

***Femminicidio* and the emergence of a ‘community of sense’ in contemporary Italy**

Giovanna Parmigiani*

Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, USA

(Received 25 May 2017; final version accepted 24 November 2017)

In this article, I offer a reading of the ‘creation’ of *femminicidio* and of its role in the emergence of a new women’s question in Italy. I concentrate on three central steps in the legitimisation of the word and the worlds *femminicidio*: Unione delle Donne Italiane (UDI)’s political use of the term in 2006, UDI’s *Staffetta* in 2008/2009, and the birth of the movement *Se Non Ora Quando* in 2011. By following Rancière’s understanding of politics as a ‘reconfiguration of the sensible’, I argue that the emergence of *femminicidio* fostered the emergence of a ‘community of sense’ of women as a new political subject. This community did not gather mainly around *ideas* of who a woman is or should be, nor did it arise from a common acknowledgement of the nature of ‘violence’. Rather, it was structured around shared *feelings* and *affects*, triggered by women’s sense of being actual or potential objects of violence.

Keywords: *femminicidio*; senses; political activism; Unione delle Donne Italiane/UDI; Italian feminism; affects.

Introduction

It was September 2011, and I had just started my fieldwork among feminists in Salento, Italy.¹ I was in Lecce with Eugenia, wanting to get to know both her and the organisation to which she belonged – the Unione delle Donne in Italia or UDI. The UDI, she said, was the oldest Italian feminist movement (and the one to which most of the women I met at the beginning of my fieldwork gravitated).² It was founded in 1945, in the aftermath of the Second World War, and was for some time called Unione delle Donne Italiane (Union of Italian Women). During the 1970s and 1980s it was well known for its pro-divorce and pro-abortion rights campaigns. More recently, to recognise explicitly that it was part of the movement of immigrants or non-native women who live in Italy, its name changed to Unione delle Donne in Italia (Union of Women in Italy).

I was fascinated by Eugenia remarking that it was the oldest Italian feminist movement, for at that time I had never heard about the UDI, despite its important role in recent Italian history. As a matter of fact, I had not encountered any Italian feminist book or author during my university years in Italy, nor had I read anything on the news that indicated the wide presence of a contemporary, active Italian feminist movement until a few months before. In fact, the recent mobilisation around *Se Non Ora Quando* (see below) had positively surprised me, and I had considered it a novelty on the Italian public scene.³

*Email: giovanna.parmigiani@gmail.com

If this was indeed an oversight on my part, I certainly was not alone. For many of my generation – Italians who were born between the late 1970s and the early 1980s – Italian feminism was not a *lived* experience, or something that we studied at school. As a woman whom I encountered once at the Milan Women’s Bookstore, a historical locus of Italian feminism, explained to me when I confessed my lack of knowledge of the Italian feminist movements, ‘after years of political public activities around pro-divorce and pro-abortion legislation of the 1970s and 1980s, Italian feminists decided to stay away from the public squares and to change society by changing themselves’ (see, for example, Plesset 2006; Bono and Kemp 1991). In part, she was referring to the work in women’s shelters, and in part to some specific political practices. As a matter of fact, the Italian feminists I met, especially those of the older generations, shared a radical interpretation of the ‘personal is political’ adage, believing that social change depended on specific political practices, such as the practice of self-awareness (*pratica dell’ autocoscienza*, see, for example, Dominijanni 2005, 26; Bono and Kemp 1991), the practice of entrustment (*affidamento*, see, for example, Dominijanni 2005, 37; Bono and Kemp 1991), the practice of starting from oneself (*pratica del partire da sé*), and the practice of relationships between women (see, for example, Scarparo 2005, 40–41). Of these four practices, that of relationships between women was especially valued for its personal and political implications, as my first days with Salentine feminists clearly demonstrated. I was strolling around *Porta Napoli* with Eugenia, eager to know more. When I asked her to tell me more about the contemporary UDI, she immediately started talking about the three national campaigns promoted by the group since 2002: 50E50; the *Staffetta delle donne contro la violenza sulle donne*; and *Immagini Amiche*. The first, she told me, was a bill concerning the percentage of women that should be on Italian governing boards at all political levels; the third, a campaign to promote awareness of how women and specifically women’s bodies were portrayed on TV and in other media.⁴ The second national campaign – which Eugenia seemed to consider the most important, the one that exemplified the struggles of the other two campaigns as well – was against ‘sexed violence’ and specifically *femminicidio*. That was the first time I had ever heard the word *femminicidio*, the Italian rendering of the word *femicide*.⁵

Technically, *femminicidio* is not a neologism in Italian, as is its South American equivalent *femicidio*.⁶ But it was used only sparingly in nineteenth-century Italian literature, and until very recently it did not appear in legal or everyday language. Although its use in 2011 was not yet widespread, now it is broadly employed in the media to refer to ‘the killing of women by the hand of men for the fact of being women’. The term is now included in some of the most respected Italian dictionaries; it is acknowledged by the prestigious Accademia della Crusca; and it has become part of the everyday vocabulary of many Italians.⁷ Moreover, the word *femminicidio*, or *femicidio*,⁸ has appeared in the title or was the topic of at least 17 books published between 2012 and 2013 (and of many more, later), appears in the name of some blogs (including the one by Barbara Spinelli, and notably in the works of the Casa delle Donne of Bologna), and was the subject of the theatrical piece (and book) *Ferite a morte* (*Wounded to Death*),⁹ written and performed all over Italy by the actress Serena Dandini. It was the topic of a reportage book by the well-known TV journalist Riccardo Iacona (2012) and of one of his TV specials¹⁰ and of the recent book by the two distinguished Italian writers Loredana Lipperini and Michela Murgia (2013). It was the object of a 2012 petition of the feminist grassroots movement *Se Non Ora Quando*;¹¹ the concern of a number of articles and blogs on the internet; and, in 2013, of a specific Law (#119 of 2013) known as the ‘Law on Femminicidio’ –¹² a law contested by some Italian feminists.¹³

In this article, I propose a possible reading of the ‘creation’ of the term *femminicidio*, and of its role in the emergence of a new women’s question in Italy. In particular, I concentrate on three steps that I consider central to the legitimation of the word *femminicidio* and of the world

it depicts: UDI's political use of the term in 2006; UDI's *Staffetta di donne contro la violenza sulle donne* (Relay of women against violence against women) in 2008/2009; and the birth of the grassroots movement *Se Non Ora Quando* in 2011. Moreover, by following Rancière's understanding of politics as a 'reconfiguration of the sensible' (see Rancière 1999) – that is, of what makes sense and of what can be sensed (Panagia 2009, 3) – I argue that the emergence in Italy of violence against women as a matter of social concern fostered the emergence of a 'community of sense' of women (Hinderliter et al. 2009) as a new political subject. Yet this community did not grow mainly around *ideas* of who a woman is or should be, nor did it arise from a common understanding of violence. Rather, the term arose around shared *feelings* and *affects*, triggered by women's sense of being actual or potential objects of violence.¹⁴

