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Fuitina: Love, Sex, and Rape in Modern Italy, 1945–Present

Antonella Vitale
The Graduate Center, City University of New York

FUITINA: LOVE, SEX, AND RAPE IN MODERN ITALY, 1945-PRESENT

by

Antonella Vitale

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in History in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

_____	_____
Date	[Mary Gibson]
	Chair of Examining Committee
_____	_____
Date	[Andrew Robertson]
	Executive Officer

Supervisory Committee:

Marta Petrusewicz

Jane Schneider

Julia Sneeringer

David Troyansky

City University of New York

ABSTRACT

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Advisor: Mary Gibson

The term *fuitina* in Sicilian dialect is a word used to describe a form of abduction, and is a variation of the more formal Italian term *fuga*, meaning a flight or escape. *Fuitina,* was essentially a sanctioned bride theft. Often, after the abduction of a woman, the abductor would seek a reparatory or rehabilitating marriage that would restore the woman's "honor" and absolve the man of bride theft. Until 1981, the Italian legal system supported the practice of *fuitina* and rarely prosecuted men who kidnapped and raped women under the guise of this tradition. The practice of *fuitina* and the laws that enabled it, seem antiquated and brutal by today's standards, but an investigation into the practice reveals a very nuanced custom. This dissertation explores the interplay between two types of *fuitina,* nonconsensual and consensual. Furthermore, the custom of *fuitina* creates a framework through which to analyze the history, law, and cultural evolution of women's rights and emancipation in Italy. By examining the various manifestations of *fuitina,* this work positions the tradition as an evolving practice situated at the intersection of gender violence and sexual autonomy. *Fuitina* is a lens to examine the evolution of sex, gender, and female bodily rights in the post-fascist era, 1945 to the present, by examining a complicated process of national transformation that impacted the law, popular morality, and everyday attitudes regarding sex and gender norms. After the Second World War, life in Italy underwent massive transformation. This dissertation uses the island of Sicily as a case study to explore *fuitina* and considers its complexities and evolution in both perception and practice. This study tracks how the practice changed over time to accommodate new laws, cultural norms, economic structures, and the rise of a new feminist consciousness in the 1970s. Ultimately, this dissertation argues that *fuitina* is more than just an expression of patriarchal authority; it can also be utilized by individuals as a form of resistance against traditional social norms and hierarchies. This project demonstrates that there is no single definition of *fuitina* and complicates popular representations of the practice as an archaic and oppressive tradition often associated with southern Italy, in particular the island of Sicily. Overall this dissertation demonstrates that though on the one hand, *fuitina* is a manifestation of a violent and oppressive patriarchal system, it can also be used by individuals for claiming sexual autonomy. In some cases, it gives individuals agency over their own private lives and has contributed to the democratization of marriage and sexual relations in Italy in the post-fascist era.

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We will capture her, *nni la pigghiamu*.
We will capture her, *nni la pigghiamu*.
With four good friends we can't lose.
And with her mother and father we will make peace, *li pacificamu*.
We will make peace, *li pacificamu*.
And with her mother and father we will make peace, *li pacificamu*.[1]

Spunta lu suli (The Sun Rises), Sicilian folk song

I. Introduction

A popular Sicilian folk song, *Spunta lu suli* (The Sun Rises), tells the story of a man plotting to abduct a young woman. After extolling her beauty, he says he will first capture her and then make peace with her parents. The form of abduction described in this song is known in the Sicilian dialect as *fuitina*, and the word is a variation of the formal Italian term *fuga* meaning flight or escape.[2] In a traditional *fuitina,* like the one described in the song, after abducting a woman, the abductor would seek a reparatory or rehabilitating marriage that would restore the woman's "honor" and absolve the man of the crime of the abduction. In its most common form, *fuitina* was essentially sanctioned bride theft. The practice grew from a set of sociocultural values surrounding the systems of marriage and patriarchy, and it depended on notions of honor and shame that based the value of women in the marriage market on family wealth and the condition of virginity.

[1] The following is the full text of the original song in the Sicilian dialect. *Spunta lu suli e squaggia la jlata. Squagghia ppi na picciota che'e sapurita Che'e sapurita che' e sapurita. Squagghia ppi na picciotta che'e sapurita. Lu pettu teni di na scaffalata m'havi l'ucciuzzi di na calamita. Di na calamita di na calamita Avi dui ucchiuzzi di na calamita. Chiudirmimi 'nte so manu iu mi vurria Bedda sa chi ti dicu dammi na vasata. Dammi na vasata dammi na vasata. Ju mottu sugnu e mi duni la vita. Mi dumi la vita mi duni la vita. Ju muttu sugnu e mi duni la vita. Bedda sai chi ti dico o ni nni fuemu. Comu na manna diu nni la pigghiamu. Nni la pigghiamu e nni la pigghiamu. Comu na manna diu e nni la pigghiamu. Ccu quatru boni amici o chi pirdemu. E mamma e patri e li pacificamu. Li pacificamu li pacificamu. E mamma e patri e li pacificamu.*

[2] Bride kidnapping can also be referred to as bride theft, marriage by abduction, or marriage by capture. I use these terms interchangeably throughout this dissertation.

Until 1981, the Italian legal system supported the practice of *fuitina* and rarely prosecuted the men who kidnapped and raped women under the guise of this tradition. Under Article 544 of the Italian penal code, the offense of rape would be extinguished, even if committed against a minor, if the victim married her rapist.[3] In simple terms, a *fuitina* was the abduction or rape of a young woman resulting in a marriage between the victim and the perpetrator.

The practice of *fuitina,* and the laws that enabled it, seem antiquated and brutal by today's standards, but an investigation into the practice reveals a very nuanced custom. While the song *Spunti lu suli* describes a nonconsensual kidnapping and rape, further research reveals that there were other forms of *fuitina* practiced throughout Italy. In the song *Mamma vi l'hju persu lu rispettu* (Mother, I Have Lost Our Respect), the female singer describes a form of consensual *fuitina*.

> Mother of mine, I have lost our family's respect,
> Through the window,
> Through the window I let him enter.
> Whoever talks, I don't care.
> I held him tight because I don't want to end up single, old, and ugly.
> Because I don't want to end up single and old.
> We "escaped" right away because,
> God willing,
> God willing, I will marry.[4]

The young woman in the song laments to her mother that she has lost the family honor by escaping with her lover through her bedroom window. Despite the risk her behavior has

[3] Articolo 544, Titolo X (Dei delitti contro la moralita pubblica e il buon costume), *Codice Penale Rocco*, Ministero Della Giustizia E Degli Affari Di Culto, (Roma: Istituto Poligrafico Dello Stato, 1930), 115. The Rocco Code, like its legal predecessor the Zanardelli Code of 1890, was established after the unification of Italy and regulated sexual behavior and relations between the sexes. Under the Rocco Code, sexual crimes were matters of interest to the state. Both the Zanardelli and Rocco codes maintained similar provisions for the cause of honor as a defense in cases of rape and murder.

[4] Mama vi l'haju persu lu rispettu di la finestra lu natichi tunni e lariule di la finestra lu fici acchianari. Cu parra parra mi lu tegnu strittu. Ca schetta vecchia nu natichi tunni e lariule ca schetta vecchia nun vogghiu ristari. Ni ni fujemu dirittu dirittu po come voli diu natichi tunni e lariule po comu voli diu m'ha maritari

posed to her family's reputation, she sings that she's followed her desire to marry because she's afraid of remaining an old spinster. Unlike the woman in *Spunta lu suli,* this woman is a willing participant in her own abduction. In this kind of consensual *fuitina*, after she had spent the night with her "abductor," the woman's family would assume there had been sexual intercourse and be forced to consent to the couple's marriage. This form of consensual *fuitina* or elopement was common in Italy until the 1980s, and it is still practiced occasionally to this day.

Well into the twentieth century, marriage in Europe was primarily a contract between two families based on economic and social factors. The contract was not typically dependent on the presence of love between two individuals.[5] Families of young couples sometimes sanctioned the consensual form of *fuitina,* particularly in times of economic hardship, to avoid marriage-related expenses. Typically, Italian weddings required both the dowry and the *corredo,* and these transactions formally established the relationship between two families by creating a joint provision for the young couple's new family and home. Traditionally, the dowry involved the exchange of goods, including money and property, between two families. The dowry reflected the social status of the giving party, which was most often the woman's family. Traditionally, a woman's virginity was an important aspect of the dowry. The *corredo,* the belongings of the bride, were also a significant part of the exchange. Clothes and household linens typically handcrafted by the bride demonstrated her sewing and needlework skills. The *corredo* also displayed family status. The elaborately embroidered linens reflected a

[5]For a general history of marriage and customs in Italy and Europe see Daniel Albas and Cheryl Albas, "Love and Marriage." in *Family and Marriage in Cross-Cultural Perspectives,* ed. K. Ishwaran*,* (Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing, 1992) 14-36; Stephanie Coontz, *Marriage, a History*: *How Love Conquered Marriage* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2005); Daniela Lombardi, *Storia del matrimonio dal medioevo a oggi.* (Bologna: Societa editrice, 2008).

family's wealth by demonstrating that they could afford to have their daughters spend time on needlework. With the advent of mass consumer society in the 1950s and 1960s, a handmade *corredo* became less important as wealthier families began to purchase linens for their daughters. Families often went into debt to provide dowries to secure or increase marriage prospects for their daughters. By marrying via *fuitina,* the families eliminated the need for this expensive and formal process.

The interplay between the two types of *fuitina*, nonconsensual and consensual, creates a framework through which to analyze the history, law, and cultural evolution of women's rights and emancipation in Italy. This dissertation explores the various manifestations of *fuitina* and positions the tradition as an evolving practice situated at the intersection of gender violence and sexual liberation. Using *fuitina* as a lens to examine sex, gender, and female bodily rights in postwar Italy, this project documents a complicated process of national transformation that impacted the law, popular morality, and everyday attitudes about sex and gender.

II. Historiography

There is a well-developed scholarly literature on marriage and bride kidnapping practices in early modern Italy, but reviewing this body of work is beyond the scope of this dissertation.[6] This project will concentrate on studies concerned with marriage and

[6] On the topics of bride theft and marriage see Christiane Klapish-Zuber, *Women, Family, and Ritual in Renaissance Italy,* (University of Chicago Press, 1985); Gene Brucker, *Giovanni and Lusanna: Love and Marriage in Renaissance Florence,* (University of California Press, 1986); Trevor Dean and KJP Lowe, *Marriage in Italy 1300-1650,* (Cambridge University Press, 1998); Daniela Lombardi, "Findanzimenti e matrimoni dal Concilio di Trento alle riforme settecentesche," 215-250 in *Storia del matrimonio.* eds. Michela De Giorgio and Christiane Klapish-Zuber, (Laterza, 1996); Valentina Cesco, "Female Abduction, Family Honor, and Women's Agency in Early Modern Venetian Istria. *Journal of Early Modern History.* Vol. 15 Issue 4, January 2011, 349-366. Barbara Ayres, "Bride Theft and Raiding for Wives in Cross Cultural Perspective," *Anthropological Quarterly*. Vol. 47 No. 3, 1974, 238-252; R.H. Barnes, "Marriage

bride abduction in Italy after the Second World War. **S**cholars, primarily anthropologists, began to study bride theft practices in the 1970s.[7] By the 1990s, scholarship about bride kidnapping focused largely on bride theft in Islamic countries in Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia.[8] Most feminist scholars described the practice as endemic to patriarchal societies and part of the efforts by men to control female sexuality. Recently, a new wave of feminist scholars have argued that bride kidnappings are more complex, and in some cases, these scholars have demonstrated that the practice can be an engine of social change when it is used to undermine existing social systems and institutions.[9] There has been very little scholarship about bride kidnappings in postwar Western Europe.

After the Second World War, life in Italy underwent massive transformation. However, despite cultural, social, and political shifts that upended the patterns of daily life, notions of morality, and the fundamental structures of the law and economy, *fuitina*

By Capture," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, No. 5, (1999), 57-73; Daniel Bates, "Normative and Alternative Systems of Marriage among the Yoruk of Southeastern Turkey," *Anthropological Quarterly.* Vol. 47. No. 3, 1974, 270-287; Nilda Rimonte, "A Question of Culture: Cultural Approval of Violence Against Women in the Pacific Asian Community and Cultural Defense." *Stanford Law Review.* Vol. 43. No. 6, 1991, 1311-1326; Cynthia Werner, "Bride Abductions in post-Soviet Central Asia: Marking a Shift Towards Patriarchy through Local Discourse of Shame and Tradition," *Journal of Royal Anthropology,* Vol. 15, 2009, 314-331.

[7] Barbara Ayres. "Bride Theft and Raiding for Wives"; Bates, "Normative and Alternative Systems of Marriage," 270–287; Brian Stross, "Tzeltal Marriage By Capture," *Anthropological Quarterly.* Vol. 47, No. 3, July 1974, 328-346.

[8] Mebrigiul Ablezova, Medina Aiteieva, and Russell Kleinbach, "Kidnapping for Marriage in Kyrgyz Village," *Central Asian Survey*. Vol 24. No. 2, June 2005, 191-202; Anne McLaren, "Marriage by Abduction in Twentieth-Century China," *Modern Asian Studies,* Vol.35, No. 4, October 2001, 953-984; Cynthia Werner, "Women, Marriage and the Nation-State: The Rise of Nonconsensual Bride Kidnapping in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan," in *The Transformation of Central Asia: States and Societies from Soviet Rule to Independence,* ed. Pauline Jones Luong, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 59-89; Jennifer Ann Yang, "Marriage By Capture in Hmong Culture: The Legal Issue of Cultural Rights Versus Women's Rights," *Law and Society Review at UCSB*. Vol. 3, 2004, 38-49.

[9]See Ayres, Barbara, 1974, "Bride Theft and Raiding for Wives in Cross Cultural Perspective." *Anthropological Quarterly*. Vol. 47 No. 3. Barnes RH. "Marriage By Capture." 1999. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, (N.S.) 5, 1999. 57-73. Bates Daniel. 1974. "Normative and Alternative Systems of Marriage among the Yoruk of Southeastern Turkey." *Anthropological Quarterly.* Vol. 47. No. 3. Rimonte, Nilda. 1991. "A Question of Culture: Cultural Approval of Violence Against Women in the Pacific Asian Community and Cultural Defense." *Stanford Law Review.* Vol. 43. No. 6. 1311-1326; Werner, Cynthia. 2009. "Bride Abductions in post-Soviet Central Asia: Marking a Shift Towards Patriarchy through Local Discourse of Shame and Tradition." *Journal of Royal Anthropology.* Vol. 15. No. 2, 314-331.

still exists in Italy today. This dissertation uses the island of Sicily as a case study to explore *fuitina* and consider its complexities and evolution in both perception and practice. Through an analysis of oral histories, interviews, media, and written sources regarding the history of feminism, law, honor, and rape, this dissertation examines the nonlinear process of modernization and cultural transformation in postwar Italy.

There is no monographic study of the practice of *fuitina*. While there are numerous references to *fuitina* in Italian popular culture and media, very little scholarly work considers the practice. When historians do mention *fuitina*, it is typically in reference to the story of Franca Viola, the seventeen-year-old Sicilian girl who famously refused to marry her rapist in 1966.[10] I address the Viola case in greater depth in chapter two.

The most substantial analysis of *fuitina* comes from the Sicilian scholar and writer Marinella Fiume. In a 1989 article in the journal *Memoria*, Fiume examined various instances of *fuitina* as part of an analysis of the marriage customs of patriarchal peasant families in the Sicilian town of Fiumefreddo.[11] Fiume's article, "*Lo sciaffur rapitore: Maschi e contrattazione matrimonale in Sicilia*" (The Chauffeur Kidnapper: Males and Marriage Bargaining in Sicily), documents a car hire service in Fiumefreddo used by local men to kidnap potential brides.[12] Using the testimonies of the abductors and the abducted, Fiume collected various stories of *fuitina,* both violent and consensual, that occurred between the 1920s and 1940s. She argues that these testimonies, as well as the

[10] Perry Willson, *Women in Twentieth-Century Italy*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 127; Marta Boneschi. *Di testa loro: Dieci Italiane che anno fatto il novecento. (*Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 2002), 275-296; Guido Crainz, *Storia del miracolo Italiano: Cultura, identita, trasformazioni fra anni cinquanta e sessanta*, (Rome: Donzelli Editore, 2005), 252.
[11] Fiumefreddo is a commune within the city of Catania. It is located on the Ionian Sea.
[12] Marinella Fiume. "Lo sciaffur rapitore: Maschi e contrattazione matrimonale in Sicilia." *Memoria rivisti di storia delle donne,* No. 27, 1989. 76-95. Marinella fiume is a Sicilian teacher and writer. She is scholar as well as Giovanna Fiume's sister.

rise of the "kidnapping chauffeur" as a lucrative local business, illustrate the evolution of a new capitalist cultural in an era when individualism began to erode the communal and traditional system of marriage alliances that had long existed among peasants families. Fiume also highlights the role of women within *fuitina*; they were resistors, accomplices, and negotiators who participated in the practice and encouraged the abductee to accept her fate. Fiume's article demonstrates that in some cases of *fuitina* women exerted agency and were able to choose to accept or reject a reparatory marriage. In one testimony, a woman refused to marry her abductor and elected to remain a spinster despite pressure from her family and community.

This dissertation builds on Fiume's work and provides a comprehensive overview and close examination of *fuitina* after the Second World War. This study also tracks how the practice changed to accommodate new laws, cultural norms, economic structures, and the rise of a new feminist consciousness in the 1970s. Ultimately, this dissertation argues that *fuitina* was more than just an expression of patriarchal authority; it could also be utilized by individuals as a form of resistance against traditional social norms and hierarchies.

Due to the lack of extensive scholarly research on *fuitina* itself, this dissertation engages four key historiographical subjects: modernity and the "southern question," women and gender studies, honor and shame culture, and the history of laws governing sexual violence. I discuss these topics briefly below before expanding on each in the chapters that follow. These subjects are the focal points of this study, and they are addressed here to explore the complexity of *fuitina* and its place in the evolution of culture, morality, sex, and gender norms in Italy in the latter half of the twentieth century.

Modernity and the Southern Question

The concept of modernity is an important historiographical framework for understanding *fuitina.* The historical construct of modernity is based on a set of eurocentric, Enlightenment-era values focused on the shift from traditional or primitive communities to modern societies. Modernization theory, a mid-twentieth century social theory devoted to understanding the rise of industrial civilization, identified the specific characteristics of modern and nonmodern societies, and in most cases, Western or modern societies appeared as superior to traditional or non-modern communities. Dipesh Chakrabarty's seminal book, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference,* discusses how many histories of the capitalist transition characterize the continent of Europe as a mythical figure of modernity and the original site of modernization that standardized the global transition from feudal to capitalist societies.[13] According to Chakrabarty, this western standard was applied to nonwestern countries, and non-European nations were deemed unmodern if they did not follow the linear European model. Chakrabarty's work challenged the concept of Modernization theory, and subsequent scholars have also emphasized the possibility of multiple or plural modernities. These scholars suggest that the process of modernity contains multiple manifestations and cannot be defined by a homogenous, eurocentric standard. According to the anthropologist Dorothy Hodgson:

> There is an important distinction between the western project of "modernity" based on a linear idea of economic and social progress and the modernties produced in local contexts. Modernity has multiple meanings. It is a process mediated by and through local cultural forms, more often shaped by the actions

[13] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, (Princeton University Press, 2000).

> and ideas of people operating from different structural positions of power, knowledge, and identity.[14]

In other words, the best way to understand the contemporary world is to see it as an ongoing evolution of multiple cultural types and systems driven by a variety of social, economic, and political factors pursuing different goals and holding a multitude of views on what makes society modern.[15] By examining the evolution of a custom like *fuitina*, typically viewed as backward and traditional, we can gain insight into the complexity of modernity in Italy.

Modernization theory also appears in debates about *La Questione Meridionale* (The Southern Question), a characterization of southern Italy as backward, inferior, and unable to adapt to modernity. The scholars Marta Petrusewicz and Nelson Moe both trace the origins of these ideas to the period before Italy's unification. Petrusewicz demonstrated how disenchantment with the Bourbon Monarchy, before and after the revolutions of 1848, led to the enduring myth of the south as backward and unmalleable.[16] Moe expanded on this idea and traced the denigration of the south in the late eighteenth century through literary texts, political discourses, and visual culture. Moe contextualized the evolution of the Italian south within a larger framework of "imagined geographies" that explored European cultural identity in the eighteenth century.[17] As Europeans sought to distance themselves from non-Europeans by promoting bourgeois

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[14] Dorothy Hodgson, *Gendered Modernity: Ethnographic Perspectives,* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 7; Chakrabarty and S.N. Eisenstadt, "Multiple Modernities." *Daedalus,* Vol. 129 No. 1, Winter 2000, 1-29; Bjorn Wittrock, "Modernity: One, None, or Many? European Origins and Modernity as a Global Condition," *Daedalus,* Vol. 129, No. 1, Winter 2000, 31-60; Stanley Tambiah. "Transnational Movements, Diaspora, and Multiple Modernites." *Daedalus,* Vol. 129. No. 1, Winter 2000, 163-194.
[15] Chakrabarty and Eisenstadt, "Multiple Modernities"; Wittrock, "Modernity: One, None, or Many?"; Tambiah, "Transnational Movements."
[16] Marta Petrusewicz. *Come il meridione divenne una questione: Rappresentazioni del Sud prima e dopo il quarantotto*, (Soveria Mannelli: Rubettino Editore, 1998).
[17] Nelson Moe, *The View from Vesuvius: Italian Culture and the Southern Question*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 2.

values, eastern and southern parts of Europe became borderlands to the western European core. Moe argued that in the nineteenth century the increased eurocentrism and bourgeoisification of the northern Italian elite created an imagined divide between the north and the south.[18] In this context, the rest of Europe came to see southern Italy as backward, uncivilized, and possessing exotic qualities. The "othering" of southern Italy also emphasized the region's economic stagnation. Perceptions of the social and cultural immobility of the south ignored any growth, diversity, and vitality within the southern economy and society.[19] I suggest that nonconsensual *fuitina* became a sympbol of southern Italy's percieved inability or refusal to modernize.

In 1987, the new journal *Meridiana* gathered a group of scholars across disciplines in history, sociology, anthropology, political science, and economics to challenge the percieved backwardness of the *Mezzogiorno* and the belief in a uniform southern culture. These scholars believed the Italian south needed a multidisciplinary analysis to deconstruct its cultural representations and stereotypes.[20] Following the foundation of *Meridiana,* revisionist historians have worked to challenge the idea of a uniform, immobile, and backward south by taking into account the region's complexity and by looking more closely into the social, political, economic, and historical differences within and among the southern regions. Petrusewicz's pivotal work,

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[18] Ibid.
[19] Domenico Cersosimo and Carmine Donzelli, *Mezzogiorno: Realita, rappresentazioni e tendenze del cambiamento meridionale,* (Rome: Donzelli, 2000).
[20] Lucy Riall, "Which Road to the South? Revisionists Revisit the Mezzogiorno," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* Vol. 5, No. 1, 2000. 89-100; Marta Petrusewicz. *Latifundium: Moral Economy and Material Life in a European Periphery,* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996); John Davis, "Casting off the "Southern Problem": Or "The Peculiarities of the South Reconsidered," *Italy's Southern Question: Orientalism in One Country,* ed. Jane Schneider. (New York: Berg, 2001), 205-224; Piero Bevilacqua. *Breve Storia dell'Italia Meridionale: dall'Ottocento a Oggi,* (Rome: Donzelli, 1993); Domenico Cersosimo and Carmine Donzelli. *Mezzo Giorno: Realta, rappresentazioni e tendenze del cambiamento meridionale.* (Rome: Donzelli, 2000).

Latifundium, was among the first to demonstrate that the southern economy was more diverse than previously thought. Petrusewicz looked at the socioeconomic system of southern Italy and discovered a region with a mixture of both feudal and modern practices.[21] Silvana Patriarca's *Italian Vices: Nation and Character from the Risorgimento to the Republic* demonstrated how twentieth-century images of the south, particularly representations of vice, informed the various "engineers of Italianness" who preoccupied themselves with national character and morality.[22] According to Patriarca, "the south became essentially an exaggerated version of Italy, possessing all of its mishaps, becoming essentially a scapegoat for all of Italy's problems."[23] My dissertation engages these debates about southernness by demonstrating the complexity and evolution of *fuitina* as an example of southern social mobility and cultural diversity.

Cultures of Honor and Shame

In the 1950s and 1960s, anthropologists began to focus their attention on the European continent using the same analytic models they had previously applied to African societies. Many of these scholars viewed Mediterranean culture as especially distant from and peripheral to the rest of European society. Anthropologists Julian Pitt Rivers, John Campbell, and John Peristiany argued that the culture of the Mediterranean was bound together by ideas about honor and shame.[24] Often overemphasizing the importance of honor and shame, they claimed that this culture was unique to

[21] Petrusewicz, *Latifundium.*
[22] Silviana Patriarca, *Italian Vices: Nation and Character from the Risorgimento to the Republic*, (Cambridge University Press. 2010), 8.
[23] Ibid, 9.
[24] Julian Pitt-Rivers, *The People of the Sierra,* (New York: Criterion books, 1954); John Campbell, *Honor, Family and Patronage: A Study of Institutions and Moral Values in a Greek Mountain Community,* (Oxford University Press, 1964); John Peristiany, ed., *Honor and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society,* (Chicago University Press, 1966).

Mediterranean societies. Pitt-Rivers defined honor as the value of a person in his or her own eyes and in the eyes of society. That value, according to Pitt-Rivers, needed to be publicly defended and was bound to ideas about male virility and the virginity of female family members.[25] Largely due to the influence of these scholars, honor and shame culture are understood as central to *fuitina,* and the practice is tied to preoccupations with cultural and legal codes of honor linked to sexuality. According to Pitt-Rivers, "A man must defend his honor and also his family's whereas a woman must preserve her sexual purity."[26] Most of the work on honor-shame culture has focused on how these codes operated in small communities from the perspective of men. A woman's honor was seen as a resource; it was typically controlled by legal and social codes and by men.[27]

By the late 1960s and 1970s, scholars began to challenge the notion of a monolithic culture of honor and shame. They argued that there were great differences within shame cultures across the Mediterranean. This thinking led to more site specific and comparative studies of the cultures of the Mediterranean that emphasized regional differences. Jane and Peter Schneider's *Culture and Political Economy in Western Sicily* classified honor codes in Sicily as more than just a set of sexual mores. They believed these codes were tied to larger political and economic forces and concerns.[28] John Davis's *Land and Family in Pisticci* presented women as active participants in the construction and maintenance of honor culture and challenged the assumption that woman were passive victims. He argued that chastity alone did not determine a woman's

[25] Pitt-Rivers, *The People of the Sierra*, 21.
[26] Julian Pitt-Rivers, "Honor and Social Status," *Honor and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society*, ed. J.G. Peristiany, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 45.
[27] Victoria Goddard, "Honour and Shame: The Control of Women's Sexuality and Group Identity in Naples," *The Cultural Construction of Sexuality*, ed. Pat Caplan, (New York: Tavistock Publications, 1987), 166.
[28] Jane and Peter Schneider, *Culture and Political Economy in Western Sicily.* (New York: Academic Inc. Press, 1976).

reputation; her capacity to take care of her husband and defend the interests of the family and community were also important.[29] Rudolph Bell also contributed to a more nuanced understanding of honor and shame culture by demonstrating how these cultures shifted over time. According to Bell's *Fate, Honor, Family, and Village: Demographic and Cultural Change since 1800*, "the struggle to maintain honor in the area of sexual behavior made excellent cinema but it was only a part of the total effort."[30] Bell brought a multidisciplinary approach to his investigation of honor over time, and his anthropological and historical analysis of four southern Italian villages illustrated how industrial modernization and migration altered local traditions of honor. Bell's work challenged the assumption that honor was static and unchanging. Tradition and modernity were not simply oppositional constructs, Bell argued, but were actually parts of a continuum and evolution of norms that coexisted and interacted with each other.[31]

In 1989, Giovanna Fiume and other scholars writing in *Onore e storia nelle società Mediterranee* demonstrated that honor extended beyond ideas about female chastity. Honor, they argued, was a state of constant negotiation and conflict between groups and a continual reformulation of social identities. Their work considered the notion of honor in a variety of social and national contexts and stressed the relationship of local power hierarchies—family, neighborhood, and client groups—within the context of the church, market, and the state.[32] Reparatory marriage in cases of *fuitina* was an important method for preserving and maintaining the honor of a family, and it was codified and written into law through the honor codes. More recent scholarship about

[29] John Davis, *Land and Family in Pisticci*, (London: The Athlone Press, 1973), 217.
[30]Rudolph Bell, *Fate, Honor, Family and Village: Demographic and Cultural Change in Rural Italy since 1800,* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1979), 2.
[31]Ibid.
[32] Giovanna Fiume et al, *Onore e storia nelle societa Mediterranee*, (Palermo: La Luna, 1987), 423.

honor in the postwar era has focused on regions outside the south and considered how honor relates to law and female sexuality within the Italian state. These studies will be reviewed further in chapter three.

Gender Studies

Women's studies and gender studies are also important historiographical themes informing my study of *fuitina.* Female historians in the 1960s and 1970s, inspired by the feminist movement, began to rewrite history to include the lives of women as topics of study. In response to this movement, several academic journals began to encourage multidisciplinary approaches to the study of women in Italy. *Memoria* and *Genesis-Rivista della società Italiana delle storiche* are among the journals associated with this shift. Italian women's history emphasized female consciousness and autonomy by dispelling notions that women were simply confined by limited civil and political rights. Michela Di Giorgio was one of the first to acknowledge that, despite limitations and subordination in the law, women were still able to carve out their own destinies and able to influence culture and contribute to the modernization of Italian society.[33]

The advent of gender studies led many historians and anthropologists to focus on issues relating to family and marriage. Marriage, from the creation of family units to family law to marriage customs, has been at the center of a variety of projects informed by gender studies. Di Giorgio and Christiane Klapishch-Zuber analyzed marriage to understand gender relations within the family and demonstrated that women were not merely subordinate to men but also played important roles in establishing family

[33] Michela Di Giorgio, *Le italiane dall'unita' a oggi: Modelli culturali e comporamenti sociali* (Rome: Laterza, 1992).

dynamics and relationships. Their work undermined the assumption that the system of patriarchy successfully rendered all Italian women subservient to the men in their lives.[34] In this dissertation, I argue that women's public refusal of nonconsensual *fuitina* marked a major turning point in the process of the legal and social emancipation of women in Italy. Furthermore, women's willing participation in voluntary forms of *fuitina* demonstrated their active role in marriage dynamics and their ability to resist cultural strictures they did not like.

Comparative studies of the European family have also informed my analysis of *fuitina*. David Kertzer and Richard Saller's edited volume, *The Family in Italy from Antiquity to Present,* traces the cultural variations and transformations in family systems on the Italian peninsula from the Roman era to the present and reveals major variations across diverse economic, social, and political structures and regions.[35] Essays in the book demonstrate the diversity of Italian family values and undermine the reductive studies of the European family that use the English family as a model of inquiry. The authors stress the non-uniformity of family systems across Italy by highlighting the problematic link between juridical and cultural norms and the actual behaviors of individuals. Utilizing an ethnographic approach, the essays in the collection illustrate a variety of household arrangements and family patterns. The authors emphasize the importance of local perspectives and challenge the generalizations previously made about family formation in Italy.

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[34] Michela De Giorgio and Christine Klapishch-Zuber, eds., *Storia del Matrimonio*, (Bari: Laterza, 1996).
[35] Luigi Tittarelli, "Choosing a Spouse among Nineteenth-Century Central Italian Sharecroppers," 271-285. and William Douglas, "The Joint-Family Household in Eighteenth-Century Southern Italian Society," 286-303. *The Family in Italy from Antiquity to the Present,* eds. David Kertzer and Richard Saller. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

Another central focus of historians and anthropologists has been the difference between the established norms of church and state and the actual behavior of individuals. Scholars have examined how individual circumstances, and the impact of economic and political change, continuously influenced and reshaped ideas about marriage and sexual relations. In this dissertation, I suggest that this fluidity also applies to the use of *fuitina* as a way to circumvent the rigid structure of marriage obligations and the church's control over marriage decisions. *Fuitina* offered individuals another way to negotiate the terms of sexual interactions and marriage.

Analyzing *fuitina* through a local perspective provides insight into the subjectivity and the flexibility experienced by individual families. The local lens illuminates the various ways individuals interact within their own environment and how they negotiate challenges within the parameters established by their circumstances. This idea was best reflected in Jane and Peter Schneider's important work, *Festival of the Poor: Fertility Decline and Ideology of Class in Sicily, 1860-1980*, which explored the diversity of cultural ideals and practices relating to sexuality and fertility in western Sicily. The Schneider's found that people with no access to contraception used the practice of *coitus interruptus* as a form of birth control. In this case, *coitus interruptus* was a rational choice made in the interest of personal economic comfort.[36] The Schneiders emphasized the importance of historical context and class relations to the sexual behaviors of individuals embedded in "reputational networks that mediate, among other things, their notions of a good family."[37]

[36] Jane and Peter Schneider, *Festival of the Poor: Fertility Decline and The Ideology of Class in Sicily 1860-1980*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996), 9.
[37] Ibid, 9.

More recently, Linda Reeder's *Widows in White* demonstrated how factors such as transoceanic migration and financial constraints continued to shape notions of family and marriage in Sicily. Reeder argued that mass male migration radically altered the lives of rural women and changed practices of motherhood, work, and citizenship. Despite cultural images of male dominance and the absence of women in public spaces, Reeder found that women had considerable decision-making power within the domestic sphere.[38]

Sexual Violence

By bringing together a variety of sources such as law codes, political discourses, cultural artifacts, and individual accounts, this dissertation reveals the complex meanings of rape in Italy from World War Two to the present. Rape was, and remains, a crime dependent on a variety of cultural and moral prescriptions—rules that frames certain kinds of violent behavior as acceptable and other kinds as criminal. When women in Italy began to refuse the *fuitina*, their individual acts of courage, alongside the organized feminist movement, shifted the culture. Once the culture shifted, the laws followed.

Nonconsensual *fuitina* is essentially an act of rape, and this study engages with the historiography of sexual violence. Dagmar Herzog, a historian of sexuality and modern Germany, frames the history of sexual violence with a question about sex in general. "What can sex, both violent and voluntary, tell us about human beings, relationships to their bodies, and the bodies of others?"[39] Her question asks scholars to consider how we can best document and decipher the authenticity of individual stories,

[38] Linda Reeder, *Widows in White: Migration and Transformation of Rural Italian Women, Sicily 1880-1920,* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003).
[39] Dagmar Herzog, *Brutality and Desire: War and Sexuality in Europe's Twentieth Century*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 6.

especially those regarding intimate relationships. In Italy, the topic of sex itself is sensitive and often associated with taboo and shame. The topic of sexual violence still remains at the margins of historical inquiry in general. Most historical scholarship about sexual violence in Italy has focused on feminist debates and law reforms.[40]

Much like the history of sexuality, there is no general history of rape. Rape is an event that means different things across contexts and time periods. Beginning in the 1970s, feminist scholars changed the discourse surrounding rape and reframed it as a crime of patriarchal power instead of a crime of passion.[41] Since the 1970s, scholars have expanded our understanding of rape and stressed the importance of not blurring historical distinctions and of not framing rape as a homogeneous and unchanging result of patriarchal society. Scholars have considered rape in a variety of contexts and in relation to the law, to cultural myths, to court cases, to popular culture, and to the individual accounts of rape victims.[42] Recent scholarship has designated rape as a concept in constant motion with a meaning that changes and evolves across time and place.[43] For example, Joanna Bourke's *Rape: Sex Violence History* argued that rape is not universal,

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[40] A.J. Earhart, "Predicting the Effect of Italy's Long-awaited Rape Law Reform on the 'Land of Machismo,'" *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law*, 1998, 671-718; Rachel Fenton, 2010. "Rape in Italian Law: Towards the Recognition of Sexual Autonomy," *Rethinking Rape Law: International and Comparative Perspectives,* (Abingdon: Routledge; 2010), 183-195. Tina Lagostena Bassi, "Violence Against Women and the Response of Italian Institutions," *Visions and Revisions: Women in Italian Culture,* eds. Nirna Cicioni and Nicole Prunster, (New YorK: Bloomsbury Academic, 1993), 199-212. Also see *Genesis: Rivista della societa Italiana delle Storiche.* IX, 2, 2010, edited by Maria Clara Donata and Lucia Ferrante.

[41] Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will.* (Ballantine Books, 1975). Brownmiller's book established that sexual violence was a political problem and manifestation of patriarchal society, which dated back to ancient times. She argued that rape was a phenomenon that impacted every woman and was a conscious form of intimidation, typical of patriarchal societies.

[42] See Sylvana Tomaselli, "Introduction," 1-15, Peggy Reeves Sanday, "Rape and Silencing of the Feminine," 84-101, and Roy Porter, "Does Rape Have Historical Meaning," 216-236, in *Rape: An Historical and Social Enquiry.* eds. Sylvana Tomaselli and Roy Porter, (Basil Blackwell, 1986).

[43] Georges Vigarello, *The History of Rape: Sexual Violence in France from the 16th to the 20th Century,* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001); Joanna Bourke, *Rape: Sex, Violence, History*. (London: Virago Press, 2007); Merril Smith and Tubal Inal, eds. *Rape Culture and Survivors: An International Perspective,* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2018).

meaning it does not exists in all societies, and that "rapists" are not necessarily always men. She suggested that rapists are heterogeneous groups in different contexts that have diverse motivations for their actions. According to Bourke, rape is more than just a manifestation of patriarchy; it is an assertion of power in specific contexts, environments, and cultures, each of which need to be understood within their own realm.[44]

Georges Vigarello's *A History of Rape: Sexual Violence in France from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Centuries* also considers evolving definitions of rape. Vigarello traces the changing legal attitudes surrounding rape by highlighting three important motors of change that transformed the way French citizens thought about sexual abuse and rape: the professionalization of law courts, the advent of psychoanalysis, and, most importantly, the feminist movement which saw women as victims of male oppression in need of protection.[45] Vigarello argues that despite increased awareness and rape conviction rates throughout the nineteenth century, it was only after the feminist campaigns of the twentieth century that the true seriousness of rape as a crime against a woman's integrity was fully recognized. Vigarello views the history of rape "not [as] an act confined to just violence but rather a phenomenon associated with a set of complex interrelationships between the body, attitudes, and morality in a given time and place."[46] This dissertation will not address psychoanalysis, but Vigarello's work as it relates to feminism, law, and culture sets the foundation for this study's interrogation of the history and evolution of sexual violence in Italy.

