

Behind the Issue of Sexual Violence in Italy

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Introduction

- Sexual violence against women an issue on the political agenda and the role played by racism.
- Moral panics: creation of the “foreign monster” –Criminalization of immigrants
- Hidden violence against women:
Domestic Violence

Background

- Italy: from Emigration to Immigration
- 1970`s many nationalities
- 1980`s biggest community: Moroccans
- 1990`s: Albanians
- Recently: Romanians

Mass Media in Italy

- Berlusconi Media Empire control
- Images of women in Italian media
- Migrants and Roma people associated with criminal activities (sensationalist articles: main print media and prime-time television broadcasts) ECRI
- Creation of Moral Panics

Cases Studies

- Case Giovanna Reggiani 30/10/2007 – Rome
- Case Cappodano (New Year Party)
01/01/2009-Rome
- Case Guidonia 22/01/2009- Periphery of
Rome
- Case Caffarella 14/02/2009- Rome

Case Giovanna Reggiani (30/10/2007)

- Victim of Romulus Mailat a Romanian accused of robbery, rape and murder
- Several attacks on immigrants settlements (ROMA camps) and working areas
- Political tensions: national , international and EU levels
- Emergency Decree on crime and illegal immigrants (01/11/2007)
- Center-Right candidate Gianni Alemanno elected as a Rome's Mayor

Case Cappodano (01/01/2009)

- Davide Franceschini (Italian) sexually assaulted a 25 years old women under drug and alcohol effect
- Emergency Decree against rape, creation of civilian anti-crime patrols, longer detention for illegal immigrants (23/02/2009)
- Franceschini received a different treatment from the media



Case Guidonia (22/01/2009)

- Couple assaulted: woman 21 years old raped by four Romanians
- Perpetrators were arrested and almost lynched by the population
- Attacks to Romanian establishments
- Women's demonstration against the violence
- Policemen were arresting illegal migrants in ROMA camps



Case Caffarella (14/02/2009)

- Young couple attacked in the park, the girl 14 years old raped by two Romanians
- New Force Party demonstrations
“No pity for the beasts”
- Far-Right Northern League Presented a bill:
Chemical or surgical castration of sexual offenders



New Force Party demonstration (February/2009)



Sexual Offenses

- Real sexual offenders in Italy
- Data from the government (24/02/2009):
- 2007 rape increased 5%
- 2008 decreased 8.4% :

Sexual offenders nationality:

Italians: 60.9%

Romanians: 7.8%

Moroccans: 6.3%

Domestic Violence: Hidden Crime

- Italian Violence Against Women Survey:
(ISTAT and Ministry of Equal Opportunity)
2005-2006
- Sample: 25.000 women (16-70 years old)
- Measured physical, sexual and psychological violence against women
- Results:
 - Stereotype of foreigner abuser
(Rapes: 69% perpetrated by partners and only 6% by strangers)

Surveys' Results Useful for Policies

- Partner violence is the most widespread and the most severe violence;
- Psychological violence by partner and stalking by former partner are very common
- Few women speak about the violence, much less report to the police
- Women don't recognize as a crime the suffered violence.

Perceptions of Violence Against Women in Italy

- Historical Aspects: Catholicism, Fascism, Renaissance Arts (Greek Myths)
- Contemporary Tendencies:
Women's economic dependence, Media only shows serious cases without historical relation with DV, uneven support system for victims, fragmented legal system.

The Pieta- St. Peter's Basilica

Vatican City Michelangelo Buonarroti 1499



Catholic Saints

St. Anthony of Padua
Miracle of Jealous Husband (Titian 1511)



St. Mary Goretti (1890-1902)



Loggia del Lanzi- Florence

Benci di Cione 1376-1382



Rape of the Sabine Women

Giambologna 1583



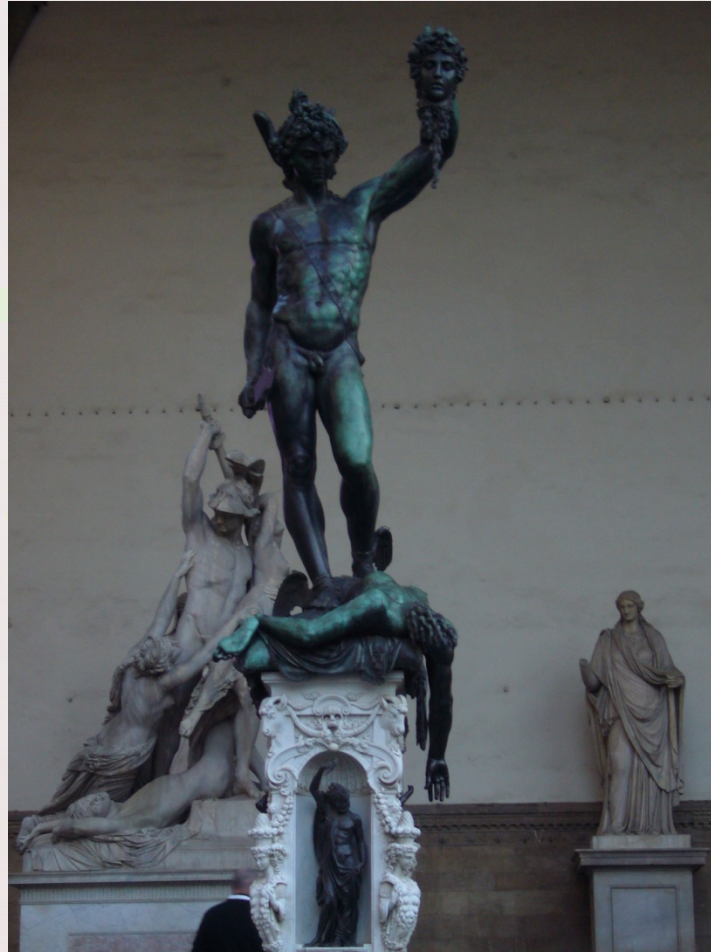
Rape of Polyxena

Pio Fedi 1865



Perseus with the Head of Medusa

Benvenuto Cellini 1554



Femicide

- Escalation of Domestic Violence increasing number of women`s murdered
- Representations of DV crimes by the media (banality of violence)
- Feminist Movement : demonstrations (Petition)

Feminist Women`s Center Event



Feminist Women's Center Event



Government`s Policies

- Government slow and fragmented policies
- International pressure:
- CEDAW (Recommendations)
- European Council:
(Convention on Prevention and Fight
Against Violence of Women and Domestic
Violence)
- European Union
(Projects)

Concluding Remarks

- Behind the sexual violence in Italy the serious situation of Domestic Violence is hidden
- Increased cases of femicide
- Media and political xenophobic and racist attitudes against foreigners
- Fragmented legal and policy framework as a challenges to address violence against women