Violence against women in Italy: some (contested) data

It happens to be that in this ... year, 2013, 128 women have been killed so far. This data is not mine, I take it from *La Repubblica*, the newspaper considered to be the continuation of the Gospel of Eugenio [Scalfari, the co-founder of *La Repubblica*], lately engaged in conversing with Pope Bergoglio, having abandoned his direct [conversations] with God, in whom he does not believe, but with whom he is on first name terms as if he [God] were his brother-in-law... 128 massacred women are too many, overall, but in relation to the 60 million Italian citizens, statistically speaking, that is very few ... if these are the numbers of the female victims of the males, we are within the Continental average ... In fact, so far the EU has not fined us for killing more women than Brussels expected us to, though Brussels is notoriously strict with us ... It goes without saying that we are against violence, but we are against it when it is done to what, in another epoch, was referred to as the weaker sex [*Sesso debole*], as well as when it is done to men, to elders, and to children. *Whoever suffers [from violence] is worthy of pity and protection. Normally bullies persecute the weakest [living] beings. And the 'weak' are not just the girls or the former-girls* (my emphasis, my translation).¹⁵

These are the (at times sarcastic) words of Vittorio Feltri, the editor of the right-wing newspaper *Il Giornale*, delivered on the occasion of the 2013 International Day Against Violence Against Women. He described *femminicidio* as somehow 'trendy' and this startling judgement provides a good starting point to present the different narratives and political performances that characterised Italian debates on femicide and violence against women in Italy during my fieldwork.

As this brief excerpt shows, narratives around violence against women and femicide were quite contested in Italy, and unsurprisingly the debates about them tended to be quite animated. On the one hand, when these themes emerged in the media and in Italian public opinion as a national problem, they were presented as facts (see Herzfeld 1998, 2008) about which politicians and intellectuals, in particular, were required to have an opinion. On the other hand, these opinions were far from unanimous, and often tended to align themselves along pre-existent party-political lines.

One of the main issues regarding violence against women in Italy was that, in the absence of a national research organisation on violence against women and femicide, gathering data on these topics required juxtaposing the information from different sources, some of them national, and some international.¹⁶ According to the 2011 Global Gender Gap report, for example, which follows the well-established international parameters of the World Economic Forum, Italy ranked 74th in the world for gender equality, a particularly poor result for a country that is among the founding members of the European Union.¹⁷ Such principally economic data is better understood when read in conjunction with other international reports, such as the 2011 UN's CEDAW (The Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women) shadow report, that claimed that, in Italy, machismo attitudes were widely tolerated and reinforced by the mass

media.¹⁸ These remarks were confirmed in the report of the UN's Human Rights Council visit of the Special Rapporteur, Rashida Manjoo, to Italy in 2012.¹⁹

The effects of gender discrimination and of high levels of tolerance of male chauvinism in Italian society could be observed in many aspects of women's lives, from the difference in salaries between men and women²⁰ to how women are represented on TV and in other media,²¹ from the percentage of unemployment among women compared to men²² to the 2007 Istat data on violence against women.²³ According to the latter, published by the Italian National Institute of Statistics, in 2006 more than one million women in Italy were the victims of male violence, violence that in 90 per cent of the cases went unreported. In particular, the steady increase in the numbers of femicides – that is, the murder of women by men for reasons of gender – in Italy in the past ten years was considered particularly worrisome. According to a study by the Casa delle Donne per non Subire Violenza of Bologna, in 2010 there were 127 femicides – 20 more than in 2009, and 43 more than in 2005. In 2011, allegedly, the number of victims of femicide was 129, and in 2012 it was 124.²⁴ According to the same source, which is currently one of the few organisations that tracks the number of victims, the 2014 data reports 115 victims and 101 attempts of femicide, and the 2015 data indicates 117 victims.²⁵ The 2013 data recorded 134 victims, and 86 attempts at femicide.²⁶

According to the aforementioned sources, some of the problems that Italian women faced when involved in violence against them were cultural, while others were more directly linked to the structure of the Italian juridical system. The laws on abortion (in 1974) and divorce (in 1970) together with the outlawing of honour killings in 1981, and the 1996 reinterpretation of sexual violence as a crime against the person (and not against morality) are some examples of important achievements around women's rights in Italy (see Molé 2013, 84; Plesset 2006). Nonetheless, as the 2011 CEDAW shadow report pointed out and the 2012 Report of the UN's Special Rapporteur for the Human Rights Council confirmed, these improvements failed to coalesce into an organic legal corpus of norms. The existence of an integrated system of laws on these matters could have provided protection to women victims of violence and related situations (CEDAW, General Recommendation 19).

Despite the wide circulation of this data and its interpretation in Italy, in the absence of a national watchdog on femicide and violence against women, this was contested data. Organisations involved in reporting violence against women did not agree on the numbers, the methodologies of data collection, or the statistical analyses of these data. While some organisations referred to these numbers to document a national problem around femicides and violence against women, others referred to the same data in order to question the reality of the latter and of the phenomenon of *femminicidio*.²⁷

The divide between those who supported or rejected the existence of femicide as a societal problem was not the only rift in relation to the perception of violence against women and femicide in Italy. As emerges clearly from Feltri's words, even among those who recognised violence against women as a minor (though nonetheless important) issue, talking about it too often became merely a pretext for voicing political rivalries and polemicising with political competitors.

If this was the *status quaestionis* in 2013, then it was the result of the recent emergence of *femminicidio* as a matter of social concern. To trace the 'emergence' of this 'emergency', to quote Dave's pun (2011), I propose to look at three particular steps that, I argue, led to the legitimisation of the word *femminicidio* and of the worlds it depicts. The first step is the *political* and not just terminological adoption of this term by UDI in 2006; the second is UDI's national campaign '*Staffetta di donne contro la violenza sulle donne*' (or 'Relay') in 2008/2009; and the third is the

2011 social mobilisation of the feminist movement *Se Non Ora Quando* (SNOQ) in the aftermath of the Rubygate scandal that involved the then Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi.

The creation of *femminicidio*

Apparently, the first people to use the term *femminicidio* politically in the Italian context were the women of the UDI.²⁸ Pina Nuzzo, the former national delegate of the UDI, told me in a private conversation that

the term *femminicidio* was taken on politically by the UDI during a sit-in in front of the parliament in June, I think, of 2006, with a banner drawn by me that said Stop *Femminicidio*. We wanted to involve the women members of parliament and to direct the attention of institutions to a killing spree (*matanza*) that seemed, and still seems, unstoppable. From that moment on I always used [the term], and I relaunched it with the *Staffetta* in 2008 I chose to push through the use of a term that bothered both men and women in order to force them to see, in many murders classified as generic in the statistical data, the violent death (*morte violenta*) of women at the hands of men. In general, [the perpetrators are] relatives and kin.²⁹ (My translation)

This linguistic struggle was all the more an ideological one, as Nuzzo clearly pointed out. The choice to introduce a new word was a conscious attempt to make visible a particular interpretation of the world that, in 2006, was *invisible* to many. Stressing the fact that femicide was not a synonym for homicide or for uxoricide was indeed a revolution in men's and women's 'commonsensical' perception, in Rancièrian terms, of what violence against women was.