This dissertation tracks the multilayered discourses surrounding *fuitina* and the development of a new feminist consciousness that led to changes in the law and culture

[44]Bourke, *Rape, Sex, Violence, History.*
[45] Vigarello, *The Hisory of Rape,* 244.
[46] Ibid, 2.

surrounding the female body, sex, and marriage. *Fuitina* is a form of sexual violence, but it can also be an alternative and consensual path to marriage. Examining *fuitina* from a variety of angles—legal, ideological, and cultural—allows us to situate the phenomenon within the broad contexts of sexuality and the family. This framing provides insight into the complex cultural tug-of-war that persisted within family networks regarding decision-making, autonomy, and everyday sexual relations.

III. Sources and Methodology

This dissertation uses an interdisciplinary methodology and draws on the tools of anthropology, gender studies, and oral history. In my research, I examined police records, news and film, media, literature, songs, and law codes. I conducted interviews about the custom of *fuitina* in both the Sicilian dialect and Italian. Oral interviews conducted with a variety of individuals, from people who married by way of *fuitina* to the local feminists, scholars, teachers, social workers, and priests who discussed their experience and understanding of the practice, proved immensely valuable. This work relies heavily on these interviews.

Oral History

In 2014 and 2015, I took an extended research trip to Sicily and conducted thirty interviews with people from various neighborhoods of Palermo including Sferracavallo, Tomasso Natale, Bagheria, La Zisa, and Lo Zen. I also met with people in smaller towns within the province of Palermo including Carini, Capaci, Cinisi, and Terrasini.[47] Many of the interviews were conducted in the Sicilian dialect which is still the common language

[47] See map of Sicily on pg. 189.

for older Sicilians. Several of the families I interviewed had multiple generations of couples who were married by way of *fuitina.*These interviews produced a collection of stories and memories of the practice of *fuitina.*

Oral history developed into a formal academic practice after the Second World War. It was slow to take hold, and in the 1950s and 1960s oral historians struggled to find legitimacy within a discipline that remained heavily focused on the use of quantiative data and written sources as the legitimate tools of historical analysis.[48] By the late 1970s, oral history found popularity among social historians who sought to include the stories of people traditionally absent from historical narratives: the poor, women, members of ethnic minorites, homosexuals, and religious minorities.[49] Today, the field of oral history is a global and sophisticated category of analysis utilized across history, sociology, anthropology, communications, and medicine. Oral history is still a tool for giving voice to those powerless or marginalized groups whose stories provide alternative perspectives to the more conventional, top-down historical narratives.

Luisa Passerini, one of the pioneers of oral history in Italy, defined it as an analytical practice that included "not just factual statements but also expressions and representations of culture found in the literal narration, memory, ideology, and subconscious desires of the subjects interviewed."[50] Near the end of the twentieth century, oral history methods began to emphasize memory as an important aspect of analysis. Allessandro Portelli established the area of memory studies based on the idea

[48] For more understanding of the key themes and theoretical framework of oral history discipline and research and its various interpretive frameworks that include subjectivity, memory, narrative, performance, and power, see Lynn Abrams, "Introduction," *Oral History Theory,* (Abingdon: Taylor and Francis Books, 2010).
[49] Ibid.
[50] Luisa Passerini. "Work Ideology and Consensus under Italian Fascism," *History Workshop Journal,* Vol. 8, Issue 1,1979, 82-108.

that "memory was not a static depository of facts but an active process of creating meaning."[51] Portelli's work inspired scholars to look more closely at the relationship between memory and personal identity. According to the oral historian Daniel James:

> Life stories are cultural constructs that draw on public discourse structured by class and gender conventions. They make up a wide spectrum of possible roles, self representations, and available narratives. We have to learn to read stories and the symbols and logic embedded in them if we are to attend to their deeper meaning and do justice to the complexity found in the lives and historical experiences of those who recount them.[52]

James's work pushed scholars towards a deeper theoretical understanding of how the past is remembered and reconstructed by people in the present.

Today, oral historians strive to account for various complex elements of the interview process including the interaction between interviewer and subject, the recording, the transcription of the interview, the subjectivity and social identity of the subject, and the ongoing impact of the present on the retelling of events.[53] Combined with written and archival sources, the oral histories gathered for this dissertation were produced with attention to the theoretical practice of oral history. This work also interogates the categories of class, gender, and age and posits that these categories are important for understanding individual subjectivity and the gendered experience of interview subjects. By drawing on the knowledge of a variety of actors, this work compares the common threads and differences in the collected memories of *fuitina* and

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[51] Allessandro Portelli*, The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History,* (New York: New York University Press, 1991), vii.
[52] Daniel James, *Dona Maria: Life History, Memory, and Poltical Identity*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000).
[53] Ron Grele and Studs Terkel, *Envelopes of Sound: The Art of Oral History,* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1991); Luisa Del Giudice, "Speaking Memory: Oral History, Oral Culture and Italians in America," and Allessandro Portelli, "What Makes Oral History Different?" in *Oral history, Oral Culture, and Italian Americans*, ed. Luisa Del Giudice, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 3-18 and 21-30.

asks how those memories and perceptions have been influenced by cultural transformation and individual circumstances.

Archival Documents

In addition to my collection of oral interviews, I accessed a variety of documents from various archives in Palermo and surrounding towns. The organization *Unione Donne Italiane* (UDI) in Palermo provided official feminist statements and other campaign materials including newspaper clippings of court cases in which UDI participated on behalf of women victimized by sexual and domestic abuse. UDI also archived its own magazine, *Noi Donne,* which it continued to publish until 1990. *Noi Donne* chronicled some of the leading voices of Italian feminism and reached its peak during the 1970s during efforts to secure equal pay, legal divorce, and access to abortion services and contraception.

At the Antonio Gramsci Institute and at Palermo's central library, I accessed coverage of the Franca Viola case and other honor-related crimes from daily Sicilian and Italian newpapers published after 1945. These included *L'Ora*, *Corriere della sera*, *Giornale Di Sicilia*, *La Stampa, L'Unita,*and *La Republica.* Some of these stories are also available online through Rai Television news as well as within documentary and newspaper archives.[54]

[54]*L'Ora* was a Sicilian daily newspaper published from 1900 to 1992. It was considered to be an authority on the mafia, best known for its investigative reporting on the mafia from the 1950s to the 1980s. *Giornale di Sicilia* is a daily Italian newspaper for the island of Sicily founded in 1860. *La Stampa* is an Italian daily newspaper based in Turin founded in 1867. *L'Unita* was an Italian newspaper which ceased publication in 2017. It was founded by Antonio Gramsci in 1924 and became the official newspaper of the Italian Communist Party. *La Repubblica* is an Italian daily general interest newspaper founded in 1976.

In addition to news and documentaries, I also used other forms of media including films, short stories, poems, and songs to illustrate represention of *fuitina* across several decades. Though multiple media sources are utilized throughout the dissertation, chapter five focuses specifically on representations of *fuitina* in twentieth-century films including Pietro Germi's *Sedotta e abbandonata* (Seduced and Abandoned) from 1964 and Giuseppe Tornatore's *Baaria* (Bagheria) from 2009.

During several visits to the Palermo State Archives, I collected police reports from the years 1933 to 1948. I was unable to access police records generated after 1948 due to Italy's restrictive archival policy prohibitng access of certain private records for public viewing for 70 years. The reports I was able to secure provide a small window onto what is known as Crimes against Public Morality—a subset of sex crime violations under title XI of the Italian penal code. They include cases brought against men who had committed libidinous acts against women including forced prostitution, fornication, seduction, and rape. Most of the suits were filed by parents on behalf of their daughters at the police headquarters in Palermo. Chapter two discusses these documents further.

This dissertation also explores the position of the Catholic church, particularly the actions of local priests, in cases related to *fuitina*. Through interviews with priests, I gained insight into the position of local churches in matters related to reparatory marriage and sexual violence. These interviews also provided details about how local churches dealt with *fuitina* and reparatory marriages across generations.

Drawing on a variety of sources, this research examines the complicated intersection between the lived realities and sexual relations of everyday people with more official discourses surrounding matters of sex, gender, and violence. The use of a wide

variety of sources illuminates the complexity and subjectivity of cultural transformation at a moment in history when older customs governing sex and marriage gave way to new ways of being.

IV. Chapter Summaries

This project examines women's rights and sexual violence in Italy through the lens of *fuitina* engaging with both the facts of the struggle for gender equality and sexual violence and the discourses that framed these topics. To do this work, this dissertation investigates a variety of topics from the famous Franca Viola case to Italian law as it relates to the female body to the organized feminist movement to representations of *fuitina* in film and, finally, to interviews with individuals directly impacted by *fuitina*. Throughout, this dissertation engages with themes of social, cultural, political, and economic change in Italy in the second half of the 20th century.

Chapter two chronicles the case of Franca Viola. Viola is widely known throughout Italy as the young woman who refused to marry her rapist and helped to change the discourse surrounding reparatory marriage and the law. The Viola case made national news and sparked a new public discourse about the rights of women. Although Viola is remembered as the first women in Italy to refuse a reparatory marriage, the evidence suggests that she was not the first. Drawing on police records, this chapter provides further evidence that women spoke up against sexual violence and reparatory marriage before Franca Viola. Chapter two examines why the Viola case is so central to popular conceptions of *fuitina* as oppressive to women and identical to rape. In the context of the Viola case, these representations often misrepresented the practice of

fuitina, as well as Sicilian society, as part of the Italian media's fixation on the sexual habits and morals of southern Italians. This chapter also challenges popular perceptions that Sicilian culture is dominated by mafia culture and fixated on honor.

Chapter three examines the complicated relationship between sexual violence under the law and sexual violence within Italian culture from the early national period to the present. To better understand non-consensual *fuitina*, this chapter places the practice within the larger context of the attitudes, morals, and legal codes that allowed for reparatory marriage, even in cases of abduction and rape, to persist under Italian law until 1981. This chapter traces the evolution of Italian law concerning female subordination, sex, and honor with sexual violence and rape culture as a backdrop. In doing so, this chapter documents both the continuities and fractures in Italian law and culture that codified and normalized certain levels of violence against women across two centuries.

Chapter four discusses the emergence of new feminism in Italy in the 1970s. This period marked an important historical moment in the expansion of Italian women's rights. Previously untold stories from a small group of Sicilian women who refused reparatory marriage after Franca Viola document the rise of female activism and consciousness in Sicily that has been overlooked by Italian feminist history. By juxtaposing the stories of the women I describe as "accidental feminists" with the narratives of feminists involved in local campaigns, this chapter contextualizes the custom of *fuitina* within the process of female emancipation and sexual liberation in Italy from 1968 to the present. This chapter also discusses the interplay between the accidental feminists who refused reparatory marriages and the organized feminist movement that ultimately led to reforms in the law and the abolition of the Italian honor codes.

Chapter five analyzes representations of *fuitina* in Italian films. Some films embellished the practice of *fuitina* and perpetuated stereotypes about southern Italians. Looking at representations of *fuitina* in film between the 1960s and today, this chapter also documents the tensions and political discourses of each decade surrounding Italian national identity and modernity. Analyzing films from two distinct time periods, the 1960s to 1980s and the 1990s to the present, allowed me to reveal a shift in representations of *fuitina* from backward and oppressive to reflective of Italian exoticism and tradition. I argue that these representations accentuated the political, economic, and cultural differences between northern and southern regions and reflected national politics and discourses surrounding the economy, modernity, and national identity. This chapter also demonstrates that more recent representations of *fuitina* in film reflect a general shift in attitudes about the south as new tensions arise from the influx of foreign immigrants. More recent images of the practice present a nostalgic and idealized image of *fuitina* as part of an Italian past that must be preserved and cherished in the face of foreign immigration.

Finally, chapter six draws on oral testimonies to further clarify our understanding of *fuitina.* By presenting a variety of stories that demonstrate the complexity of the practice, this chapter shows that women were not always passive victims of male oppression and abuse; they were often active participants in their own abductions. Some of the woman I interviewed used *fuitina* to arrange their own marriages within a patriarchal system. For many *fuitina* participants, the practice was a way to resist archaic power structures and to gain control over their own lives and sexuality. In some instances, *fuitina* challenged the traditional institution of marriage by providing

individuals some choice about who and when to marry. This chapter shows the extent to which *fuitina* was, and continues to be, practiced within social and economic circumstances that allowed it to persist.

This dissertation builds on various historiographical fields discussed above to understand the complexity of *fuitina* and how the practice changed over time. Using the lens of *fuitina* to explore various aspects of Italian society including law, feminism, the media, and the evolution of ideas about sex, gender, and marriage, this project complicates popular representations of *fuitina* as an archaic or oppressive tradition. I demonstrate the ways *fuitina* allowed some individuals opportunities for personal choice, autonomy, and sexual freedom within the constraints dictated by church, state, and strict family customs. In some cases, *fuitina* relieved individuals and their families of the economic burdens and restraints associated with the institution of marriage and allowed new opportunities for social freedom and mobility.

Fundamentally, *fuitina* is a complicated custom. On the one hand, it is a manifestation of a violent and oppressive patriarchal system. On the other hand, it can be a tool used by individuals for sexual liberation. In some cases, it gave individuals agency over their own private lives and contributed to the democratization of marriage and sexual relations. *Fuitina* represents a multiplicity of individual experiences informed by the complexity of gender roles and generational shifts over time. There is no single story of *fuitina.*

Women's resistance to rape marriage shifted the culture and ultimately led to significant legal change at the national level. Women changed the culture, and the culture changed the law. This dissertation assesses that cultural transformation as both a

reflection and variant of national, European, and global trends determined by a variety of circumstances: economics, law, migration, and the actions and resistance of everyday individuals. I demonstrate how the culture changed in waves and show that the experiences of the rural women of Sicily differed significantly from the experiences of educated and organized feminists. The definition of the term *fuitina*, and the way that it was and is still practiced, tells us much about the ways in which certain attitudes about sexuality, honor, morality, and women's rights have undergone massive transformation and also, in many ways, remained intact.

Chapter 2: Rediscovering the Case of Franca Viola

> *The silent woman with one simple word, "no" assured her immortality with a grand refusal. Viola has carried Sicilian women out of the Medieval era into modernity.*
>
> Anonymous author, *La Repubblica*.[55]

I. Introduction

On December 26, 1965 in Alcamo, Sicily, the Viola family of 41 Via Arancio was going about their post-Christmas routine when two cars parked in front of their house.[56] According to various local accounts, twelve young men, led by twenty-four-year-old Filippo Melodia, emerged from the cars, beat on the front door of the home, and waited while Melodia dragged seventeen-year-old Franca Viola down the stairs and into one of the cars. Interviews with neighbors later revealed that Franca's mother, Vita, and her eight-year-old brother, Mariano, yelled for help, but the men fired several shots into the air and none of the neighbors dared to intervene.[57] Newspapers retold the story of Franca Viola's abduction, but the details varied from telling to telling. For example, a story in *L'Ora* mentioned only seven assailants but also noted that they kidnapped Franca's

[55] "La donna del silenzio con una sola parola, 'no,' si e assicurata l'immoralita. Un gran rifiuto che ha di colpa traghettato le donne siciliani dal medioevo alla modernita," Unknown author, "La donna che disse no Franca Viola, l'attualita di una ribelle." *La Repubblica.* May 18, 2012. <https://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/2012/05/18/la-donna-che-disse-no-franca-viola.html>

[56] With a population of 43,000, Alcamo was at the time the largest town in the province of Trapani. A port city on Sicily's westernmost tip, Alcamo is situated on the borderline of the provinces of Palermo and Trapani, a distance of 58 kilometers from both cities.

[57] Unknown author, "Oggi a Trapani il processo per il ratto di Franca Viola," *Corriere Della Sera,* December 9, 1966.<http://archivio.corriere.it/Archivio/interface/view.shtml#!/NjovZXMvaXQvcmNzZGF0aWRhY3MyL0A1MTA3Ng%3D%3D>

brother when he refused to let go of his sister. According to this account, Mariano returned home crying that evening. Franca would not return home for seven days.[58]

Filippo Melodia and Franca Viola were not strangers at the time of the abduction. In 1962, when Viola was just 14, they had been engaged to be married. Viola's father, Bernardo, ended the engagement when he learned that Melodia was a criminal and connected to a local mafia family. After the engagement ended, Melodia spent several years living in Germany, and some sources suggest he had left Sicily to evade murder allegations.[59] According to *Corriere Della Sera,* Filippo Melodia returned to Alcamo in 1965 and sought out Franca Viola in an effort to rekindle their relationship. He also confronted her father and asked him to re-establish the engagement. Bernardo Viola refused and Melodia retaliated with a series of threats towards the family and their property.[60] These threats culminated in the abduction on December 26th.

Seven days after her kidnapping, the local police found Franca and liberated her from a house owned by a relative of Melodia. Franca had been held hostage and raped, and after his arrest, Melodia's family sought to negotiate a reparatory marriage with the Viola family. If the Viola family had agreed to the *matrimonio riparatore*, Melodia would have been exonerated of his crimes. Instead, they refused marriage and pressed charges against Melodia. On December 18, 1966, after a heated and a heavily publicized trial, Filippo Melodia was convicted of his crimes against Franca Viola. For many

[58] Unknown author, "La ragazza che disse di no ecco il clamoroso ratto di Alcamo minuto per minuto giorno per giorno," *L'Ora,* December 1966. *Istituto Gramsci Palermo.*
[59] Concita De Gregoria, "Franca Viola: Io che 50 anni fa ho fatto la storia con il mio no alle nozze riparatrici," *La Repubblica*, December 27, 2015.<https://www.repubblica.it/cronaca/2015/12/27/news/_io_che_50_anni_fa_ho_fatto_la_storia_con_il_mio_no_alle_nozze_riparatrici_-130210807>
[60] Unknown author, *Corriere Della Sera*, December 9, 1966. *Istituto Gramsci Palermo*

following the trial, his conviction was a triumph over traditional customs and manners that subordinated women.

Melodia's lawyer, Girolamo Bellavista, worked hard to undermine Franca Viola's claim that she'd been kidnapped against her will, held hostage, and raped for seven days. Bellavista argued that the incident "had been a consensual *fuitina* orchestrated between the couple*"* and claimed that "the abduction was not an act of violence but rather an act of love on the part of a young couple wanting to be together."[61] He reminded the court that the couple had been previously engaged. "Filippo Melodia and Franca Viola were in fact in love. It was only due to her parent's refusal that they were not together."[62] Bellavista maintained that the engagement had been called off against Viola's wishes and under pressure from her father.

Viola's attorney argued that the abduction had been clearly criminal. "It was clear," he claimed, "that this was not a consensual act." He asked the court to look at the details of the case. "The violence, the guns, the manner in which Viola had been abducted, all demonstrated a strong resistance on Viola's part and proved the wrongfulness of the act, as well as the lack of consent from the victim herself."[63]At the end of the trial, the court charged Melodia with kidnapping, threats, domestic violence, sequester of a person, and illegal trespassing. He was given an eleven-year prison sentence. His eleven accomplices would be convicted of the same charges, minus sequestration and rape.[64]

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[61]Girolamo Bellavista. "In difesa di Filippo Melodia." December 16, 1966. Cited in Giuseppe Sotgiu. *L'eloquenza antologia critica cronaca,* 56-66.
[62] Unknown author, "La ragazza che disse no," *L'Ora*, December 29, 1966. *Istituto Gramsci Palermo.*
[63] Ibid.
[64] Unknown author, "Undici anni al rapitore di Alcamo," *Corriere Della Sera*, December 14, 1966. *Istituto Gramsci Palermo.*

II. Historiography

Although the Viola case received national attention and represented a major shift in the culture of sexual violence in Italy, the case has not been the subject of much scholarship. In 2012, Beatrice Monroy published a book about the Viola case entitled *Niente ci fu* (It Was Nothing). Monroy's book offers a short history of the Viola case in the context of 1960s-era Italian feminism. Monroy argues that the new wave of feminism led to major reforms to Italian laws related to the female body. Monroy's book emphasizes the significance of Franca Viola's decision to press charges against Melodia and credits her with breaking the silence surrounding violence against women in Italy. *Niente ci fu* also includes a dramatized version of Franca Viola's story and Monroy's own personal feelings about the case based on her reading of Italian newspaper accounts.[65]

Monroy's book seeks to understand Viola's story and stresses the importance of her legacy. Referring to the title of the book, Monroy notes that mothers often used the Sicilian phrase "*niente ci fu*" to describe the abduction or rape of their daughters. She speculates that the phrase performed critical work for Sicilian women. "It was nothing" acted as a way to comfort a young woman or somehow deny that the act was a violation of her body, a way of trying to forget by essentially stating, "nothing happened."[66] Monroy notes that Viola's 1965 refusal to marry Melodia coincided with other efforts to combat various cultures of silence including the anti-mafia movement in Sicily. With a popular feminist style, Monroy's book depicts *fuitina* as an archaic institution tied to an old-fashioned patriarchy and the oppression of women.

[65] Beatrice Monroy, *Niente ci fu,* (Molfetta: Edizioni la Meridiana, 2012).
[66] Beatrice Monroy, interview with Antonella Vitale, personal interview, July 14, 2015.

The work of historian Niamh Cullen focuses on the media coverage of the Viola case and analyzes the emotional tone of the newspaper coverage. In a 2016 article, Cullen connects the discourse surrounding the case to larger issues in Italy in the 1960s, and she is particularly concerned with debates about Italian national identity and what kinds of behavior were considered appropriate for a modern nation. Cullen demonstrates that media coverage of the Viola case "carried at its core a long running debate about national identity, southern difference, and the very meaning of modernity for Italian society."[67] She notes that the practice of *fuitina* was part of a set of cultural norms related to honor culture and female chastity. Cullen argues that the abductions resulted from the fact that unmarried women were not easily able to meet men in public and had little choice about who they would marry due to Sicily's rigid gender norms. However, she also notes that the participants of a *fuitina* could have complex motivations, and she acknowledges that the practice could involve a romantic act or elopement meant to secure a love marriage.

Cullen is not the first to suggest that female sexuality was more regulated in Sicily than in the rest of Italy, and she notes that Sicilian women were often kept indoors and subject to other restrictive practices. Unlike Cullen, I argue that although there many restrictions to their freedom, women in Sicily were not always bound to the home nor were their lives dictated entirely by patriarchal notions of honor. The experience of Sicilian womanhood was neither monolithic nor static, and this dissertation shows that the lives of Sicilian women varied across class and were informed by family dynamics and individual circumstances. This chapter considers the Viola case as a way to understand *fuitina* in Sicily between World War II and the present and argues that

[67] Niamh Cullen, "The Case of Franca Viola: Debating Gender, Nation and Modernity in 1960s Italy," *Journal of Contemporary European History,* Volume 25, Issue 1, February 2016, 101.

shifting ideas about *fuitina* mirrored and informed shifting ideas about Italian womanhood.

Fuitina was still quite common in Sicily in the 1960s, and most accounts of the Viola case emphasized the persistence of the practice in the region. Many Italians believed Sicily was more traditional, and more attached to honor culture, than other parts of the country.[68] When the Viola family sought legal recourse from public officials instead of agreeing to a reparatory marriage, many Italians viewed their refusal as a revolutionary act. For some, the Viola's refusal represented a Sicilian spring, and their legal efforts became associated with other efforts to resist the oppressive forces of the mafia culture and custom believed to be prevalent in Sicily. Viola's case coincided with the rise of the anti-mafia activism of Giuseppe "Peppino*"* Impastato. Impastato was a left-wing member of the Italian Socialist Party and the creator of *Radio Aut* in his hometown of Cinisi, Sicily. He used the radio station to ridicule local criminals and expose their crimes on live radio. He was eventually killed by the mafia in 1976.[69] For many observers, the case of the Viola family was a part of this popular resistance to traditional Sicilian culture.

Although many Italians believed the Viola case represented major social and cultural change in Sicily, much of the media coverage of the case drew on salacious and

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[68] Perry Willson, *Women in the Twentieth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 127-128; Marta Boneschi, *Di testa loro: Dieci Italiane che hanno fatto il novecento* (Milano: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 2002), 275-296; Beatrice Monroy, *Niente ci fu,* (Molfetta: Edizioni la Meridiana, 2012); Niahm Cullen, "The Case of Franca Viola: Debating Gender, Nation, and Modernity in 1960s Italy," *Journal of Contemporary European History*, Volume 25, Issue 1 (February 2016): 97-115.

[69] For more information regarding Giuseppe Impastato and the Sicilian anti-mafia campaign, see Felicia Bartolotta Impastato, *La mafia in casa mia,* (Palermo: La Luna, 1987); Santino Umberto, "Peppino Impastato: la memoria dificile," *Meridiana.* Issue 40, 2001; Santino Umberto, "Antimafia," *Meridiana,* Issue 25, 1996. 1-18; There is also a website with information, www.centroimpastato.com, and an archive run by Santino Umberto and his wife Ana Puglisi in Cinisi, Sicily, called Centro Siciliano di Documentazione "Giuseppe Impastato."

stereotypical ideas about the sexual mores, social customs, and outmoded morality of Sicilians. However, a closer examination of the Viola case suggests that popular Italian perceptions about sex, morality, and marriage in Sicily were often simplistic and ignored female agency. In the popular imagination, Sicilian women were victims excluded from the public sphere. According to Ana Puglisi, the stereotypical image of the Sicilian woman was well known:

> The Sicilian woman is the one who lives up a dark staircase, or is hidden behind a curtain. She remains the greatest victim of female oppression and patriarchy, enslaved either by her father, her husband, or the culture in which she exists. The Sicilian woman persistently falls prey to patriarchal society, the culture of honor, and the mafia.[70]

As I argue throughout this dissertation, this image of the Sicilian woman as cloistered and powerless was an inaccurate and reductive representation of women in the region. Despite significant social, legal, and economic limitations faced by Sicilian woman, they were not powerless and often managed to assert rights to their self and body.

It is impossible to understand the significance of the Viola case to Italian culture without also considering the cultural relationship between Sicily and the rest of the nation—a relationship sometimes referred to as the Sicilian Question.[71] Representations

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[70] Ana Puglisi, *Donne, mafia e antimafia* (Trapani: Di Girolamo Editore, 2012), 11. Puglisi notes that the image of the Sicilian woman dressed in black further emphasizes her oppression and has made great film spectacles. Perhaps the best journalistic account of this image can be found in the documentary on women impacted by the mafia by French journalist Marcelle Padovini. In 1979, Padovini published a book with Leonardo Sciascia called *la Sicilia come metafora,* or *Sicily as a Metaphor,* (Milan: A. Mondadori, 1989*)*. Padovini also wrote a series of articles on Sicily and directed two television reports on the Sicilian Mafia.

[71] The term itself was first coined, by Leonardo Sciascia in his novel *A ciascuno il suo* (1959). Compared to the rest of Italy, Sicily and its inhabitants were often identified as culturally and politically different from other Italians. Though southern Italy was often considered a uniform entity with specific economic and social problems, Sicily has often been distinguished from the rest of the region with emphasis on its language and customs. For an introduction to this concept, see Maurice Aymard and Giuseppe Giarizzo, "Introduction," *Storia dell'Italia: Le regioni dall'Unita a Oggi.* (Turin: Einaudi, 1987), 1-23; Antonio Recupero, "La Sicilia all'opposizione, 1848-74," in *Storia d' Italia.* 46-67; Renda Beati, *Storia, Letteratura, e leggende* (Palermo: Flacovia, 1988). Today the notion of identity in Italy and elsewhere is vast and full of different meanings. For more understanding of regional identity around Italy, see Silviana Patriarca, "National identities and National Character? New Vocabularies and Old Paradigms," *Making and*

of the island's peculiarity date as far back as the eighteenth century, and in the eyes of many Italians, Sicily was not like the rest of Italy.[72] After World War II, images of Sicily on the news and television depicted an island ruled by mafia violence. Sicily appeared as an Italian wild west: a place where law and order did not exist. For many throughout the country, the Viola case demonstrated the backwardness of Sicily even though the same law that would have exonerated Melodia applied to the whole country.

The orientalizing of southern Italy, particularly the island of Sicily, has been the subject of much scholarly and popular discussion. Representations of the south as an "other" became more pronounced after the Italian Risorgimento when the Italian state prepared to intervene in the southern economy and its development. In many ways, the Italian discourse about Sicily mirrored the language and ideology of European imperialists in the late nineteenth century. Much like Europeans claimed cultural superiority over nations outside of Europe, along with the necessity to civilize the people of the rest of the world, many Italians discussed Sicily as a place in need of a civilizing influence.[73]

Remaking Italy: The Cultivation of National Identity Around the Risorgimento, eds. Albert Russel Ascoli, Krystyna Von Henneberg, (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 34-56; Ernesto Galli Della Loggia, *L'identita italiana* (Bologna: Mulino, 1998); Emilio Gentile, *La Grande Italia: Ascesa e declino del mito della nazione nel ventesimo secolo,* (Milan:Mondadori, 1997).

[73] For more information on this topic, see Eric Hobsbawn, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge University Press, 1990); Seamus Deane, "Introduction," *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature,* eds. Terry Eagleton, Fredric Jameson, and Edward Said (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 3-19; Silvana Patriarca. *Italian Vices: Nation and Character from the Risorgimento to the Republic* (Cambridge University Press. 2010); Marta Petrusewicz. *Come il meridione divenne una questione: Rappresentazioni del Sud Prima e dopo il Quarantotto,* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino Editore, 1998); Nelson Moe *View from Vesuvius* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Nelson Moe, "The Emergence of the Southern Question in Villari, Franchetti, and Sonnino," *Italy's Southern Question: Orientalism in One Country,* ed. Jane Schneider (New York: Oxford International Publishers, 1998), 51-76. On southern Europe as a periphery and semi-periphery, see Immanuel Wallerstein, "The Relevance of the Concept of Semi-periphery to Southern Europe," *Semi-peripheral Development: The Politics of Southern Europe in the Twentieth Century: Explorations in the World Economy,* ed. Giovanni Arrighi (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1985), 31-29.

European Social Darwinist ideology inspired a wave of Italian criminologists concerned with Sicilian criminality. The criminologists Cesare Lombroso (1835-1909) and Enrico Ferri (1856-1929) promoted the idea that southern Italians were inferior and primitive and that their Mediterranean genes predisposed them to crime. Though criminologist differed in their typologies of "race," some went so far as to suggest that inferior southern genes could threaten the progress of northern Italians blessed with Aryan or Celtic genes.[74] Others claimed, there were two races in Italy: the Alpines in the north and the "cursed race" of Mediterraneans in the south.[75] For some of these reformers like Gugliemo Ferrero (1871-1942), southern inferiority was found expressed in the "hypersexuality" of southerners.[76]

Northern Italians and Europeans were not alone in spreading these ideas. Some southern intellectuals and writers also promoted the idea that southerners and northerners were biologically distinct. The Sicilian-born criminal anthropologist Alfred Niceforo (1876-1960) claimed that sexual crimes were more common in southern Italy. His theory reinforced the popular belief that southern Italians were more effeminate and sexually perverted than northerners.[77] Like Lombroso and Ferri, Niceforo related crime on the island of Sardinia to the existence of a "Mediterranean Race." Published in 1897, his study, C*rime in Sardinia,* claimed that the islands of Sardinia and Sicily rivaled each other in numbers of felonies. Niceforo claimed that Sardinia surpassed Sicily in crime, and he used crime statistics to demonstrate what he believed was the "erosion and

[74] Mary Gibson, "Biology and Environment? Race and Southern 'Deviancy' in the Writings of Italian Criminologists 1880-1920." *Italy's Southern Question,* 107.
[75]Ibid, 112.
[76] ibid, 191.
[77]Chiara Beccalossi, "The Italian Vice: Male Homosexuality and British Tourism in Southern Italy," *Italian Sexualities Uncovered, 1789-1914,* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015*),* 190.

corruption of moral life on the island."[78] He drew on local customs, songs, and traditions to support his theories and argued that racial inferiority resulted in crime because moral traits were inborn like physical traits.[79] Criminologists were not the only Sicilian intellectuals fixated on Sicilian pathology. The literary writers Giovanni Verga (1840-1922) and Tomasi De Lampedusa (1896-1957) also promoted the image of Sicily as backward. Their writing focused on the problems of Sicily and the south, and they lamented the possibility that the region would never improve.[80] Verga, in particular, portrayed Sicily as a place full of sad stories about agrarian life, poverty, and hardship.[81]

In addition to their interest in poverty and criminality, the writers, scholars, travelers, social scientists, and politicians who observed Sicily focused on sexual mores and customs. Chiara Beccalossi's essay, "The Italian Vice: Male Homosexuality and British Tourism in Southern Italy," examines popular ideas about southern Italian sexuality through the lens of nineteenth century British sex tourism to the region. Northern Europeans clearly identified southern Italian men as possessing more erotic freedom than could be found in England and the rest of northern Europe. To the English, the habits that allowed for the tolerance of a lucrative male homosexual tourist industry in southern Italy demonstrated the sexual deviance of southern Italians. By this logic, sex tourism was not a problem driven by British citizens.[82] In some cases, the English linked same-sex desire to Catholicism or southern Italy's warm climate.[83]

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[78]Gibson, "Biology or Environment?" 107.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Giovanni Verga is perhaps the most influential and important literary writers of his time and one of the first Sicilian writers to gain fame outside of Sicily. Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa is most famous for his novel *Il Gattopardo* (1958), which is set in Sicily during the Risorgimento.
[81] For an introduction to Verga's work, see Stanly Appelbaum, ed./trans. *Sicilian Stories by Giovanni Verga* (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2002).
[82] Chiara Beccalossi, "The Italian Vice." 185-206.
[83] Ibid, 187.

As late as the 1990s, some scholars perpetuated the notion that southern Italians were backward. Edward Banfield's *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society* (1967) claimed that southern Italy's economic stagnation was the result of an unchanging and deeply uncivic society and political culture. Banfield diagnosed southern Italy with a condition he called "amoral familism" and defined as "a culture that was so self-interested and family centric" that it "sacrificed the public good or civil society for the sake of the nuclear family."[84] Banfield based his argument on his anthropological study of a town in the region of Basilicata in southern Italy. According to Banfield, in southern Italy family concerns overcame interest in citizenship, and this led to a weak democratic society. In 1993, Robert Putnam's *Making Democracy Work* built on Banfield's book and argued that civil society in southern Italy was weak as a result of the region's feudal past. He pointed particularly to the Norman conquest of the south in the twelfth century, which imposed a hierarchical structure and set a pattern for social and political behavior that has lasted until the present day. "A south without a civic history," wrote Putnam, "slipped into a desolate anarchy and never recovered. The precedence of individual needs and goals always took precedence over those of the community. Thus democratic values could not take root."[85]

Many scholars have challenged the Putnam and Banfield ideas about an inherent southern backwardness. Jane and Peter Schneider argue that promoting an image of an Italian south frozen in the past creates historical generalizations, caricatures, and

[84] Edward Banfield, *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society,* (New York: Free Press, 1967).
[85] Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton University Press, 1993), 121.

prejudice.[86] They argue that it is important to understand southern Italy on its own terms and to avoid poorly constructed measures of modernity. In their book, *Reversible Destiny*: *Mafia, Antimafia, and the Struggle for Palermo,* the Schneiders argue that traditional Sicilian codes of honor and family were not the only cultural values that existed in the south. In their analysis of both judicial and community-based anti-mafia campaigns in Palermo during the 1980s and 1990s, the Schneiders found that community partnerships and civil society *did* exist in a city dominated by a corrupt political class involved with organized crime. The crackdown on the mafia by magistrates in these decades, and the emergence of the citizens' anti-mafia movement, can be taken as evidence of modernization in Sicily.[87] Piero Bevilacqua, in *Breve storia dell'Italia meridionale: dall'Ottocento a oggi,* calls for the trope of the Southern Problem to be cast aside altogether. Bevilacqua suggests that a southern history synonymous with failure and backwardness has homogenized the southern regions and their people into a undifferentiated stereotype of a "universal *Mezziogiorno*" that denies the south any history of its own.[88] Bevilacqua and others urge scholars to invoke the pluralism of modern economic growth and to identify different paths to modernity. Gabriella Gribaudi calls Banfield's concept of amoral familism utterly useless and based on false and unidentifiable claims. She argues that Banfield did not understand the culture he studied. Gribaudi suggests that using the family as the sole perspective to study individuals results in a faulty understanding of identity and social structure. According to Gribaudi, amoral familism was not the problem in southern Italy. The problem was the state, and it was the

[86] Jane and Peter Schneider, *Reversible Destiny: Mafia, Antimafia, and the Struggle for Palermo,* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2003); Schneider, *Italy's Southern Question.*
[87] Schneider, *Reversible Destiny,*160-192.
[88] Piero Bevilacqua, *Breve storia dell'Italia meridionale: dall'Ottocento a oggi* (Rome: Donzelli Editore, 1993), 102.

state's failed welfare policy that was responsible for the slow economic expansion of Italy's southern regions.[89]

In *Inventing the Nation: Italy*, Nicholas Doumanis argues that large numbers of Italians have demonstrated an interest in making the Italian state work despite its problems. He claims that any political, legal, and social reforms in Italy resulted primarily from "pressure from below."[90] According to Perry Willson, the new society produced by the Italy's economic miracle in the 1950s was "a mixture of tradition and modernity, where old ideas and habits jostled with the new."[91] Willson concedes that economic development differed dramatically between northern and southern cities and towns. However, Willson attributes those differences to regional and geographic circumstances, not to the idea that southerners were somehow inherently barbaric.[92]

Even though the Viola case occurred nearly a century after Italian unification, the gender politics of the Sicilian Question informed how people across Italy understood the significance of Franca's refusal. The characterization of Sicily and the Italian south as a region plagued with crime, mafia authority, poverty, and sexual vice reinforced longstanding stereotypes about life on outer edges of the Italian state. The fact that the family at the center of the story hailed from a small Sicilian town drew the attention of observers who noted that the cultural politics of Sicily, so long viewed as backwards and static, were finally in flux.

V. Honor Culture and Society

[89]Gabriella Gribaudi, "Familismo e famiglia a Napoli e nel Mezzogiorno," *Meridiana*, No. 17, 1993, 13-42.
[90] Nichola Doumanis, *Italy: Inventing the Nation,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 164.
[91] Willson, *Women in the Twentieth Century,* 113.
[92] Ibid.