Rancière is one of the scholars interested in the connections and tensions between the political and the emotional, between power relations and sensory/aesthetic experiences. His work is central in my analysis of the emergence of *femminicidio*, and of a 'community of sense' around violence against women in Italy. Rancière (2004, 10) suggests that politics can be considered a 'partition of the sensible':

Politics is first of all a way of framing, among sensory data, a specific sphere of experience. It is a partition of the sensible, of the visible and the sayable, which allows (or does not allow) some specific data to appear; which allows (or does not allow) some specific subjects to designate them and speak about them. It is a specific intertwining of ways of being, ways of doing and ways of speaking.

This partition of the sensible, that might also be referred to as regimes of perceptions (Panagia 2009, 7), is what is generally called 'common sense'. The aim of activist politics, as well as of art, can be understood, then, as a *reconfiguration* of the sensible. By 'sensible' Rancière means both what makes sense and what can be sensed (Panagia 2009, 3). Following a definition of aesthetics that encompasses both the original and the current meanings, Rancière develops a philosophy that puts the aesthetic and sensory experiences at the centre of political action. In particular, his understanding of democracy lies in the phenomenon of *dissensus* (in Latin, sensing differently). *Dissensus* is the moment in which the experiences 'of those who have no part', those who are not recognised by the majority, and are not included in the political 'distribution of the sensible' – are inscribed into society (Rancière 1999, 123). In other words, *dissensus* (which includes both cognitive and affective dimensions) is intrinsically political in as much it challenges common sense by broadening the sensorium in a given time and space.

This was the context in which the UDI women operated. Their battles of and for representation, and their use of *femminicidio* to promote *dissensus* and to change the practices of seeing and sensing (and of making sense) around women and violence in Italy were both their own and those of their actual or imagined publics. In such a perspective, the story of the process of legitimisation of the word *femminicidio* was also the story of its creation, and the steps that describe the endorsement of the term also represented the measures of the passage between the lack of

acknowledgement of a phenomenon and its recognition by Italian public opinion. Though one can trace the first public appearance of this word within UDI settings back to 2006, it is not until 2009 and more especially until 2012/2013 that non-UDI and explicitly non-feminist women and men began to embrace and widely adopt the term *femminicidio*. In this process, the *Staffetta delle Donne contro la Violenza sulle Donne*, UDI's national campaign against sexed violence, played a crucial role. Yet while central, it was only a first step towards the formal and widespread recognition of the word and worlds of *femminicidio*.

Staffetta di donne contro la violenza sulle donne

As Eugenia explained to me in our *passaggiata*, the *Staffetta* or Relay was one of UDI's National campaigns. It was launched on 25 November 2008 in Niscemi, Sicily, where a woman named Lorena had been murdered, and ended exactly one year later in Brescia, Lombardy, where a woman called Hiina had been slaughtered. During that year, an amphora designed with two handles 'in order to be carried by two women' – to 'symbolise the importance of relationships' (Nuzzo 2008) – travelled throughout Italy. Each city or town that received the amphora welcomed it by organising public events: from seminars to exhibits, and from shows to public debates. People greeted the amphora, an artistic object created by Pina Nuzzo and painted with images of the Mother Goddess inspired by the work of the archaeologist Gimbutas (2006), in many public places: from schools to jails, and from theatres to city halls. The ritual associated with the tour was characterised by the public delivery of the amphora by two women to two receiving women. In each town or city, every woman who wanted to could put into the amphora's 'womb' a note with her thoughts, feelings, denunciations, or pictures. The objective of the *Staffetta* was 'to say "Stop sexed violence and *femminicidio*"' (Nuzzo 2008), defined variously as 'the killing of women by the hands of men', as a 'disease' (each 'germ' of which needed to be neutralised), and as the act of a man killing a woman in order to feel '*maschio*' (male) (Nuzzo 2008).

Despite the relative lack of publicity about the Relay initiatives in the national press, the *Staffetta* was a great success.³⁰ Hundreds of women witnessed the amphora's progress and left messages in it. Interestingly, in presenting the *Staffetta* to the press, Nuzzo (2008) wrote:

We want to fight against sexed violence and femicide. In order to do so, we want to say WHO we are, without putting a distance between us and the other [women], because we are not alien [to violence] or privileged and we do not expect one woman alone to do what all of us can't manage to do: stop the violence from which we all suffer! (*far smettere la violenza che tutte subiamo!*) (My translation)

More explicitly, after describing who is 'an abused woman' and after highlighting the connection between being the object of violence and 'having a precarious job', Nuzzo claimed literally: '*QUELLA donna siamo NOI*,' 'WE are ALL THAT woman'. Moreover, in the same document Nuzzo wrote that: 'We must first of all talk by saying WE, we shouldn't think of ourselves as alien or even privileged, nor should we be tempted (*cadere nella tentazione di*) to sensitise the women we meet to make them aware of the violence that they certainly suffer, that we all suffer.'

Besides spreading beyond feminist circles the use of the term *femminicidio* and the world-vision that it described, *Staffetta* fostered an important ideological move: that of superimposing the bodies of violated women on women *in general*. This ideological move, assisted by the widespread biological understanding of gender among Italian feminists who followed the *Pensiero della Differenza Sessuale* (see endnote 5), was performed both through the 'we are that woman' narrative, and through the relation with a particular artistic object, the amphora (see e.g. Gell 1998). The latter, an out-and-out 'actant' of the Relay, developed as a key element of the particular 'assemblage' (see, for example, Bennett 2010) of human and non-human actors that was the *Staffetta*. This artistic object

was personified, and explicitly associated with a body of a woman.³¹ This woman, who was *every* woman, was considered the *'testimone'* (meaning, in Italian, both 'witness' and 'baton') of the *Staffetta/Relay*, the one who testified against violence against women.

During my fieldwork I observed that this personification took many forms. To begin with, the women I met did not use a definite article when they talked about the amphora, they simply called it 'Amphora' or 'she'. Second, they explicitly gave *Anfora* agency, making *her* the subject of actions normally performed by humans. The amphora was not carried by women, but 'she walked with women', *Anfora* was not brought to city halls, hospitals and so on, but 'she went' there, 'she attended' ceremonies, 'she witnessed' events, etc. Moreover, they showed me pictures in which, whether alone or in her red suitcase, *Anfora* was not just addressed but also *treated* as a person, and appeared, for example, on a car seat with the seat belt fastened, on a bike during a ride organised in her honour, and beneath the altar during a Catholic Mass.

This personification of an artistic object brought forward an ideological move that was extremely important for the formation of a 'community of sense' around violence against women in contemporary Italy, one that linked violence, being women, and being a political subject. If the *Staffetta* was one step in the creation of this (also affective) community, the events linked to the SNOQ manifestations represented another important benchmark in this process.