The Viola case revealed that honor culture was still present on the island of Sicily in 1965. The case reignited an ongoing debate about honor and the law that centered on Article 544 of Italian penal law. This law exonerated a man for the crime of rape, even if his victim was a minor, if the victim consented to marriage. In traditional Italian culture, honor codes were gendered.[93] Communities where honor remained an important aspect of society highly valued virginity. Women who lost their virginity also lost valuable marriage prospects and were often marginalized by their communities. As honor was tied to both social value and property, a loss of honor could have significant economic impacts on a family. As a result, reparatory marriages remained common in Italy until the 1980s and still exist to some form today.

In honor-driven societies, the notions of honor and shame dictate the boundaries of acceptable behavior for individuals and families.[94] Typically, men and women both play a significant role in the maintenance of honor. In Italy, women were considered holders of honor property, and they maintained the property by conforming their behavior, especially their sexual behavior, to the social expectations of their community. In popular culture, women were the primary agents of their family's honor by way of their chastity, but this dissertation argues that women were not the sole proprietors of

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[93] Julian Pitt Rivers, "Honor and Social Status," *Honor and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society,* ed. J.G. Peristiany, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 18-75; Victoria Goddard, "Honor and Shame: The Control of Women's Sexuality and Group Identity in Naples," *Cultural Construction of Sexuality,* ed. Pat Caplan (New York: Tavistock Publications 1987), 166-193; Maria Rosa Cururfelli, *Disoccupata con onore.* (Milan: Gabriele Mazzotta 1975); Giovanna Fiume et al., *Onore e storia nelle societa Mediterrranee* (Palermo: La Luna, 1987).

[94] Though historians, anthropologists, and sociologists typically associate the concept of honor with Mediterranean cultures, honor culture is not exclusive to the Mediterranean or Italy. More research on honor culture in different regional contexts needs to be conducted, but scholars have increasingly noted that such cultures exist in other parts of the world, including northern Europe and the United States. See Mosquera Patricia, Anthony Manstead, Agneta Fischer, "Honor in the Mediterranean and Northern Europe," *Journal of Cross Cultural Psychology,* January 2002, 16-36; Also see Dick Steward, *Duels and Roots of Violence in Missouri,* (University of Missouri Press 2000), 6-7.

family honor.[95] Although it was often customary for female rape victims to marry their rapist in order to regain their honor and ensure they did not become an economic liability for their families, my research suggests that women were not always forced to marry their abductors. And, honor was not only a familial concern. It remained part of the Italian penal system until 1981 through the presence of reduced punishments for the crimes of abduction, rape, and murder in cases related to honor.

VI. Franca Viola: Symbol of Change

Franca Viola's refusal to marry her rapist changed how the Italian media covered matters of sexual violence, honor culture, and Italian law. Her refusal also helped activists and feminists reframe the subordination of women in the law, particularly as it related to sexual violence. In 1965, intellectuals and political activists associated the Viola case with debates about the honor codes. The Sicilian-born author Leonardo Sciascia argued that "Viola's courageous refusal was an individual revolt against a custom and an environment that for centuries had degraded women. A system of laws that had long provided men with a ticket to directly humiliate them."[96] According to Sciascia, Franca Viola's refusal to marry Melodia "would bring about a new birth in Sicily where justification of rape and murder were no longer made in the name of honor."[97] For many activists, Bernardo Viola, Franca's father, was an ally and a hero.

[95] Johanna Bond, "Honor as Property," *Columbia Journal of Gender and Law*, 2012. 202-303.
[96] Leonardo Sciascia, "C'e un altro imputato ed e il Codice Penale," *L'Ora* December 26, 1966. *Archivio Istituto Gramsci Palermo*
[97] Ibid.

They believed he was a new type of man, and together Bernardo and Franca became "representatives of a new Sicily."[98]

Today, Italians remember Franca Viola as the first woman in Italy to refuse a reparatory marriage. In December 2015, the famous journalist Concita De Gregoria published an interview with Viola, her first in fifty years, in the newspaper *La Repubblica*. The headline was striking. "She refused to marry the man who violated her. Her courage changed the penal code. Don't ever be afraid to protest."[99] Prior to the 2015 interview, Viola had refused most inquiries for interviews. Asked why she had stayed quiet for so long, she noted "I am not sure why I finally allowed someone to interview me. Maybe sometimes, one word or one act, something small is all that it takes to create change."[100] Although Viola remained largely out of the public eye after the trial, today she is an iconic figure within Italian feminism.

Viola's public refusal of Melodia's request for a reparatory marriage was a turning point in Italian culture. After Viola, speaking up against sexual violence became increasingly normal, and she came to represent a sexual and moral revolution that rejected the culture and hierarchy in Sicily. In 1966, Filippo Melodia's conviction demonstrated a victory for female emancipation and victims of sexual assault. Franca Viola's story challenged a set of Sicilian cultural norms, specifically the longstanding and oppressive culture of silence synonymous with the Sicilian mafia.

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[98] Unknown author. "Oggi a Trapani il processo per il ratto di Franca Viola." *Corriere Della Sera* December 17, 1966. <http://archivio.corriere.it/Archivio/interface/view.shtml#!/NjovZXMvaXQvcmNzZGF0aWRhY2kxL0AzNDUz>

[99] Concita De Gregoria, *La Repubblica*, "Franca Viola: "Io che 50 anni fa ho fatto la storia con il mio no alle nozze riparatici," December 27, 2015. <http://www.repubblica.it/cronaca/2015/12/27/news/_io_che_50_anni_fa_ho_fatto_la_storia_con_il_mio_no_alle_nozze_riparatrici_-130210807/>

[100] Ibid.

For many young Sicilians, Viola and her parents were pioneers in a rebellion against the traditional customs and violent acts that had terrorized and oppressed generations of women before them. Franca's parental support seemed to indicate that the Violas were a new type of Sicilian family; one concurrent with civic society and the rest of the nation. During this period of anti-authoritarian consciousness, protests and unrest spread to universities and factories, and individual acts of courage, like those of the Viola family, bolstered a new political radicalism.

Many Italians praised the Violas for their bravery, and Franca and her father became symbols of a changing of Sicily. One journalist described Franca as "a young woman who had a persona that rose above the average girls of her culture and class."[101] In 1968, Franca Viola married Giuseppe Ruisi, and their marriage suggested that older ideas about women and chastity were no longer central to all Italian marriages.[102] The *Corriere Della Sera* reported on the wedding and noted, "Franca Viola married the man that had defeated her with love."[103] They went on to celebrate Viola and Giuseppe's wedding, and it paid special attention to details such as Viola's white dress and flowers and Giuseppe's blue suit.

Northern journalists covering the Viola case portrayed southerners and rural people as more socially conservative, resistant to change, and culturally backward. In a 1966 issue of *Epoca* one journalist noted, "Not everyone sees shame in the same way in Italy. For northerners, disgrace is forced matrimony, but for many citizens of Alcamo it is

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[101] Luisa Pronzato, "Franca Viola, il coraggio di dire no." *Corriere Della Sera*

[102] Dal Nostro Corrispondente, "Franca Viola sposerebbe un giovane di Alcamo," *Corriere Della Sera,* April 5, 1968. *Istituto Gramsci Archive Palermo.*

[103] Unknown author, "Franca Viola ha sposato l'uomo che l'ha conquistato con l'amore, *Corriere della Sera.* December 5, 1968. <http://archivio.corriere.it/Archivio/interface/view.shtml#!/MjovZXMvaXQvcmNzZGF0aWRhY3MyL0A2NzAxMw%3D%3D>

the loss of purity or the refusal of marriage to such a 'good match' as Filippo Melodia." The northern journalists who wrote for *Epoca* interviewed local Sicilians about their attitudes regarding shame. They quoted a man in a bar in Alcamo who noted, "In the end she will marry him and make everyone believe that she is happy with her lot in life. This is how things go in Sicily."[104] Despite these stories, Sicilian attitudes towards sexuality were varied and complex. For average Sicilians, men and women's lives and attitudes around sex were not static or singularly fixated on notions of honor. Much like the social upheaval taking place in the north, by the 1960s Sicilian society was in the midst of a social and moral transformation that held elements of tradition and modernity in tension.

The popular fixation with southern sexuality in the wake of the Viola case extended beyond journalists. Artists, writers, and especially filmmakers produced work about Sicilian honor culture and sexuality. A general poll on a RAI Television documentary in 1967 indicated that sixty percent of Sicilian men would not marry a woman if she were not a virgin. Franca Viola's new husband was interviewed about the importance of female virginity and his answer was clear: "A woman's character and sentiments are more important to me than her virginity."[105] Pier Paolo Pasolini's 1964 documentary film, *Love Meetings,* also investigated the sexual attitudes of Italians across the peninsula. Pasolini interviewed a range of people from various social classes and regions. He spoke to college students and rural peasants, but his film demonstrated a high level of conformity among Italians regarding their attitudes towards sex. Pasolini found that although some northerners were also conservative, his film emphasized how southern

[104] Unknown author, "Il giovane mafioso se la ride," *Epoca Magazine,* December 1966.
[105] "Il corragio di Franca," RAI Televison, 1967. <raistoria.rai.it>

Italians, Sicilians in particular, vehemently opposed gender equality, feminism, and anything that deviated from traditional sexual mores.

In 1966, the Sicilian-born Lieta Harrison published a book about honor culture and Sicilian sexual customs called *Le Svergognate.* Harrison interviewed 685 subjects and argued that honor remained at the center of society in Sicily. Rape victims were still often forced to marry their rapists in order to regain their honor, and honor killings occurred frequently.[106] She described the place of honor in the lives of women as follows:

> The Sicilian woman is a true female of honor. She knows her place and her duty. Though modern society may consider her act of honor as wrong, she knows she must repair her blood. Sicily is a land of honor. To the local Sicilian honor gives strength in life. It gives courage not only to men but also to women.[107]

According to Harrison, "dishonored women in Sicily, who remain un-avenged" were typically thrown out of their parent's homes or shunned by their communities.[108] Franca Viola's story represented a breaking down of this honor culture. Speaking to *Epoca* in 1966, Viola framed the importance of this transformation. She asked the readers, "Why does my life need to be conditioned by barbaric customs?"[109] Change did not come to Sicily overnight, but Franca Viola's refusal to perform the expected "act of honor" marked a turning point in the history of Sicilian sexual politics.

The Viola story encouraged some Italian movements devoted to social progress, but the case also exposed the ongoing subordination of women in Sicily and under Italian law. Discriminatory laws in the 1960s, including the honor codes, continued to restrict

[106] Willson, *Women in the Twentieth Century*, 127.
[107] Lieta Harrison, *Le Svergognate* (Roma: Edizioni di Novissima, 1963), 124.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Unknown author, "Franca Viola e una murata viva," *Epoca Magazine*, April 10, 1966.

women's control over their bodies, lives, and safety. Writing in *L'Ora* in 1966, Leonardo Sciascia noted:

> It is a discourse, which we have to engage regarding the code of honor. There is a new Sicily emerging in which homicide for honor, and rape for the purpose of marriage will no longer be justified with moral value but seen as an act of delinquency. The reality is that the law of the state continues to justify morality in the case of violence.[110]

Commenting directly on the Viola case and the complicity of Italian law, Sciascia argued forcefully for the importance of legal change. "There is another defendant in this case, it is the Italian penal code which has provided a license for rape." Sciascia challenged the notion that honor culture was limited to Sicily. "Undoubtedly, we understand the courage of Viola and her family as they come at the mercy of daily reprisals that the Italian world (not just Sicilians) freely exercise on the victims of injustice, especially victims of erotic injustice."[111]A new set of voices, coming from the Left and giving rise to a new women's movement, echoed Sciascia's indictment of Italian law. This movement eventually pushed for major reforms that changed the legal and cultural standing of Italian women.

Second wave feminists brought renewed attention to Italian penal and civil laws related to sexual violence. They believed that the system of patriarchy needed to be overturned in order to achieve true democracy in Italy, and they argued that all the laws of the nation, especially those that confirmed female subordination, needed to be rewritten to meet the principles of the Constitution. In 1946, women won the vote, but they continued to bear the brunt of the formerly established legal system of the Fascist regime. After the war, Italian law continued to classify women as subordinate to their fathers or husbands and denied them the right to make decisions regarding where they

[110] Leonardo Sciascia, "Licenza di rapire," *L'Ora,* December 13, 1966.
[111] Ibid.

could live and work. Divorce and abortion were illegal, and women faced more severe punishment than men for committing adultery. Perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence often received light punishment, if punished at all.[112]

Franca Viola became, and still remains, a symbol of social change in Italy. Her story became linked to the feminist goals of sexual autonomy, and many consider her to be the first woman in Italy to have made a claim for bodily autonomy in aftermath of rape. Her case is often cited as an influential component in the debates regarding Italian legal reform and the dissolution of the honor codes.

IX. Viola Revisited and Challenged

Franca Viola's story represented a significant change in the culture of sexual violence in Italy. However, the popularity of her story has distorted the history of women's emancipation and *fuitina* in Sicily. The emphasis placed on Franca Viola as the first Italian woman to reject a reparatory marriage simplifies a more complex history of sexual violence in the region. Constructing the Viola case as a break from the past creates storylines that "sidestep the consideration of individual subjectivity," a process Jane Schneider refers to as "modes of interpretation that have the tendency to polarize time, values, and behavior privileging top down narratives over the realities of everyday individuals."[113] Although Franca Viola is known widely as the first woman to refuse reparatory marriage, the story of women resisting *fuitina* has a much longer history and is more complex than typically understood.

[112] Molly Tambor, *The Lost Wave: Women and Democracy in Postwar Italy*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 12.
[113] Jane and Peter Schneider, *Festival of the Poor: Fertility Decline and the Ideology of Class* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996), 5.

A series of police records collected at the Palermo State Archives from the years 1933 to 1948 reveal that reports of sexual assault to public authorities did not begin with the Viola family. Sex crimes prosecuted under title XI of the Italian penal codes were known as Crimes Against Public Morality.[114] A number of these cases appeared in the Palermo State Archive well before the charges file by the Viola family. These documents provide very little information about the legal outcomes of the suits filed on behalf of women who had been sexually violated, but they do provide evidence that women and their families sought help from public officials and did not always take matters into their own hands to save their honor. The Palermo records demonstrate that families filed complaints and suits on behalf of their daughters against unwanted suitors who they accused of acts such as seduction, kidnapping, rape, forced prostitution, and fornication. These suits appeared in the records as early as 1933.

On January 1, 1944, La Mantia Vincenzo, 53, made a denunciation on behalf of his daughter, La Manta Giovanna. Vincenzo accused Mercurio Michele, 37, of rape and of making a promise of marriage. Unfortunately, the record supplies little more information regarding the individuals, the details of the assault, or the end results of the suit.[115] In a case from October 13, 1943, Antonino Di Franco filed a complaint on behalf of his daughter Francesca against Giuseppe Salvatore for rape and injury. According to the record, Francesca, 22, confirmed through interrogation and earlier testimonies given by her parents that she had been kidnapped from her home against her will and forced to

[114] Police and court documents are unavailable after 1944 due to Italy's 70-year privacy laws. In 1975 the court of cassation in Italy acknowledged the right to privacy protecting domestic and personal situations from disclosure. For more information, see Cassazione 27 Maggio 1975, n. 2129, "Diritto d'autore" 367-78; and Sabina Kirschen, *Il Codice della Privacy, fra Tradizione ed Innovazione* (*The Privacy Code, Between Tradition and Innovation*) *in* Panetta, *supra* note 5, at 7, (translated by author).
[115] Questura di Palermo, January 1, 1944, Palermo State Archives, Busta 136, *Delitti contro il buon costume,* n. 149.

stay with the accused.[116] These documents indicate that women, with support from their families, brought suits against seducers and rapists decades before the Viola case.

These cases also suggest that strict ideas about honor and virginity were not the only ideologies that dictated sexual relations in Sicily. Sexual boundaries were persistently contested. Despite the law, cultural norms, and codes of conduct, individual and economic circumstances often overrode notions of honor. In 1941, Angela and Paolo Carbonaro were charged with the corruption of their daughter Rosaria, a minor who had been prostituted to earn more money for the family. The report claims that Rosaria had been involved in a life of immoral conduct and corrupt existence. The report also noted that Rosaria's parents had used her lavish earnings to purchase household goods and clothing out of line with their poor economic conditions. Rosaria testified that she was sent to clean the wine shop of a Giuseppe Traina. "After about a month," she claimed, "he accompanied me to the barrels in the back of the shop where he groped my breasts and kissed my face. He then sat down and made me sit on his knees. Then he invited me to perform masturbatory acts on him."[117] Rosaria said that Traina "handed me a 50 lira note that I gave to my mother, telling her how I had earned them. She warned me not to commit such acts in the future, but after a week, needing more money, I went back to Traina's shop."[118] Testimony from a neighbor suggested that Rosaria's mother was aware of her daughter's actions. Giuseppina Vitta testified that she saw with her own eyes what Rosaria was doing at the wine shop and that one day she had accompanied Rosaria to help clean Traina's shop. At one point, she noticed Rosaria and Traina behind a set of

[116] Questura di Palermo, May 5, 1943, Palermo State Archives, Busta 136, *Delitti contro il buon costume,* n. 1271.
[117] Questura di Palermo, February 28, 1941, Palermo State Archives, Busta 136, *Delitti contro il buon costume,* n. 1347.
[118] Ibid.

barrels, where Rosaria was half naked and sitting on the legs of the old man. Vitta claimed that she immediately went to Rosaria's mother to tell her about what she had seen, but apparently Rosaria continued to frequent Traina's wine shop. Vitta testified that she immediately stopped associating with the family because it was clear that they were immoral people.[119]

Accusations of assault could also be brought by the parents of young couples who orchestrated *fuitina* against their family's wishes. Families did not always concede to a love marriage even after the loss of virginity. In the case of Francesca Librorio, the woman's father, Giuseppe Librorio, filed a lawsuit against Eduardo Riccobono for carnal violence to the detriment of his daughter. When questioned, Francesca admitted that she had "fled from the house together with Eduardo in a moment of spontaneous will with the intention to live with him."[120] These stories provide a small glimpse into the contested space of honor culture in the 1940s, and they also illustrate the complexity of sexual relations in Sicily well before the Franca Viola case.

More research is needed, but the documents I analyzed suggest that incidents of sexual assault did not always result in a forced marriage. Instead, the complaints filed with local police imply that there were other possible, and perhaps common, alternatives to forced marriages. This evidence brings into question the popular belief that Sicilian families always dealt with honor crimes on their own through violence or reparatory marriage. Franca Viola remains the most famous example of a women obtaining the support of civic institutions against sexual violence, but she was not the first woman to reject a *fuitina* and demand control over her body and sexual life after an assault.

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[119] Ibid.

[120] Questura di Palermo. May 5, 1943. Palermo State Archives. Busta 136. *Delitto contro il buon costume.* n. 1271.

X. Conclusion

The Viola case allows us to look closely at the social and cultural world of Italian sexuality after the war. However, in many ways, the popular representations of the Viola case distorted how people understood the *fuitina* custom. The use of honor codes to promote the subjugation of women in Italy did not end with the Viola case. The shifting centrality of strict interpretations of honor, purity, and social value to Italian culture was a fluid and fragmented process. In Sicily, women were not merely victims of their oppressive family and restrictive cultural traditions. Rather, as this chapter demonstrates, they were often able to exert some agency over their own bodies and sexual relations. And sometimes their acts of resistance were even supported by their families.

The coverage of the Viola case reflected various themes in Italian national history, but the most prominent was the belief in southern otherness. Coverage of the Viola case not only highlighted contemporary national tensions between north and south, but the coverage also perpetuated a popular fascination with Sicilian habits and customs. Even as observers noted that the actions taken by Franca Viola represented a major change for Sicilian culture, many continued to emphasize the supposed backwardness of Sicily and Sicilians.

The Franca Viola story can be read in many ways. Her story offered other victims of physical and sexual violence a public example of a woman successfully defying a man and asserting control of her body. Viola's story also marked a critical turning point for shifting ideas about gender, sexuality, and marriage in a rapidly changing society.[121] However, although Viola's case is often connected to discussions about female

[121] Cullen, "The Case of Franca Viola," 1.

emancipation and sexual violence, her story also remains largely absent from many histories of feminism in Italy.[122]In the late 1960s and 1970s, Italian feminists did not fully engage with the Viola case, with honor crimes, or even with violent cases involving *fuitina*. Although many feminists believed the culture of honor was used to oppress women, they avoided addressing honor practices like *fuitina* directly.[123] The place of *fuitina* in Italian feminism is the subject of chapter four.

[122] Paola Bono and Sandra Kemp, eds. *Italian Feminist Thought: A Reader,* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 234-254; Adami Cristina, Alberta Basaglia, Franca Bimbi, and Victoria Tola, *Liberta feminile e violenza sulle donne,* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2000); Maud Ann Bracke, *Women and the Re-invention of the Political: Feminism in Italy 1968-1983.* (New York: Routledge, 2014); Rachel Fenton, "Rape in Italian Law: Towards the Recognition of Sexual Autonomy," *Rethinking Rape Law,* eds. Clare McGlynn and Vanessa Munro, (New York: Routledge, 2010); Tamar Pitch, "The Political Use of the Law: The Italian Women's Movement and the Rape Campaign," *ALSA Forum,* vol. VII, no. 2-3 (1983), 139-162; Tamar Pitch, *Limited Responsibilities: Social Movements and Criminal Justice System,* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Rachel Van Cleave, "Rape and Querela in Italy: False Protection of Victim Agency," *Michigan Journal of Gender and Law,* vol.13 (2007), 273-310.
[123] Ibid.

Chapter 3: Body of Law: Redefining Rape Law in Italy, 1945-Present

> The relationship between law and culture is dynamic, interactive, and dialectical. The law is both a producer and object of culture in combination with other cultural artifacts maintains social and cultural narratives.
>
> Noami Mezey, legal scholar[124]

> Men pass, but ideas remain…
>
> Giovanni Falcone[125]

I. Introduction

Violence against women remains ubiquitous in Italy. Historically, honor culture actively promoted some kinds of gendered violence, and Italian law tacitly normalized sexual violence. The practice of *fuitina*, sitting squarely between tradition and crime, was only able to exist with the support of both Italian culture and Italian law. Italian criminal law is national and does not vary by region or province, and the legal structures that supported reparatory marriages, even in cases of abduction and rape, existed in Italian law until 1981. Although *fuitina* was commonly associated with Sicily, the custom and the laws that allowed it were part of the national legal system and were central to widely held ideas about Italian values and culture. This chapter investigates the transformation of the laws that governed *fuitina* as well as the political conditions that led to legal and cultural changes to the ways Italian society understood and responded to sexual violence against women.

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[124] Noami Mezey, "Law as Culture," *Georgetown Law Faculty Publications and Other Works.* 2001. Reprinted by permission of Yale Journal of Law and the Humanities, Vol. 13, 35-67.

[125] Full quote by Giovanni Falcone. Italian Translation: "Gli uomini passano, l idee restano. Restano le loro tensioni morali e continueranno a camminare sulle gambe di altri uomini." Giovanni Falcone was an Italian judge and prosecuting magistrate. He spent his career combatting the mafia in Sicily. In 1992, he was, assassinated by the Sicilian mafia shortly after he presided over the Maxi trial, a criminal trial against the mafia conducted in Palermo Sicily between1986-1992. Sicilian prosecutors indicted 475 mafiosi on various mafia related crimes.

The Italian legal system developed in a manner that was heavily gendered and often disadvantageous to women. The clearest examples of the gendered implications of Italian law can be found in laws relating to rape. For example, men could be exonerated of the crime of rape if they married their victim until 1981, and it was not until 1996 that the crime of rape was reclassified as a violent crime against an individual. Before the 1996 change, rape was a property crime or crime against public morality; it was not a crime committed against a female victim.

Female subordination under the law dated back to the first penal and civil codes established after the unification in 1861. The provisions found in the family section of the civil code, and the laws regarding honor and rape in the penal system from the Liberal Era to present, provide important historical context for understanding Italian law as it relates to the female body. Considering the period from the Liberal Era to the present, and specifically highlighting changes in the law following the Fascist period, this chapter documents the evolution of legal and political discourses as they relate to female sexuality and the practice of *fuitina*.

II. Historiography: Rape, Culture, and the Law

Law and culture overlap. Or, in the words of the legal anthropologist Lawrence Rosen, "the law is embedded in the particularities of each culture and [that] carving it out as a separate domain distorts the nature of both the law and culture."[126] This is especially relevant for understanding the intersections of law and culture as they relate to the female body, sex, and *fuitina*. As legal and gender scholars have clearly articulated, Italian law

[126] See Mezey; Also see Lawrence Rosen, *Law as Culture*, (Princeton University Press, 2006). Roger Coterell, "Law in Culture," Ratio Juris, Vol. 17, No. 1. 1-14, 2004, https://ssrn.com/abstract=548090.

and culture both designate the sexual behaviors of men and women as entirely distinct. One result of this legal distinction was the way Italian law conflated private behavior with the health of the state. According to Maria Gabriella Bettiga-Boukerbaut's essay, "Crimes of Honour in the Italian Penal Code: An Analysis of History and Reform," there was a clear correlation between the presence of women in the public sphere and efforts to reform laws promoting gender discrimination.[127] Bettiga-Boukerbaut notes that "the persistence of the honor codes in Italian legal history were indicative of the unwillingness of political forces to modify the status quo, coupled with their view that giving more rights to women would disrupt the structure of the family and society."[128] In other words, the laws governing honor and sexual behavior were designed to promote a misogynistic culture rather than ensure justice.

The Italian legal system underwent revolutionary changes between the 1880s and the present, but there has been remarkable legal continuity within the law as it relates to family, honor, and female sexuality. Eva Cantarella's essay, "Homicides of Honor: The Development of Italian Adultery Law over Two Millenia," argues that ancient legal concepts were used to negotiate modern law within the new Italian state. According to Cantarella, the modifications made to the Zanardelli (1890) and Rocco Codes (1930), though they reduced sentences for female-related crimes such as abortion and infanticide, they also illustrated the persistent need of Italian legislators to still re-enforce the importance of family honor and sexual discipline at every level of society. "Rather than recognizing their dignity as individuals, the extension of the benefit of the motive of

[127] Maria Gabriella Bettiga-Boukerbaut, "Crimes of Honour," in Italian Penal Code: An Analysis of History and Reform," in eds. Lynn Welchman and Sara Hossain. *Honour: Crimes, Paradigms, and Violence Against Women,* (Spinifex Press, 2005), 230-244.
[128] Ibid, 230.

honor to women inscribed the subordination of females to male values in the law code."[129] Even changes as substantive as the addition of women to the protections of the honor codes did not actually change the gendered dynamics of Italian law. Although Italian law underwent massive changes with every new political system, the law has continued to treat women and men by different standards. Whether under parliamentary monarchy (1861), fascist dictatorship (1925) or democratic republic (1946), ideas about honor and sexuality remained relatively unchanged in the law for much of Italian national history.

Rachel Van Cleave's essay, "Sex, Lies and Honor in Italian Rape Law," considers the *Cristiano* decision, also known as the 1998 jeans opinion, and argues that elements of honor culture continued to inform rape law long after the honor codes were abolished. According to Cleave, this is clearly exemplified by the persistence of the *querela,* a concept introduced by the Zanardelli Code of 1889 requiring the victim of rape (or her family) to file an official request that the state prosecute the crime. This provision was maintained in the Rocco Code of 1930 and remains part of Italian rape law today. Cleave argues that the endurance of the *querela* posed a real danger to women by suggesting that rape was not a serious enough crime for the state to assume responsibility for automatic prosecution.[130] Some legal scholars disagree with Cleave's assessment and suggest that the *querela* protects women. Tamar Pitch, a scholar of legal philosophy and the sociology of law, argues that the feminist call for mandatory prosecution only serves to reinforce male authority by taking the decision to prosecute out of the hands of female rape

[129] Eva Cantarella, "Homicides of Honor: The Development of Italian Adultery Law over Two Millenia," in eds. David Kertzer and Richard Saller. *The Family in Italy.* (Yale University Press. 1991), 244.
[130] Rachel Van Cleave, "Sex, Lies, and Honor in Italian Rape Law" *Suffolk University Law Review,* 2005; Also see Cleave, "Rape and Querela in Italy: False Protection of Victim Agency," *University of Michigan Journal of Gender and Law.* 273, 2007, 274-310.

victims. Pitch calls for a new politics of rape prosecution that grants sovereignty and autonomy to the female victims.[131]

The law is an important codifier of cultural scripts. Although there is an established narrative purporting that the legal equality of women has followed a linear trajectory from oppression to liberation, in many ways the process of achieving gender equality has been uneven. Even today there are elements of Italian law that support ideas about women's bodies that promote the acceptance and normalization of sexual violence. Building on the work of Tamar Pitch, this chapter challenges the notion that Italian law provided increasing degrees of equal protection for women over time. By looking at the law within three distinct legal periods in Italian history—the Liberal era, the Fascist era, and the postwar period—I demonstrate that while legal codes have undergone significant transformation, laws dictating control over the female body have remained relatively consistent. Despite the expansion of some kinds of legal rights for women, certain attitudes within the law and criminal justice system, particularly those that relate to honor and female sexual autonomy, persisted even in the face of radical political and cultural change. Furthermore, changes to the laws governing sexual violence have a limited ability to change cultural attitudes about female sexual conduct. For much of Italian national history, changes made to laws governing rape have been undermined by a criminal justice system that continued to treat victims of sexual violence as partially responsible for their own violation.

III. Political Foundations of Feminist Law

[131] Tamar Pitch, *Limited Responsibilities*: *Social Movements and Criminal Justice.* (London and New York: Routledge), 1995.

In 1946, following the collapse of the fascist regime, Italy became a democratic republic and expanded the franchise to women. The new constitution made great strides towards gender equality and the protection of women's equal rights before the law. According to Article 3, "All citizens have equal social status and are equal before the law, without regard to their sex, race, language, religion, political opinions, and personal or social conditions."[132] The constitution also promised women equal pay, the right to vote, and the ability to hold public office. The new foundational document essentially created a version of the American Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). The ERA, of course, has still not been adopted into American law.

The expansion of women's legal rights, and access to political participation, brought women into parliament, and once they were in office, female politicians pressed for more laws in support of gender equality. Despite the progressive nature of the postwar constitution, Italian penal and civil law retained elements of fascist law—especially the parts of the law that governed women's rights and sexuality. Many articles of the civil and penal codes remained largely unchanged from the fascist period, and many of their key provisions defended strict gender inequalities. In response to the persistence of these codes, many female legislators insisted that "all articles in the civil and penal codes, especially those concerning women citizenship and equality needed to be implemented, and that women's rights and equality in the law as directly connected to the overall health

[132] *La costituzione della Repubblica Italiana*, Principi Fondamentali, Articolo 3. Accessed online https://www.quirinale.it/page/costituzione. The article also states, "It is the duty of the Republic to remove the economic and social obstacles which by limiting the freedom and equality of citizens, prevent the full development of the human person and the effective participation of all workers in the political, economic and social organization of the country."

and status of the new democratic nation."[133] Despite the best efforts of female legislators, the transformation of the law was slow and inconsistent.[134]

After the war, Italian electoral politics included a wide variety of groups across the political spectrum, but three parties dominated postwar politics: the Christian Democrats (DC), The Italian Communist Party (PCI), and the Italian Socialist Party (PSI). The Christian Democratic party (DC) came to power in 1943 and dominated politics until 1992. The DC was a centrist Catholic party comprised of mostly right-leaning political groups.[135] Despite some liberal influences, the DC was socially conservative, valorized the "traditional" family, and emphasized the maternal role of women within the private sphere.[136] The DC played a dominant role in the politics of Italy from its victory in the 1948 elections until its eventual demise in 1994 amid corruption scandals.[137] Although the Christian Democrats were characterized by a number of factions, the party represented Italian Catholics on both the right and left against the Italian Communist Party (PCI). Like the DC, many women in the PCI supported individual rights and women's rights, and both parties supported female suffrage. The PCI was a stronger advocate of women's rights, but the party framed women's rights as a labor issue. They focused their efforts on creating economic parity for women; it did not emphasize social issues that might challenge the moral authority of

[133] Molly Tambor, *The Lost Wave: Women and Democracy in Postwar Italy*, (Oxford University Press, 2014), 9.
[134] Tambor has noted that the surge of women in early legislatures of the new Italian republic was in step with other European nations. There are especially strong parallels with France where women were granted the right to vote after the war.
[135] John Agnew, *Place and Politics in Modern Italy,* (University of Chicago Press, 2002), 144.
[136] Valerio Pocar and Paola Ronfani, "Family Law in Italy: Legislative Innovations and Social Change," *Law and Society* 12 4, 1978, 612.
[137] The *Tangentopoli* scandals were the result of a nationwide judicial investigations into political corruption in Italy in the 1990s which led to the demise of the so-called "First Republic." Investigations led to the exposure and crimes of politicians and industry leaders tied to members of Italy's major political parties (Christian Democrats (DC) and the Italian Socialist Party (PSI)).

the Church.[138] Like the DC, the PCI also stressed the importance of the family and the role of women as mothers. In light of this focus, they were reluctant to confront gender inequality when it came to sexuality, divorce, and women's inequality within marriage.[139]

The Italian Socialist Party (PSI) was more sympathetic to women's issues than other major parties. The PSI had been a strong advocate for women since its inception in 1892, but following the war the party failed to consider cultural aspects of female oppression. It was not until the late 1970s and 1980s that all three major political parties began to take cultural feminist issues seriously. The Radical Party (PR) was also a leading force for women's rights in Italy. They were the most anti-establishment of the parties and advocated for the breakdown of traditional gender roles. Although it only had a few seats in parliament, PR were major advocates for civil rights reform in the 1970s. There were other influential, although more minor, parties on the left, center, and right such as the Italian Republican Party (PRI) and the Italian Liberal Party (PLI) that formed alliances with the major political groups in order to pass legislation.

Operating alongside the party structure, the Catholic Church played a major role in Italian politics. By the 1950s, the expansion of rights and opportunities for women, coupled with the increasing Americanization of society, resulted in a major backlash from the Church. The Catholic Church was staunchly anti-feminist and promoted a traditional organization of the family. As late as the 1950s, the Church supported the authority of husbands over wives, and Church officials stressed the difficulty of having

[138]Perry Willson, *Women in the Twentieth Century*, 131.
[139] Christian democratic parties came to power across Europe after the war, not just in Italy. Christian Democratic parties thrived after the war in countries like the Netherlands, Belgium, and France, and West Germany who maintained a majority of the Catholic vote. Even the most conservative of Catholics had no choice but to vote Christian Democrat because conventional right wing parties either lost credibility or were banned out right. For more information see Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945,* (Penguin Books, 2006).

gender equality within marriages. The Church even condoned the rights of men to beat their wives and prevent them from working.[140] In many Italian regions, the Church still administered the majority of marriages under the power of the 1929 Concordat and exercised jurisdiction over nullity and annulment.[141] The Church did not support the right to divorce.[142]

Despite the active opposition of the Church, the inclusion of female suffrage in the 1946 constitution demonstrated that many Italians were committed to gender equality. In the realm of employment and political enfranchisement, the postwar was a period of significant gains for women. However, despite the equality guaranteed by the constitution, the penal and civil codes that governed laws related to the female body and sex remained restrictive and sexist until at least the 1970s.

IV. History of the Law: Liberal Era to Present

Liberal Era

Established in 1889, the first new law code of the unified Italian state, the Zanardelli Penal Code named for Minister of Justice Giuseppe Zanardelli, remained intact until 1930. Based on Enlightenment ideology, the Code was essentially gender neutral when it came to the punishment of crimes with the critical exception of the crimes of adultery, infanticide, and abortion.[143] Yet, despite the appearance of gender equity

[140] Michela De Giorgio, *Le Italiane dall'unita a oggi,* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1992), 309.
[141] Article 34 of the Concordat of 1929 was an agreement between the Fascist government and the Holy See, which stated that religious marriages celebrated in conformity with the Concordat rite had the same effects in Italy, as did civil marriages.[141]
[142] "Like the Church, the Christian Democrats were strongly opposed to divorce. The Italian left led by the Italian Communist Party (PCI) was also willing to compromise on this matter in the interest of national unity. See Mark Seymour, *Debating Divorce In Italy,* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 166.
[143] Mary Gibson, "Women's Prisons in Italy: A Problem of Citizenship," in *Crime, Histoire & Societies* Vol. 13, No. 3, 2009, 27-40.

regarding the punishment of most crimes, the Zanardelli Code upheld laws that supported the patriarchal family structure. The Zanardelli drafters distinguished between violations of law and violations of morality. According to the Code, the state had more authority to punish criminal offenses than offenses driven by individual passions. The Zanardelli Code maintained the distinction between criminal and moral crimes through a series of laws known collectively as the honor codes.

Honor codes governed crimes associated with the protection of honor or reputation, and many Italians supported the existence of these codes. Even in the face of violent crimes, beliefs about honor and the honor codes mediated responses from both the courts and the public.[144] Under the Zanardelli code, adultery was a crime against society itself, and women were punished for the crime of adultery more severely than men. The law stipulated that there was no evidence needed from a man who sought to formally accuse a wife of adultery, but women could only bring a case if there was evidence that a man maintained a concubine or mistress in his home or elsewhere.[145] The adultery laws penalized woman for their gender and subjected them to higher penalties and a greater risk of losing home, livelihood, and custody of children. The honor codes could have life-or-death consequences; under the honor codes the murder of an adulterous wife or lover was punished less severely than murder inspired by a different motive.

Articles 331-327 of the Zanardelli penal code, collectively known as the *Crimes Against the Morality of the Family,* often led to the exoneration of men who had committed sexual violence. A rapists faced five years in jail for raping a woman or minor

[144] Giovanni Cazetta. "Seduscta: Onesta e consenso femminile nella *cultura giuridica moderna,* 247, 1999. Characterized Francesco Carrara's theory of penal law.
[145] Codice Penale 1889, Articles 353-354.

and as long as ten years in jail for raping a female child under the age of twelve.[146] However, Article 326 provided for the exoneration of the perpetrator if he married his rape victim.[147] In addition, Article 327 of the Code maintained that the crime would be prosecuted only by *querela,* an official complaint of the victim. If the victim was a minor, the prosecution proceeded automatically or by authority of the legal guardian, which in most cases would be the father of the victim.[148] Unlike homicide, which was considered a crime against a person and automatically prosecuted by the state according to Chapter Nine of the penal code, rape was considered an offense against morality and the family. The law categorized a rape victim as exclusively female and maintained no stipulations for male rape victims. By allowing for a rapist to marry his victim and be exonerated of all criminal charges, the state tacitly supported male perpetrators.

The prosecution of rape within Italian law was riddled with contradictions. According to the legal historian Giovanni Cazetta, Enlightenment ideology led to the adoption of the notion that women were individual subjects capable of consenting to sex. Prior to this development, Italian law viewed women as legal dependents incapable of consenting to sex. The notion that women had sexual agency led the courts to determine that women who engaged in sex outside of marriage did not need protection from the state.[149] At the same time, rape victims were newly charged with proving there had been violence associated with the crime; in many cases the courts considered victims to be

[146] Titolo VIII, Dei delitti contro il buon costume e l'ordine delle famiglie, *Codice Penale Zanardelli, Le disposizioni per l'attuazione*, Torino: Unione Tipografico Editrice, 1890, 874.
[147] Articolo 326, Titolo VIII, Capo II, *Codice Penale Zanardelli*, 876.
[148] Articolo 327, Titolo VIII, Capo II, *Codice Penale Zanardelli*, 876.
[149] Cazetta, Presumiter seducta: Onesta e consenso femminile nella cultura guiridica moderna, 443.

seducers or accomplices in their own violation. According to Cazetta, this shift in the prosecution of rape led, in many cases, to a partial decriminalization of rape.[150]

The Zanardelli Code drew on Cesare Beccaria's philosophical treatise about crime from 1764, *On Crimes and Punishment*. Many legal scholars credit this text with leading to the abolishment of torture and capital punishment. Beccaria's work argued effectively that there should be limitations to the state's power to punish and noted that the state should punish only conduct that was dangerous to the state or citizens.[151] By adopting the Zandardelli codes as the law of the new nation, the Italian state demonstrated that crimes against women's bodies were fundamentally crimes of morality and family honor and were not considered a threat to the wellbeing of the state.

The civil code of the new nation—the Pisanelli Code of 1865—also drew on Enlightenment ideologies and created laws that granted women some new rights while maintaining their legal subordination in other areas. This conflicting expansion and retraction of legal rights drove the establishment of *patria potesta* or parental authority, which gave parents including mothers, authority over their children. The Pisanelli Code determined that both a mother and a father could exercise parental authority over their children, and that sons as well as daughters could inherit property equally. At the same time, the Pisanelli Code regulated sexuality and enforced specific gendered behaviors. The civil code's section on marriage law demonstrates some of these particularities. Article 131 dictated that the husband was the head of the family, and a wife assumed the

[150] Ibid.
[151] For more information on Beccaria see "Introduction," in Edward Wise. *The Italian Penal Code: American Series of Foreign Penal Codes*, (Translation), 1978, 1-25.

civil status of her husband and was obliged to take his last name. A wife was also obligated to accompany her husband wherever he chose to reside.[152]

In all civil matters, fathers represented all members of the family (Article 224).[153] Both parents had the authority of consent over who their children could marry, and this authority extended to male children until they reached the age of twenty-five and female children until they reached the age of twenty-one. When a couple disagreed over their children's future marital status, the father retained the final authority (Article 63).[154] Although parental authority was extended to both parents, placing all offspring under the control of parents until the age of emancipation, the ultimate power of family decision-making was granted to the father unless he was unable to exercise that power. Only in the case of a father's illness or death could total familial authority be exercised by the mother.[155]

The civil code also determined who could receive the protections afforded by the new laws governing the life of the family. Article 48 defined legitimate parenthood as one composed within a civil marriage between man and woman. A child born out of wedlock was considered illegitimate and was denied inheritance and property rights.[156] At the same time, under Article 53 of the civil code, the promise of future marriage was not legally binding.[157] Unlike the previous Italian civil codes or laws, there were no provisions protecting women from the potential seduction of a lover or fiancé who might exert pressure for sex with the promise of marriage. In the case of a pregnancy resulting

[152] Articolo 131, Titolo V (del matrimonio), *Il Codice Civile Italiano,* annotato dall'avvocato Vincenzo Cattaneo, Carlo Borda e di altri giure consulti, (Torino: Dalla Societa L'Unione Tipografico-editrice, 1865), 125.
[153] Articolo 224, Titolo VIII, *Codice Civile Italiano*, 182.
[154] Articolo 63, Titolo V, Sezione I (Della Promessa Di Matrimonio), *Il Codice Civile Italiano,* 1865, 97.
[155] Articolo 220, Titolo VIII (Della Patria Potesta), *Il Codice Civile Italiano*, 1865, 179.
[156] Articolo 48, Titolo IV (Della Parentela E Della Affinita), *Il Codice Civile Italiano*, 1865, 69.
[157] Articolo 53, Titolo V, *Il Codice Civile Italiano*, 1865, 92.

from sex outside of marriage, paternity suits, which gave women the legal right to file court cases to legitimize the identity of the father in an effort to claim financial support, were considered illegal unless a criminal conviction for rape or abduction had been proven at the time of conception (Article 189).[158]The prohibition of paternity suits, paired with the virtual decriminalization of rape, essentially allowed men to eschew responsibility for their offspring.

Central to critiques of the gender inequality under the law was the issue of seduction. In the 1860s and 1870s, there were approximately 73,000 illegitimate births reported a year in Italy, and tens of thousands of Italian women were married in a church without a civil ceremony. The new state required a civil ceremony in addition to a religious ceremony, and women married only in a religious ceremony were not legally married and lacked legal protection under the new civil code for themselves and their children.[159] For liberal reformers, the family was a moral structure concerned with the duties of men and women. According to female reformers, the state neglected the rights of women in favor of promoting family stability.[160]

The authority of the Catholic Church impacted both civil and criminal codes and contributed to the slow development of gender equality under the law. In the early national period, the Church resisted many of the liberal doctrines associated with the new Italian state, and after the loss of Rome, Pius IX had never officially recognized the Italian state. After 1870, Pius IX prohibited Catholic followers from participating in

[158] Articolo 189, Titolo VIII, *Il Codice Civile Italiano*, 1865, 185.
[159] David Kertzer, *Sacrificed For Honor*, 23.
[160] Chiara Saraceno, "Women, Family, and the Law, 1750-1942, *Journal of Family History,* 1990; 15; 427, 430; Mark Seymour "Keystone of the Patriarchal family? Indissoluble Marriage: Marriage, Masculinity and Divorce in Liberal Italy," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies,* Vol. 10 (2005), 297-313. Divorce law was introduced in other European nations at the time such as in France in 1884.

national politics and parliamentary elections. The conflict between the Church and the state was especially pronounced regarding marriage and divorce. The Church sought to protect marriage at all costs while the liberal state, theoretically, supported more secular regulations of the private sphere. Liberals viewed marriage as a contract between two willing parties and potentially dissoluble if necessary, but the state avoided engaging with the radical notion of divorce.[161]

For the women who'd fought for Italian unification, lingering gender inequality under the law was especially problematic. Women in the 1860s and 1870s suffered for the Italian cause, and they expected the unified state to provide them more rights than preceding regimes.[162] The civil code's family law was a particular point of contention for women like Anna Maria Mozzoni and Paolina Schiff who produced manifestos lamenting on the fact that unification had done little for Italian women.[163]

Fascist Italy

The Fascist period saw many changes to the legal system, but gender ideology continued to be at the central of many of the state's legal policies. The Rocco Penal Code of 1930 and the Civil Code of 1942 led to major transformations of the law, but the laws governing family changed relatively little. The exception came with the Concordat of 1929 which returned some legal authority to the Church.[164] Much like the Liberal state before it, the Fascist state used the law to enforce the sanctity of the patriarchal Italian

[161] Mario Banti, *La nazione del Risorgimento: Parentela, santita e onore alle origini dell'Italia unita,* (Turin: Einudi. 1948).
[162] Howard, 2.
[163] Mozzoni's work *La donna e I suoi rapport sociali in occasione della revisioni del Codice Italiano, Woman and Her Social Relationships on the Occasion of the Revision of the Italian Civil Code* offered a critique of Italian family law as did Paolina Schiff's essay, "La donna e la legge civile."
[164] One of the Lateran Pacts of 1929 between the Kingdom of Italy and the Holy See regulated relations between the Catholic Church and the Italian state.

family. While the Liberal state retained honor laws out of deference to the rights of the individual and the Church, the Fascists retained honor laws because the laws conformed to the Fascist's pronatalist political agenda. Despite the vast differences between them, Liberal and Fascist policy makers both supported gender inequality in the arena of sex.

Named for the fascist Minster of Justice, Alfredo Rocco, the Rocco Penal Code was an expression of the ultra-fascist ideology the regime deployed to define itself.[165] Next to Giovanni Gentile, many considered Rocco the most comprehensive fascist theorist, and his legal theories dictated the legal culture of fascist Italy. The Rocco Code differed from the liberal Zandarelli Code in several critical ways. According to the criminological theories that underpinned the Zandarelli Code, criminal behavior was the result of an expression of free will and thereby deterred by appropriate punishment. The Rocco Code, on the other hand, framed criminal activity as a crime against the state and allowed for far more severe penalties and longer terms of imprisonment. The Rocco Code reintroduced the death penalty, which had been abolished by the Zanardelli Code, for more than 20 offenses including political crimes. The Rocco Code also established minimum sentences and increased maximum sentences for a range of crimes including sexual offenses, abortion, and crimes against the state. [166]

The Rocco code redefined sex crimes as matters of the state, and defined abortion was a crime against the integrity of the Italian race.[167] In a striking departure from the Liberal era, under the Rocco code the use of contraception by women was a crime. According to Victoria De Grazia's *How Fascism Ruled Women,* "The fascist regime sustained and even reinforced numerous legal measures that treated women as chattels of

[165] Edward Wise, *The Italian Penal Code* Translated, (London: Rothman and Co, 1978), xxiv.
[166] Wise, xxxv.
[167] Saraceno, 436.

male and family honor."[168] The fascist state defined women's sexual behavior as being in the interest of the state.[169]

Under the Rocco Code, the majority of the laws related to sex appeared in a section of Code known as *Crimes against Public Morality and Decency.* These laws typically distinguished between sex crimes committed against minors and adults. They also drew clear distinctions between various forms of sexual encounters and allowed for varied punishments for crimes associated with carnal intercourse, sex without penetration, and abductions that did not result in sexual contact. Notably, under the Rocco Code there were no changes in punishments for perpetrators who were responsible for the victim in any capacity: parent, guardian, or teacher. Even in cases of a victim in a compromised physical or mental state, the law acknowledged no special circumstances.

At the same time, a number of these laws related, at least tangentially, to the practice of *fuitina* stipulated higher penalties than the Zanardelli Code. Chapter One, Article 519 indicated that the use of violence or threat to compel carnal intercourse would result in between three and ten years of imprisonment.[170] Article 522 or *Abduction for the Purposes of Marriage* stipulated a sentence of one to three years for acts of violence, threats, or other deceit resulting in the detention of an unmarried woman for the purposes of marriage; Article 523 or *Abduction for the Purpose of Lust* called for three to five-year sentences. Both Articles 522 and 523 included various stipulations for increased punishment if the victim was a minor.[171]

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[168] Victoria De Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women: Italy 1922-1945,* (University of California Press, 1992), 89.
[169] Saraceno, 436.
[170] Articolo 519, Titolo IX (Dei delitti contro la moralita pubblica e il buon costume), *Codice Penale Rocco*, Ministero Della Giustizia E Degli Affari Di Culto, (Roma: Istituto Poligrafico Dello Stato, 1930), 114.
[171] Articolo 523, Titolo IX, *Codice Penale Rocco*, 115.

Fuitina entered the law explicitly with Article 525. This article allowed for a modification of Articles 522, 523, and 524 by allowing for the reduction of punishment if the offender, before conviction, returned the person abducted and restored her liberty by bringing her back to the house from where she was taken, returning her to her family, or by placing her in some other location accessible to her family.[172]Article 525 was consistent with the Zanardelli codes and hewed to the belief that in the case of *fuitina* women were often consenting instigators. Taken together, Articles 519, 522, 523, 524, and 525 framed the legal understanding of rape-related crimes under the fascist regime.

Chapter Two of the Rocco Code addressed a category of crimes known as affronts to decency and sexual honor. These included any actions considered obscene such as the corruption of a minor, prostitution, or the trafficking of women and children. Article 530 or *Corruption of Youth* noted that any acts of lust committed in the presence of a minor carried a punishment of six months to three years, but there would be no punishment if the minor was "already corrupted."[173] In other words, if the minor had engaged in sexual activity prior to the offense, the court would be unable to determine the true circumstances of the offense. Article 530 codified the centrality of honor ideology to fascist legal policy.

Under both the Rocco Code and its predecessor, no rape charge would be prosecuted without an official complaint, known as a *querela*, filed by the rape victim or her family. According to Article 542, prosecution of rape would only be initiated automatically by the state if the assault was committed by a parent, guardian, public officer, or a person charged with a public service. If the rape was related to another crime

[172] Articolo 525, Titolo IX, *Codice Penale Rocco*, 115.
[173] Articolo 530, Titolo IX, *Codice Penale Rocco*, 115.

requiring automatic prosecution the *querela* would not be required. While the Zanardelli Code allowed for the victim to elect to withdraw the *querela,* the Rocco Code did not allow the victim to withdraw the *querela*. Finally, Article 544 provided for the elimination of all punishment if the offenses resulted in a marriage contract. Following the establishment of the contract, the punishment would also be dropped for others associated with the crime, even if the sentence had already been imposed.[174]

The fascist state understood the laws surrounding sexual crimes as part of a larger effort to protect women. Within fascist ideology, women and minors were considered vulnerable property of the state and therefore in need of state protection. However, this protection would only be extended if the women and children in question were sufficiently virtuous. The requirement of the irrevocable *querela* in cases of rape, and the suspension of punishment when the woman was already corrupted or married her abductor, demonstrated that the state was only interested protecting certain kinds of women.

The fascist state took special interest in establishing gender specific roles for both men and women. Mussolini's vision for the new fascist civilization was expansive and required demographic growth along with political and ideological indoctrination. The state took a two-pronged approach to driving demographic growth. First, the government implemented a formal policy calling for higher birth rates and enforced strict restrictions on abortion and contraception. Title X or *Crimes Against Community and the Integrity of Heath and Race* dealt with abortion, contraception, impotence, sexually transmitted diseases, and any additional threats to procreation. Abortion carried a sentence of two to five years in prison, although like the Zanardelli Code, the Rocco Code called for the

[174] Articolo 544, Titolo IX, *Codice Penale Rocco,* 117.

punishment to be reduced by half if the procedure was carried out to protect individual or family honor.[175] Abortions conducted in the course of medical interventions required to save a woman's life were permitted. According to Article 553, the use of contraception or any tools against procreation carried a sentence of one year and a fine of ten thousand lire.[176]Although some of these laws could be applied to men, as the bearers of children the state held women ultimately responsible for the expansion and vitality of the Italian race.

The ideology framing fascist law explicitly rejected liberal notions of equality between the genders, and the programs and policies of the fascist regime restricted women's basic rights and removed many of the gains women had made under the liberal state. However, despite the many differences between the Zanardelli Code and the Rocco Code, both codes had many continuities regarding sexual violence, honor, and the policing of female sexual behavior. Even after the war, despite the fall of the fascist regime and the writing of a new constitution, many fascist laws remained in the statute books. In 1956, the state began to reform the remaining fascist legal codes, but most reforms regarding family law and women's rights would not begin until the 1970s.

Postwar Republic

The fall of the fascist regime and the creation of the new constitution in 1948 led to new legislation governing the family. In the postwar republic, marriage became legally bound by the equality of the spouses under Article 29, and the family was redefined as "a

[175] Articolo 547, Titolo X (Dei delitti contro la integrita e la sanita della stirpe), *Codice Penale Rocco,* 117.
[176] Articolo 553, Titolo X, Codice Penale Rocco, 117.

natural society founded in marriage."[177] Article 30 of the constitution redefined the status of illegitimacy and insured that children born outside of marriage were "entitled to the same legal rights as those born within matrimony."[178]Article 3 of the new constitution guaranteed equal social and legal status to all citizens regardless of sex.[179] Article 57 provided universal suffrage.[180] Despite these moves towards greater gender equality, opposition parties attempted to minimize the scope of the new constitutional provisions and delay their implementation. And, despite the ratification of the new constitution, many fascist legal codes remained unchanged after the war. It took many years of legal struggle to reform the fascist civil and penal codes, and in some instances, fascist laws continued to govern aspects of gender and sexuality until very recently.[181]

At the same time, the active role of many women during the war and within the resistance movement helped to legitimize their place in postwar politics. The extension of the franchise provided women new political opportunities and mobilized women to engage in new forms of activism. Italian women increasingly joined political organizations and unions, and their membership sparked a new era marked by the expansion of women's political rights and gender equality before the law and in the work place. Despite their relatively marginal position, newly elected female parliamentary deputies in the late 1940s and 1950s forced some important legislative improvements and often supported each other across party lines.

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[177] Articolo 29, Titolo II (Rapporti etico-sociale) *Costituzione della Repubblica Italiana,* 27 Dicembre 1947 in Paolo Cendon e Augusto Baldassari, *Codice Civile Annotato con la Giurisprudenza,* (Torino: Wolters Kluwer Italia Giuridica, 2007), 6.
[178] Articolo 30, Titolo II, Costituzione della Repubblica Italiana, 6.
[179] Articolo 3, Principi Fondamentali, *Costituzione della Repubblica Italiana,* 3.
[180] Articolo 57, Titolo I, Ordinamento della Repubblica, *Costituzione della Repubblica Italiana*, 9.
[181] Ibid, 630.

Legislation about women in the 1950s and 1960s focused mainly on matters regarding the public sphere: citizenship rights, employment law, and access to the professions and public office.[182] Women's rights in the private sphere, particularly those related sex and the female body, did not significantly expand until the 1970s. Despite the radical transformation of much of Italian life, the legal transition from fascism to democracy remained slow and inconsistent. The next section of this chapter provides an overview of the feminist legal campaigns. Beginning in the late 1960s, these campaigns were informed by legal debates and changes to the law codes as they related to the female body beginning. They shed light on the legal practices and attitudes about female sexuality within Italian law and in the courts, and ultimately contributed to eradication of the honor codes.

V. The Feminist Campaign and Law Reform, 1960s-Present

In the 1960s and 1970s, Italian feminists focused their efforts on developing a new understanding of the Italian family. They sought to redefine the family as a system in which husbands and wives shared duties and enjoyed equal rights. They challenged the laws that granted men authority over children and the household, that made divorce illegal, and that supported a husband's right to commit adultery. Feminists also fought against laws that prohibited access to contraceptive information and made abortion illegal. Their efforts also led to major changes to rape law and how the state prosecuted sexual violence. After nearly forty years of legal reform efforts, rape was redefined as a crime against the individual victim instead of an offense against public morality.

[182]See Perry Willson, Chapter 8: "Women's Politics in the Shadow of the Cold War." in *Women in Twentieth Century Italy,* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 129-148. Also see. Molly Tambor. *The Lost Wave: Women and Democracy in Postwar Italy*. Oxford University Press, 2014.

Italian feminists were not alone in their efforts to reframe sexual violence as a crime of power. Feminists across Europe and in the US also challenged existing rape laws.[183] Efforts to change rape laws intersected with other legal issues related to women's bodies and sexual behavior such as restricted access to abortion, contraception, and divorce. Ideas about *fuitina*, as both a cultural expression of gendered ideology and as an activity governed by law, continued to be informed by all these feminist efforts to change the laws that governed women's bodies and sexual autonomy.

Contraception and Abortion

The fight to secure women the right to access abortion care proved very difficult. Abortion posed a deep challenge to the Church's authority over the domain of reproduction, but abortion rights were significant for many Italian women due to the long history of limited access to contraception.[184] By the 1970s, many Italians were ready to consider the repeal of fascist-era contraception laws. "Even for some traditionalists, the liberalization of contraception was a better option than the "the greater evil" of the

[183]In the 1970s feminists across Western Europe and North America mobilized campaigns from abortion to sexual violence in an effort to claim rights to their own bodies. Campaigns to legalize and liberalize abortion rights spread across France, Germany, the Netherlands, The United Kingdom as well as the United States. Abortion was legalized in the United States in 1970. France legalized abortion in 1975, allowing a woman the right to abort up to ten weeks of her pregnancy. Campaigns for abortion were often followed by mobilizations against sexual violence. In the United Kingdom for example the Sexual offenses Act of 1976 improved protection of rape victims' privacy during a trial. British feminists also established rape crisis centers, the first opened in London in 1976. By the 1980s most countries in Europe had outlawed marital rape. In 1976, the International Tribunal of Crimes Against Women convened in Brussels where over two thousand women from forty countries came together to speak on issues related to sexual abuse.

[184] Contraception has traditionally been a taboo subject Italy due to the influence of the Catholic Church. The Fascist regime in particular encouraged demographic growth and inhibited access to contraception. In 1930, Fascist leaders introduced legislation prohibiting publication and propaganda in favor of birth control. Opposition to this legislation grew after World War II. See Jane and Peter Schneider, "Sex and Respectability in the Age of Fertility Decline: A Sicilian Case Study." *Social Science and Medicine.* 1991; 33:8, 885-95; DG Horn, *Social Bodies: Science Reproduction and Italian Modernity,* (Princeton University Press, 1994); Dalla Zuanna, De Rose A, and Ricioppi F., "Low Fertility and Limited Diffusion of Contraception in Italy During the Second Half of the Twentieth Century, *Journal of Population Research.* 2005; 1: 21-47.

legalization of abortion."[185] For Italian feminists, control over one's body was closely tied to contraception and access to sexual education. Feminists fought to repeal the still-existent fascist laws that had restricted access to birth control for women since 1931. Although there were conflicts among feminist groups about contraception, most agreed that women were fundamentally entitled to access contraceptives for sexual pleasure, family planning, and to avoid abortions.[186] In 1971, in the midst of numerous reforms, the Italian Constitutional Court finally repealed the fascist-era anti-contraception laws. The court's decision rested on the premise that "Articles 553 and its clauses included in Articles 112 and 144, which impeded procreation were constitutionally illegitimate."[187] The court also declared that the population policy of the fascist regime, designed to raise the birth rate, was no longer relevant. In contemporary times, limiting births was an important tool for the well-being of families and was necessary to protect women's health.[188] The court also repealed the 1946 law that had censored birth control information.[189]

In the same year, the group most active in the abortion campaign, *Movimento di Liberazione Della Donna* (MLD), began gathering signatures for a petition to decriminalize abortion. Largely as a result of the influence of the Church, all the main political parties, including the Italian Communist Party (PCI), opposed legalizing abortion. Despite this early opposition, in 1975 the PCI introduced a limited abortion bill calling for abortion access for women whose lives or health were endangered by their

[185] Francesca Vassalle, "Bitter Sex: The Politics of Contraception in Post-Fascist Italy 1943-1978," PhD dissertation, The Graduate Center of the City University of New York, 2018, 89.
[186] Vassalle, 95.
[187] Ibid, 99.
[188] Ibid, 101.
[189] Ibid, 98.

pregnancy. They called for this care to be provided in free-of-charge state-run abortion facilities. Feminists put pressure on all the political parties, especially those on the left, and female politicians found it difficult to be indifferent to the push. Eventually female members of the Communist party drove their male colleagues to support abortion rights.

The abortion bill was particularly controversial, even among feminists, but despite partisan differences, feminists campaigned vigorously for an abortion-access law.[190] Law 194 passed in both houses of parliament in 1978, after much debate and bargaining and made abortion legal. Due to significant disagreements between political parties, the law fell short of feminist demands.[191]Under the law, women were granted the right to an abortion within the first 90 days of pregnancy if the pregnancy or birth would damage the woman's physical or mental health. The law required the woman's economic status, social standing, and family dynamics, as well as any extenuating circumstances surrounding the conception such as rape, to be considered when determining her access to the procedure. The procedure was made free under the state healthcare system and private abortions were made illegal. The legislation also recognized the "social value of motherhood" and granted health professionals the right to refuse to participate in the procedure on the basis of conscientious objection.[192] In 1981, a proposal to repeal the law was considered by national referendum, but it was rejected by nearly 70% of voters.

Rape Law

[190] Paola Bono and Sandra Kemp editors, *Italian Feminist Theory: A Reader.* (Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1991), 245.
[191] *Codice Penale* law no. 194, 22 May 1978.
[192]Perry Willson, *Women in Twentieth Century Italy*, 162.

In the 1970s, Italian feminists joined feminists around the world to highlight the connection between women's oppression and sexual violence. Fueled by an organized campaign in 1979, Italian women began to report rapes far more frequently than they had in years prior. This represented a dramatic shift since the era of Franca Viola. When she'd been assaulted in 1965, there had been no judicial process in place for her to seek justice other than the honor codes, and as per the honor codes, marriage was a legitimate reparatory path for the rape victim and her family.[193]

Between 1979 and 1980, criminal code provisions governing rape and sexual violence came under increased scrutiny. In April of 1979, the *Movimento Di Liberazione Della Donna* (MLD), a woman's group associated with campaigns for divorce and abortion reform, announced a new campaign to collect signatures urging a new sexual violence bill. *Unione Donne Italiane* (UDI), formerly the Communist Party's (PCI) women's organization and now a separatist group independent of the PCI, agreed to cooperate with the MLD on their initiative. In a written statement made to all members in October 1979, the UDI announced that "the organization would join other feminist groups to create a national committee that focused on the repealing of all the laws of sexual crimes against a woman that were made against her consent."[194] The coming together of radical and moderate feminists bridged the gap between older and younger feminist groups and ideologies.

In March 1980, the national committee organized a demonstration and presented parliament with 300,000 signatures collected from across the country and calling for new

[193] Van Cleave, Rachel, 2017, "Rape and Querela in Italy: False Protection of Victim Agency." *Michigan Journal of Gender and Law* Vol. 12, Issue 2, 273-310.
[194] *Unione Delle Donne Italiane* (UDI). 1979. "A tutte le organizzasioni," UDI Palermo Archive.

laws.[195]In June of 1980, the parliament received the request known as the *Testament of Proposals for Laws Initiated by the Public.* The request made the case for significant changes to existing rape laws including the reclassification of rape as a crime against a person, the elimination of the distinction between rape and acts of libidinous violence, the ability to prosecute rape within marriage, and an overall increase of the maximum sentences from two to ten years instead of three to five years. The request also asked for permission for women's associations to take part in rape trials. Although Article 544, which exonerated a rapist if he married his victim, was not directly addressed in this proposal, it remained part of the discourse concerning sexual violence and reform efforts for both the civil and penal codes.

Significant reforms of rape laws would not come until the 1980s and 1990s. By the 1980s, legal and political discourse removed the veil of secrecy that had long obscured the facts of sexual violence. At the same time, respect for a woman's right to bodily integrity become a marker of contemporary legal and political discourse in Italy and across Europe. In the 1980 Senate debates, Senator Paolo Barsacchi (PSI) emphasized the need to overturn the "laws that helped to entrench a mentality and culture of oppression. Laws that crystallized women in the image of an individual with no independent power of decision, confined as objects rather than subjects by law."[196]As a result of this push, important changes were established in the Italian penal code in the 1980s and 1990s.

[195] *Unione Delle Donne Italiane* (UDI), 1980."Settimana di mobilitazione e di lotta per la legge contro la violenza sessuale," UDI Palermo Archive.
[196] Barsacchi, Paola, 1980, Senato Della Repubblica VIII legislature, 131 Seduta pubblica, (Resconto Stenografico), Giovedi 15 Maggio.

In 1981, nearly fifteen years after Franca Viola's abduction, the state, through parliamentary legislation eliminated the honor codes and Article 544. Honor was no longer accepted as a legitimate cause for leniency in sentencing crimes of violence including murder and rape. The practice of reparatory marriage was finally outlawed. In 1996, in a move that proved to be a great victory for the feminist legal reform movement, the crime of rape was finally classified by Article 609 as a sexual offense against an individual and personal freedom rather than a crime against public morality.[197]

The 1996 reforms brought extensive changes to the prosecution of rape in Italy. New laws raised the minimum penalty for the crime from three to five years, although the maximum sentence remained ten years.[198]In the case of aggravating circumstances—the victim being a minor, the use of arms, alcohol, narcotics or other stupefying substances, commission by a person in disguise or pretending to be a public official, or commission on a person whose personal liberty is curtailed—the law allowed for sentences of six to twelve years.[199] The new law also eradicated the distinction between vaginal penetration and other sexual acts and made all forms of sexual violence equally punishable under the law.[200] The law also included a provision that criminalized gang rape.[201]

Perhaps the most dramatic transformation of rape law was the reclassification of rape as a crime against a person. Recognizing rape as a crime against a person helped to establish the status of Italian women as full legal subjects. The feminist legal scholar Rachel Fenton argued that "changes in the law have been used to send an ideological

[197] Rachel Fenton, "Rape in Italian Law: Towards the Recognition of Sexual Autonomy," *Rethinking Rape Law*, eds. Clare McGlyn and Vanessa Munro, (New York: Routledge 2010), 183.
[198] Article 609-bis, 1996.
[199] Article 1 609-ter, 1996.
[200] Article 3 609 bis, codice penale, 1996.
[201] Article 9 609-octies, 1996.

message to society about the status of women and the right to self-determination. This is particularly important in light of the fact that sexual violence takes place within culturally and sociologically defined parameters."[202] The 1996 law was the beginning of an even greater push by feminists and members of parliament to reexamine the laws governing a variety of sexual offenses including prostitution, pedophilia, pornography, sex tourism, and stalking. These early reforms helped build a movement of activists and legislators who have worked together to debate and redefine sexual violence in Italian law.

Although most aspects of rape law had undergone radical transformation by the 1990s, the requirement of the *querela* remained. Some advocates argued that the *querela* put undue burden on the rape victim and perpetuated the notion that rape was crime somehow distinct from other crimes. Under the Rocco Code, and under Italian law today, rape was, and remains, the only violent crime for which a *querela* is required. The drafters of the 1996 law argued that they retained the *querela* to allow the victim control over the decision to proceed with a criminal trial.[203]It was also designed to protect women from being coerced into withdrawing their complaint. As noted previously, the issue of the *querela* requirement remains controversial in Italy to this day.

VI. Repealing the Honor Codes

Beginning in 1966, some Italian legislators began an effort to abolish the honor codes in order to align Italian law with laws in other European countries. Debates flared between those who sought repeal and honor code supporters who argued that "the application of the codes and their mild penalties were not necessarily a defect of the law

[202] Ibid, 184.
[203] Article 124, 1996.

but rather determined and assessed by individual judges."[204] This debate divided Parliament but not along clear party lines. One of the earliest and strongest voices for the honor code repeal came from Alberto Guidi, a deputy of the Communist Party, in April of 1967. As part of the feminist movement to reconstruct family law, Guidi proposed the abolition of the special cause of honor for crimes related to adultery, murder, and reparatory marriage. He argued that the removal of honor codes was necessary in order to dismantle the gendered systems of hierarchy within the Italian family. Despite heated discussions in parliament, Guidi's reforms failed to gain ground. Efforts to repeal the honor code did not resume until the latter part of the 1970s.

Between 1977 and 1981 there were long and complex debates within parliament to formally and finally reform the remnants of the Rocco code including the complete dissolution of the honor laws represented by Article 544 and Article 587.[205] On December 14, 1977, the Senate approved a draft of a new law known as the *Abolition of the Criminal Relevance of Honor*. The law was presented by feminist activist and Vice President of the Independent Left, Tullia Romagnoli Carettoni.[206] Carettoni, a strong advocate for laws that protected women and promoted equality of the sexes, called for the complete abolition of all laws in the penal system that discriminated against women. She had been a pivotal force in the fights to legalize divorce in 1974, to reform family law in 1975, and to protect legal abortion in 1978. At the heart of the effort to repeal the honor laws was the notion that sexual honor was a fundamentally outdated

[204] Vittoria Calabro, "Storia di un contrastato tramonto: La legge abrogativa della causa d'onore e del matrimonio riparatore," in *Violenza di genere, politica e istituzioni,* ed. Antonella Cocchiara (Milan: Giuffre Editore, 2014), 295.
[205] Article 544 of the Italian penal code under special circumstances exonerated a man for the crime of rape if the victim married him. Article 587 provided a lesser sentence for the crime of murder if the perpetrator was defending his or her honor.
[206] *Abrogazione della rilevanza penale della causa d'onore,* Camera Dei Deputati, December 14,1977.

concept.[207]Carettoni's draft was approved by the Senate along with the repeal of Article 578 and Article 592 related to child abandonment and infanticide.

The new draft was sent to the Chamber of Deputies on December 19, 1977 and discord among the Italian Socialist Party (PSI), Italian Republican Party (PRI), Italian Democratic Socialist Party (PSDI), Italian Liberal Party (PLI), and even the Italian Communist Party (PCI) resulted in a delay of the provisions. Continuing political crisis following the kidnapping of Aldo Moro in March of 1978 led to a stall in the adoption of the draft.[208] The effort to repeal the honor codes took a back seat to debates about terrorism.

In June of 1979, new elections and the eighth Republican Parliament led to renewed efforts to abolish the honor codes. In July of 1979, a group of senators led by communists and other left independents again presented a new draft of the law titled *Abrogazione della rilevanza penale della causa d'onore*or (Repeal of the Criminal Relevance of the Honor Cause). The new law was a reproduction of Carettoni's draft from 1977, but this time the senators included changes to the legislation regarding infanticide that allowed the mental state of the mother to be considered as a mitigating circumstance of the crime. The Senate approved the new law in May of 1980, and the law moved to the House of Deputies for approval. Legislators in the House of Deputies decided to defer the matter to the *Commissione Giustizia*, and for the next two years legislators proposed new amendments to the honor codes and struggled to agree on

[207] Senato Della Repubblica, VII Legislatura, 214 seduta pubblica pomeridiana, cit. Intervento di Bonifaciao, 9359.
[208] Aldo Moro was a prominent member of the Christian Democratic Party. He was the longest serving post war prime ministers, holding power for six years. Moro was abducted and killed in 1978 by members of the Red Brigades.

specific language and stipulations.[209]

The legislative procedure to repeal reparatory marriage came on April 15, 1981 when Vice President of the House of Deputies, Luigi Scalfaro of the Christian Democrats, announced the approval of the Repeal of the Criminal Relevance of the Honor Cause.[210]Although the repeal had made its way through the Chamber of Deputies and the Commission of Justice, it was again stalled by Francesco De Cataldo of the Radical Party and Carlo Casini of the Christian Democrats. These legislators expressed concern over the issue of the *querela*.[211]Although neither Cataldo nor Casini proposed solutions to the problem, the commission agreed to extend the debates.[212]

The Commission met again on February 18, 1981, and this time the deputies from the Italian Social Movement – National Right presented a new amendment to Article 544 arguing for a wider scope to the notion of *querela*. Ultimately, these amendments were rejected and the bill for repeal was approved as drafted in its initial formulation.[213] Conflicts persisted over Article 578 which governed infanticide. Members of the Communist and Socialist parties called for the penalty for infanticide to be reduced from ten to three years and argued that the mother should no longer be framed as the perpetrator of the crime.[214]Angela Bottari, a representative of the PCI party, argued that:

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[209] Vittoria Calabro, "Storia di un contrastato tramonto," 314.
[210] Ravaioli wrote one of the earliest and most influential radical feminist works in Italy, *Maschio per obbligo (Masculine by Force)* about the construction of gender in society and the way in which sex roles appear natural even though they are socially constructed.
[211] See definition of *querela* in chapter 3.
[212] Camera Dei Deputati, VIII legislature, IV Commissione Giustizia, Seduta Del 2 Luglio 1980, 188-190.
[213] Camera Dei Deputati, VIII Legislatura, IV, Intervento di Casini, 486.
[214] Translation: Il numero degli infanticide al momento del parto e notevolmente diminuito nel nostro paese; visono alcuni e raricasi, dietro ai qualisi nascondono grandi drammi. Non possiamo, quindi, proprio alla luce di questa nuova ratio, che considera la madre che commette l'infanticidio essaste sa vittima, prevedere la comminazione di un apena superior a quella gia prevista dal Codice Rocco. Questo risultarebbe grave e strano agli occhidell'opinione pubblica, che non comprenderebbe piu quale sia la linea da noisequita, Ibid, intervento di Bottari 490-491.

> The number of infanticides at the time of delivery have significantly decreased in our country; there are some rare cases, behind which great dramas are hidden. We cannot, therefore, precisely in the light of this new ratio, which considers the mother who commits infanticide herself victim, to foresee the imposition of a penalty superior to that already foreseen by the Rocco code. This would be serious and strange in the eyes of public opinion, which would no longer include what is the line we followed.[215]

Representatives from rightwing parties rejected this logic; they claimed that if infanticide was less common the punishment should be increased.[216]

The final process for the repeal of the honor codes took place between April and August of 1981. Despite many years of debate and numerous amendments and provisions, the senators finally agreed to "conclude the legislative process in an effort to avoid further loss of time and division between the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies."[217] On August 5, 1981, Head of State Sandra Pertini disseminated the new law. *Abrogazione della rilevanza della causa d'onore* (N. 442) cancelled all the honor codes in the penal system (Article 544, Article 587, and Article 592) and replaced Article 578 with new text that introduced specific material and moral conditions in the case of infanticide. The repeal effort was finally won with the support and coalition of the DC, PCI, PSI, PSDI, PRI, and PLI parties, and the "cause of honor" was finally expelled from the Italian judicial system. This change marked a profound shift in the law and transformed what had been a core component of Italian culture. After the abolition of the honor codes, women's sexual lives and safety were no longer governed by codes that

[215]Ibid, Translation: "Il numero degli infanticide al momento del parto e notevolmente diminuito nel nostro paese; visono alcuni e raricasi, dietro ai qualisi nascondono grandi drammi. Non possiamo, quindi, proprio alla luce di questa nuova ratio, che considera la madre che commettel'infanticidio essastessa vittima, prevedere la comminazione di una pena superiore a quella gia prevista dal Codice Rocco. Questo risultarebbe grave e strano agli occhi dell'opinion epubblica, che non comprenderebbe piu quale sia la linea da noisequita"

[216] Camera Dei Deputati, VIII Legislatura, IV Commissione Giustizia, Seduta del 4 Marzo 1981, Intervento di Garavaglia, 511.