Where are you, girls? Italy's new women's question

On 13 February 2011 an estimated one million protestors, mostly women, took to the streets in more than 250 cities in Italy and abroad, in order to protest against 'the model of man-woman relations exhibited by one of the highest state authorities' that 'deeply affects' Italy's 'lifestyles and culture, justifying detrimental behaviour to women's dignity and to the institutions themselves'.³² The demonstration that gathered around this grassroots movement, *Se Non Ora Quando* (SNOQ) named after Primo Levi's well-known novel, was meant to be politically inclusive, and involved women from different contexts and ideological positions. In spite of the fact that this demonstration was not unanimously positively received by feminist groups, it was the first time in 30 years that Italian women were visible on the streets in such numbers.³³ What triggered this massive reaction and its media coverage were recent events related to the prime minister at the time, Silvio Berlusconi, and what since then has come to be known as Rubygate, a sexual scandal that involved an under-age woman. The media coverage of this event was unprecedented, and gave great visibility to women's groups for the first time in many years. Yet even this tremendous visibility did not prompt a dialogue on women's rights, or on Italy's poor scores in the Global Gender Gap report (it was ranked 80th in the world in 2012), for example. Both among left- and right-wing journalists and intellectuals, the movement was framed as a possibility or as an attempt to delegitimise Berlusconi *politically*. In other words, by catching the feminist wave, politicians of the left and right (and the national press which is highly dependent on, and influenced by, political parties) attempted to use a new women's question to accomplish their political goals – the delegitimation of Berlusconi.³⁴

The emergence of SNOQ represented an appearance – or a reappearance – of women as a political subject in Italy's public sphere after years of scant visibility. Many committees bloomed spontaneously throughout Italy. While for many women this occasion was their first experience of women's politics, many activists, within and outside the UDI, found that the visibility of a women's question in the media, even though not framed properly, was indeed something that could be exploited in order to make their voices audible and their bodies visible.³⁵ For them, SNOQ was a 'karstic' phenomenon.³⁶ The metaphor of the karstic river is used frequently and ubiquitously

among Italian feminists in order to interpret and narrate the history of Italian feminist movements. It responds to the need to find a shared historical narrative that comes to terms with the diversification and the divergences between the specific experiences of the different feminisms that have been developing in Italy since the beginning of the last century. As Maria Teresa Sega writes:

Feminine participation in collective movements is not linear: it proceeds with alternate phases, between claimed presences and silences; an appearing and a disappearing that resembles more a 'karstic' river than the flow, sometimes slow and sometimes turbulent, of a river in the light of the sun (Sega 2005).³⁷ (My translation)

Whether interpreted as a complete novelty or as a 'karstic reappearance', this episode of recent Italian political history is pivotal for its implications about violence against women and *femminicidio*, and for the emergence of a new women's question in Italy around these topics. Rubygate prompted important responses in Italian public opinion. Indeed, as a result a new women's activism grew around it, an audience interested in the conditions of women in Italian society matured, and wider discourses around women's issues developed. As a matter of fact, though claims in support of women's dignity were at the centre of appeals and reflections in the aftermath of Berlusconi's scandal, the discourse rapidly expanded beyond this in Italian social, political, and media arenas to include a variety of issues around violence against women.

The construction of a (counter) public

Concita de Gregorio, the former director of the left-wing newspaper *l'Unità* (founded by Antonio Gramsci) strongly supported and endorsed the new feminist cause of SNOQ. Her editorial choices at the time (2011/2012) allowed for the development, expansion, and media success of the movement, and for the creation of a public able to acknowledge the new women's question, which until then had been scarcely visible, as both real and meaningful. In the aftermath of the emergence of Berlusconi's sexual scandal around el Mahroug and the *bunga bunga* parties,³⁸ Concita de Gregorio proposed gathering signatures for a petition that later merged with the *Se Non Ora Quando* manifesto. She said:

I am sure, I know it with certainty, that the majority of Italian women are not in line for the *bunga bunga*. I am sure that conscious prostitution is the choice, if it's a choice under these circumstances, of a very small minority. I am therefore addressing the others, all the other women. This is the time to answer firmly: Where are you, girls? Mothers, grandmothers, daughters, nieces, where are you? Right-wing or left-wing, poor or rich, Northern or Southern women, daughters of a time that other women, before you, made rich with possibilities, equal and free, where are you? Now is the time to say: enough is enough!³⁹ (My translation)

De Gregorio's contribution to the birth of *Se Non Ora Quando* cannot be underestimated. Her work helped to mobilise people, giving voice to and shaping the attitude of some sectors of public opinion *vis-à-vis* the former Prime Minister's sexual scandals. By doing so, she not only gathered women and made an affective response to Berlusconi and the role of women in Italian society, she also helped to construct a (counter) public (Warner 2002), an audience for the emergence of a new, and broader, women's question in Italy. In other words, the references to the 'other women', to an old-style *familismo* (kinship-centered ideology), and to 'patriarchal' values (see Ottonelli 2011) that were evident in her appeal were not at all an idiosyncratic take on Berlusconi's scandals. They were shared by – and, at the same time, triggered in – her readers, the founders of SNOQ, and other intellectuals and political authorities. By underlining these elements, the *Se Non Ora Quando* movement was able both to mobilise a particular (although generic) political subject (i.e. the 'other women' of De Gregorio's appeal), as Ottonelli argues, and, with the particular help of *l'Unità*, to

create an audience and a public capable of seeing and recognising this newly crafted political subject and the presence of a women's question in Italy, that had been neglected until then in public opinion. The ability to mobilise the feelings, affects, and thoughts of many Italians and to construct both a political subject and its audience also relied on the fact that, in spite of its being a new movement, SNOQ's ideology did not attempt to introduce a radical change in the frameworks used to interpret contemporary events.

The audience constructed by de Gregorio and SNOQ played an important role both in the consolidation of a 'community of sense' around violence against women in Italy and in the construction of women as new political subjects. The attention of the media on women's issues, in fact, fuelled a renewed interest in public initiatives. While Italy's women's question emerged in connection with concerns around women's dignity, it rapidly shifted to issues of violence and femicide. The latter were already being discussed within feminist circles even though they had not yet reached the attention of the wider public – not even during UDI's *Staffetta*.

Many initiatives have taken place since the SNOQ protests. The majority of them have revolved around episodes of violence in which women were injured or killed at the hands of men. In particular, 25 November, the International Day Against Violence Against Women, became a reference point for many women and women's associations.

From dignity to violence

The connections between dignity, violence, and being (feminist) women were common among many of the activists I met. Firstly, on a personal level, for Eugenia and the other women I met, if feminism was 'fighting for women's dignity', it was evident that their dignity was threatened especially by sexism, and by its violent connotations. As Carla, a Salentine activist, used to say to me: 'If there is anything that "patriarchy" does not tolerate, it is women's volition (*volitività*) and the inviolability of their bodies. Therefore, it needs to act on both levels in order to control them. From this perspective, coercion and tutelage are just two sides of the same coin.' Throughout my fieldwork, though, I noticed that what at first seemed to be a particular feature of the personal lives of feminist activists, gradually became apparent also in the public sphere, in initiatives such as the following.