[217] Ibid.

restricted bodily autonomy under the guise of family honor.

VII. Conclusion

The transformation of the laws governing women's bodies, first with the revision of family laws and later with the abolition of the honor codes, altered some core elements of Italian culture. However, neither the changes made to the law and nor the developments within the culture have been linear. An overview of the law demonstrates both continuities and fractures regarding popular attitudes and perceptions of female sexual behavior and honor. Legal reform did not lead to the end of sexual violence in Italy, but reforms did inspire major cultural shifts resulting in increased equality for women under the constitution, in the eyes of the law, and throughout the culture. The rewriting and implementation of new rape laws since 1981 provided Italian women with a formal way to bring their attackers to justice and, to some degree, to experience greater fairness in court trials. *Fuitina*, as a cultural practice supported by the honor codes, underwent a fundamental transformation following these legal changes. Customs and attitudes regarding marriage, courtship, and virginity all changed when the law no longer supported the honor codes and reparatory marriage.

Some forms of *fuitina* still exist in Italy today, but the practice has taken on a new meaning. Now it is understood as an expression of love and a claim of autonomy practiced by young lovers. At the same time, despite legal change the power of honor persists. For example, in August of 2016, three Italian women were murdered in one week, including Vania Vannucchi, 46, who was burned alive by an ex-boyfriend. This spate of violence led the Italian government to earmark twelve million euros to create a

plan to combat violence against women. Femicide legislation implemented in 2013 led to harsher punishments for men who killed women, but many critics argued that femicide legislation failed to adequately protect women. Critics argued that police and court officials have not applied the law in the way it was intended. In an interview with *The Telegraph* in 2016*,* the journalist and author Rosella Diaz argued that "the problem lies with the lack of gender-related education and training by law enforcement and health professionals, as well as too many cuts in funding for shelters and anti-violence centers."[218] Even though the honor codes have been abolished, there is still a pattern of lessening the sentences of perpetrators in cases considered to be crimes of passion.

Recently, horrific incidents of violence have forced many in Italy to reflect on the treatment of women. In 2017, Tiziana Cantone, 31, committed suicide after a video of her having sex with a former boyfriend appeared on social media. Despite her efforts to have the material removed from multiple media outlets, including several pornographic websites, the sexual content remained available for all to see. According to several media sources, Cantone was driven to despair by the posted video. She left her job, moved away from her home in Naples, and made numerous failed complaints to the police to have the video removed. According to reports, Cantone felt shunned all over Italy when she became an internet meme. Italian companies and average media users shared still photographs and quotes from the video. Some companies even made profits by selling t-shirts and smartphone cases using a phrase she said in the video: "You're filming?

[218] Andrea Vogt, "A Week of Shocking Murders Prompts Italian Government to Declare a Crisis over Violence Against Women," *The Telegraph.* Accessed August 8, 2017, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/08/08/a-week-of-shocking-murders-prompts-italian-government-to-declare/.

Bravo."[219] The law has not caught up with internet technology and often fails to prosecute this form of gendered harassment.

Just after Cantone's suicide, another tragic story emerged in the Italian news. A 17-year-old girl committed suicide after her friends posted a video of her being raped in the bathroom stall of a nightclub while they looked on and laughed.[220] In response to these cases, the Italian government forwarded a bill that some argued was the "stupidest censorship law in European history."[221] In an effort to prevent cyber-bullying, harassment, and revenge porn, the new law proposed to censor the mockery of a person by removing any material from social media and other internet sources that the recipient determines as insulting. The new law also included penalties of up to 100,000 euros for those failing to take action.[222] Many Italians opposed the bill and argued that it was an attack on free speech and an easy tool for censorship without due process. Critics argued, "The law would not stop cyber bullying and harassment instead it would create a tool for the rich and powerful to take down material that was unflattering to them."[223] The efforts put forth by the Italian government were criticized as reactionary lawmaking. Some feminists described these laws as "the use of criminal punishment and civil incapacitation typically thought to be the hallmarks of social conservatism. Using the law as a form of social control through punitive measures to criminalize first, rather work to achieve social

[219]Foreign staff, "Four Questioned in Italy after Woman Abused Online Over Viral Sex Video Commits Suicide," *Daily Telegraph* online, September 2016. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/09/15/four-questioned-in-italy-after-woman-abused-online-over-viral-se.
[220] Andrea Pasqualetto, "Minorenne violentata, le amiche diffonodono il video su Whatsapp," *Corriere della Sera,* September 2016.
[221]Cory Doctorow, "Italy on the Verge of the Stupidest Censorship Law in European History, *Boing Boing* online, http://boingboing.net/2016/09/18/italy-on-the-verge-of-the-stup.html
[222]*Atti Parliamentari,* Settembre 2016, Commissioni Riunite online http://documenti.camera.it/leg17/resoconti/commissioni/bollettini/pdf/2016/09/08/leg.17.bol0690.data20160908.com0212.pdf
[223] Doctorow, 2016.

change."[224] The debates surrounding these laws demonstrate that legal reform and cultural change do not always proceed at the same pace.

Legal change is often bound to political agendas, economics, and the transformation of social values and norms. Historically, the Catholic Church's stance on the politics of sex and the body impacted on the way public and the justice system responded to certain crimes. Today, the Church has less influence on public and legal opinion, and while the Church remains anti-feminist, it has also loosened its control on family life and gender roles. Faced with its own sexual scandals over the past several few years, the Church has remained largely silent on the subject of rape legislation. Following World War II, European nations struggled to redefine their national values. Italy, like its European counterparts, took part in the process of reinventing the national identity and constructing women's rights in the wake of war and fascist rule. Laws controlling the body and sex were, and continue to be, an important aspect of this historical legacy.

[224] Janet Halley, "The Move To Affirmative Consent," *Signs Journal: Current Feminists Key Concepts and Controversies,* 2015, 1-16. http://signsjournal.org.

Chapter 4: From Below and Beyond: Feminism and Honor

> Customs based on an extremely rigid code of rules are not easy to break. It is not easy to break a chain of conditioning, which is linked almost invisibly from one generation to another. But there are historical moments in which breaks in the chain can more easily be made than others.
>
> Elena Gianini Belotti, *Little Girls* (1975)[225]

I. Introduction

The emergence of a new wave of feminism in the 1960s and 1970s marked the beginning of a period of profound transformation in the lives of Italian women. Formerly sacrosanct systems governing everything from sexuality and personal relationships to the very nature of the family became subject to fierce debates about cultural change and public morality. In the midst of the cultural upheavals of the era, Franca Viola's refusal of a reparatory marriage became one of the most iconic expressions of a new female consciousness. Although today Viola is considered a symbol of Italian feminism, in 1966 she had no feminist affiliations or ties to formal feminist ideology. "The seventeen-year-old girl who changed the story of women in Italy" maintains to this day that her decision to refuse to facilitate her rapist's exoneration was her own. She did not act in accordance with any specific feminist ideologies. In her most recent interview with *La Repubblica* in 2015, Viola stated:

> This was not a courageous gesture. I did what I felt like doing, how a young girl today should, that is, listen to my heart. Today I advise young women to pursue their sentiments. It is not difficult. I did it in a Sicily, where opinions were very different. They can too, simply by following their hearts.[226]

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[225] Elena Gianini Belotti, *Little Girls.* (London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative, 1975), 15.

[226] Concita De Gregorio, "Franca Viola: 'lo che 50 anni fa ho fatto la storia con il mio no alle nozze riparatrici,'" *La Reppublica,* December 27, 2015. <https://www.repubblica.it/cronaca/2015/12/27/news/_io_che_50_anni_fa_ho_fatto_la_storia_con_il_mio_no_alle_nozze_riparatrici_-130210807/>

Regardless of her intentions, Italian feminists, then and now, understood Franca Viola's refusal to marry Filippo Melodia as an act in service of female emancipation in Italy. Today, feminists credit Viola with changing gender politics, particularly in the south, and contributing to the repeal of the Italian honor codes.

Although it is not well known, Viola was not the only, nor the first, woman in Italy to reject a *fuitina*. Before the Viola family, there were other Italian women, sometimes with the support of their families and local communities, who refused reparatory marriage to their assailants. Through an analysis of the archives of the newspapers *L'Unita, La Stampa,* and *Giornale Di Sicilia* housed at Palermo's Central Library and the Antonio Gramsci Institute, I have uncovered numerous accounts of other woman who refused forced marriages in the 1960s and 1970s.[227] These other women, much like Franca Viola, had no relationship with organized Italian feminism nor did they identify as feminists. Their stories, combined with the Viola case, demonstrate a significant movement, often overlooked by standard feminist histories, of regular women engaged in a form of activism.

This chapter considers the legacy of these women alongside an oral history drawn from interviews with three Palermo-based feminist scholars. I interviewed these three women—Daniela Dioguardi, Simona Mafai, and Giovanna Fiume—in Palermo in 2015. Both the archival record and these local perspectives reveal a critical failure on the part of

[227] *L'Unita* was an Italian newspaper founded by Antonio Gramsci and the Italian Communist Party in 1924. It later supported the party's successors (the Democratic Party of the left and Democrats of the left). The newspaper ceased publication on June 3, 2017. *Giornale di Sicilia,* founded in 1860, is the Palermo-based daily newspaper for the island of Sicily. It is the best-selling newspaper in Sicily and played a significant role in nationalizing the Italian rural women in Sicily at the beginning of the 1900s. *La Stampa* is an Italian daily newspaper in Turin, founded by journalist and novelist Vittorio Bersezio in 1867. Today the paper is owned by GEDI Gruppo Editoriale and takes a centrist stance.

many feminist groups to fully engage with the practice of reparatory marriage. Despite the tremendous amount of media attention given to the Viola case and other honor-related crimes in the 1960s and 1970s, the failure of organized feminism to engage with the issue of *fuitina* provides a view into the complex struggle for female emancipation in Italy from the 1960s to the present day.

Although many feminist activists described honor crimes as a form of oppression faced by Italian women, in practice, feminist groups in the 1960s and 1970s treated honor crimes as a secondary concern. This lack of engagement with crimes that primarily impacted southern women suggests that postwar feminism was not as universal as it imagined itself to be. The feminist groups addressing the issues of abortion and divorce engaged explicitly with issues of cultural and social class difference, but this sensitivity to difference did not extend to the topics of reparatory marriage and honor culture. Feminist organizations understood that honor codes, and associated practices like *fuitina,* were oppressive to women, but organized feminism did not make the dismantling of the honor system a strategic priority. It took the work of many individuals and groups, from left-wing politicians to everyday families, to bring an end the legal sanctioning of reparatory marriage in Italy.

II. Italian Feminism from Risorgimento to "New" Feminism

Feminism means different things in different historical contexts and geographical spaces. The emergence of a new feminism in Italy in the 1960s and 1970s grew out of the cultural and economic upheavals of the economic miracle. This period, roughly between 1958 and 1963, provided new economic opportunities and new freedoms for women

across Italy. The modernization of the Italian state led many to challenge old customs, to question the validity of existing gender norms, and to reimagine the social hierarchy that informed all aspects of Italian society.

In the late 1960s, a new movement of Italian feminists, known popularly as "new feminism," shifted focus from issues related to economic and political inequalities like suffrage, equality before the law, and equal pay to the politics of the private sphere. New feminist activists across Europe and the United States adopted a motto to describe this focus: the personal is political. This new wave of feminism was a transnational phenomenon, and it would have a lasting impact on the way the law and society dealt with matters related to family and marriage in Italy. The historian Michela Di Giorgio described their impact as follows:

> Across time and space, even with the development of Italy first as a nation, then an industrial society, and after World War II a mass consumer society, the symbolic frontiers of difference between men and women have continuously been reaffirmed, remodeled, and redefined.[228]

Like feminists in England, France, the United States, and Germany, Italian feminists emerged with a new agenda they believed to be even more radical than the political and economic agenda of their predecessors. Armed with a new focus on the private sphere, Italian feminists challenged the authority of the Catholic Church. Their activism led to profound changes to ideas about sexuality and marriage across Italy.

Of course, individual women, and some men, fought for the rights of Italian women long before 1968. Early Italian feminists like Anna Maria Mozzoni fought changes in the Pisanelli Code directly after unification. Later, first wave Italian feminism, which evolved from an idea into a political movement in 1880 with the foundation of *La*

[228] Michela Di Giorgio, *Le italiane dall'unita a oggi* (Laterza: EditoriLaterza, 1992), 1-6.

Lega Promotrice Degli Interessi Femminili (The League for the Promotion of Women's Interest). Established by Anna Maria Mozzoni and Paolina Schiff, focused their efforts on four areas of reform: female suffrage, equal pay, prostitution, and the legalization of paternity searches. The Italian civil code of this era, known as the Pisanelli Code, discriminated against children born out-of-wedlock and unmarried mothers. Under the Pisanelli Code, paternity searches were illegal, and unmarried mothers had no method of recourse to make men share the financial and social responsibility of parenthood. These early feminists lobbied politicians, held conferences, and published literature to promote their activities and raise awareness about these issues.[229]

Another form of first-wave feminist activism was the creation of a series of women's journals. These publications included *La Cornelia* founded by Aurelia Cimino Folliero De Luna and *La Donna* founded by Alaide Gualberta Beccari.[230]The low rates of female literacy in Italy impeded the reach of these journals, and feminism was slow to develop beyond privileged, literate, and urban women. Nineteenth-century feminism was centered in Italy's most urban and modern city, Milan, but there were outposts of feminist organizing even in small southern towns.[231] By the early twentieth century, a more active and expansive movement began to attract lower-middle-class and working-class women by engaging with issues of wage equality and prostitution reform. These women tended to be from urban areas. Like the elite groups, these feminists lobbied politicians,

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[229]Annarita Buttafuoco, *Cronache femminile: temi e momenti della stampa: emancipazionista in Italia dall'unita al fascism,* (Siena: Universita Degli Studi, 1988).

[230]*La Cornelia* was mostly directed towards upper class women, dealing with the need for reforms in education, professions, and the law. It ceased publication in 1880. *La Donna,* published between 1868 and 1891, was at the center of the emancipationist network of feminism. The journal tried to appeal to working class, as well as middle- and upper-class women, and promoted the ideal of "citizen mother," similar to the idea of "Republican Motherhood" in the United States, which meant that independent and educated mothers would pass down to their children a love for the new Italy.

[231] Perry Willson, *Women in Twentieth-Century Italy,* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 24.

organized conferences, and published magazines and newspapers.[232] Feminism in this period expanded to include working-class women but had little reach into the lives of peasant women. However, some of the legal reforms promoted by these groups did benefit women in rural areas.[233]

First-wave Italian feminists drew inspiration from feminists in Great Britain and the United States. Many Italian feminists attended international women's rights conferences and closely followed feminist movements abroad. Early Italian feminism gained momentum thanks to the involvement of foreign-born women and religious minorities, particularly Protestants and Jews, who were often more educated than their Catholic peers. Feminists were also inspired by the work Giuseppe Mazzini who viewed women's rights as fundamental to the construction of a new democratic nation.[234]Although these early feminist organizations did not remake Italian society, they did effectively build interest in the "woman question." This early Italian feminism was composed of many organizations and strands that sought to address a variety of issues surrounding women and gender, some more radical than others.[235]

The First World War divided many feminist organizations. The war changed women's lives and exacerbated class divides. At the same time, the war mobilized women and led many to form new women's groups and associations intended to support

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[232] Buttofuoco, *Cronache femminile.*

[233] Willson, *Women in Twentieth-Century Italy*, 25.

[234] Giuseppe Mazzini had emerged as the leader of the Italian unification movement in the 1830s and founded the organization, "Young Italy," whose goal was to create a unified Italian republic. In 1860, Mazzini addressed a group of Italian workers in a speech called *Doveri dell'uomo,* or "Duties of Man," outlining his ideas about women's rights. Mazzini was one of a group of European thinkers at the time who challenged established customs and laws to end the social and legal subordination of women.

[235] For more information on Italian first wave feminism and its different strands, see Willson, *Women in Twentieth Century Italy*; Buttafuoco, *Cronache femminile;* Judith Jeffrey Howard, "Patriot Mothers in the Post-Risorgimento: Women after the Revolution," in *Women, War, and Revolution,* eds. Carol Berkin and Clara Lovett (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1980), 23-44.

the war effort. Some pro-interventionist feminists argued that women should be more fully integrated into the civic life of the nation in order to more effectively support the war effort, and in 1917 feminists lobbied for suffrage at the National Women's Conference held in Rome. The war had increased women's visibility in the public sphere, and women almost won the right to vote in 1919.[236]

In the 1920s, Italy, like much of Europe, experienced anxiety about declining birth rates and the social and military implications of diminished populations. Between this anxiety and the rise of fascism, anti-feminism was on the rise.[237] Many conservative feminists and middle-class women were drawn to fascist ideology during the interwar period. Some women believed fascist politics provided a safety net and protected women from the policies of the radical left and Bolshevism. Early fascism also attracted women who desired order and the return of the nation's honor after the perceived failures of liberalism and the rising communist threat.[238] For some feminists, fascism seemed no different than other political parties at the time, especially when it came to women's rights. In fact, in the early days of the movement fascists had even promised to support female suffrage.[239]By the mid-1920s, the fascist regime began to intervene more directly in the private sphere than the liberals ever had. In those years, fascist policies about women were increasingly totalitarian. Today, scholars argue that fascist pro-natalist policies, which demanded Italian women have as many children as possible, were not as

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[236] See Willson "On the homefront, 1915-20," in *Women in Twentieth-Century Italy,* 43-60; Stefania Bartoloni, "L'associazionismo femminile nella prima guerra mondiale e la mobilitazione per l'assistenza civile e propaganda," *Donna lombarda 1860-1945,* eds. Ada Gigli Marchetti and Nanda Torcellan (Milan: Angeli, 1992), 13-25; Buttafuoco. *Cronache femminile.*

[237] Alexandra Wilson, "Torrefranca vs. Puccini: Embodying a Decadent Italy," *Cambridge Opera Journal* Vol. 13, No. 1, March, 2001, 29-53.

[238] Graziella Gaballo, *Ero, sono e sarò fascista,* (Le Mani, 2001), 18.

[239] Willson, *Women in Twentieth-Century Italy*, 83.

effective as many believed. Despite the many social and institutional restrictions placed on them in this period, some Italian women ultimately came to accept and support Mussolini's regime. At the same time, according to Victoria De Grazia's *How Fascism Ruled Women,* most women in the fascist era saw themselves as their own agents empowered to make choices regarding their own lives.[240] While fascist policy and ideology remained anti-feminist, it also mobilized women. Gender-based organizations thrived, and young women and girls participated in the countless fascist youth organizations that created new opportunities to socialize, travel, and play outside the confines of the family home.[241]

The Second World War, like most wars, was difficult for women. Between 1943 and 1945, the years of the allied invasion and occupation, many women joined the resistance movement. They participated in noncombat roles and provided support to all aspects of military mobilization, from making clothing and sheltering soldiers to working as spies and informants.[242] The presence of women within the resistance helped women establish a place for themselves in politics after the war. However, even as social and political opportunities opened up for women across Italian society, the "woman question" re-emerged as a topic of debate. While some women found allies among men, many others found that their fathers, brothers, husbands, and sons did not support their ongoing

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[240] Victoria De Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women: Italy, 1922-1945,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 11.

[241] Willson, *Women in Twentieth-Century Italy.* For more information on the mobilization of women and organizations in the fascist period, see De Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women*; Perry Willson, *Peasant Women and Politics in Fascist Italy: The Massaie Rurali,* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

[242] Willson, *Women in Twentieth-Century Italy*, 96-111. For more information on the resistance movement, see Perry Willson, "Saints and Heroines: Rewriting the History of Italian Women in the Resistance," in *Opposing Fascism: Community, Authority and Resistance in Europe,* eds. Tim Kirk and Anthony McElligot (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 180-198; Also see Jane Slaughter, *Women and the Italian Resistance 1943-1945,* (Denver: Arden Press, 1997).

struggle for women's rights. After the war, despite the critical role played by women in the resistance, many men remained extremely hostile to women's involvement in Italian politics.[243]

The establishment of the New Republic and the ratification of the new constitution granted women the right to vote in 1946. While newly elected female members of the constituent assembly made up only 3.7 percent of the total deputies, "their presence remained vital for ensuring the inclusion of important clauses in the Constitution regarding gender equality."[244]The Constitution of 1946 granted women citizenship, but despite the progressiveness of the new constitution, many laws and customs continued to restrict women's autonomy and bodily rights. The law remained particularly ambivalent about women's rights in the private sphere.[245]

In 1965, Italian communist party leader, Palmiro Togliatti, was the first leader of a major political party to publicly announce that "women's emancipation was directly tied to the stability and longevity of a democratic republic."[246]In the following years, the organized feminist movement grew more assertive, and many Italian feminists engaged in new and increasingly radical forms of struggle as they joined student and worker protests. For many women, the experience of activist mobilization, along with the hypocrisy of male peers within the student movement, led to the development of a new consciousness

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[243] Willson, *Women in Twentieth-Century Italy*, 130.

[244] Willson,135. Also see De Giorgio, and Molly Tambor, *The Lost Wave*: *Women and Democracy in Postwar Italy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); Anna Maria Galoppini, *Il lungo viaggio verso parita*, (Pisa: Tacchi, 1992), 187; Maria Sophia Quine, *Italy's Social Revolution: Charity and Welfare from Liberalism to Fascism,* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); Adrian Lyttelton,"Introduction," *Liberal and Fascist Italy: 1900-1945,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 1-17; Lesley Caldwell, "Italian Feminism: Some Considerations," *Women and Italy: Essays on Gender and History,* eds. Zygmunt G. Baranski and Shirley W. Winall, (New York: Macmillan Academic and Professional Ltd, 1991), 95-116.

[245] The new Constitution promised equal rights and pay for working women and the right to vote and hold public office. Men and women were declared equal by the law under Article 3.

[246] Palmiro Togliatti, "L'emancipazione della donna," *Donne communiste: Antologia di discritti e discorsi,* ed. Graziella Falconi. (Rome: Claudio Salemi, 1989), 52-80.

regarding women's continued subordination in society. In particular, the failure of the 1968 student movements to include the specific grievances and aspirations of women led many female activists to believe that feminists needed to organize independently from men. Inspired by foreign texts translated into Italian such as Simone De Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* and Betty Friedan's *The Feminist Mystique,* Italian feminists began to pay particular attention to the limits imposed by traditional gender roles within the family.[247]

In the 1970s, deep hostility towards state and parliamentary institutions permeated the feminist movement. Female activists, primarily middle-class women who had participated in the student movements, organized around questions of health and female sexuality.[248]With issues of sexuality and family center stage, the institution of the patriarchy became an object of intense scrutiny. In 1970, a conglomeration of women's organizations from different parts of Italy called *Rivolta Femminile* (Women's Revolt) published a manifesto denouncing marriage as an institution of male domination. They declared feminism to be the first political stage of a historical critique of both family and society. "Let's unite the situations and episodes of historical feminist experience. Through it, woman has manifested herself, interrupting for the first time the monologue of patriarchal civilization."[249]Groups apart from the *Rivolta Femminile* maintained an ongoing dialogue regarding self-awareness and labored to discard and question all preconceived ideas about women, tradition, and personal experience. Male control of

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[247] Yamine Ergas, "Feminism of the 1970s," in *A History of Women in the West, Vol. V: Toward a Cultural Identity in the Twentieth Century,* ed. Francois Thebaud, (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1994), 527-547.

[248] Ibid.

[249] "*Rivolta Femminile* Manifesto, 1970" cited in *Italian Feminist Thought: A Reader,* eds. Paola Bono and Sandra Kemp (Hoboken: Blackwell Publishing, 1991), 37-38.

women's sexuality was rejected in all its forms.[250]

According to the scholar of Italian feminism, Lesley Caldwell, the groups mobilizing in 1973 and 1974 concentrated on the importance of small groups that practiced *autocoscienza* or consciousness raising efforts.[251] Within these small groups, feminist collectives developed several major focal points: the decriminalization of contraception and abortion, the reform of family law, and the legalization of divorce. By the late 1970s, many organized feminist groups refocused their campaigns on the issue of sexual violence.[252] By theorizing the body as a site of identity and power, feminists in Italy drew inspiration from the publication of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* by the Boston Women's Health Collective.[253] The book was translated into Italian in 1974, and in many ways, *Our Bodies, Ourselves* changed how women around the world thought about female health and sexuality. It helped feminists develop a new politics focused on reproductive rights and sexual independence.[254]

III. Historiography: The 1970s and New Feminism

> What is feminism? Who is a feminist? How do we understand feminism across national boundaries? Across cultures? Across centuries? These questions and their corollaries are raised every day, by activists in contemporary women's movements, by scholars, in the press, and in informal conversation. Everyone seems to have different answers, and every answer is infused with a political and

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[250] Ibid.

[251] Caldwell, "Italian Feminism," 32.

[252] See Willson and Bono and Kemp; Also see Anna Cento Bull and Adalgisa Giorgio, eds. *Speaking Out and Silencing: Culture, Society, and Politics in Italy in the 1970s.* (Leeds: Maney Publishing, 2006); Susan Basnett. *Feminist Experiences: The Women's Movement in Four Cultures,* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin Publishers, 1986), 91.

[253] The publication *Our Bodies, Ourselves* provided information regarding women's health and sexuality, including sexual health, sex orientation, gender identity, birth control, abortion, pregnancy and childbirth, violence and abuse, as well as menopause. The most recent edition was published in 2011.

[254] "Boston Women's Health Collective Equality Archive" accessed January 29, 2019, http://equalityarchive.com/history/taking-health-into-their-own-hands/ -feminist theory

emotional charge.

Karen Offen, "Defining Feminism"[255]

In the most general sense, feminism is the effort to secure the economic, social, and political equality of the sexes.[256]Scholars typically relegate 1970s Italian feminism to the margins of second-wave feminist history. It is often framed as an offshoot or satellite of the more the influential French and American feminisms of the era.[257]In other words, 1970s feminism in Italy has been viewed through an international lens that positions American, French, and British feminist history and thought at the center. At the same time, scholarship about Italian feminists has focused heavily on middle-class northern feminists involved in specific campaigns. Women of other social classes, individuals not working within specific groups or collectives, and southern women have been largely excluded from the narrative.

The Italian feminism of the 1970s is commonly referred to as new feminism instead of second-wave feminism.[258]Many scholars criticize the emphasis on new feminism for creating a narrow view of the scope of Italian feminism. Some argue for a longer historical framework, and suggest that scholars should shift their focus away from middle-class organizations and collectives. Amalia Signorelli has argued that Italian

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255 Karen Offen, "Defining feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society.* Vol. 14, No. 1, (Autumn, 1988), 119.

256 Karen Offen, *European Feminisms: 1700-1950: A Political History*, (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2000).

257 "Second wave" is a term used to describe the larger international phenomenon of female activism that stretched across Europe and the United States in the 1970s.

258 Scholars have questioned the periodization of 1970s arguing that the acceptance of a "year zero" largely distorts its legacy and origins. See Bracke, Molly Tambor, inspired by Simonetta Piccone Stella's seminal book *La prima generazione; ragazze e ragazzi nel miracolo economico Italiano.* Stella first argued that the immediate postwar period was less of a time of instability for women and more of a period of expanded opportunity.

feminist history "has failed to acknowledge the larger sexual and cultural transformation, where women from all social strata emerged as subjects demanding and deciding for themselves the rights that society previously denied them."[259]

Since the late 1980s and 1990s, scholars of Italian feminism have focused on the efforts of new feminists to produce publications and translate Italian feminist theory into English.[260] Much has been written about the movement's ideological roots and relationships to other political movements including the 1968 student protests.[261]This thread of scholarship has continued to overemphasize the history of organized groups and campaigns centered in the northern cities of Milan and Turin and the political debates surrounding birth control, divorce, and legal reform.[262]Feminist historiography of this era has also focused on the oral histories of individual women such as *Rivolta Femminile* cofounder Carla Lonzi and other participants in specific campaigns.[263]

More recently, scholars have created a more thorough understanding of 1970s feminism by comparing written and oral sources. These scholars claim that feminist historiography's heavy reliance on oral histories has hindered critical historical analysis, and they study economic, political, and social dynamics as a way to diversify and deepen

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[259] Amalia Signorelli, "Women in Italy in the 1970s," in *Speaking Out and Silencing,* eds. Ana Cento Bull and Adalgisa Giorgio, (Leeds: Maney Publishing, 2006), 42.

[260] Establishment of several journals such as *Lete*, *Lapis*, and *Memoria* including the publication of the following books: *Non credere di avere dei diritti (Don't think you've got rights)*. Libreria delle donne di Milano, (Turin: Rosenberg & Sellier, 1987), and *La ricerca delle donne (Women's Research)* helped to establish feminist studies in Italy and document its distinctiveness.

[261] Luisa Passerini. *Storie di donne e femministe*. (Turin: Rosenberg & Seller, 1991); Passerini, "The Women's Movement in Italy," in *Visions and Revisions Women in Italian Culture,* eds. Mirna Cicioni and Nicole Prunster, (Berg: Oxford University Press, 1993), 167-182.

[262] Anna Calabro and Laura Grasso, *Dal movimento femminista al femminismo diffuso: storie e percorsi a Milano dagli anni 60 agli anni 80*, (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2004); Piera Zumaglino, *Femminismi a torino: contribute di Angela Miglietti e Angese Piccirillo,* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1996).

[263] Maria Schiavo, *Movimento a piu voce: Il feminismo degli anni settanta attraverso il racconto di una protagonist,* (Milan: Fondazione Badaracco, 2002); Maria Luisa Boccia, *L'io in rivolta: Vissuto e pensierodi Carla Lonzi*, (Milan: La Tartaruga, 1990).

insight into Italian feminist history and political thought.[264]The scholar Maud Bracke suggests that in order to develop a better understanding of Italian feminist campaigns, historians need to pay more attention to regional diversity and the dynamics between collective and individual action within the movement.[265] Bracke notes:

> The traditional narrative of a monolithic or global feminist sisterhood is problematic. Though larger, more global histories are important to understand, too often they ignore local influence, customary practices, and identities that are shaped by a person's locality. Feminist history is no exception. The history of Italian feminism has lacked critical reflection on different parts of Italy suffering from its own form of an unaddressed "southern question."[266]

By focusing on the cities of Turin, Rome, and Naples, Bracke's analysis has deepened our understanding of new feminism's emergence, transnational links, and local particularities. Her study of Naples, for example, illuminates the feminist movement in southern Italy—the region most often neglected by scholars. By comparing the city of Naples to Rome and Turin, she emphasizes the importance of understanding how local circumstances shaped local campaigns. In Naples, Bracke found that Neapolitan feminists were most successful when their campaigns transmitted a real sense of everyday liberty and focused on practical issues such as childcare and housing instead of the more abstract notion of women's traditional roles.[267] Bracke's work reveals a gap in Italian feminist historiography, and illustrates that focusing on middle-class women involved in specific campaigns and organizations fails to adequately tell the full story of Italian feminisms. According to Bracke, "Until today the history of Italian feminism is largely based on memory and written largely by former participants, who at times claim to speak for the

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[264] Anna Rossi-Doria, *Dare forma al silenzio: Scritti di storia politica delle donne,* (Rome: Viella, 2007).
[265] Maude Bracke, *Women and the Reinvention of the Political: Feminism in Italy 1968-1983.* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 2.
[266] Bracke, *Feminism in Italy*, 16.
[267] Bracke, "Naples: The Unfinished Revolution," *Feminism in Italy*, 156-184.

entire movement."[268] In contrast, her study presents the first thorough analysis of the movement based on case studies, archives, and oral history interviews.

The history of Italian feminism has ignored the lives of feminist women in southern Italy and Sicily. No literature within the historiography of Italian feminism engages directly with the Viola story, with honor crimes, or with cases of reparatory marriage. Historians of Italian feminism have disregarded the actions of ordinary women and accidental feminists, but these women played a pivotal role in promoting feminist causes, sometimes before the organized feminist movement even took notice. While the stories of these informal feminists do not appear in historical scholarship, I was able to find them in the newspaper archives in Palermo. In the next section, I examine these stories and attempt to understand why they are excluded from the history of Italian feminist discourse.

IV. Beyond Viola: Other Women Who Said "No"

The case of Franca Viola, along with the emergence of the newly revitalized feminist movement following the protests of 1968, brought widespread media coverage to the topic of sexual violence. Before this increased focus, sexual violence in Italy, especially crimes associated with honor, had remained largely out of the public eye. The shift created by Viola's story led other women to speak out against forced marriage. Although their stories reflected diverse circumstances, they collectively represented a new willingness of women to stand up against old values and customs that condoned violence against women. These women, mostly located in the south, were not considered feminists, but they protested for the right to govern their own bodies.

[271] Bracke, 4.

In the newspapers archived at the Antonio Gramsci Institute and the central library in Palermo, I uncovered a number of cases in which Italian women publicly rejected the culture that protected perpetrators of sexual violence. In December 1966, for example, the very same month of Filippo Melodia's sentencing, the newspaper *L'Unita* published three articles concerning another case of forced *fuitina*. A young woman named Mattea Ciravolo was kidnapped and held hostage for five days in a cottage by her ex-fiancé, Andrea Virtuoso. When Ciravolo returned to her family and reported the abduction, Virtuoso was arrested and charged with kidnapping. Like Franca Viola, Mattea Ciravalo had the support of her family. As her father noted in an interview at the time, "My daughter is free to decide what she wants to do in this case. Whatever her decision, we will support her."[269]The Turin-based newspaper *La Stampa* recognized Ceravolo and Viola as heroines and ran a story about them under the headline "Franca Viola and the Girl from Salemi, Two New Symbols of The Modern Sicily."[270] For many Italians, both women represented the new morality governing sexual behavior. The system of honor embedded in Italian law had forced women into unwanted marriages for the sake of honor; that system would no longer stand. Throughout the next decade, more cases involving honor crimes and reparatory marriage appeared in newspapers across Italy. Many of these articles focused on cases in the south and reinforced stereotypes about southern backwardness.

In the late 1970s, the phrase *non lo voglio sposare* (I will not marry him) became a familiar cry among young women like twenty-year-old Maria Grazia Nappa. Nappa's refusal to marry an ex-boyfriend who had kidnapped and raped her drew the support of

[269] "Rapita dell'ex fidanzato una ragazza di Salemi," *L'Unita,* December 21 1966, 5.
[270]"Franca Viola e la ragazza di Salemi nuovi simboli della moderna Siciliana," *La Stampa,* December 28 1966, 7.

her family, friends, and neighbors. The young people at school expressed their solidarity with the kidnapped twenty-year-old. "These are things are of another time," reported an article in *La Stampa*.[271] *L'Unita* went on to report:

> Though there was a great deal of solidarity with young Maria, still a small fraction of the population sustained that she had no choice in this matter as she was "ormai segnata," or "branded." This is another example of old and new coming into contact in Italy. At the same time, there is evidence that the old no longer has a place in Sicily. Today the entire town is with Maria Grazia![272]

Nappa did not identify as a feminist, but like Viola her actions gave momentum to the revolution regarding issues surrounding marriage, sex, and notions of consent. She did not protest in the streets, join a feminist collective, or occupy a university campus, but she was one of a group of women taking radical actions in private spaces. Some of these women gained the support of their family, friends, and neighbors, and others acted on their own. Some were more successful than others.

Carmela Turisi was just fifteen when her own mother, Grazia Cassarino, helped to orchestrate her abduction. Cassarino ended up in jail with the twenty-three-year-old abductor, Rocco Fauciana. There is no explanation as to why Cassarino facilitated her daughter's abduction. After Turisi returned home and refused the reparatory marriage, she attempted to commit suicide by swallowing a sewing needle. In 1970, a journalist with *Giornale Di Sicilia* collected a record of public opinions about the Turisi matter. The piece was called "The Opinion of Mothers and Daughters" and included interviews with women, young and old, about the Turisi's case. Concetta Pertino, 40, commented that "if this was my daughter I would do everything possible to ensure she did not marry

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[271] Ibid.

[272] Fito Faenza, "Rifiuta nozze riparatrice ragazza rapita" *L'Unita,* March 18, 1979, 3.

a man who treated her inhumanely." Nunzia D'Aparo, 37, noted that "Her daughter should leave her in jail. She is a woman that deserves nothing else." Pietra La Vigna Giaguinta, 65, shared this sentiment:

> These are crazy things. I know Carmelina's mother and I find it strange that she would make such a deal with Rocco Fauciana. I believe if this had happened to my daughter I would not force her to marry. Instead I would have her leave Gela and try to find work on the continent because they still don't understand here that it is 1970 and not the year 800.[273]

Out of the thirty women and girls interviewed, six girls and sixteen mothers opposed Carmela's marriage to Fauciana. Two of the mothers favored matrimony, and five girls and one mother remained undecided. The majority stood with Carmela.

These stories demonstrate that new ideas about womanhood were emerging in Italy in the 1970s. A new generation of women felt more sexually liberated than their mothers had felt, and they were empowered to face down their rapists and abductors. These women had the attention of the media and, as a result, captured the ear of the wider culture as it grappled with issues of sexual violence. Women were speaking out, and the culture was listening.

This new wave of resistance against sexual violence was led by individuals. These women were not organized within political groups or collectives, but they did help push forward a new kind of feminist consciousness. For many women, especially women in the south, the ability to choose who one should marry was a major step towards emancipation. Traditionally, parents dictated who their children could marry. In cases where a woman lost her virginity during the course of a rape, she would often be forced by her family and community to marry the man who had raped her. In this new feminist

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[273] Unknown author, "L'opinione della madri e delle figlie," *Giornale di Sicilia,* November 21, 1970, 10.

moment, women began to publicly reject this practice. However, much of the organized feminist movement neither acknowledged nor embraced their contributions. In the following section of this chapter, I draw on interviews conducted with Sicilian feminists to understand the disconnect between organized groups and the individual acts of these accidental feminists.

V. Reflecting on the Past: Interviews with Local Feminists

In 1965, the same year as the Viola abduction, the national organization, *Unione Donne Italiane* (UDI), organized a conference on the topic of adultery and law reform. Strikingly, participants at the conference only discussed honor crimes in the broader context of family law reform. For these activists, honor code reform was a secondary concern and not a priority.[274] Even though feminists across Italy believed the notion of honor was a form of oppression against women, as demonstrated by the *Rivolta Femminile* manifesto of 1970, feminist organizations failed to engage with cases involving honor crimes.[275] The *Rivolta Femminile* manifesto went as far as to reject the entire institution of marriage as a system designed to subordinate women, but it made no mention of reparatory marriage.

The following interviews with Giovanna Fiume, Simona Mafai, and Daniela Dioguardi provide insight into this startling omission on the part of organized feminists. These interviews clarify the socio-economic differences between the women who organized in groups and those who resisted as individuals outside the movement. Giovanna Fiume, a Sicilian scholar and professor at the University of Palermo, described

[274] Unione Donne Italiane (UDI) Archive. Palermo, Sicily. Busta 3, fascicolo 26 and Busta 5, Fascicolo 7.
[275] "*Rivolta Femminile* Manifesto*,* 1970," in *Italian Feminist Thought: A Reader,* 37.

this divide:

> In my mind the custom of *fuitina* or reparatory marriage, as I understood it as a young woman, was that it was always a violent marriage. It was a practice that to me felt antiquated. I represent a group of women in Sicily who went to university starting in 1968. I occupied the University of Catania. I never considered the notion of honor and virginity as representative of my individual value. For my generation it was not important. Of course, I had limitations at home directed by my father who told me not to go dancing or to be home at midnight. At the same time, by age eighteen, I had my driver's license. I was mostly free to come and go. In my mind, my validity was that I had an education and worked hard. I saw myself as good as or even better than my male counterparts. Honor was not part of my culture. To me honor meant mafia culture. It was a world from which I felt far removed.[276]

As an educated, middle-class woman, *fuitina* was simply not part of her reality or, as she tellingly described it, "my generation." Yet, stories of women resisting *fuitina* unfolded in the same era as the protests Fiume referenced. This gap of awareness was likely because the women rejecting *fuitina* were rural and lower class. None were attending universities. The former PCI senator Simona Mafai expressed similar sentiments. She noted that the history and evolution of *fuitina* and honor could only be understood in the context of economics and social class. According to Mafai, after World War II, the custom of *fuitina* remained more widespread among the poor. For women of her generation who had attended high school and university, their sense of self and identity expanded beyond the realm of motherhood. Mafai said that her female peers strove to be lawyers and doctors rather than "simply mothers or housewives."[277]Mafai also noted that the legalization and availability of contraception in the 1970s largely eliminated the fear of pregnancy and made *fuitina* even less common because young women could have sex outside of marriage without the fear of getting pregnant. In her opinion, *fuitina* was not

[276] Giovanna Fiume, interview with Antonella Vitale, personal interview, July 7, 2015.
[277] Simona Mafai, interview with Antonella Vitale, personal interview, July 2, 2015.

always or entirely violent. Though there were obvious exceptions, to her mind *fuitina* was an expression of liberation. It was, she believed, a way for a young woman under her family's control to escape and experience freedom from "a primitive family structure."[278]

Daniela Dioguardi expressed similar sentiments. She joined UDI in the 1970s and was part of the efforts across Italy to secure women's legal rights. Today, she is the director of UDI Palermo and the main coordinator of the female anti-violence program with the group *Le Onde Onlus Palermo*.[279] I asked Dioguardi why there were no direct protests against the honor codes and reparatory marriage by feminist groups, and she responded that the honor codes were simply part of the overall protests against all laws that subordinated women. She believes her generation viewed the issue of reparatory marriage as a private matter. In her mind, the issue was relevant only to families and could be settled between parents and children. She also noted that cases of violent *fuitina* seemed to be rare and typically hidden from public view. This made it harder to assess just how widespread the issue actually was at the time. Dioguardi believed that *fuitina* was a tradition largely confined to the poor. For families with more money, couples were more likely to get married in cases when a young woman got pregnant. "Wealthier families had the resources to marry their daughters right away." She followed this statement by noting that the movement and the idea of female emancipation was not based on social class but rather on the larger universal subjugation of "all women in the law."[280]

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[278] Ibid.

[279] *Unione Donne Italiane* (UDI) was officially established in 1945. The group was founded by resistance partisan Velia Sacchi and became the largest national organization in Italy to support the emancipation of women. *Le onde onlus* is anti-violence center based in Palermo in operation since 1992. *Le onde onlus* is part of the national association of anti-violence centers for women in Italy, "DIRE Against Violence."

[280] Daniela Dioguardi, interview with Antonella Vitale, personal interview, July 7, 2015.

The transformation of Italian law and cultural attitudes regarding sexual violence resulted from the efforts of everyday women and organized feminists. One outcome of this transformation is an increased emphasis on the prosecution of sexual violence. At the same time, some feminists argue that there are limits to what the law can achieve. Some women's groups believe that social attitudes about women need to be uprooted before any real change can take place. The need for radical change is especially evident when examining how victims of sexual violence are treated by the law, the criminal justice system, and society. The next section will outline recent feminist debates about rape law from the 1980s to the present.

VI. Feminist Activist and Rape Law Reform

For the past twenty years, feminists have debated rape law reforms. The *querela* has been a particularly divisive issue, and some feminist activists suggest that the the *querela* proves that the government does not take the crime of rape seriously. Other feminist groups argue that the *querela*—the clause that requires the request of the victim before a rape can be prosecuted—does not go far enough to empower victims of sexual assault.[281]They argue that the rape victim should have control over the choice to prosecute the crime and be allowed to revoke the call for prosecution. There are other reformers who want to classify rape as a special crime and create legislation to address the special needs of victims.[282] There is little consensus, even among feminist legal reformers, about how to best protect the rights of sexual assault victims.

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[281] Van Cleave, 274.

[282] Amy Jo Everhart, "Predicting the Effect of Italy's Long Awaited Rape Law Reform on the Land of Machismo," *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law.* 31.3 1998, 671-718.

The topic of consent is also an area of controversy, and it is particularly contentious when the law addresses minors. The notion of consent has been key within Italian law to the determination of whether or not a rape occurred. Critics of the existent law argue that efforts to prove consent often results in the rape victim herself being subjected to a trial. Today, the victim must prove that there was absolutely no consent and that the perpetrator was aware of the victim's dissent. This becomes harder to prove when there has been no explicit threat or violence, and the courts often subject victims, rather than perpetrators, to further persecution. And, as many scholars have noted, in cases of sexual violence, sexist myths about rape and antiquated perceptions about women and honor still inform rape trials.

Several court cases from the 1980s and 1990s demonstrate how the persistence of attitudes about female promiscuity and stereotypes about women have remained embedded within the Italian legal system. The infamous "Jeans rape case" made national news and a sparked national dialogue about rape in 1999. The case concerned an 18-year-old woman who was raped in the town of Muro Lucano just 60 miles outside of Naples in the region of Basilicata. The woman claimed that her driving instructor drove her to a remote place, forced out of the car, and raped her. After much deliberation, the court ruled in favor of the defendant claiming that sex between the two parties must have been consensual because the woman was wearing jeans. The court stated:

> It is common knowledge that jeans cannot even partly be removed without the effective help of a person wearing them, and it is impossible if the woman is struggling with all her force… It should be noted that it is instinctive, especially for a young woman, to oppose with all her strength the person who wants to rape her. And it is illogical to say that a young woman would passively submit to a rape.[283]

[283] Annalisa Usai, "Con i jeans lo strupro diventa consenziente," *La Republicca,* February 11, 1999.

The court equated the removal of the jeans as consent to sexual penetration. This ruling produced outrage in Italy and abroad. Female politicians in Italy wore jeans to parliament in protest of the ruling. The court's decision was mocked across Italy, and in Rome and in Naples shop owners advertised "anti-rape jeans" as Valentine's gifts.[284]

In addition to the absurdist explanation of the jeans, many Italians were infuriated by the court's statement that "it is illogical to say that a young woman would passively submit to a rape, which is a grave violence, for fear of undergoing other hypothetical and no more serious offenses to her physical safety."[285] In the words of Simonetta Sotjiu, one of the ten female judges on the Supreme Court, "This sentence leaves me nauseous. The law is solidly in the hands of men. Many of them think in a way that is completely detached from reality."[286] It was only in 2008 that the court of cassation finally overturned the ruling and acknowledged that women who wore jeans could indeed be raped. Cases such as this demonstrate the persistence of sexist ideas about women's bodies and violence, and clearly indicate that legal reform did not eradicate the legacy of honor culture. However, despite the lingering impact of sexist laws governing sexual violence, the culture of sexual violence did change thanks to a new feminist language that provided women with ways to recognize, identify, and name sexual violence. At least in theory, women began to feel that they would be protected and believed when they reported sexual violence.[287]

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[284] Alessandra Stanley, "Ruling on Tight Jeans and Rape Sets off Anger in Italy." *New York Times,* February 16, 1999.
[285] Stanley, 1999.
[286] Maria Novella Deluca. "Non e vergine, strupo meno grave cassazione choc, bufera sui giudici, 1999. www.larepubblica.it/online/fatti/jeans/giudice/html
[287] Tamar Pitch, *Limited Responsibilities: Social Movements and Criminal Justice,* (London and New York: Routledge 1995), 157.

Starting in 1996, a series of amendments were made to the laws governing violence against women. The laws expanded to cover physical, sexual, and psychological violence. Italian law now includes legislation addressing crimes associated with pornography, human trafficking, the sexual exploitation of children and pedo-pornography, female genital mutilation, stalking, and domestic violence committed against anyone—husbands, wives, cohabitant partners, children, and parents—subject to physical and psychological abuse. The national hotline for victims of violence was established in 2006, and this toll-free line operates 24 hours a day and transfers calls to a national network of local hubs distributed across the country. In 2013, the Council of Ministers approved measures to prevent any sex-based hate crime that involves the intentional killing of women or girls by men because of the victim's gender. The new measures increased punishments and improved the tools for victim protection.[288]The new law, Article 119, introduced even more severe penalties against persecutory acts committed among persons linked to the victim by an emotional relationship.[289]

Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, Italy adopted EU directives such as 97/80/CE on discrimination and 2002/73/CE on equality in employment, and the adoption of these directives increased levels of gender equality.[290] Today, these laws have expanded to include increased protections for victims of sexual violence. New legislation has also expanded the parameters of rape to include a broader range of violent sexual acts. At the same time, legal reforms have raised new concerns. As the legal scholar Tamar Pitch has noted, "A struggle which was motivated by progressive secular values degenerated into

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[288] European Parliament FEMM Committee, *Policy on Gender Equality in Italy*. Policy Department: Citizen's Rights and Constitutional Affairs, 2014.
[289] Codice Penale, Articolo 119, Primo libro 1-3, *Brocardi.it* http://www.brocardi.it/codice-penale/
[290] European Parliament Policy on Gender Equality in Italy, 2014.

moralistically repressive legislation which imposed new demands and opened new contradictions."[291]According to Pitch, despite changes in the law meant to improve gender equality and improve sexual violence laws, these changes have created new problems and placed new restrictions on female autonomy. Also, although women remain the most frequent victims of rape, they are not the sole victims. Italian rape laws do not address sexual violence against men and boys. This particular crime has been under-reported and largely under-researched. Furthermore, some argue that Italian law must adopt reforms to further broaden the definition of rape, improve the rules about sentencing and admissible evidence, and, most importantly, remove requirements for verification of rape in victim's accounts so that the victims themselves are not subjected to trial.[292]

VII. Conclusion

Efforts to create gender equality in Italy have taken many forms over many, many decades. One such effort has been the individual acts of courage demonstrated by rural women flouting custom and refusing to marry their rapists. It is easy to trace the impact of organized urban feminists and legislators. It was their work that led directly to legal reform. But, the "accidental feminists" discussed in this chapter were also critical

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[291] See Tamar Pitch *Limited Responsibilities*, 153.

[292] Ibid*;* Also see Pitch, "Rape Reform in Italy: The Endless Story in *Italian Politics,* Vol. 4, 1990, 162-173; Amy Jo Everhart. "Predicting the Effect of Italy's Long Awaited Rape Law Reform on "The Land of Machismo," *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law.* 31.3, 1998. 671-718; Caterina Peroni, "Gender Based Violence and Feminicide in Queer Italian Movements: Questioning Gender, Sexuality, and the Hetero-normative Order," *Onati Socio-Legal Series.* 5 (6). 1557-1579. Accessed online: http://ssrn.com/abstract=2710640; Elena Zambelli, Arianna Mainardi, and Andrea Hajek, "Sexuality and Power in Contemporary Italy: Subjectivities Between Gender Norms, Agency, and Social Transformation, *Modern Italy,* Vol. 23, No.2, 2018, 129-138. Though the crime of rape is still defined as solely a crime against a woman in Italy, increasingly, European nations such as France and Sweden have expanded the definition of rape to include male victims.

participants in the movement for equality. These women were not typical feminists by most measures, but they were the most impacted by honor culture and through their individual actions they made brave claims to their own bodies. The organized feminist groups of the late 1960s and 1970s brought feminist issues to the forefront of Italian cultural and drove legal and social changes that transformed life in Italy, but they mostly ignored *fuitina*. Both groups of women influenced changes in the culture in their own respective ways, and their actions led to major reforms in the law and created a new discourse surrounding the female body and the private sphere. Fundamentally, it was the combination of these efforts that led to the repeal of the honor codes and to the redefinition of sexual violence under Italian law.

Chapter 5: Representations of *Fuitina* in Italian Film

Introduction:

The practice of *fuitina* appeared often in Italian cinema after the Second World War. Over the decades of the postwar period, representations of the practice changed, and these shifting depictions both reflected and drove changes to Italian values, laws, and notions of national identity. Film, as the most popular cultural product of the postwar era, also shaped long-standing debates about Italy's Southern Question with depictions of southern sexuality, otherness, and *fuitina.* According to Peppino Ortolevo, "the media of the nation help us understand the way that a nation perceives its own geography, how it defines its centers and periphery."[293]Within the Italian national project, Sicily represented an Italian "other," and the framing of Sicily as insufficiently modern or Italian was often gendered. The gendering of this otherness relied on depictions of "backward" customs and of these customs *fuitina* was central. Post-1945 films depicting the practice illustrate that Italians and Sicilians continued to wrestle with the otherness of Sicily after the fall of the fascist regime. By analyzing Italian films from this period, it is possible to understand how the Italian national narrative made use of *fuitina* to illustrate the role of gender ideology within the nation.

Following the Second World War, Italian filmmakers regularly used the island of Sicily as the setting for their films, and they often used the location to display images of the island that traded in stereotypes about Sicilians and southern Italians. In a number of postwar films, Italian filmmakers depicted *fuitina* as a repressive and archaic practice in order to denigrate southern Italian culture. Over time depictions of *fuitina* in film

[293]Peppino Ortolevo, "A Geography of the Media since 1945," in *Italian Cultural Studies: An Introduction,* (Oxford University Press), 1996, 185.

evolved, and later depictions suggested that the practice could create liberation from old traditions. In this chapter, I suggest that film directors depicted *fuitina* in three very different ways: some perpetuated old stereotypes, others challenge those stereotypes, and more recently, filmic depictions of *fuitina* helped to redefine the public's understanding of the custom entirely.

By looking at representations of *fuitina* in Italian film across several decades, this chapter examines the stereotyping of southern Italians and considers how *fuitina* appeared in various historical contexts. I argue that depictions of *fuitina* in popular Italian film reflects a long history of denigrating southern Italian habits, customs, and sexuality as a means of articulating an Italian national character and morality.[294] Films produced in the decades after World War Two are particularly important for understanding shifting ideas about *fuitina,* as postwar films reached large audiences and wielded tremendous influence on the Italian popular imagination.

II. Italian Cinema

Before the Second World War, stereotypes of the south and anxiety about Italian national character found expression in travel writing, nationalist discourses, fine art, and popular literature. In the pre-War period, popular depictions of Sicily focused on the Southern Question, but after 1945, Italian films brought a new focus to representations of the island. Sicily became the region most representative of the south, and it was utilized by filmmakers as a place to explore the changing manners and mores of a society

[294] See Nelson Moe, *View From Vesuvius,* (University of California Press, 2002); Marta Petrusewicz. *Come il meridione divenne una questione: Rappresentazioni del Sud prima e dopo Il Quarantotto,* (Rubettino Editore, 1998); John Dickie, *Darkest Italy: The Nation and Stereotypes of the Mezzogiorno 1860-1900*, (New York: Saint Martens Press, 1999); Jane Schneider, ed. *Italy's Southern Question: Orientalism in One Country,* (New York: Oxford, 1998; Silvana Patriarca. *Italian Vices: Nation and Character from the Risorgimento to the Republic,* (Cambridge University Press), 2010.

transformed by the economic miracle. In other words, Sicily became a place onto which anxieties about the future of the nation could be projected. Roberto Ando, author of "Il Terzo Occhio," described this process:

> Film was complicit in the promulgation of colonial type attitudes toward Sicilians. A cultural identity was created in which the Sicilian was promoted as the other, supporting the audience's need to locate difference and deviance. In the case of Sicily, it was rendered discrete by its geographical specificity.[295]

Following World War Two, Italian film became a major force in culture and society. The film studio *Cinecitta,* the largest film studio in Europe, had a massive impact on the popular imagination. Founded by Benito Mussolini in 1937, the public inauguration of *Cinecitta* included a banner reading *Cinematografia e le arma piu forte* or "cinematography is the strongest weapon."[296] In the early postwar era, film was an agent of modernity, bringing forth, and reflecting, social and political transformation in Italian society.

Filmmakers perpetuated many stereotypes about the Italian south by using images of the south that juxtaposed lawlessness, backwardness, economic immobility, and immoral characters with natural beauty, traditional values, and exoticism. Some recent scholarship has addressed the role of film in the creation of these stereotypes. According to Elizabeth Hart, "The stereotyping of Sicilians, for an Italian as well as a global audience, allowed space for "destablising characteristics," such as criminality, to be both contained and explored, while the exotic otherness of Sicily offered Italians a form of cultural tourism, which was often complemented by the visual paradise of the setting."[297]

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[295] Roberto Ando. "Il Terzio Occhio" *Nuove Effermiridi* 13 1991 41-45.
[296] Giuseppe Pucci, "La cinematografia e l'arma piu forte," *Progressus,* Vol. 2, 2018, 11-18.
[297] Elizabeth Hart, "Destablising Paradise: Men, Women, and Mafiosi: Sicilian Stereotypes," *Journal of Intercultural Studies,* June 5, 2008, 213. Accessed online. http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cjis20.

By looking at representations of *fuitina* in Italian popular film, this chapter explores the context and imagery used to represent Sicily in the postwar period.

Sebastian Gesu, a film critic and the leading historian of Italian cinema, has also explored the construction of Sicilian identity or *Sicilianita* in popular media. Gesu spent his career collecting cinematic images of Sicily, and he has archived all films where Sicily was the setting or that involved Sicilian directors and actors.[298] His work documented the Italian, and foreign, fascination with representations of Sicily and Sicilian tropes.[299] Gesu argues that postwar Italian filmmakers, largely influenced by Hollywood, created their own type of "wild west" in Italian film. As a film location, Sicily came to embody the image of the Italian frontier and appeared as a place where theft co-existed with beauty.[300]

Perhaps the best representation of the Sicilian frontier appeared in what some call Italy's first mafia film. Produced in 1949, *In nome della legge* (In the Name of the Law) was co-written by directors Pietro Germi and Frederico Fellini.[301] John Dickie referred to the film as a shotgun wedding between neorealism and Hollywood. According to Dickie, much like Hollywood films set in the American West, "Germi's Sicily became an Arizona, a place of lone lawmen, long stares, and ambushes, or a type of quasi wild-west where in the film, instead of John Wayne, viewers are met by lone lawmen and cowboy capos."[302]

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[298] Gesu, Sebastiano, "Rassegna del documentario e della comunicazione archeological," *University of Catania* Conference. November 6-9, 2014. Accessed online https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8Y_HkK-tkk

[299] Sebastiano Gesu, *La Sicilia Tra Schermo e Storia,* (Giuseppe Maimone Editore, 2008).

[300] Gesu, 7.

[301] *In Nome Della Legge.* Directed by Germi, Pietro and Fellini Frederico. Lux films, 1949. Italy. DVD.

[302] Dickie, John, *Mafia Republic: Italy's Criminal Curse: Cosa Nostra, Camorra and Ndrangheta from 1946 to Present,* (London: Sceptre, 2013), 22. *In the Name of the Law* was based on the novel *Piccolo Pretura* by leading authority on the Sicilian Mafia Giuseppe Lo Schiavo.

In nome della legge tells the story of a young magistrate named Giuseppe Guido Lo Schiavo who is sent from Palermo to investigate a murder and restore order in the Sicilian town of Capodarso. Once he arrives in the town, Lo Schiavo encounters a suspicious and conspiratorial local population too afraid to share information. His only allies are the local baronessa, Teresa Lo Vasto, the town marshal, Grifo, and a young man named Paolino. The three help Lo Schiavo gather information and serve as secret informants. The film portrays Sicily as a frontier region lacking law and order, and the Sicilian town as a place where nothing ever changes.[303] In the conversation below, between Lo Shiavo and the local mafia boss, named Turi Passalacqua, the film lays out these conditions:

> PASSALACQUA: Mr. Lo Schiavo, Your work has no use as this is how things go here on our island. They have been this way for over one hundred years and the farmers are happy about it.
>
> LO SCHIAVO: Actually the opposite is true, many of the farmers and members of their families have been held hostage by your ways. I am here for only one reason to administer the law to everyone equally.
>
> PASSALACQUA: What law? Do you mean the law of the state? You are very brave *pretore*, but we ourselves administer the law here. We are an island far from the mainland and "men of honor" who live independently like the birds in the sky. The government is far and if we weren't here no one would be safe in their homes.[304]

The depiction of the town of Capodarso as lawless, as well as geographically and culturally distant from mainland Italy, is a motif highlighted throughout the film through character traits, dialogue, and local events. The image of this small town as a "wild west" where order needs to be restored illustrates a society struggling between the forces of tradition and modernity. Understanding representations of *fuitina* within this framework

[303] *In nome della legge.* 1949.
[304] *In nome della legge*. 1949.

is important for exploring how depictions of southern backwardness contributes to narratives about Italian national identity.

With the onset of the economic miracle in the late 1950s, artists and intellectuals continued to use Sicily as a place through which they could confront the changing mores of Italian society. The characterization of southern Italy as Italy's frontier, a place full of archaic traditions, mafiosi, and saturated by strict codes of honor, appeared throughout Italian cinema. In these popular representations, Sicily illustrated the perils of economic immobility, oversexed people, an extremely hot climate, impoverishment, and lawlessness. Films reminded viewers that the gulf between the cultures of the north and south was vast, and they highlighted concerns that regional divisions threatened national values. However, postwar Italian cinema was not uniform or static, and over time representations of the south, and of *fuitina*, changed dramatically as new national tensions, particularly those concerning gender, moved to the forefront of popular consciousness.

II. Historical Background: Italian Cinema Postwar

The film movement known as Italian neorealism emerged after the war as a backlash to the propaganda films of the fascist period. While fascist films used realism to promote fascist values and Italian greatness, neorealist films utilized realist techniques to create awareness of the conditions of everyday life and the struggles of the working class and poor in Italy. Neorealist portrayals of human suffering reflected the aftermath of war and the overall re-organization of daily life, the economy, and politics.[305] The grainy documentary style of neorealist films reflected the scarcity of the immediate postwar

[305] Peter Bondanella, *Italian Cinema,* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2009), 31-195.

period, and these films were often produced with limited budgets and outdated equipment. Though neorealist films largely failed at the box office, they had a lasting impact on the evolution of Italian cinema and led to the centrality of film within broader discussions of the economic, political, and social problems facing the nation over time.[306]

In the 1950s, better economic conditions led to the development of a much brighter and less serious film genre known as *Commedia all'Italiana* (Comedy Italian-style).[307] These years, particularly 1958 to 1968, were pivotal for Italian cinema as it established itself in the global film market. *Commedia all'Italiana* films are some of the most popular Italian films ever made and are considered some of the greatest of that era. Like neorealist films, the *Commedia all'italiana* from the1950s and 1960s reflected the conditions of Italian life, portrayed the rapid transformation of Italian culture, and highlighted the tense intersection between tradition and modernity in the postwar nation.[308] These films used satire to attack old traditions and morals and a number of these films focused on economic change, southern migration, and the impact of industrialization on the agricultural labor force.

Some of the most successful Italian films produced between 1945 and 1968 were set in Sicily, including Luchino Visconti's 1948 *La terra trema* (The Earth Trembles) and 1963 *Il gattopardo* (The Leopard) based on the novel by Giuseppe Tomasi

[306] For more information neo-realist film genre, see Millicent Marcus, *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism*, (Princeton University Press, 1986); Peter Bondanella, *Italian Cinema: From Neo-realism to the Present.* (Continuum, 2001).
[307] See Bondanella, *Italian Cinema*, 88-89 and 144-145.*Commedia all'italiana* illustrated the undercurrents and social ills of society and the contradictions of culture. The genre portrayed a darker more cynical vision of Italian life. It has been described as, "tragic comedy bordering on the grotesque." See Peter Bondanella and Federico Pacchioni, *A History of Italian Cinema,* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017), 186.
[308] Ibid.

Lampedusa.[309]*The Leopard* was one of the most successful films in the world and won the Palme D'Or at the 1963 Cannes Film Festival.[310]Visconti's earlier film, *La terra trema,* is particularly relevant to the questions raised in this chapter. The film focuses on the clash of family systems and pits the traditional southern family and its codes of honor against the individualistic and modern culture of the industrial north.[311] Visconti captures the unchanging nature of life in the Sicilian fishing village of Aci Trezza and portrays the continual exploitation of working fisherman by the town's merchants. The film opens with the narrator describing Aci Trezza as a "place where its walls are made of old stones as old as the trade of being a fisherman, where things have always been the same from grandfathers to fathers."[312] The townspeople of Aci Trezza play themselves in the film, and they spend nearly all of their screen time lamenting their economic hardships.

The story focuses on the Valastros family and their efforts to improve their economic circumstances. The eldest son, Ntoni, and the grandfather represent the conflict between new and old ways of life. The grandfather cannot understand why Ntoni is always complaining and tells his grandson that things have always been this way and that he should accept his conditions and listen to his elders. Ntoni, who served as a soldier on the mainland, has a different perspective.[313] He convinces his family to take out a mortgage on their house to buy a boat and gain control over the price of the fish they catch and sell in the market. During a storm, their boat is severely damaged and the family's efforts fall apart. The merchants of the village punish the family for attempting

[309] *Il gattopardo*. Directed by Luchino Visconti. Potential films France, 1963. Movie. DVD; The film *The Leopard* was adapted by Giovanni Verga's novel *I Malavoglia*1881. *La Terra Trema.* Directed by Luchino Visconti. Victor Film, 1948. Movie. DVD. Italy.
[310] *Il gattopardo.* 1963.
[311] *La terra trema.*1948.
[312] Ibid.
[313] *La terra trema.* 1948.

to be their own masters and prevent the Valastro men from getting work in town.[314] The family falls into further despair when the bank repossesses their home. Brother Cola leaves secretly for the mainland to seek opportunities and the grandfather dies. Sister Lucia loses her reputation when she is seduced by the local marshal, Don Salvatore, and sister Mara laments that she will never be able to marry because they are so poor. By the end of the film, Ntoni swallows his pride and returns to the merchants to sign up to be a day laborer with his younger brothers. When he arrives to work, the wholesalers mock him for his communist spirit and tell him to listen to his elders in the future. The film ends with a sense of hopelessness. Conditions will never change in Aci Trezza because no one, not even the members of a single family, can work together to combat exploitation. In the words of the film's narrator, "Nobody could help Ntoni because as long as they will not learn to care for each other or be united, it is within himself that he will need to find the strength to start again."[315] The film characterizes the unchanging nature of the island and depicts a place corrupted by the uncivil nature of its occupants.[316]

The representation of Sicily in film as backward, different from northern Italy, and full of uncivilized inhabitants was also illustrated by the Sicilian filmmaker Giuseppe Tornatore in his 1995 film *L'uomo delle stele* (The Starmaker). Set in Sicily in the 1950s, *L'uomo delle stelle* begins with a man from the north, Giuseppe Romolo, bathing himself in a river. As he washes himself, a dead naked body floats past. Shocked by what he sees, he yells over to a group of local men who are digging in the ground and asks them if they also saw the body. The men slowly and casually raise their heads and nod "no" before

[314] Ibid.
[315] *La terra trema.* 1948.
[316] Ibid.

continuing their work. The camera cuts to another man who says, "It could only be the body of three people, a trade unionist, a policeman, or a bandit, or more simply put, *un figgiu ri buttana* "a son of a bitch."[317]

The Starmaker depicted a clash of cultures between north and south, and Tornatore called the film "a metaphor for the fractured history of the island of Sicily and its people, who suffered numerous invasions."[318] When the Sicilian men ignore the dead body in the river, Tornatore is making an explicit reference to the Sicilian mafia's practice of *omerta*. The *omerta* or "code of silence" demands that witnesses remain silent when being questioned by the police, government officials, or an outsider. In Sicily, breaking *omerta* or co-operating with the authorities was punishable by death.

Tornatore is considered one of the best directors in Italy, and his work has been praised for elevating the reputation of Italian cinema in the 1990s. His film *Cinema paradiso*, also set in Sicily, won the Academy Award for Best Foreign Film in 1990.[319] However, while Tornatore's work addressed the exploitation of Sicilians, his films have also traded in stereotypes about the island.[320]In an interview with *The Independent* in 1997, Tornatore described Sicily as an island of stasis.

> There isn't another region in the world that is as small but has inspired as many movies as Sicily. In the period just after World War II, everybody had a politics. Everyone's personal history informed it and everyone thought they knew the best for the future. So, in the *Starmaker* you have the Mafia, the Communists, the Fascists, and anarchists. For a moment cinema is one of the metaphors for that future. But that future, in Sicily, never comes.[321]

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[317] *L'uomo delle stelle.* Directed by Giuseppe Tornatore. Italia, 1995. Movie. DVD.
[318] Ibid.
[319] *Cinema Paradiso.* Directed by Giuseppe Tornatore. Les Films Ariane, 1990. Movie. DVD.
[320] In 2014, Tornatore also directed the series of Dolce and Gabbana ads for the perfume *Sicily.* The ads showed a series of images that quickly identify Sicily, such as old men wearing caps, women in traditional dress, and people speaking in Sicilian dialect.
[321] Interview with Giuseppe Tornatore, "A Man for all Sicilians." *The Independent* January 10, 1997 *https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/a-man-for-all-sicilians-1282435.html.*

The constant exploration of social problems within narratives set in Sicily has distorted the popular image of Sicilian people and their customs. Sicilian filmmakers, alongside their northern counterparts, produced images of Sicily similar to those found in the works of earlier writers such as Giuseppe Verga and Luigi Pirandello. The term *Sicilianita,* what Leonardo Sciascia also referred to as *Sicilitudine* in his famous work *La Corda Pazza* (1982), stems from the term *Negritude,* an expression of revolt against French colonial rule and racism articulated by black intellectuals in the 1930s.[322] During the unification of Italy, Sicily, like Sardinia, was considered a distinct region with an intemperate climate and volatile people. In many ways, Sicily functioned almost as an internal colony within Italy.[323] Filmmakers, like writers, elite patriots, scientists, and intellectuals before them, portrayed the land and people of Sicily as lawless, irrational, and difficult to understand.

In films, the archetype of the mafia man is associated with Sicily. In her study of mafia culture, *Donne, mafia e antimafia*, Anna Puglisi notes:

> Images of southern society and the mafia combined, are so often presented by the mass media with stereotypes that distort the true nature of the problems: mafia as an elusive and unknowable octopus; mafia as the mafia of the past as men of honor. Southern society as a bag full of backwardness and mafia, a product of underdevelopment.[324]

Influenced by Hollywood, Italian filmmakers created their own Mafioso characters.[325]The counterpart to the Sicilian mafia man was the archetypical Sicilian

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[322] The term negritude is attributed to three fellow classmates and poets Aime' Cesaire from Martinique, Leon Gontran Damas from Guiana and Leopold Sedhar Senghor (the first president of Senegal) who used the term as an expression of revolt against racism and colonialism, which for colonial subjects, meant being considered an uncivilized people in need of education and guidance. Leonardo Sciascia. "Sicilia e Sicilitudine." *La corda pazza: Scrittori e cose della Sicilia.* Aldelphi Edizioni, 1991. 11-18; Orioles, Vincenzo. "Tra Sicilianita e Sicilitudine," Vol. 49, No. 1, 2009. *Linguistica,* Vol. 49, No. 1, 227-234. https://revije.ff.uni-lj.si/linguistica/article/view/3565

[323] Hart, 214.

[324] Anna Puglisi, *Donne Mafia E Antimafia*, (Trapani: Di Girolamo, 2012), 11.

[325] Ibid.

woman. This woman often appeared as an oppressed figure trapped beyond a dark staircase or behind a curtain. She is a victim of male oppression and enslaved by her father or her husband.[326] When she appears in films, the Sicilian woman is a victim of patriarchal society, the culture of honor, and the mafia. She is exotic, sensual, and desirable to men. She appears as a fixture of the landscape, beautiful but stunted like the island of Sicily itself. Like the mafia figure, the Sicilian woman is often at the center of cinema plotlines. These symbols of southern Italian identity, the mafia don with his code of honor and the sequestered Sicilian woman, intersect with representations of *fuitina* on film.

III. *Fuitina* on Film

A number of films produced after 1945 were set in Sicily and addressed the custom of *fuitina.* The films spanned various genres including neo-realism, *Commedia all'Italiana*, drama, and documentary and many won awards and reached international audiences. The film *In nome delle legge* uses *fuitina* to signify that Sicily is rife with antiquated values. In the film, a young woman, Bastianedda, is set to marry a much older man named Francesco. Upset about this forced marriage arrangement, Bastianedda confides in seventeen-year-old Paolino. The young pair decide to escape and save Bastianedda from her marriage to Francesco. The couple runs away and locks themselves

[326] Puglisi, 11. The Sicilian woman is an image often of an oppressed woman who has suffered great losses, often dressed in black further emphasizing her oppression. The image of the Sicilian woman in mourning, in particular, has made for a great many film spectacles. Perhaps the best reflection of this character can be found in the journalistic documentary investigations of women impacted by the mafia produced by French journalist Marcelle Padovini. Padovini wrote a great deal on Sicily. In 1979, she published a book with Leonardo Sciascia *La Sicilia come metafora* or "Sicily as a Metaphor.*"* Padovini also wrote a series of articles on Sicily in the press as well as directed two reports for television on the Sicilian Mafia, one on women engaged against the mafia, the other called *Nemici della mafia: Solitudine del giudice Falcone* (1988) or "Portrait of Giovanni Falcone." Padovini interviewed the female relatives and wives of victims of the mafia. Her interviews were conducted at local cemeteries next to the tombs of their loved ones.

in a barn. Bastianedda's mother and Francesco learn about their *scappata* or "escape" and rush to retrieve Bastianedda. While she attempts to open the barn door, Bastianedda's mother is mocked by local onlookers. "It is too late now! They will need to marry instead."[327]Francesco arrives at the barn with a rifle and the intention of shooting the young couple (or at least Paolino) to protect his honor, but he is stopped by Bastianedda's mother. Later, Francesco finds Paolino and murders him on the street. The episode ends with a speech from pretore Lo Schiavo during which he blames the community for their culture of silence, and their overall disrespect for the law for allowing for such violence to persist. The tragic death of Paolino has inspired Lo Schiavo to restore order in the town. In the end, Lo Schiavo asserts that he will no longer leave town, like he had previously planned, but will remain and fight for good until he changes Capodorso's old backward ways "in the name of the law."[328]

In nome della legge highlights the poverty, generational conflict, corruption, lawlessness, and a lack of civil society that many believed plagued Sicily after the war. Other films, such as *La terra trema,* also addressed these issues. Although there is no *fuitina* in *La terra trema*, the young people in the film, especially the women, obsessively worry about how poverty will impact their futures and prospects for marriage. In both of these films, Sicily itself is figured as an impediment to modernity and mobility.

Giorni d'amore (Days of Love) is a comedy in the neo-realist style from 1954. Directed by the founder of the neo-realist genre, Giuseppe De Santis, the film gives a comic twist to the social concerns found within the neo-realist genre. *Giorni d'amore* takes place in an undesignated region of southern Italy and focuses on the rural poor. The

[327] *In nome della legge.* 1948.
[328] *In nome della legge.* 1948.

stars, Marcello Matrioanni and Marina Vlady, play a young couple, Pasquale and Angela, who want to marry. Because their families are so poor, they cannot afford a traditional wedding. Pasquale and Angela fantasize about their future together, and they spend their days calculating the cost of wedding items from the *bomboniere* or "party favors" and the organist to Angela's veil and Pasquale's suit.[329] After each calculation, their funds still fall short of what they need. Although they are poor, they obsess about making a bad impression if they do not have a respectable wedding. After much back and forth, the families of the couple meet to discuss the wedding expenses; at the meeting everyone agrees that there simply is not enough money. Pasquale suggests that Angela not buy a white bridal gown or that he can wear an old suit, but everyone rejects this suggestion. Angela argues that "without a white dress the whole town will speak and make all sorts of assumptions about me." Her parents tell Pasquale that in their family "there has never been a wedding without a white dress!"[330] Pasquale suggests they cancel the wedding and commit a *fuitina*. "Unfortunately," Pasquale says, "there can be no proper wedding as this is how things go for the poor."[331] Finally, the families agree to the *fuitina,* but Angela worries about being disgraced in the eyes of the local townspeople. Still, her family encourages her to escape with Pasquale. "You will not be the first," they argue, "even the rich do it!" Angela responds that "at least the rich escape in a car!" Angela worries about gossiping villagers. "Instead of everyone remembering me in a white dress, they will just remember that I escaped."[332] In the end, realizing she has few options, Angela agrees to

[329] *Giorni d'amore.* Directed by Giuseppe De Santis. Excelsa Films, 1954. Movie. DVD.
[330] *Giorni d'amore.* 1954.
[331] *Giorni d'amore.* 1954.
[332] Ibid.

the *fuitina* and accepts that her hope for a respectable wedding conflicts with the reality of her family's poverty.