The town of Sogliano Cavour in the province of Lecce, in February 2014 promoted a campaign condemning violence against women, called *Meno Giallo, più Rosa. Riprendiamoci la scena del delitto* (literally, Less Yellow, More Pink. Let's reclaim the crime scene). The title is a pun that plays on the Italian categorisation of novels. *Gialli*, in Italian, is the adjective that refers to thrillers, while *rosa* connotes romance novels. The initiative explicitly linked the public spaces customarily associated with men with crime scenes. The aim of the campaign was to encircle with white and pink tape – similar in shape and style to the one used by the Italian police to cordon off murder scenes, but in different colours – the 'places with inadequate female presence'. The purpose of this taping was to 'create a map of the spaces that women cannot access, and where sexist culture is more deep-rooted'.⁴⁰

There are PLACES where SEXIST CULTURE has always expressed itself in a way that did not respect women. Every woman knows them very well. They are the town BARS, the SQUARES which, after a certain hour, we prefer not to cross, the STOPS for [public] transportation that are better not frequented alone. LET'S TAKE BACK all these places, and all the others that are part of your experience. Let's mark them with this tape, before they again become the SCENE OF THE CRIME (emphasis in the original. From the invitation to this initiative).⁴⁰ (My translation)

On the one hand, the association between these unfriendly places for women and crime scenes underlined the fact that the absence of women from those places represented their symbolic

killing. On the other hand, it clearly played on an imaginary that associated women and women's bodies, indiscriminately, with potential victims of murder. Initiatives such as this one, I argue, gesture towards the presence of a 'community of sense' of women gathering around violence and femicide in contemporary Italy.

A 'community of sense'

It was a nice, sunny Saturday morning in late November. Rosa, Veronica, and I were in a *Fiat Punto*, and were headed to a beautiful *masseria* (mansion) surrounded by olive trees for a two-day women's social event (*socialità femminile*) organised in honour of Carla, one of our feminist co-activists. Rosa was a middle-aged lesbian woman who had driven to Lecce, an Apulian city in south-eastern Italy, from another Italian region specifically for this event. Unlike most of the other women in homosexual and/or homoemotional relationships whom I met during my fieldwork, she chose to define herself as a lesbian. Her adoption of this identity marker was probably related to her particular history: she had been politically active in different movements, including groups that were known to be lesbian-feminist. Given the particularity of her standpoint, her experience in different sectors of Italian feminisms, and her position on the governing board of the UDI, I was eager to use the car ride to hear her perspective on that historical feminist association. In particular, I was curious about who UDI women considered to be a woman.

Giovanna: 'So, Rosa, I have a question for you, as a member of the governing board of UDI. Am I entitled to be a member of UDI? You know, I am Italian, but I live abroad ... if UDI is the Union of Women in Italy ... well, technically, it might not be possible for me to be a member.' Rosa and Veronica laughed, and both offered me some reassurance: I could indeed be considered part of UDI. I laughed as well, reciprocating their affection, but persisted: 'Seriously, Rosa. Who is a woman to UDI? For example, could a transgendered or a transsexual woman be part of UDI?' In formulating this question I paid close attention to talking explicitly about transgender and transsexual *women*.⁴¹ Rosa replied brusquely, sounding almost irritated: 'I would not give a UDI membership card to a trans. They were not raised as women, and were not exposed to the violence and to the possibility of violence in the same ways young girls are.'

I was surprised. I did not expect this answer from her. Our conversation continued gently and respectfully for the remaining miles of our trip. Nonetheless, Rosa's answer affected me deeply, and I could not get over it. In particular, I could not get over the abrupt change of ambience that my question had provoked: from friendly warmth to huffy distance. I thought I had indeed touched a sore spot. I admit that I felt disturbed by the implications of Rosa's line of reasoning, one that I felt was discriminatory, and that gave to violence the additional power of defining who *I* am. As an Italian woman, it was the first time that I had heard such a narrative. As Koyama writes in her *Transfeminist Manifesto*, I knew that '[s]ome feminists, particularly radical lesbian feminists, have accused trans women and men of benefiting from male privilege. Male-to-female transsexuals, they argue, are socialised as boys and are thus given male privilege' (2003, 247). What surprised me in the conversation with Rosa was that this gender privilege was inflected with a language of violence. According to Rosa's reasoning, what makes a person a woman has nothing to do with the lack of privileges or the absence of particular rights. Rosa seemed to be saying that it was violence itself and *the possibility of violence that 'made' women*. This violence was understood as a particular type of violence. This 'sexed violence' did not seem to be comparable to that to which transgendered and transsexual persons tragically are often exposed.

To my initial surprise, I found connections between being a woman and violence to be ubiquitous during my fieldwork. While women in Italy, and particularly non-Italian women in Italy,

certainly experienced structural, symbolic, and physical aggression, these aspects of violence were not the only ones that informed the lives of my informants, my ethnography, and my anthropological reflections. The women I met in Italy, like most women, certainly suffered from the effects of widespread sexism (see for example Guano 2007; Plesset 2006; Passerini 1996; and Molé 2012), of economic precariousness and unemployment (see for example Molé 2012; Muehlebach 2012; and Fantone 2007), and of an economic gender gap. They were indeed the objects of forms of violence, discrimination, and sexual assaults.

Nonetheless, in their everyday lives violence typically had other connotations, too. Similar to what Pesmen (2000) claimed of the ‘Russian soul’, I found that what the women I met call ‘sexed violence’ was in fact a ‘deceptive lexical item: not just a notion, image, entity, or experience, but something that involved ‘an aesthetics, a way of feeling about and being in the world, a shifting focus and repertoire of discourses, rituals, beliefs, and practices more and less available’ to them (9). This type of violence, conceived as a cluster of discursive and affective elements and formations inflected in rhetorical and representational terms, operated by constructing a ‘community of sense’ that helped to redefine women as political subjects in Italy. If during the 1970s and 1980s, Italian feminist movements were active and publicly visible, and were relying heavily on the key word *auto-determinazione* (self-determination), today by contrast the bodies of women in Italy are not primarily the political subjects of sexual liberation, or of self-determination. The bodies of women today are primarily *violated* or potentially violated bodies (*corpi violati*), and Italian women tend to represent themselves and to be represented mainly as actual or potential objects of violence. Sometimes this status is understood within a *paradigma vittimario* or paradigm of the victim (De Luna 2011; see also Giordano 2014, 9; Gribaldo 2014; Gamberi 2015), sometimes it is inflected in terms of existential or economic *precarietà* (precariousness, see e.g. Molé 2013), or framed as a reaction to both.

In any case, I argue that a ‘community of sense’ of women emerged recently and, with it, a new women’s question. This ‘community of sense’, in line with Rancière’s work, is understood as a community that ‘acknowledges politics to contain a sensuous and aesthetic aspect that is irreducible to ideology and idealisation,’ and that ‘works toward being-together only through a consistent dismantling of any idealised common ground, form, or figure’ (Hinderliter et al. 2009, 2). Whereas in Italy, following the tradition of the ‘Pensiero della Differenza Sessuale’, gender differences are still mostly framed within a substantially binary understanding of sexes and genders, this new ‘community of sense’ is not just an ‘imagined community’ of women (Anderson 1991). It does not coalesce primarily around particular ideas or ideological representations of who, specifically, is or should be a woman. Rather, it revolves around what it *feels* like to be a woman: namely around the affects and feelings of precariousness linked to being potential or actual objects of ‘sexed violence’. In other words, in the past few years Italian women gradually emerged as a new unitary political subject not specifically in relation to particular common political belongings or interests, but in relation to shared *feelings* of being potential or actual objects of ‘sexed violence’, regardless of the particular aspects and the agreed-upon understandings of the latter.