When Angela and Pasquale finally flee together, their families pretend to be outraged. They loudly blame each other in front of the other villagers for the *fuitina* they have planned together. The scene mocks the practice of consensual *fuitina* and all the drama and scheming that surrounds it. Overall, *Giorni d'amore* portrays *fuitina* as a consequence of poverty and the suffering of the poor who are unable to reach the middle class ideal of *bella figura* or "making a good impression." *Fuitina* is a practice for the poor who cannot afford to formal weddings for their children.[333]

The custom of *fuitina* also appeared in *Sedotta e abbandonata* (Seduced and Abandoned), directed by Pietro Germi in 1964. Germi was already famous for his Oscar-winning *Divorzio all'Italiana* (Divorce Italian-style) from 1961, and *Sedotta e abbandonata* debuted at the International Cannes Film Festival and reached a global audience.[334] Germi was from Genoa, and his early work included several neorealist films and social dramas about the plight of people of Sicilian heritage. In the 1960s, he shifted away from social dramas and moved towards satirical comedies, often incorporating Sicilian settings.

Sedotta E Abbandonata tells the story of a 16-year old Sicilian girl, Agnese, who is seduced and impregnated by her sister's fiancé, Peppino. When Agnese's father, Don Vincenzo, discovers the pregnancy he goes to great lengths in order to protect the honor of his family. Don Vincenzo is the ultimate rigid and overbearing patriarch. After he receives word from his wife about a note containing Agnese's declaration of love for

[333] *Giorni d'amore.* 1954.
[334] *Divorzio all'italiana.* Directed by Pietro Germi. Embassy Pictures, 1961. Italia. Movie. DVD.

Peppino, Don Vincenzo calls a nurse to physically examined Agnese. The nurse tells Don Vincenzo, "well she is a girl, it was bound to happen." Don Vincenzo demands that Agnese reveals the name of her lover, and when she refuses he beats her. Hearing his wife's screams, Don Vincenzo stops the beating but yells for the nurse not to leave his home until all of his three other daughters are examined.[335]

Don Vincenzo has Agnese's urine tested and discovers that she is pregnant. When he learns that Peppino is the seducer, he demands that Peppino "orchestrate a *fuitina*" in order to avoid any shame to his family's honor. Peppino refuses, claiming he does not love Agnese because she is a *buttana* or whore.[336] Instead of performing the *fuitina*, Peppino goes into hiding and fears that Don Vincenzo will murder him to save his family's honor. After a series of mishaps and threats to his life, as well as the pressure of his own family, Peppino agrees to marry Agnese.

The film ends tragically for all the principal characters. Don Vincenzo lays dying alone in his bed. Agnese and Peppino are forced to marry, and Matilda, Peppino's original fiancée, takes her vows to become a nun.[337] In the very last shot of the film, the camera focuses on a bust of Don Vincenzo placed in the center of the piazza. It reads "Onore e Famiglia" and the inscription highlights the tragic outcome of Don Vincenzo's efforts.[338] Don Vincenzo's character is an exaggerated caricature of the Sicilian patriarch, and his entire arc illustrates the ridiculousness of the social honor code. In the end, Don Vincenzo goes to great lengths to protect his image in the eyes of local villagers. He forces his daughter to marry a man who does not love her, who seduced her, and who

[335] *Sedotta e abbandonata.* Directed by Pietro Germi. Continental Distributing Inc., 1964. Italy and France. Movie. DVD.
[336] *Sedotta e abbandonata.* 1964.
[337] Ibid.
[338] Ibid.

called her a whore, all in the name of honor and family. At the film's end, everyone is a victim of old customs, especially Peppino, Agnese, and Matilda, who find themselves bound by traditions that no longer make sense in the modern world.[339]

Germi's film critiqued reparatory marriage and the Italian honor codes. The use of Sicily as the film's setting, along with the use of the Sicilian language, emphasized the otherness of Sicily and painted the island as a place where archaic customs persisted. The film depicts *fuitina* as a backward and oppressive custom, and it is clear that Agnese and Peppino have control over their own fates. *Fuitina,* like the honor codes, is portrayed as a relic of the past that needs to be eliminated. It persists on Sicily because the island is a place where old habits die hard. At the film's end Vincenzo, the unrelenting patriarch who cares only about his public image, takes his last breath and the audience is left with a sense of hope that change is possible.

La ragazza con la pistola (The Girl with a Pistol), a comedy from 1968 by the Tuscan-born director Mario Monicelli, also depicted *fuitina* as an antiquated and oppressive practice. Monicelli is considered a master of *Commedia all'Italiana*, and the film received an Academy Award nomination for best foreign film in 1969. *La Ragazza con la pistola* stared the Monica Vitti as Assunta, and it opens with a scene of young people dancing to rock n' roll music playing on the radio.[340] The young women dance together inside behind shutters and curtains while the men dance outside on the terraces in broad daylight. The modern music paired with the gender segregation depicts the striking contrast of tradition and modernity in an era of rapid cultural change.

[339] *Sedotta e abbandonata*. 1964.
[340] *La ragazza con la pistola.* Directed by Mario Monicello. Documento Film, 1968. Italy. Movie. DVD.

In the first scene, Assunta and a young man, Vincenzo, gaze at each other from afar. The viewer see that Vincenzo is not admiring Assunta but her dancing partner and cousin, Concetta. Assunta goes to the pharmacy with her mother, sisters, and Concetta, and as she exits the pharmacy, they are approached by a group of local men in two cars. A woman yells for them to run. The men chase the women, and Assunta is captured and thrown into the car as her mother screams "*figghia mia!*" or "My daughter." Assunta fights to escape and yells for the whole town to hear. "*Vogghiu moriri megghu morta ca disunurata"* or **"**I want to die. Better dead than dishonored."[341]

The car arrives at a farmhouse where Vincenzo is waiting. When he sees Assunta he tells the kidnappers that they have gotten the wrong girl. "Who is this? This is not the one I wanted. I requested the fatter one." It is a *fuitina sbagliata* or mistaken *fuitina.* The men blame Assunta for confusing them and tell Vincenzo that Assunta practically threw herself in the car. Assunta confesses that she thought Vincenzo had come for her and played her part. She reminds Vincenzo of the many months the two of them have spent admiring each other, and Vincenzo tells her that she was mistaken. "I wasn't looking at you, I was looking at your cousin Concetta."[342] Assunta angrily tells him that the mistake is irrevocable. "Well it is too late, regardless of who you wanted, I am the dishonored one now. You must marry me. Are you clear, that is if you want to live."[343] The men agree, stating in dialect "*ormai u fattu e fattu"* or "too late now, the deed is done." After the men leave, Vincenzo tells Assunta that the outcome could have been worse. "Now that I see you closer you don't look so bad" to which Assunta replies "better than my cousin Concetta?" As Vincenzo draws closer, Assunta pulls a knife and demands he make her a

[341] Ibid.
[342] *La ragazza con la pistola.* 1968.
[343] Ibid.

marriage promise if he is going to seduce her.[344] Then, in a display familiar in films from this era, Assunta begins to kiss Vincenzo, ostensibly overcome with her desire to be with him.[345]This representation of a mistaken *fuitina* downplays the severity of Assunta's violation. Her arousal is exaggerated, and she is presented as a willing and consenting participant in her abduction and rape.

The next morning, Assunta finds that Vincenzo has abandoned her, and when she returns to the village, a crowd is there to meet her. The women lament her new and unfortunate condition. Her mother says "Assunta you are now dishonored and no one will ever want to marry you." Concetta tells her to become a nun, and her sister tells her to "throw yourself at sea with a rock tied around your neck." Because her mother is a widow, and there are no men in the family to protect her honor, Assunta is forced to manage the dishonor herself. Feeling insulted and the subject of village gossip, Assunta leaves the village with a pistol and a plan to find Vincenzo who has fled to England.[346]

Although she is intimidated by English culture, Assunta does not give up on her mission to murder Vincenzo and win back her honor. After an accident puts her in the hospital, Assunta decides to abandon her pursuit of Vincenzo. A fellow hospital patient advises her to forget about her vengeance and devote herself to her own life. She creates a new life in England, and trades in her black Sicilian dresses for London's latest fashions. Her modern persona intrigues Vincenzo, but Assunta falls in love with a divorced British man and wants nothing to do with him. When they meet one last time, Assunta slaps him in the face. Assunta's assimilation into English culture symbolizes her

[344] Ibid.
[345] Ibid.
[346] *La ragazza con la pistola*. 1968.

liberation from the archaic and oppressive values of Sicily.[347] Monicelli uses the setting of the island to portray a distant land where outdated social and cultural norms persist. The spectacle of *fuitina sbagliata* or "botched *fuitina"* provides the filmmaker an opportunity to make fun of Sicilian people and their primitive customs.

La Moglie Piu (The Most Beautiful Wife), a film from 1970 by the Italian screenwriter, director, and actor Damiano Damiani, is darker and more serious than either *Sedotta e abbandonata* or *La Ragazza con la pistola. La moglie piu bella* draws on the story of Franca Viola and was one of a series of Damiani films about Italian politics, crime, and the mafia.[348] Damiani's films portrayed Sicily as a troubled place populated by defeated victims of systemic oppression. In *La moglie piu bella* a Sicilian mafia boss, Gaetano, advises his potential successor, Vito, to marry a virtuous and poor woman. Vito selects the 15-year old Francesca as his future bride, and while Francesca is initially interested in Vito, she later breaks off the engagement. Vito refuses to accept her rejection and hires his friends to kidnap her to a remote farmhouse where he holds her hostage and rapes her repeatedly. Vito tells Francesca that she must marry him because she is no longer pure. Like the real-life Viola, Francesca defies social norms and refuses Vito's proposal. Francesca's family fears retaliation from Vito, and her parents refuse to support her decision. Without her family's support, Francesca fights Vito alone.[349]The film is critical of the *omerta'* or silence of Sicilian society and the mafia. Francesca, like Agnese and Assunta, resists the hierarchical systems—the patriarchy, the mafia, and the honor codes—that oppress Italian woman.

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[347] Ibid.
[348] *La moglie piu' bella.* Directed by Damiano Damiani. Italy, 1970. Blue Ray DVD. For example, in the 1980s Damiani produced a television mini-series featuring the contemporary Italian mafia and its involvement in politics.
[349] *La moglie piu' bella.* 1970.

Between the 1950s and 1980s, representations of Sicily and *fuitina* accentuated stereotypes and provided distorted images of Sicilian customs and sexual norms by over-emphasizing the backwardness and impoverishment of Sicilian society. In this context, the island of Sicily appears as a lawless frontier or peripheral space where customs like *fuitina* continued to threaten Italian modernity. In the late 1980s and early 1990s depictions of *fuitina* in film began to change. In the films of this period, portrayals of Sicilians became increasingly sympathetic and no longer depended on comical caricatures of Sicilian identity. Representations began to include positive portrayals of young love and other complicated instances of consensual *fuitina*. These new representations of *fuitina* likely had two causes: the changes to the Italian Penal Code in 1981 that outlawed the honor codes and the increasing influence of Sicilian-born filmmakers in Italian cinema.

In the films of the 1990s especially, *fuitina* appeared as a consensual act orchestrated by young couples to rebel against parental rules and familial obligations. These willing *fuitinas*, consensual acts undertaken by two people to bypass the wishes of their families or the constructs of society, had always existed, but representations of consensual *fuitina* in film did not appear until this period. The films from the 1990s depict *fuitina* as a complex practice within a broader social context, or, in some cases, as a charming and old-fashioned cultural tradition.

Ragazzi fuore, a 1990 film set in the *Lo Zen* district of Palermo, addressed crime, poverty, unemployment, prostitution, and police harassment in the Sicilian capital. The film was followed in 1994 by *Le buttane* or The Whores.[350]Both films are shot in a

[350]*Lo Zen* is an economically marginalized quarter of the northern outskirts of Palermo. For More information about *Lo Zen* see Ferdinando Fava. *Lo zen di Palermo: Antropologia dell'Esclusione.* Milano:

documentary neorealist style also known as "Pasolinian style" and accentuated the bleakness of life in the impoverished communities of Palermo.[351] *Ragazzi Fuori* depicts *fuitina* as an aspect of working-class life in Palermo deployed by impoverished youth for their own purposes. The film presents a very bleak picture of Palermo and the Lo Zen neighborhood. The struggling young people face a number of challenges related to the failures of modernity and capitalism but not, as in earlier representations of *fuitina*, the inherent backwardness of Sicilian society.

The opening scene of *Ragazzi Fuori* presents a social and cultural divide between rich and poor in Palermo. Two young boys meet and ride their bikes through scenes of poverty, hooliganism, graffiti, and drug dealing. They travel to the wealthy part of town and climb the wall of an enclosed *villa.* From the wall, they admire a woman swimming in a private pool who uses proper Italian, unlike the Sicilian dialect spoken by the boys, to call to invite her son to swim with her.[352] In the next scene, the viewer is back in the rough streets of *Lo Zen* at night where two men on a Vespa violently harass a young male prostitute in drag. The following scenes show instances of juvenile delinquency, drug dealing, hostility towards African immigrants, and gang activity.[353]Next, a young man is released from a juvenile detention center in Naples, and as he leaves a police officer tells him to "say hello to the Palermitans for me."[354] Claudio finds his girlfriend, Vita, waiting

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Franco Angeli, 2007. Fava's book focuses on the history of Palermo in the last three decades. He uses the "ghetto" of *Lo Zen* in Palermo as an example of social-urban obstacles that confront the inhabitants of *Lo Zen.* Fava also uses *Lo Zen* as an example of the impact that the global economy has had on certain metropolitan spaces.

[351] *Ragazzi fuori.* Directed by Marco Risi, Cecchi Gori, 1990. Italia. Movie. DVD. Also see *Le buttane*. Directed by Aurelio Grimaldi and Marco Risi. Trio Cinema and Television Srl, 1994. Italy. Movie. DVD.

[352] *Ragazzi fuori.* 1990.

[353] Ibid.

[354] Ibid.

for him and learns that she has surprised him by traveling alone from Palermo. Immediately, Claudio reveals the meaning of Vita's visit.

> CLAUDIO: What are you doing here?
>
> VITA: I came on my own by boat.
>
> CLAUDIO: Does your mother know
>
> VITA: Sure, that way she would have killed me.
>
> CLAUDIO: You ran away?
>
> VITA: Yes, what does it matter?
>
> CLAUDIO: It definitely matters! This is *fuita*. What are we going to do now? What if when you arrived I didn't want to consent? What then?

Vita initiates the *fuitina*, and although we sense his unwillingness, he is obligated to consent or live with a bad conscience.[355]In this version of *fuitina,* it is the man who is forced comply.

A similar version of *fuitina* appeared the film *Baaria* from 2009. Directed by Giuseppe Tornatore, *Baaria* tells the story of three generations of people living in the town of Bagheria in Palermo. The term *Baaria* is Sicilian slang for Bagheria, and the film follows the life of a local Baarian named Peppino Torrenuovo from the 1930s through the 1980s.[356]The film traces Peppino's life and family across three generations of Sicilian history and politics. The opening scene begins with Peppino's son, Pietro, running to fetch cigarettes for a group of local men playing cards in the Piazza. As Pietro runs faster he begins to fly over Bagheria. His flight introduces the viewer to the beautiful and dramatic landscapes of Palermo. In the next scene, Peppino is back on the ground and late for school. When he enters his classroom, his classmates and teacher are signing a

[355] Ibid.
[356] Ibid.

fascist song. "If the world wants peace it must hear the voice of a nation that says, Duce! Duce! Duce!"[357] As the children sing, the teacher asks Peppino why he is not singing. "What's the matter did a cat eat your tongue? Get your book this minute."[358] Peppino tells the teacher that his book was eaten by a goat, and she drags him to a corner of the room. Later the film depicts major historical events: the WWII bombing of Palermo, the Allied invasion and occupation of Sicily, and the massacre at *Portella della ginestra.* During this imfamous massacre, twelve people were killed and 33 wounded during May Day celebrations in Sicily. The event is considered one of the most violent acts in the history of modern Italian politics.[359]

Peppino is a grown man when he sees a woman, Mannina, walking to her embroidery school. The pair crosses paths again at a local town gathering, have a formal meeting, and begin to dance. Peppino and Mannina fall in love. Watching from a distance, Mannina's mother is curious about the young couple. Mannina's family is suspicious of Peppino's intentions and concerned about his standing in the community. They inquire around town about his character and learn that he is a Communist. Mannina

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[357] *Baaria*. Directed by Giuseppe Tornatore. Medusa Film, 2010. Italy. Movie. DVD.
[358] Ibid.
[359] *Portella della ginestra massacre* was one of the first and most violent episodes of the New Republic during May Day celebrations in Sicily on May 1, 1947 in Piana Degli Albanesi, Sicily. Piana Degli Albanesi is a commune in the Metropolitan City of Palermo, Sicily. Separatist leader and well-known bandit, Salvatore Giuliano and his gang were initially held responsible, yet relevant investigation of the matter was not pursued. Motives and intentions are still a matter of controversy yet many are convinced that Giuliano was set up by anti-communist landowners. Legal scholar Giuseppe Mantalbano, two years after the incident, representing the people's bloc in the regional assembly accused members of the noble Tasca family and their allies including large landowners, monarchists, and the Christian Democratic minister of interior Mario Scelba of being involved and manipulating Salvatore Giuliano and his men. For more information on Salvatore Giuliano see "Una strage con troppi misteri," *La Sicilia,* May 1, 2011; La strage di portella della ginestra at Wayback Machine (internet archive), by Umberto Santino, Centro di Documentazione "Giuseppe Impastato," published in Narcomafie, June 2005. Also see Documentary film *Salvatore Giuliano.* Directed by Francesco Rosi. Lux Films. 1962. Movie. DVD; Marianna Giuliano e Giuseppe Giuliano, *My Brother, Salvatore Guiliano: The True Story.* (Palermo, 2000). Also see Beatrice Monroy. "Portella fu strage di Mafia" *La Sicilia,* November 22, 2009.

writes Peppino a letter expressing her concerns and tells him that her parents have arranged for her to marry an older man she does not love.

> *Dear Peppino, when I saw you yesterday in the Communist parade you looked much thinner than before. You tell me that you earn money, but my parents have asked around to some trustworthy people who say you are good-for-nothing, and that, even your family is disgraced by you because the cows you purchased at the war's end with your lottery winnings have all died one by one. As a result they say that in your house you don't even have enough tears in your eyes to cry (a pot to piss in). Some of my uncles have also found out that you are a communist. And even though you told me that communists don't eat children, my uncles say they are worse than the diseases that killed the cows in your stable. Peppino, I don't believe what they say my love, but because of my parents doubts about you they have informed me that they have officially engaged me to a man who owns lots of land. Help me Peppino I don't know what else to do.*[360]

Peppino visits Mannina, and she suggests that they elope. "Brava," says Peppino. "The Communist party always says that the liberation of woman should come from women themselves." Mannina replies, "Does the communist party say that a woman should flee with the man that she loves? If so, *fujemunini* "let's escape together!"[361] Peppino leaves Mannina to think over how he will arrange their *fuitina*.

The next day, Mannina is home alone when Peppino arrives and locks himself inside. They kiss and presumably make love. Mannina's mother, Sarina, arrives at the house and realizes what has happened. She laments, "*Disgrazziatu, na figghia mi ruvino. Comu fazzu ora?Ma ci sciffu di fuitina e?"* or "Dishonorable man, my daughter you ruined. Now what am I to do? What kind of *fuitina* is this?" She condemns Peppino as a man so worthless that he cannot even orchestrate a proper *fuitina.*[362]

In the eyes of her family and community, Mannina is ruined, and Sarina must consent to the pairing. Peppino's father visits the young couple and tells them he will take

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[360] *Baaria.*2010.
[361] Ibid.
[362] *Baaria.*2010.

care of them. After a very comical and hurried wedding in front of the priest of the local church, Peppino and Mannina are married.[363]Tornatore's depiction of *fuitina* is comical, and the practice is presented as a modernizing force orchestrated by young lovers resisting parental authority and arranged marriage. The film illustrates Tornatore's love for his hometown; he presents Bagheria as simple and traditional but heavily impacted by mafia intimidation and control, corrupt politics, and social inequalities.

In both *Ragazzi Fuori* and *Baaria, fuitina* is not an oppressive social problem; it's an act of rebellion and liberation. In both stories, the female characters initiate the *fuitina* themselves. They are not merely victims of male aggression. An even more complex image of *fuitina* appears in the 2015 documentary film *Fuitina: Fuga D'Amore* (*Fuitina: Escape for Love*) directed by a relatively unknown Sicilian director named Salvo Spoto.[364]The film considers both the romantic and the violent forms of *fuitina*. Although most of the film considers individual circumstances and the desires of young couples, it also dedicates time to the Franca Viola case and the stories of violent *fuitina* captured by the writer and scholar Marinella Fiume.[365]

Fuitina: Fuga d'amore tracks the practice of *fuitina* through various interviews, songs, and testimonies by writers, scholars, and regular Sicilians. According to the film, *fuitina* is often orchestrated by young lovers trying to overcome a lack of parental consent or as a way for couples to be married without incurring the cost of a formal wedding. The film follows a chauffeur hired by men to kidnap potential brides. This driver even advertised his services which illustrates the scope of the practice. According to the film,

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[363] Ibid.
[364] See *Cimena: Il mio primo film postumo.*Directed by Salvo Spoto and Dario Formica. Italy, 2018. Mockumentary. Access on Youtube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gprFSf0vK0o. Salvo Spoto was born in Catania and now works in the film and television industry in Milan where he currently resides.
[365] *Fuga d'amore*. Directed by Salvo Spoto. ND films, 2015. Documentary Film. DVD.

fuitina could be a modernizing force within the institution of marriage by allowing young people to exert control over who they chose to marry.

The film also explores other reasons couples might choose *fuitina.* According to Marinella Fiume, *fuitina* could be a way to circumvent the custom of marrying siblings from oldest to youngest. In traditional families, oldest daughters were married first so they would not remain spinsters if they grew too old. If the oldest daughter did not receive a marriage proposal, her younger siblings might have to delay marriage. In some families without the resources to marry off their daughters, young women were forced to take any opportunity initiated by a potential suitor. The film stresses how *fuitina* could provide helpful alternatives for families and young people who might otherwise be restricted by social customs. The film does address violent *fuitina,* including the Viola story, and downplays the frequency of non-consensual *fuitina* and suggests that most instances of the practice were beneficial to the participants.[366]

IV. Conclusion

Italian films from the neorealist period to the present have depicted pressing social issues. The films considered in this chapter used *fuitina* to represent both social change and southern backwardness. In films made between the 1960s and 1980s, female characters were advocates of moral change and often appeared as victims of male immorality and aggression. Images of *fuitina* and Sicily often featured exaggerated depictions of patriarchal oppression, especially in contrast to the struggle for women's rights that dominated the national discourse about gender and modernity.

[366] *Fuga d'amore*. 2015.

The films produced after 1990 still depicted *fuitina* as an exotic part of Sicilian culture, but these films also romanticized and idealized the practice. Films in this era were more likely to present a nuanced vision of *fuitina* where women had some agency and used *fuitina* to liberate themselves from traditional culture. In these representations, *fuitina* was not exclusively oppressive. It was sometimes portrayed as a modernizing force within Sicilian culture.

Changing representations of *fuitina* in film reflect changes in Italian culture, law, gender norms, and perceptions about southern society. By offering nostalgic and romantic depictions of both Sicily and *fuitina,* the films of Tornatore and Spoto illustrate the influence that Sicilian filmmakers have had in reclaiming their regional identity. In these stories, Sicily is no longer an internal "other" in need of policing and assimilation. It is a place with a sympathetic and emotional connection to a romantic, simpler, and idyllic Italian identity.

Positive representations of *fuitina* appeared in the aftermath of the feminist movements for equality in civil and penal law, the abolition of the Italian honor codes, and new cultural attitudes towards sexual violence. The shift in portrayal of the custom is reflected in Italian cinema. These films illustrate the evolution and persistence of discourses surrounding national morals, unity, and identity as expressed through their representations of *fuitina.* At the same time, images of Sicily and *fuitina* in film continued to maintain elements that represented cultural differences between northern and southern Italy. Sexual difference and Sicilian morality in particular remained a persistent spectacle of otherness as reflected in the films analyzed in this chapter.

Chapter 6: The *Fuitina* Tradition: An Oral History

Quanno rue si vuono lautri un puno[367] –Sicilian Proverb

"*Prima nuddu si maritava cu vessu"*[368]- Cosimo Polizzi, fisherman, Sferracavallo, PA

I. Introduction and Methodology:

There is not a singular form of *fuitina*. A *fuitina* can be a consensual "kidnapping" staged between willing parties or the abduction and rape of a woman followed by an admission of *fuitina* to protect the rapist from prosecution. Although the degree of consent involved in *fuitina* abductions varied dramatically, popular representations of *fuitina* are typically either entirely violent or wholly romantic. In order to more wholly understand the complexity and nuance of *fuitina,* we must turn to the narratives of the actual participants.

In Italy, most people are familiar with the custom of *fuitina*, but many Sicilians know someone married through the practice. This chapter draws on a collection of oral testimonies from individuals who married by way of *fuitina*, knew people who married by way of the practice, or were involved in debates about its meaning. In 2015, I travelled to western Sicily and interviewed individuals living in Palermo and the surrounding towns. I conducted interviews with community members, scholars, social workers, activists, teachers, and priests. I selected Sicily for my case study because *fuitina* is associated specifically with Sicilian culture, although the evidence suggests that the custom existed in other parts of Italy also. Because there is little archival documentation

[367] Translation: "When two people want each other no one can stop them."
[368] Translation, "Before, no one married the right way."

of *fuitina*, these individual stories are crucial for understanding the practice and its various manifestations.

The subjects interviewed for this project were chosen through a process called snowball sampling. Personal acquaintances, as well as individuals met on previous trips to Sicily, led me to others willing to contribute to the project and discuss their participation in or knowledge of the *fuitina* practice.[369] Interviews were conducted in a qualitative format tailored specifically to the experience and knowledge of the interview subject. This method exposed a variety of perspectives from individuals, both those directly involved or impacted by the practice and those engaged in more supportive roles or as outside observers. By interviewing a wide sample of subjects from diverse class, gender, and age categories, this project explored general myths surrounding the *fuitina* practice across several decades. I adapted the questions during the interviews and modified them as needed when the conversation included an actual protagonist or an external observer. Although some of the interviewees did not partake in a *fuitina* first-hand, these subjects provided their own knowledge, second-hand stories, and views of the practice. Given the thematic nature of this project, and the need to vary the interview questions according to the type of participant, the questions focused on acquiring narratives, details, and identifying broad patterns relating to the custom. The questions were often open-ended and emphasized the participants' individual perspectives.

The first-hand stories highlighted in this chapter address mostly consensual cases; they are not representative of all instances of *fuitina*. Many individuals involved in a non-

[369] Snowball sampling is often used in oral history, particularly when the topic being covered involves locating people who have experienced something sensitive or private such as sexual violence, etc. For more information on oral history methodology see Patricia Leavy, *Understanding Qualitative Research*, (Oxford University Press, 2011); Donald Ritchie, *Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide,* (Oxford University Press, 2003). Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory,* (Routledge, 2010).

consensual *fuitina* refused to be interviewed, possibly because they experienced shame associated with their experience. As a result, I was only able to gather stories of non-consensual *fuitina* through second-hand accounts provided by family members, close friends, or neighbors who wished to remain anonymous.

Interviewees described their understanding of the practice as well as their activities, stories, and memories involving incidents of *fuitina.* Several of the families I interviewed included multiple generations of couples married via the custom. These interviews included family histories and stories that had been passed down to the interviewee by older family members. My subjects were between 24 and 95-years-old, and this range offered a chance to understand the custom across several decades. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the identity of most of the subjects; specifically, the individuals who have requested not to be identified. The names of the small towns where many of the interviews took place have also been omitted to further obscure identifiable characteristics. However, I do name several neighborhoods in Palermo because the socio-economic conditions of the various districts are important for context, and there is no legitimate risk of individuals being identified within the large populations of these urban areas.[370]In the course of these interviews, some individuals talked about their pasts and experiences extensively. The flow of their stories made it difficult to ask all of the intended of questions. The interviews lasted between 30 and 90 minutes, and the duration of the interviews largely depended on the availability and time constraints of the subject. Interviews were conducted in people's homes, places of work, cafes, local churches, and piazzas. The stories documented in this chapter detail the complexity and

[370] I conducted the interviews in Italian and in Sicilian dialect and translated them into English. Some of the interviews were conducted over the phone or via Skype. Most of the interviews were recorded. This research is IRB approved. Each of the subjects interviewed signed consent forms for research purposes.

moral contradictions of sexual violence in the everyday lives of my subjects, and by juxtaposing individual testimonies within larger meta-narratives, I've built an archive of *fuitina* that provides insights into the dialectical relationship between everyday life and cultural change for those impacted by the practice.

By capturing the memory and voices of individuals telling their stories and sharing their understanding of the *fuitina* practice, this work collects a variety of perspectives. Of course, as most of the experiences discussed by my subjects took place in the past, this work also engages with the theme of memory. According to the oral historian Alessandro Portelli, "Human memories and minds are never perfect and can be subject to incorrect facts or embellishment."[371] Despite potential inaccuracies, the narratives shared by my subjects remain products of their own experience and perception. It is important to remember that people narrate their own realities and within their stories we can capture missing details, expand our understanding of the past, and uncover new layers of truth and subjectivity. It is for this reason that I have selected a wide range of interviewees from diverse backgrounds in order to piece stories together and provide a variety of veiwpoints.[372]

II. Historiography Review: Bride Kidnapping, Marriage, and Sexual Violence

As previously noted, scholarship on the topic of bride kidnapping has largely focused on the practice in non-western cultures. In most contexts, the topic is associated with violence against women, and bride theft is understood to be culturally determined.

[371] Portelli*, The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories*, 2.
[372] For more on oral history and memory see David Ritchie. *Doing Oral History.* 30-38.

This often creates conflict between local communities and the transnational organizations and feminists working to eradicate practices such as bride abduction, genital mutilation, and honor killings. International NGOs often come into conflict with the communities that defend these customs as an important aspect of their culture.[373] Recently, some scholars have begun to examine bride kidnappings as a potential source for social change by demonstrating the ways in which the practice has both supported and undermined existing systems and institutions.[374] My own analysis of *fuitina* demonstrates that bride kidnapping in Sicily was oppressive but could also provide some individuals unexpected freedoms in an era when ideas about love, marriage, and authority underwent radical transformation across Italy. In some cases, *fuitina* was not just a manifestation of patriarchy or male domination; it could also be a force for sexual liberation and autonomy for men and women.

The institution of marriage provides an important historiographic framework for understanding *fuitina*. In nearly all cultures, people have created rules, customs, institutions and laws to govern formal relationships between men and women in an effort to achieve certain political, social, and economic outcomes. Historically, marriage organized the production and distribution of goods and coordinated the division of labor by gender and age. Since antiquity, marriage practices impacted all aspects of life, from

[373] Sally Engle Merry, *Human Rights and Gender Violence Translating International Law into Local Justice,* (Chicago University Press, 2006).
[374] See Ayres, Barbara. 1974. "Bride Theft and Raiding for Wives in Cross Cultural Perspective." *Anthropological Quarterly*. Vol. 47, No. 3. Barnes RH. "Marriage By Capture." 1999. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, (N.S.) 5, 1999. 57-73. Bates Daniel. 1974. "Normative and Alternative Systems of Marriage among the Yoruk of Southeastern Turkey." *Anthropological Quarterly.* Vol. 47. No. 3. Rimonte, Nilda. 1991. "A Question of Culture: Cultural Approval of Violence Against Women in the Pacific Asian Community and Cultural Defense." *Stanford Law Review.* Vol. 43. No. 6. Werner, Cynthia. 2009. "Bride Abductions in post-Soviet Central Asia: Marking a Shift Towards Patriarchy through Local Discourse of Shame and Tradition." *Journal of Royal Anthropology.* Vol. 15.

inheriting property to designating sexual relations, and across the centuries, societies developed specific rules to define the meaning of the institution of marriage.[375]

Throughout Italy, the customs surrounding engagement, courtship, and marriage were governed by highly local traditions, and scholars concerned with marriage in Sicily have discovered that customs and patterns were not uniform across the island.[376] After World War Two, some families continued to consider marriage an economic rather than emotional matter. During the economic miracle, which brought the onset of new cultural and social attitudes regarding gender and fertility patterns, ideas about marriage changed across the peninsula as they did elsewhere in Europe. Marriage and its role in determining sexual behavior, living arrangements, and child rearing underwent significant change in the wake of the sex revolutions of 1968 and the rise of new feminism. From the divorce revolution of the 1980s to the rise and expansion of the gay pride movement, the universality of marriage in Italy, and in Europe, has been re-shaped and persistently challenged. Despite the law and institutional norms, individuals across class and gender have applied their own meanings to intimacy and acceptable gender norms.

III. *Fuitina* Stories and Analysis:

Italian scholarship on rape has mostly focused on feminist debates and legal reform, but it has rarely documented the attitudes of ordinary people regarding sexual

[375] See Stephanie Coontz, *Marriage, a History*, (New York: Penguin Group 2005); Lombardi, Daniela. *Storia Del Matrimonio: Dal Medioevo a Oggi,* (Societa editrice il Mulino, 2008). Marion Kaplan, ed. *The Marriage Bargain: Women and Dowries in European History*, (New York. Harrington Park Press, 1984). EP Thompson, *Customs in Common,* (New York Press,1991).

[376] See Charlotte Gower Chapman, *Milocca: A Sicilian Village,* (Schenkman Publishing Company, 1971), 88-114; Jane and Peter Schneider. *Festival of the Poor.* (University of Arizona Press, 1996), 143-164 and 165-190. Both Chapman and the Schneider's work demonstrate the influence of individual and economic circumstances in influencing decisions surrounding marriage and sex.

violence.[377] This dissertation attempts to complicate the narratives surrounding rape, especially in the context of *fuitina,* and works to illustrate the ways in which ideas about love, marriage, consent, and sexual violence have shifted over time. Until 1981, *fuitina* remained an aspect of the Italian legal system. The legality of *fuitina* suggested that Italian law accepted certain levels of violence against women. But, the legality of the practice also allowed some individuals to secure liberation and autonomy. The following stories illustrate how societal patterns, economic circumstances, and individual desires often played a role in the decisions people made about sexual relations. These personal decisions often overrode entrenched values and societal norms designated by the state, the Church, and codes of honor and shame.

The inspiration for this project is a family legend. It is the story of my great zio Nino, my paternal grandfather's brother. According to family accounts, young zio Nino liked a young woman named Francesca. Unfortunately for Nino, the young woman he hoped to court could not marry until her older sister married. Nino was impatient and eager to start his own family, but Francesca's family was unwilling to disrupt the custom of older daughters marrying first. Frustrated, Nino turned to *fuitina*. He and a group of friends broke into Francesca's home and stole her from her bed. When they got to the car, the men realized they'd not kidnapped Francesca but her older and unmarried sister, Sabina. Despite the mistake, Nino could not exchange Sabina for her younger sister. He had taken Sabina out of her home, and she was now considered "a stained woman." Zio Nino had no choice but to marry her, and Sabina became my great aunt.

[377] See AJ Earhart AJ, "Predicting the Effect of Italy's long-awaited Rape Law Reform on the "Land of Machismo." *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law*; Fenton Rachel, "Rape in Italian Law: Towards the Recognition of Sexual Autonomy." in *Rethinking Rape Law: International and Comparative Perspectives.* (Routledge, 2010); Tina Lagostena Bassi, "Violence Against Women and the Response of Italian Institutions." In *Visions and Revisions: Women in Italian Culture,* (Berg Publishers Inc.,1993).

Many of my subjects referred to this story to denigrate the past and demonstrate the backwardness of their town and older generations. Lorenzo A., a man I interviewed at the local piazza, remembers this story as told to him by his relatives and friends. He laughingly told the story of the sisters who got mixed up. In Lorenzo's version, there were five sisters sleeping in one bed, and the young man mistakenly picked the wrong one. He described the young man's horrified reaction when he realized he had the wrong girl and his desire to exchange her for the right one. My subject laughed and noted, "but the family made clear that there were no exchanges. Can you believe it? This was the classic forced *fuitina*."[378]

The rumors associated with the story demonstrate the unreliability of memories and the influence of time and gossip on the re-telling of the event. The most prevalent account from my subjects was the belief that Sabina's family had gotten word of Nino's intentions and "pulled the wool over his eyes" by switching the sisters and forcing him to marry the eldest daughter instead of Francesca.[379] Many of my subjects noted that this type of *fuitina* was wrong and led to misfortune for the young woman and her family. Many referred to the event as something of the past that was acceptable at the time but would no longer be tolerable in modern Sicilian culture.

Despite the mishap, Nino realized that he could not give Sabina back to her family or exchange her for Francesca. According to the interviewees, after the abduction, Sabina was *toccata* or "touched." In some cases, even if a pair did not have sex but had been alone together without parental supervision, people assumed that the woman had been violated and would no longer be able to secure a respectable marriage with another

[378] Anonymous recorded in person interview. June 29, 2015.
[379] Anonymous. Recorded in person interview, June 29, 2015.

man. The level of consent available for women demonstrates the privileges granted to men, by both custom and law, over the female body. As a result of local custom and the rules surrounding the institution of marriage, Nino also had few options and was obligated to marry Sabina.[380]

According to Sicilian custom, siblings were required to marry in order of their age. Younger siblings often had to wait until their older sisters or brothers were married before they were allowed to become engaged or establish a marriage contract. Traditionally, as women aged they were considered the less valuable within the marriage market. Depending on factors such as beauty or the social status of the family, many families feared that few suitors would come to offer the family a marriage contract.[381] For most families marriage was an important economic matter, and it was central to the existence of individual women. Early marriage for daughters was often preferable for fathers who feared their unmarried daughters would end up as spinsters at home. Unmarried daughters posed an economic burden for families given gender discrimination and the lack of opportunities for women in the workplace.