Conclusions

In this article, I presented my reading of the emergence of *femminicidio* as a matter of concern in recent years, tracing its development from being a word employed only within feminist circles to its making the news on national mass media. I pointed out three steps that I consider pivotal for the legitimisation of the word and the worlds of *femminicidio*: UDI’s *political* adoption of the term in 2006, UDI’s *Staffetta* in 2008/2009, and the manifestations of *Se Non Ora Quando* in 2011. On the basis of my ethnographic material and of the analyses of contemporary feminist practices and

discourses, I argued that the emergence of *femminicidio* and the legitimisation of this word fostered the emergence of a ‘community of sense’ of women (Hinderliter et al. 2009) as a new political subject. Following Rancière’s understanding of politics as a sensory enterprise, I framed it as a community structured around shared *feelings* and *affects*, triggered by women’s sense of being actual or potential objects of violence.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Pina Nuzzo, Enza Miceli, and Milena Carone for their invaluable generosity and support during and after my fieldwork, Giovanni Bazzana for his encouragement, and the anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments.

Notes on contributor

Giovanna Parmigiani is an anthropologist who concentrates on Italy (Salento). She received her PhD at the University of Toronto, and she is currently a postdoctoral Research Associate at the Science, Religion, and Culture program at Harvard Divinity School.

Notes

1. From 2011 to 2016, I did the equivalent of more than two years of fieldwork in the Salento area of Italy, of which 15 months focused exclusively on feminist activism in relation to violence against women.
2. On the UDI see, for example, Plesset 2006, Michetti, Repetto and Viviani 1998, Rodano 2010.
3. I am not claiming, here, that Italian feminist groups were not active *at all* on the local and national public spheres after the 1980s, but that, as Pina Nuzzo (UDI) claimed on the verge of the SNOQ manifestation: ‘We [feminist activists] never underestimated the importance of taking to the streets ... Every single time, though, we had to realise that policy makers (*la politica*) do not listen to what women say through women’s associations, because they do not recognise the political nature of women’s movements. Neither do the media ... we have never been silent. We have been silenced!’ An important contribution on Italian feminisms after 2000 is e.g. Bonomi Romagnoli 2014. See also e.g. <http://orlando.women.it/en/>, <http://www.casainternazionaledelledonne.org/index.php/it/home>, <http://www.libreriadelledonne.it>. In reference to more recent developments of feminisms in Italy, partially as reaction to what I describe in this article, see <https://nonunadimeno.wordpress.com>
4. 50E50 was not just a proposal that had to do with quotas, but asked for a more thorough representation of women ‘*ovunque si decide*’ (in every place where decisions are made).
5. It was the first time I had also heard the expression ‘sexed violence’. During my fieldwork, I noticed that UDI women talked about ‘sexed violence’ and not about ‘gender-based violence’. The first term, which appears to be a coinage of UDI, reflects the fact that mainstream feminisms, at that time, adhered to the *Pensiero della Differenza Sessuale*, and did not distinguish between sex and gender, taking ‘sexual difference’ as a constitutive element of humanity. On Italian feminisms and on *Pensiero della Differenza Sessuale*, see e.g. Bono and Kemp 1991; De Lauretis 1990; Milan Women’s Bookstore Collective 1990; Dominijanni 2005; Scarparo 2005. See also Plesset 2006, 53–54; Magaraggia and Leone 2010; Parati and West 2002, Bonomi Romagnoli 2014.
6. <http://www.wired.it/play/cultura/2014/10/17/10-parole-consocere-meglio/> On *femminicidio* in Italy see e.g. Abis and Orrù 2016; Violi 2015; Pramstrahler 2015; Gamberi 2015.
7. According to the website of the prestigious *Accademia della Crusca*, the term *femminicidio* appeared in the dictionary Devoto-Oli in 2009 for the first time, in Zingarelli in 2010, in the Vocabolario Treccani online, and in Neologismi Treccani in 2012 (as ‘*femmicidio o femicidio*’). See <http://www.accademiadellacrusca.it/it/lingua-italiana/consulenza-linguistica/domande-risposte/femminicidio-perch-parola>. In spite of this official recognition, there are occasional resistances to its adoption – such as the following, published in the left-wing newspaper *La Repubblica*, that caused strong reactions among feminists online: http://www.repubblica.it/la-repubblica-delle-idee/societa/2013/12/27/news/care_donne_abolite_la_parola_femminicidio-74585204/
8. <http://www.europaquotidiano.it/2013/06/28/la-crusca-perche-si-dice-femminicidio/>

9. <http://www.feriteamorte.it/>
10. <http://www.rai.tv/dl/RaiTV/programmi/media/ContentItem-f3293d14-8b95-40c5-b333-957340103241.html>
11. <http://www.ibs.it/ser/serfat.asp?site=libri&xy=femminicidio>
12. <http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2013/10/15/13G00163/sg>.
13. The contestations came from many feminist groups. Notably, the Paestum 2013 meeting produced a collection of signatures against it entitled 'Not in My Name'. See e.g. <https://ilmanifesto.it/storia/decreto-femminicidio-non-in-mio-nome-incontro-pubblico-a-roma/>
14. While not unanimously 'sensed' among Italian women, it is my claim that this particular 'community of sense' emerged as an important, yet ambivalent, political subject within the recent Italian socio-political context. While it promoted the re-emergence of a women's question in Italy, it also fostered some understandings of 'women' (as victims) criticised by some feminist groups, UDI included.
15. <http://www.ilgiornale.it/news/interni/femminicidio-se-vittima-nonno-nessuno-ci-bada-970108.html>
16. It is worth mentioning that the *Casa delle Donne per non Subire Violenza* of Bologna did pioneer work in starting a conversation on violence against women and femicide in Italy since the 1990s, and still provides important data and reports.
17. Sixty-nine in 2014. See <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2014/rankings/>
18. <http://cedaw30.wordpress.com/2011/07/13/italy-submits-cedaw-shadow-report/>.
19. Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its Causes and Consequences on her mission to Italy (15–26 January 2012), GE.12-14254, United Nations.
20. http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Gender_pay_gap_statistics
21. See for example Lorella Zanardo's documentary *Il Corpo delle Donne*. <http://www.ilcorpodelledonne.net/>
22. http://d.repubblica.it/frasi/2011/11/01/news/donne_lavoro-630099/
23. <http://dati.istat.it/>
24. <https://femicidiocasadonne.wordpress.com/ricerche-pubblicazioni/> The studies are based on the information published by the national and local press. The numbers are just indicative, since some data, for example about sex workers and illegal immigrants, is not easy to access. http://bologna.repubblica.it/cronaca/2013/03/05/news/femminicidi_124_le_donne_uccise_in_italia_nel_2012_15_solo_in_emilia-Romagna-5392416/
25. <https://femicidiocasadonne.wordpress.com/2016/12/01/femicidi-in-italia-dati-sintetici-2015/>
26. <https://femicidiocasadonne.wordpress.com/2016/12/01/femicidi-in-italia-dati-sintetici-2015/> <https://femicidiocasadonne.wordpress.com/2015/11/25/i-dati-del-2014-le-donne-in-italia-continuano-ad-essere-uccise/> <http://femicidiocasadonne.wordpress.com/tag/casa-delle-donne-per-non-subire-violenza/> <https://femicidiocasadonne.files.wordpress.com/2015/11/report-femicidi-20141.pdf>
27. http://www.tempi.it/gli-omicidi-contro-le-donne-sono-uno-scandalo-ma-i-neri-del-femminicidio-sono-gonfiati#.U2YQ7dzAX_Q. See also <http://www.liberoquotidiano.it/news/italia/1356906/Facci-il-femminicidio-e-moda-C-e-gia-chi-ci-vuole-far-soldi.html>; <http://www.articolotre.com/2013/11/feltri-e-il-femminicidio-delitto-di-moda-128-vittime-sono-pochissime/>
28. There are some juridical and literary precedents – such as the work of Barbara Spinelli – but they did not become established, and were not as broadly used politically as UDI and Nuzzo's uses were.
29. Private conversation via email on 27 April 2013.
30. The journey of the *Staffetta* caught the attention of the local newspapers, but not so much of the national press.
31. I had the chance to go through the 1,854 messages left in the amphora during the *Staffetta*, and in many of them *Anfora* was personified. It was addressed directly, considered as having an agency, and of being a bearer of hips, a mouth, arms, and a womb.
32. Se Non Ora Quando, 13 February 2011: Manifesto.
33. The SNOQ manifestation was not unanimously welcomed among the Italian feminist panorama of the time. UDI, for example, did not participate as a group, and some feminists and activists participated in the demonstration with red umbrellas in solidarity with sex-workers, who had been left out of the debates on Rubygate. See e.g. <https://femminismo-a-sud.noblogs.org/post/2011/02/08/13-febbraio-massa-critica-con-gli-ombrelli-rossi-noi-vogliamo-tutto/>
34. The latter goal, according to the feminists with whom I worked, was only nominally in the interests of women.
35. This particular aspect, connected to the visibility of the women's movement linked to the Se Non Ora Quando initiatives, created a rift within the UDI during its XV Congress in Bologna in 2011.

36. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, karst is 'an irregular limestone region with sink holes, underground streams, and caverns'. Geographically, it refers to the 'limestone plateau northeast of the Istrian Peninsula in Western Slovenia extending into Eastern Italy'. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/karst?show=0&t=1389370436> On Italian feminisms and the 'karstic metaphor' see e.g. Bonomi Romagnoli 2014, 23; 150.
37. This need to think about Italian feminisms within a common and reconciliatory historical framework also stems from the need to fight against the absence (sometimes actual, but mainly constructed by the hegemonic historical 'patriarchal' narratives) of the acknowledgment of the role of women in important moments of Italian history, such as the *Resistenza* – i.e. the Resistance movement that fought against Fascism during the Italian Civil War (1943–1945).
38. It is not clear what the term '*bunga bunga*' actually means. Regardless of the etymology of the term, it appears that, during '*bunga bunga*' parties, Berlusconi and a couple of male friends enjoyed a meal and post-dinner gatherings with many young women (often 30 or more), many of whom admitted they had or were said to have received money in exchange for sexual favours, sexy shows, or simply for their presence.
39. <http://www.unita.it/firmedonne/> was the original website page, but is now no longer accessible. References to this initiative can be found here <http://forumcompagnicgilmibac.forumcommunity.net/?t=43454314>
40. Meno giallo, piu' rosa, 2014. <https://m.facebook.com/groups/1385816728346175>
41. This choice is not at all obvious in Italian. In everyday language, *transessuale* (the difference between 'transgendered' and 'transsexual' is not understood by the vast majority of Italians) is preceded almost exclusively by the masculine article *il*. By choosing the feminine indefinite article *una*, and by adding the word woman, I obviously wanted to take a particular stand.

References

- Abis, S., and P. Orrù 2016. 'Il femminicidio nella stampa italiana: un'indagine linguistica'. *Gender/Sexuality/Italy* 3:18–33.
- Anderson, B.R.O. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Bennett, J 2010. *Vibrant Matter*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Bono, P., and S. Kemp 1991. *Italian Feminist Thought: a Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Bonomi Romagnoli, B. 2014. *Irriverenti e libere. Femminismi nel Nuovo Millennio*. Rome: Editori Riuniti.
- Dave, N. 2011. 'Indian and Lesbian and what Came Next: Affect, Commensuration, and Queer Emergences'. *American Ethnologist* 38 (4): 650–665.
- De Lauretis, T. 1990. 'Feminism and Its Differences'. *Pacific Coast Philology* 25 (1-2): 24–30.
- De Luna, G. 2011. *La Repubblica del dolore: le memorie di un'Italia divisa*. Milan: Feltrinelli.
- Dominijanni, I. 2005. 'Rethinking Change: Italian Feminism between Crisis and Critique of Politics'. *Cultural Studies Review* 11 (2): 25–35.
- Fantoni, L. 2007. 'Precarious Changes: Gender and Generational Politics in Contemporary Italy Sources'. *Feminist Review* 87:5–20.
- Gamberi, C. 2015. 'L'alfabeto della violenza. Lo spettacolo *Doppio Taglio* e le rappresentazioni del femminicidio nei media italiani'. *Gender/Sexuality/Italy* 2:149–165.
- Gell, A. 1998. *Art and Agency: an Anthropological Theory*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Gimbutas, M. A. 2006. *The Language of the Goddess*. London: Thames & Hudson.
- Giordano, C. 2014. *Migrants in Translation: Caring and the Logics of Difference in Contemporary Italy*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.
- Gribaldo, A. 2014. 'The Paradoxical Victim: Intimate Violence Narratives on Trial in Italy'. *American Ethnologist* 41 (4): 743–756.
- Guano, E. 2007. 'Respectable Ladies and Uncouth Men: The Performative Politics of Class and Gender in the Public Realm of an Italian City'. *Journal of American Folklore* 120 (475): 48–72.
- Herzfeld, M. 1998. 'Factual Fissures: Claims and Contexts'. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 560 (1): 69–82.
- Herzfeld, M. 2008. 'Mere Symbols'. *Anthropologica* 50:141–155.

- Hinderliter, B., W. Kaizen, V. Maimon, J. Mansoor, and S. McCormick, eds. 2009. *Communities of Sense. Rethinking Aesthetics and Politics*. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press.
- Koyama, E. 2003. 'Transfeminist Manifesto'. In *Catching a Wave: Reclaiming Feminism for the 21st Century*, edited by R.C. Dicker, and A. Piepmeier, 244–259. Boston: Northeastern University Press.
- Lipperini, L., and M. Murgia 2013. *L'ho uccisa perché l'amavo. Falso!* Rome: Laterza.
- Magaraggia, S. and M. Leone 2010. 'Gender and Women's Studies in Italy: Looking Back to Look Forward'. *European Journal of Women's Studies* 17 (4): 425–429.
- Michetti, M., M. Repetto, and L. Viviani 1998. *UDI: un laboratorio di politica delle donne. Idee e materiali per una storia*. Rome: Rubettino.
- Milan Women's Bookstore Collective. 1990. *Sexual Difference: A Theory of Social-Symbolic Practice*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Molé, N. J. 2012. *Labor Disorders in Neoliberal Italy: Mobbing, Well-being, and the Workplace*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Molé, N. J. 2013. 'Existential Damages: The Injury of Precarity Goes to Court'. *Cultural Anthropology* 28 (1): 22–43.
- Muehlebach, A. 2012. *The Moral Neoliberal: Welfare and Citizenship in Italy*. Chicago, Ill.: The University of Chicago Press.
- Nuzzo, P. 2008. *Comunicato UDI. Presentazione della Staffetta dell'UDI*, unpublished document.
- Otonelli, V. 2011. *La libertà delle donne*. Genova: Il Melangolo.
- Panagia, D. 2009. *The Political Life of Sensation*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Parati, G., and R. West 2002. *Italian Feminist Theory and Practice: Equality and Sexual Difference*. Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press.
- Passerini, L. 1996. 'Gender Relations'. In *Italian Cultural Studies: an Introduction*, edited by D. Forgacs, and R. Lumley, 144–159. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Pesmen, D. 2000. *Russia and Soul: an Exploration*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Plesset, S. 2006. *Sheltering Women: Negotiating Gender and Violence in Northern Italy*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Pramstrahler, A. 2015. 'Il femminicidio in Italia: tra mancanza di statistiche ufficiali e impatto mediatico'. *Gender/Sexuality/Italy* 2:144–148.
- Rancière, J. 1999. *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Rancière, J. 2004. 'The Politics of Literature'. *SubStance* 33 (1): 10–24.
- Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its Causes and Consequences on her mission to Italy (15–26 January 2012), GE.12-14254, United Nations.
- Rodano, M. 2010. *Memorie di una che c'era: una storia dell'Udi*. Milan: Il Saggiatore.
- Scarpato, S. 2005. 'In the Name of the Mother. Sexual Difference and the Practice of Entrustment'. *Cultural Studies Review* 11 (2): 36–48.
- Sega, M. T. 2005. 'Passaggi di memoria. Le donne, la Resistenza, la storia'. *Venetica. Rivista di storia contemporanea* 3:11. Se non ora quando, 13 February 2011: Manifesto.
- Violi, P. 2015. 'Femminicidio: chi ha paura della Differenza?' *Gender/Sexuality/Italy* 2:142–143.
- Warner, M. 2002. *Publics and Counterpublics*. New York: Zone Books.

Websites (accessed 9 May 2017)

- <http://accademiadellacrusca.it/it/lingua-italiana/consulenza-linguistica/domande-risposte/femminicidio-perch-parola>
- <http://articolotre.com/2013/11/feltri-e-il-femminicidio-delitto-di-moda-128-vittime-sono-pochissime/>
- http://bologna.repubblica.it/cronaca/2013/03/05/news/femminicidi_124_le_donne_uccise_in_italia_nel_2012_15_solo_in_emilia-romagna-53924161/
- <http://www.casainternazionalelledonne.org/index.php/it/home>
- <https://femicidiodasadonne.wordpress.com/ricerche-pubblicazioni/>
- <http://cedaw30.wordpress.com/2011/07/13/italy-submits-cedaw-shadow-report/>

<http://dati.istat.it/>
http://d.repubblica.it/frasi/2011/11/01/news/donne_lavoro-630099/
http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Gender_pay_gap_statistics
<http://europaquotidiano.it/2013/06/28/la-crusca-perche-si-dice-femminicidio/>
<http://femminicidio.blogspot.com/>
<http://femicidiocasadonne.wordpress.com/2014/01/24/stop-al-femminicidio/>
<http://femministenove.wordpress.com/>
<http://feriteamorte.it/>
<http://forumcompagnicgilmibac.forumcommunity.net/?t=43454314>
http://giulia.globalist.it/Detail_News_Display?ID=68540&typeb=0&#maipiuclandestine-in-difesa-della-194
<http://gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2013/10/15/13G00163/sg>
<http://ilcorpodelledonne.net/>
<http://ilgiornale.it/news/interni/femminicidio-se-vittima-nonno-nessuno-ci-bada-970108.html>
<https://ilmanifesto.it/storia/decreto-femminicidio-non-in-mio-nome-incontro-pubblico-a-roma/>
<http://laboratoriodonnae.wordpress.com/2014/02/10/194-maipiuclandestine/>
<http://liberoquotidiano.it/news/italia/1356906/Facci-il-femminicidio-e-moda-C-e-gia-chi-ci-vuole-far-soldi.html>
<http://libriadielledonne.it>
<http://loredanalipperini.blog.kataweb.it/lipperatura/2014/02/14/quelle-che-sono-nate-dopo-il-1978/>
<http://menogiallopiurosa.com>
<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/karst?show=0&t=1389370436>
<https://nonunadimeno.wordpress.com>
<http://orlando.women.it/en/>
<http://rai.tv/dl/RaiTV/programmi/media/ContentItem-f3293d14-8b95-40c5-b333-957340103241.html>
http://www.repubblica.it/la-repubblica-delle-idee/societa/2013/12/27/news/care_donne_abolite_la_parola_femminicidio-74585204/
<http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2014/rankings/>
<http://vice.com/it/read/orsa-daniza-reazioni-perche-563>
<http://wired.it/play/cultura/2014/10/17/10-parole-consocere-meglio/>
<https://femicidiocasadonne.wordpress.com/2016/12/01/femicidi-in-italia-dati-sintetici-2015/>
<https://femicidiocasadonne.wordpress.com/2015/11/25/i-dati-del-2014-le-donne-in-italia-continuano-ad-essere-uccise/>
<http://femicidiocasadonne.wordpress.com/tag/casa-delle-donne-per-non-subire-violenza/>
<https://femicidiocasadonne.files.wordpress.com/2015/11/report-femicidi-20141.pdf>
<https://femminismo-a-sud.noblogs.org/post/2011/02/08/13-febbraio-massa-critica-con-gli-ombrelli-rossi-noi-vogliamo-tutto/>

Italian summary

In questo articolo intendo offrire una possibile lettura della ‘creazione’ del termine *femminicidio* e del ruolo di quest’ultimo nella comparsa di una nuova questione femminile in Italia. Mi concentro su tre aspetti centrali nel processo di legittimazione della parola *femminicidio* e dei fenomeni ad essa associati: l’uso politico del termine da parte dell’UDI (Unione delle Donne in Italia) a partire dal 2006, la campagna nazionale ‘*Staffetta*’ organizzata dall’UDI nel 2008/2009, e la nascita del movimento *Se Non Ora Quando* nel 2011. In linea con la definizione di ‘politica’ come ‘riconfigurazione del sensibile’ di Rancière, sostengo che la comparsa del ‘femminicidio’ ha portato alla creazione di una ‘comunità di senso’ di donne e che quest’ultima ha agevolato la creazione di un nuovo soggetto politico. Questa comunità non si è raccolta principalmente attorno a *idee* su chi sia o debba essere ‘donna’, né si è definita attorno a un comune riconoscimento di cosa sia ‘violenza’. Piuttosto, si è strutturata attorno a *sentimenti* e *affetti* condivisi, sollecitati dal sentirsi potenziali o concreti oggetti di violenza.