This marriage-in-age-order system did not only apply to daughters. Santo M., a local storeowner, told me the story of his 1961 *fuitina.* Santo informed me that he was one of the youngest of ten children. When he was 23, he was informally dating the woman he later married, Claudia M. He wanted to start a family with her, but his parents would not allow it because he had older siblings that needed to be married first. His

[380] Sources were unable to provide an actual date of when the couple was married. Giuseppe's niece recalled that it had to be somewhere between 1942 and 1944. This story was collected over several interviews in person and over the phone. An unrecorded phone interview was conducted with Giuseppe's niece on February 6, 2016.
[381] See Willson; Also see Giuseppe Pitre. 1889. *Usi e costumi: Credenze e pregiudizi del popolo Siciliano.* (Palermo: Libreria L. Pedone, 1889); Salvatore Salomone-Marino, *Costume e usanze dei contadini in Sicilia.* (Palermo, 1879).

parents told him he needed to wait his turn, and he worried it could take up to seven more years before his turn arrived. Santo decided to orchestrate a *fuitina.* He organized the abduction without the consent of Claudia M. In fact, she had no idea of his plan, and the couple was simply going to meet as they normally did in front of a store where they often met to talk without their parents' knowledge. On the day of their meeting, Santo showed up in a car, grabbed Claudia, and pulled her into the vehicle. He laughed as he described this, noting that Claudia was surprised and screamed "what are you doing?" as he grabbed her. In the end, she did not refuse, and Santo took Claudia to his grandmother's house for the evening. When asked how Claudia felt, Santo said that she was scared, and a bit upset with him, but it all passed. He believed she was upset because she was still so young. "She was only seventeen years old and maybe wasn't sure she was ready for such a commitment, but in the end she came around."[382]

According to Santo, when they arrived at his grandmother's house, she was surprised to see them and had no idea of his plan. Santo laughed as he described this. When his grandmother saw Claudia, she was shocked. Claudia looked very young and his grandmother asked, "What have you done? Have you kidnapped a little girl? Well you can't take her back now. Regardless, tonight she sleeps with me not you, understood?"[383]

Santo's version of *fuitina* was slightly different from Nino and Sabina's experience. Santo and Claudia were already in a relationship, but Santo pursued the *fuitina* without Claudia's initial consent. Her thoughts on the matter remain unclear; she was unwilling to be interviewed. In fact, Santo asked that we meet away from his home in a café because his wife did not like him talking about such matters. Santo seemed to

[382] Anonymous recorded in person interview July 9, 2015.
[383] Ibid.

find nothing wrong with his actions and glossed over Claudia's feelings. As he told his story, he was very vague about if Claudia was happy about the decision he had made for her or if it had been a point of contention in their relationship. In our conversation, Santo found nothing wrong with making the decision to orchestrate the *fuitina* on his own without first discussing it with Claudia. In his mind, the decision was naturally his own to make.

I heard a similar story of *fuitina* from an older couple I interviewed together. I met Filippo B. and Marta S. one afternoon in their home. They were the oldest couple I interviewed and were both proud to announce they had just had their seventy-fifth wedding anniversary. Filippo and Marta's *fuitina* took place in 1939, just before the war, when the couple was very young. Filippo was seventeen, and Marta was just fifteen. Marta and Filippo told me stories about how they met and flirted with each other as young teens. Marta's family lived on the first floor of a building, and when no one was around, Filippo would come over to stand outside her house so they could sneak in a conversation.[384] They told me this was a very delicate situation, and they had to be very careful not to get caught by Marta's strict parents. Marta remembered how Filippo tried to hold her hand a couple of times, and she would hit him or slam the door in his face. She was scared someone would see them and think differently of her. "Touching was a very serious matter at that time," she said, "unlike today where young people are doing all kinds of things."[385]

On the night of their *fuitina*, Marta, like Claudia, was unaware of Filippo's plans. She simply thought that they were going to meet and talk at her doorstep as usual, but

[384] Author interview with Filippo Baretta and Marta Sciarinno July 9, 2015. Filippo and Marta did not ask to remain anonymous.
[385] Ibid.

instead, when Filippo arrived he grabbed her and made her run off with him. At first, Marta was very scared and tried to resist, "but he made me run and so I had no other choice but to go, and that was our *fuitina*." When I asked Filippo why he decided to take Marta from her home, he claimed that he was afraid that someone else would get to her first. He said there was another young man in town who had joked with him about stealing Marta, and this made him nervous because he felt she was his to have. I asked Filippo why he did not tell Marta his plan, and he simply stated that she did not need to know. He did not want to risk her not coming to the door that night, which could have jeopardized his plan.[386]

After Marta and Filippo escaped, they stayed with his aunt for fifteen days before returning to Marta's parents' house. They stayed with Marta's parents for three months until they were married and moved into their own home. As a result of their *fuitina,* Marta became pregnant and their daughter was born six months after the wedding. Marta did not seem to have any regrets about her decision to escape with Filippo. She and Filippo claimed they had a very good life, worked hard, and did well for themselves.[387]Although, Marta and Claudia were not kidnapped out of their beds, they were coerced into their *fuitinas*. Claudia's refusal to be interviewed, and the fact that Santo and I had to meet outside their home, suggests that maybe she was ashamed or unhappy with the circumstances surrounding the event. Marta claimed that she was content with the outcome of her *fuitina* and marriage.

In other cases of *fuitina*, the decision to escape was made by the couple together. In 2015, I interviewed Angela S. at her home, and she revealed that she had planned her

[386] Ibid.
[387] Ibid.

fuitina with her fiancé, Giovanni. Her story is an example of what many refer to as the *fuitina classica.* In this iteration of *fuitina,* the young couple escaped together to force their families to agree to their marriage. Angela explained that when she and Giovanni became engaged their parents decided that the couple would have to wait two years before they could marry. "Economic resources were tight," Angela noted, and their parents needed time to purchase the necessary goods required for a formal church wedding.[388]

Angela and Giovanni were not willing to wait two years. According to Angela, "Giovanni in particular was impatient." The young couple's desire to be together led them to arrange a *fuitina* without their parents' knowledge. Prior to the flight, Angela practiced opening and closing the front door to the family home when no one was looking. She wanted to ensure that she would make the least possible noise when the time came. The night of her escape, she made sure to bathe and prepare her belongings in an overnight bag. Giovanni was responsible for borrowing a car from a friend so he could scoop her up quickly from her house on the night of their escape. They agreed that when he arrived he would send her a signal by honking the car horn twice. She described the event:

> When everyone went to sleep that evening, I stayed awake and waited. When I heard the two honks I quickly but quietly opened the door just as I had practiced for weeks. Halfway down the stairs I started to have second thoughts because I was so scared of being caught by my parents. But then I thought about how Giovanni was waiting and that gave me the courage to run. That night, friends of ours hosted us in their home. They left us alone for the evening and it is there where we consummated our business," she laughs. "The next night," she says, "we went to see my mother-in-law who justifiably was not happy with us, but we were so happy. We stayed together for five months *fuiti* where we lived with my mother in law and

[388] Anonymous. Recorded in person interview, July 9, 2015.

> then we were married and moved into our own home. We had three children and here we are 43 years later![389]

Giovanni and Angela's story was typical for couples arranging a consensual *fuitina.* In their case, they simply could not resist the desire to be intimate and alone with each other. The *fuitina* allowed the couple to defy the strict watch of parents over their sexual conduct. In other cases, it was a way to speed up the prolonged and burdensome responsibilities associated with contracting a formal marriage.[390]

Francesco P., a mechanic at his work in the *centro vecchio* or "old center" of Palermo, discussed how he and his wife made the choice to escape together. According to Francesco, from the very beginning of their relationship, the pair made important decisions as equal partners. Their *fuitina* was no exception. Francesco noted that he had always valued his wife's opinion, and, unlike other men of his generation, he would not have ignored her wishes. He claimed that he and his wife escaped because they were in love, and the decision was not driven by the desire for sex or his wish to take control over her. He simply felt restricted by his parents who made all types of excuses about why he was not ready to marry. His *fuitina* was a rebellion against his parents who he felt were trying to control him.[391]

I interviewed Francesca D., 58, in the Tomasso Natale neighborhood of Palermo. When Francesca and her husband, Giacomo S. first met, he had been divorced and already had a son. Her parents liked Giacomo and thought him to be a good young man. He was still very young and had only been married for a year, but her parents did not want her to marry him because he was divorced. Because of Giacomo's divorce, the

[389] Ibid.
[390] Ibid.
[391] Anonymous recorded in person interview. June 30, 2015.

couple would not be able to marry in the Catholic Church and that upset Francesca's parents.[392]

Because her parents would not allow the marriage, Francesca and Giacomo planned an escape. One night, the couple took the train to Marsala to stay with Giacomo's sister. The next day, Francesca phoned her parents. They were very angry and told her not to come home again. Within a week, they changed their minds and allowed her to return. She soon discovered that she was pregnant, and her parents, excited to become grandparents, became more accepting of the relationship.[393]

These stories demonstrate that *fuitina* was not always violent, one-sided, or nonconsensual. Some couples planned their escape together as a rebellion against parental rules or because they were simply too restless to wait to be together. Parents were not always unwilling to accept the new circumstances. In these cases, couples used *fuitina* to gain independence and control over their own bodies and sexuality.

In some cases, young couples did not orchestrate their *fuitina* in secret. Sometimes the *fuitina* included parental consent and originated with the economic circumstances of the family. During financially difficult times, such as the aftermath of the war when unemployment was high and resources scarce, young couples in love would ask their respective families for permission to get engaged. Sometimes their parents approved of the engagement, but the families could not afford a church wedding. Cosimo and Francesca P., for example, were a young couple whose own parents encouraged them to orchestrate a *fuitina* to avoid the economic burden of arranging a church wedding. Cosimo and Francesca eloped in October of 1948. They had been engaged since 1944.

[392] Anonymous recorded in person interview. July 10, 2015.
[393] Ibid.

After a nearly four-year engagement, they were still not able to afford a church wedding. Together with the help of their families, they decided to organize a *fuitina*.

> At that time, resources and economic opportunities were limited. If you took the alternative path of marrying via *fuitina,* the wedding that followed was considered a *matrimonio riparatorio* (rehabilitating marriage). Couples who had sex before marriage were considered undeserving of a formal ceremony in the church. In those cases, local churches would agree to marry a couple but only in informal settings. Ceremonies were usually conducted at off hours of the day (as early as 5am in the morning) behind closed doors. Usually only parents, the bride, groom, and the priest were present. Ceremonies were also held not in the church sanctuary but in the *sacrestia.*[394]

Fuitina classica sometimes involved an orchestrated kidnapping, and in these cases couples, sometimes with the help of their families, arranged a pretend kidnapping for consumption by the community. In the case of Cosimo and Francesca, their families were burdened by the responsibilities related to preparing a dowry and *correddo.* Typically, the bride's family was responsible for providing clothes, linens, and household furniture while the groom's family secured property and the home where the couple would live.

Cosimo and Francesca's story illustrates that by the 1940s, not all Sicilian marriages were arranged, and sometimes young couples or individuals exerted influence over the marriage decision. Economic circumstances of the time also weighed heavily on decisions about intimate matters, and sometimes economic necessity outweighed customs, social norms, or notions of honor and shame. The notion of honor, in particular, played a less relevant role in decisions surrounding sex and was often conceded to suit the new circumstances. And, even if everyone involved in a *fuitina* knew the escape was

[394]*Sacrestia* or *sacristy* refers to a room typically used as the priest's office and storage of worship materials. Interview with Angela P. Angela was Cosimo and Francesca's daughter. Francesca passed away in June of 2001 and before I was able to get an interview with Cosimo he suffered a stroke and was unable to tell me his story directly. Angela shared her parent's story on his behalf.

a farce, the participants' honor could be maintained if the necessary codes of conduct were followed.

According to most of my subjects, the culture of *fuitina* changed in the 1960s. This change was particularly pronounced when it came to the relationship between *fuitina* and the Roman Catholic Church. Despite doctrine and rules prohibiting sex before marriage, oral accounts suggest that local churches often looked the other way in situations when couples had sex before marriage or in cases of rape. Many local priests allowed families to use *fuitina* as an alternative path to marriage when needed, mostly to support and protect the honor of individuals or to ensure that children were not born out of wedlock. In essence, members of the clergy would avoid confrontation when confronted with these cases. I interviewed a number of couples who were married between the 1940s and the early 1960s, and several recalled that their marriages took place in the early morning while it was still dark. These ceremonies were held in the *sacrestia,* the bride did not wear a white dress, and the couple was not celebrated afterward. Not all early morning weddings were so somber. Santo M. noted that he and his wife took a one-day honeymoon to Palermo where they even toured the Monreale Cathedral.

By the late 1960s, according to my interviewees, the shame surrounding *fuitina* became less significant to clergy or families. Couples married by *fuitina* began to have full wedding ceremonies in the Church with the bride dressed in white. Ambrogio Vincenzo, a Catholic priest, described the evolving view of the Church as follows:

> Over time church policy had to change especially around customs related to the ceremony. By about the 1960s, when couples had sexual relations before marriage they were increasingly married in church ceremonies. In this period brides were allowed to wear white dresses. After the wedding

> ceremony, families held celebrations much like they do today. With the onset of the sexual revolution and loosening of parental constraints it increasingly became rare for brides to come to the altar as virgins. In the past the church made the distinction between who was a virgin whereas today it does not.[395]

Felicia V. confirmed this change in church policy. She and her husband were married in 1968 in the Church, a year after their *fuitina*, and she still wore a white wedding dress.[396]

Due to the potentially traumatic and always intimate nature of *fuitina,* I found it difficult to find subjects willing to discuss the practice even in cases of consensual *fuitina.* With the assistance of personal contacts, I did find people willing to tell their stories. However, I was not able to secure a single first-hand account with the primary participants involved in a violent *fuitina.* Sometimes, even the relatives and friends of the participants were unwilling to discuss the event. When I wrote to the son of Nino and Sabina, he refused to speak with me on the matter of his parents' *fuitina*. Instead, I heard their story through other members of the family and local gossip circles. For many Sicilians, marriage by way of *fuitina* was not considered a suitable way to get married, and some individuals were ashamed to talk about it. For example, Ignazio M., 76, agreed to tell me the story of his *fuitina* but asked to meet outside of his home. He did not have the consent of his wife to share their story.[397] It was not clear why his wife was unwilling to share the story, although perhaps she felt uncomfortable discussing matters related to sexual experiences. Men were more often open to talking about their experiences, but most of the women I interviewed asked to remain anonymous and would only meet with me in the privacy of their own homes.

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[395] Recorded in person interview with Ambrogio Vincenzo. Local priest. July 9, 2015.
[396] Anonymous recorded interview September 20, 2015.
[397] Anonymous. Recorded in person interview. July 4, 2015.

According to my interviewees, people continued to practice *la fuitina classica* even after the elimination of the honor codes in 1981. Despite changes in the law and culture, some families remained strict and sought to control who their children married. Social class remained an important matter for some families, and some well-off families rejected their daughter's desire to marry someone of lower class.[398] For many poor families, meeting the economic demands and costs of a formal wedding arrangement was prohibitive. Both situations could lead to a *fuitina.*

Many of my interviewees described how other family members helped to mediate conflicts between parents and young couples who had left home. Grandparents, aunts, uncles, and older siblings often helped to broker a peace between parents and the couple. Sometimes parents complied easily, but in some cases they did not. Even when parents accepted the couple back into their home, they often denied them a *corredo* or dowry and refused to grant them family property to punish them for going against their wishes.[399]

Fuitina was also used to facilitate migration outside of Italy. Nina P. described immigrating to the United States in 1982 with her husband, Giovanni.[400] Nina parents were initially against her relationship with Giovanni who was only visiting Sicily from the US when he began courting her. After several interactions between the couple, Giovanni asked Nina's father for permission for a formal engagement but her father refused. Nina really liked Giovanni and was devastated by her father's noncompliance. She worried that she would never see Giovanni again if he returned to the United States.

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[398] Though I was unable to get a first-hand account of this issue of marrying someone of a lower class, several interviewees noted this as one of the reasons for orchestrating a *fuitina.* See anonymous recordings with Felicia V., Giacomo S., and Caterina F.

[399] Several of the interviewees discussed these facts. See Anonymous recording with Santo M., Felicia V., and Angela S.

[400] Anonymous recorded phone interview. January 21, 2016

After her father's rejection his engagement proposal, Giovanni asked Nina if she would escape with him to the United States, and she agreed to join him. According to Nina, this was a very difficult decision to make, and she did not speak to her family for several years following her departure.[401]

There is also evidence of migration to Tunisia via the *fuitina* practice. Alfonso Campisi, a professor at the University of Tunis, shared stories of young couples escaping to Tunisia to be together against the wishes of their parents. Campisi's findings are based on interviews he conducted with members of the Sicilian-Tunisian community living in Tunis. Campisi noted that immigration via *fuitina* to Tunisia was more common because of the low cost of the trip and Tunisia's close proximity to Sicily. These escapes were mostly limited to couples fearing serious repercussions from their families and local communities. Tunisia was the closest and easiest place to escape to because you could arrive there in just one night by boat instead of the more complex and expensive trip to the United States or elsewhere.[402]

Sometimes honor played a role in the decision to engage in *fuitina*, especially in cases where the bride and her family were willing participants in the orchestration. Rita Affigato, a social worker working in the Lo Zen neighborhood in Palermo, told me that sometimes, as they were being abducted, women would put on a performance of resistance for their neighbors to see and later lament about how upset they were over the matter. Their families would often participate in the performance. Frequently during the moment of abduction, the young woman would scream, cry, kick, and generally pretend to fight off her abductor. The performance was a way for the family and the bride-to-be

[401] Ibid.
[402] In person interview. Alfonso Campisi. Scholar. February 12, 2016.

to maintain honor. For women, pretending they had been taken against their will removed the stain of having any responsibility in the matter. Demonstrating that they were unwilling victims helped to maintain their respectability in the eyes of their own family and the local community.[403] This type of *fuitina* performance, according to several of my interview subjects, still exists today and is most likely when a young teenage girl is pregnant. According to Francesco P., sex among teens is far more common today because young people have more freedom than enjoyed in the past, but abortion, for many families, particularly those who are religious, is not considered an option in the case of unintended pregnancy. He noted that when a family learns their teenage daughter is pregnant, they force the young couple to orchestrate a *fuitina* to demonstrate to the community that the pregnancy occurred during the escape and not beforehand. In these cases, the *fuitina* is a symbol of reparation that erases the shame of the early pregnancy. Once a *fuitina* has occurred, the young woman would be absolved of her reputation for promiscuity.[404]

Contrary to popular images of bride kidnapping, *fuitina* was not always instigated by men. Concetta G., 43, described how strict and overbearing her parents were as she was growing up. They rarely let her out of the house unsupervised even as a teenager. When she met Paolo, now her ex-boyfriend and the father of her daughter, she was young and believed she was in love. Her parents did not accept the relationship. "They didn't think Paolo was good enough for me and also they thought I was too young to engage with him. I was just sixteen-years-old." Concetta explained that at some point she could

[403] Recorded in person interview. Rita Affatigato. Social worker. July 8, 2015.
[404] Anonymous Recorded in person Interview. June 30, 2015.

no longer tolerate her parents' overbearing behavior. She decided to leave home on her own and stormed off to the café where Paolo worked.

> I left home unsupervised to force him to escape with me. I was young but all I wanted was to be with him and have my own family. When I showed up at the café where he was working and I was alone Paolo looked shocked and also a little scared," she laughs. "At that point he knew he had no other choice but to take me with him. After his shift we left and stayed together for the next three years. We were never married. We just lived together *convivendo*.[405] It's a shame my parents never accepted us. Today they still refuse to talk to me. Now, it's just my daughter and I. We are on our own and that was the story of my *fuitina,*[406]

Concetta's story demonstrates that parents did not always forgive their children for undermining their parental authority. In this case, Concetta's honor within the family was never restored. To maintain the family honor, she could no longer be accepted in the family. Concetta's version of *fuitina* did not lead to a wedding, and Concetta was left to raise her daughter on her own.

Non-consensual *fuitina* is no longer considered an acceptable custom among Sicilians. Although violence against women still exists in other forms, few women are forced to marry unwanted suitors. The sexual revolution of 1968, the abolishment of the honor codes in 1981, and new reforms and legislation changed popular perceptions and attitudes about acceptable levels of consent and sexual violence in society and in the law. However, consensual forms of *fuitina* do still exist and are still practiced in certain communities in Italy.

Rita Affatigato works in the Lo Zen neighborhood of Palermo at a local center for teens with babies. The center provides education, healthcare, and childcare services.

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[405] *Convivere* is a term used to describe a couple that lives together outside of marriage. Some individuals describe the act of living together as an evolved version of *fuitina*. Within some families living together outside of marriage is still not considered acceptable practice.

[406] Anonymous. Recorded in person interview. June 29, 2015.

Affatigato described typical examples of contemporary *fuitina* and explained the motives behind recent expressions of the practice. Affatigato described the circumstances leading to modern-day *fuitina* in great detail, and I have quoted her full explanation below:

> Today *fuitina* is used largely by young people, typically teens sometimes as young as age 13. *Lo Zen* is one of the communities in Palermo that is segregated from the rest of the city and the people who live there tend to be isolated, often maintaining their own set of social rules and norms. *Lo Zen* is a community, where young women especially have very few economic opportunities and high school dropout rates are extremely high.For many young women, motherhood tends to be their only option. "When young couples decide to orchestrate a *fuitina* it becomes a sort of a rite of passage, often happening in a moment when a couple decides that they want to have some autonomy from their families or a moment in which many believe that they are ready to transition into adulthood. In a lot of the cases, a young girl will get pregnant and the couple decides to go away for a day or two. This escape is generally referred to as the *fuga* and looks much like it did in the past. Generally, during the *fuga* period, couples are hosted by the young man's family. This is mainly because the couples are young and have nowhere else to go. The pregnancy is a more serious matter. In this community, sex before marriage is still considered somewhat taboo. Young women who are known to have sexual relations before they are married are considered less respectable.[407]

Today, female virginity is less central to family honor than it was in the past. Modern-day versions of *fuitina* might involve informal events and rituals followed by the young couple escaping for a couple of days. After the girl's family realizes she has left, they will seek information regarding her whereabouts or go to the young man's home to reclaim her. After a *fuga*, the first encounter between the families and their children can be quite hostile, especially if the parents are ashamed about the events of the *fuitina*.[408] Affatigato notes:

> Usually it will take a month for everyone to calm down and make peace with the situation. The fact that the couple is so young and unable to secure their own accommodations usually means they end up living with

[407] Ibid.
[408] Ibid.

> one of their families, frequently unmarried. Rarely will there be an actual wedding planned. Marriage is no longer something that is pushed by families, especially when they are this young. Twenty years ago, wedding ceremonies were more common, but today marriage has lost its value especially among these young people, mostly because it is no longer economically accessible for people in this community. A wedding would be too much of a financial burden.[409]

Although the customs surrounding *fuitina* have changed, the term is still used to describe a variety of sexual encounters. Examining the individual stories of the practice can help scholars identify the ways the custom has changed over time and provide insight into evolving ideas about marriage and sexuality. These oral histories offer a way to understand not only *fuitina* but also how the retelling of stories have been influenced by time.

V. Memories and Reflections

Although non-consensual *fuitina* occurred often, we lack first-hand accounts of the experience. We know that men manipulated the dynamics of the *fuitina* tradition when they kidnapped and raped women they wanted to marry. In the retelling of these stories, many of the subjects described forced *fuitina* as something of the past—an practice culturally acceptable at the time that is no longer tolerable today. According to locals I interviewed, "young women then had no other choices; parental authority and society were strict in those days."[410]

When I asked my subjects if people in the past had believed *fuitina* was truly acceptable, many noted that it was probably not completely acceptable in the past. According to Giacoma S., "These types of kidnappings, which occurred from time to

[409] Ibid.
[410] Anonymous. Recorded phone Interview. February 6, 2016.

time were definitely looked down upon."[411] At the same time, my interviewees mostly agreed that young women who had been kidnapped had few alternatives beyond accepting a *fuitina*. Ideas about the value of virginity were very strict. In some cases, even if the couple did not have sex, the fact that they were alone together without full supervision left the young woman stained. Many noted that the families who forced their daughters to marry their abductors were following codes that were more morally and culturally acceptable in that time. If a young woman lost her virginity, or even the perception of her virginity, she might find it difficult to secure a husband and could become an economic burden on her family. Also, the impact of her dishonor to the family could have long-lasting financial consequences, especially if the honor violation impeded the ability of the families other daughters or sons to marry.[412]

Although the practice was culturally sanctioned and enabled by Italian law, in some cases, men were persecuted and went to jail for performing non-consensual *fuitina*.[413] Contrary to the popular portrayals of *fuitina* that suggested young women had no choice but to marry the attacker, A. Lorenzo noted that there were cases in which women refused to marry their assailants. According to Lorenzo, "It happened that women would denounce their abductors and had them sent to jail." When I asked if those women were able to marry someone else, Lorenzo confirmed "in some cases, yes." Lorenzo's account demonstrates that even in cases of non-consensual *fuitina,* some women were able to assert some agency. Other subjects interviewed expressed similar sentiments and noted that not all families were as traditional as others. Sometimes parents supported their

[411] Anonymous. Recorded in person interview. June 29, 2015.
[412] Anonymous. Recorded in person interview. June 29, 2015.
[413] Oral testimonies help to support that Franca Viola may have not been the "first to say no." to a reparatory marriage in Italy.

daughter's desire not to marry someone they did not love.[414]Although the evidence presented previously in this dissertation helps to confirm these accounts, more oral history interviews are needed in order to further reinforce these testimonies.

Lorenzo admits that *fuitina forzata* happened frequently and left some young women without much of a choice. "It all depended on their families perception of the matter."[415] In the end, Lorenzo sympathized with abductors like Nino and downplays the obvious or deliberate violation of women like Sabina. Laughing, he noted that "In the case of this great switch up, that happened here the poor fellow remained stuck too."[416] In the end, Nino also faced consequences if he did marry Sabina. Without the reparatory marriage, Nino risked jail time for rape and kidnapping and might even have been murdered by members of Sabina's family.[417]

Other interviewees shared stories of forced *fuitina.* These accounts demonstrate the prevalence of the practice and the ways the community, including women, played a role in normalizing this form of violence. Felicia V. shared the story of a young woman, Carmela, who was kidnapped from her seamstress school or *sarta*. According to Felicia, Carmela had gone to the school to try on a dress she was having made for an upcoming event. As she was leaving, she was grabbed and taken away by a group of men. Even worse, it turned out that the main abductor was a relative. According to Felicia, "He was her very own first cousin. Children of brothers. She ended up having to marry her own cousin." Felicia recalled that Carmela protested for weeks and refused to accept her

[414] Anonymous. Recorded phone interview. December 15, 2015
[415] Ibid.
[416] Ibid.
[417] The Italian penal code until 1981, under article 587 lessened the punishment for imprisonment if the murderer was defending their family honor. The sentence typically applied to the cause of death of a person who was involved in an illegitimate relationship with a man's spouse, daughter, or sister. Like bride kidnappings, these cases rarely made it to the courts.

parents' wishes to proceed with the customary reparatory marriage. "In the end, however, like everyone else her family pushed her to finally agree." Carmela was forced to marry her abductor in the jailhouse in front of a judge. Felicia lamented how devastating the situation must have been for Carmela and her family. "They had to give up their beautiful daughter to such a criminal," she said. At the same time, Felicia supported the family's final decision to force Carmela to marry her abductor. "The family had no other choice. She had been touched. No other man would have wanted her otherwise."[418] Several other women I interviewed shared similar sentiments regarding *fuitina forzata*. Caterina F. explained the double standards of the past and believed people did not see the abductor in a *fuitina* as a criminal like they may today. "In the past," she says, "people perceived it as a moment where a man could not control his desires for a particular woman. I do not think it was right, but that is simply the way it went at that time."[419]

VI. Conclusion

This chapter explored the complex motivations and manifestations of the *fuitina* tradition. Not only did the practice serve important economic and social functions, it could also be a tool for establishing autonomy in a traditional society undergoing rapid changes. The stories provided by my interview subjects offer insight into the multilayered settings that informed sexual relations and notions of consent. They demonstrate the evolution of cultural ideas about sex and illustrate how time and cultural change could influence these ideologies. In some cases, the act of kidnapping, and the performances associated with it, allowed for desires to be disguised as coercion and vice versa.

[418] Anonymous. Recorded phone interview. December 15, 2015.
[419] Anonymous. Recorded phone Interview. February 6, 2016.

Examining *fuitina* helps us understand cultural transformation at the local level and how public discourses shaped this aspect of private life.

The stories introduced in this chapter provide a glimpse into some of the reasons why individuals chose to marry via *fuitina.* These stories demonstrate that *fuitina* undermined not only parental authority and traditional social and mainstream norms but also customary codes and other dictates of church and state. Furthermore, *fuitina* was not just oppressive towards women but allotted individuals, including women, opportunities for personal freedom and autonomy. In cases where a young couple could not afford a wedding or wished to marry without family approval, the practice of *fuitina* could provide an escape from these restrictions.

These accounts also demonstrate the flexibility of the custom and the rules surrounding marriage and sex. Although some families and individuals were rigid and fixated on protecting their reputations, others adjusted their beliefs and expectations based on their circumstances and thereby demonstrated the fluidity of honor culture and local tradition. The complexity and contradictions that surround these stories demonstrate the nuanced and complicated landscape surrounding everyday sexual relations and politics. Looking at the practice of *fuitina* across time and through individual perspectives shows that personal choices and behaviors varied and were not always dictated by tradition or social norms. As noted previously, there is not one story of *fuitina.* Within each of these cases gender and age influenced individual experiences. These stories emphasize plurality, expose contradictions, and further illustrate the importance of oral history and local perspectives to understanding cultural change. Utilizing local perspectives and the island of Sicily as a case study also demonstrates that Sicilian

culture was not simply homogenous, traditional, and unchanging but was instead constantly evolving.

Chapter 6 Appendix

Interview Questions

All interviews were conducted in Italian or Sicilian dialect. Below are the general questions that subjects were asked during the interview. Questions were slightly modified depending on the person who was being interviewed:

Questions

1. What can you tell me about marriage in Sicily during your lifetime? How important was it to marry? How have those attitudes changed in your lifetime?
2. How did you meet your husband? Wife? Partner? Were your parents aware of your relationship?
3. Why did you decide to follow through with a *fuitina*. Were your parents not willing to accept your relationship? Other reason?
4. Was fuitina a frequent occurrence? Why?
5. Have other people in your family married by way of *fuitina?*
6. Did your fuitina result in marriage? Were you married in a church? Did you or your bride wear a white dress?
7. Why do you think the practice of *fuitina* has existed for so long? In your opinion was it an important aspect of society? Why or why not?
8. Describe what gender roles were like in your home growing up?
9. Why do you think families forced young women in the past to marry someone who had kidnapped and abducted their daughter?
10. How do you feel about the custom looking back? How is it different today?

11. What is *fuitina* in your opinion? Tell me about your experience and understanding of the custom? Was it prevalent in your community? Why or Why not?
12. Explain the details of your *fuitina*? The decision-making process, planning, and the actual event. Why did you choose to do a *fuitina*? Did you feel you had a choice in the matter?
13. Can you briefly tell me how attitudes regarding gender have changed during your lifetime in your home and community?
14. What is the general attitude regarding premarital sex today? How has this attitude changed since you were a young person? Was maintaining honor important to you and your family?
15. What events or developments have occurred that in your opinion were pivotal in changing public opinion regarding forced marriages and the law that allowed for the exoneration of rape if a man married his victim?

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Examining the complex custom of *fuitina* reveals often unseen corners of Italian history. The story of *fuitina* from the post-fascist era to the present is also the story women's rights, sexual liberation, and gendered violence in a rapidly changing Italy. This dissertation illustrates the complexity of the *fuitina* practice and explores the ways both the practice and perception of reparatory marriage changed across the postwar decades. By considering the ways *fuitina* intersected with the law, feminism, the media, and the lives of both famous and nameless Italians, this dissertation has highlighted the continuities and fractures within Italian culture and mapped a dramatic transformation of the morals and cultures of gender and sex in modern Italy.

Scholarship about modern Italy pays little attention to the custom of *fuitina*. By expanding our understanding of the custom and by juxtaposing a range of sources, from media reports and cultural representations to legal briefs and oral histories, this dissertation revealed how popular representations distorted this complex and multi-faceted custom. Although *fuitina* is often considered a holdover from an ancient or archaic past, this dissertation reveals it to be a much more nuanced and potentially modernizing force that contributed to the democratization of gender roles, the institution of marriage, and sexual relations across Italy.

Fuitina was always more than one thing. On the one hand, it could involve the kidnapping and rape of a woman who was then forced her to marry her abductor. This horrific process consolidated male authority and domination over female bodies. At the same time, a *fuitina* could serve radical economic and social functions by allowing some

individuals, including women, opportunities for agency and autonomy over their own sexuality.

In the 1960s, the famous case of Franca Viola represented a significant turning point in the public perception of *fuitina* and also the culture of honor and Sicilian modernity. The case of Franca Viola's fueled debates about the law and female emancipation. At the same time, the case led many Italians to misunderstand both the complexity of the *fuitina* custom and the dynamism of Sicilian culture. Counter to popular portrayals from the Viola case, Sicilian society was not uniformly backward and oppressive towards women. Sicilian women were not just victims of a traditional and archaic culture; in some cases, they exerted agency over their own bodies even with the support of their own families. Viola's story, and those of other women refusers found in local police records, indicate that sexual violence in Sicily did not always result in a forced marriage. The evidence suggests that some rape victims, through their own efforts and with the support of their families, were able find alternatives to forced marriage. Furthermore, while Viola's case remains the most well-known story of a *fuitina* refusal, my research suggests that she was not the first woman in Sicily to reject a reparatory marriage, and the existence of these other refusers demonstrates that notions of honor and purity were often contested and fluid, even in Sicily.

By tracing the evolution of Italian law as it relates to women's rights and the prosecution of gender-based violence, this project has also explored the interplay between consensual and non-consensual *fuitina*. That the same term and legal framework could apply to rape and consensual elopement suggests that female emancipation within the Italian legal system has been riddled with contradictions and continuities. Particularly as

the law related to the female body and sex, the path to legal equality has been full of twists and turns. Furthermore, even though the act of reparatory marriage was commonly associated with the island of Sicily, the forced marriages were legal throughout Italy until 1981. Although *fuitina* was typically understood as a southern tradition, it was sanctioned by Italian national law which historically privileged men and normalized violence against women.

The emergence of new feminism in the late 1960s and 1970s changed the discourse surrounding Italian gender politics and eventually contributed to the legalization of divorce and abortion, the repeal of the honor codes, and the expansion and redefinition of the law as it relates to sexual violence. However, organized feminists failed to campaign on the issue of forced reparatory marriage, and they seemed to view the matter as less important than other issues of female bodily autonomy such as divorce and abortion. In the place of an organized feminist response, individual women, such as the accidental feminists identified in chapter four, took matters into their own hands by refusing to marry their abductors. The stories of these lesser known women illustrate that the work of creating gender equality took many forms, from the organized campaigns of feminists to parliamentary reforms to the individual acts of courage of regular women. Together, these efforts forced changes in the law and also drove a transformation of cultural manners and mentalities.

Popular representations of *fuitina* also informed the custom and illustrated how the practice related to larger Italian narratives surrounding national identity, morality, and unity. Depictions of *fuitina* in film reflect political, economic, and social trends, and careful analysis of these representations illuminate the process of social change in Italy

and the evolving narrative of southern Italian "backwardness." Popular representations of *fuitina* changed over time, and in many ways, these representations mirrored broader transformations of Italian law, culture, gender norms, and national ideas about southern society. Filmic representations of *fuitina* from the Second World War to the present have been influential in shaping national, and global, attitudes and perceptions of southern Italian identity, sexuality, and "otherness."

Oral histories have also expanded our understanding of *fuitina* and the oral history archive discussed in chapter six reveals the reality of the custom as experienced by ordinary individuals at the local level. This collection of narratives highlights an array of individual experiences and the various components of the practice including parental control of marriage, power, gender relations, and the customary and economic circumstances surrounding sex and marriage in Italy. This collection of stories documents consensual *fuitina* and is not representative of all cases of *fuitina,* but it does provide an important archival resource and makes a major contribution to Italian gender studies. These interviews indicate that the boundaries surrounding gender, sex, and marriage as dictated by family, church, and state were contested by everyday individuals, and this contestation further drove the social, political, economic, and legal changes that took place over time.

These narratives also reveal that sometimes both women and men orchestrated *fuitina* and helped sustain patriarchal society and honor culture as both participants and facilitators of local customs and practices that were oppressive to women. In some cases, *fuitina* was tied to the economic conditions, place, and circumstances of individual families. *Fuitina* was a rule-driven practice, and could function as an alternative to

traditional forms of marriage, particularly arranged marriage. By examining the practice through a variety of perspectives, this dissertation demonstrates that *fuitina* is exceptionally complex and has changed over time.

Despite societal constraints and parental authority, young people did not simply submit to social norms, at least not without a struggle. In many cases, through the practice of *fuitina*, young people asserted their own desires, even if those desires were in contradiction with social and parental rules and institutional practices. At the same time, the custom of *fuitina* was a by-product of a set of socio-cultural norms related marriage and patriarchy and depended on a culture of honor and shame that determined a woman's value in the marriage market by her family's wealth and her own chastity. In some cases, the act of *fuitina* allowed for individual desires to be disguised as coercion, thereby allowing individuals, including women, opportunities to make choices related to their own bodies within the confines of patriarchal society. In other cases, *fuitina* relieved the burden and shame for families that could not afford to provide their children with a traditional wedding ceremony. Primarily, the *fuitina* custom manifested as a form of male dominance and violence. Sanctioned by national law, *fuitina* privileged men and provided opportunities for men to act on their own desires without consequences or any consideration for their victims or their families. The stories highlighted throughout this dissertation show the range of acceptable sexual ideologies in Italy in the decades following World War Two. Finally, as the following story suggests, the politics of sexual violence is still in a state of flux in Italy today.

A recent news story highlighted in *larepubblica.it TV* on October 11, 2018 established that *fuitina* is not always an act performed between heterosexual couples, and

even when there is no resistance, it does not always end in marriage. The story demonstrates that sexual encounters, as they relate to the custom of *fuitina,* included those outside normative heterosexual relationships. *Larepubblica.it* TV recently told the story of Rosalia Armomino and Salvatrice Giallombardo, a lesbian couple in their sixties, who were granted a civil union at the municipality of *Termini Imerese* in Palermo. Their marriage occurred forty-five years after their *fuitina*. In an interview with *La Repubblica TV,* Rosalia Armomino described her *fuitina* as follows:

> Salvatrice and I are establishing our legal partnership because we no longer want to live as strangers under the law. More than anything I want to be her relative in case of important matters such as an admission to the hospital or to sign an important document on her behalf.[420]

When asked how the couple met, Armomino explained she'd initially been engaged to Giallombardo's brother and had broken up with him when she realized she was in love with his sister. In 1966, after Armonino's mother passed away, the two women decided to consummate their love by escaping their family homes to live together as a couple. They explained that they had been together for forty-five years and endured much criticism of their relationship.

> We always kept it *alla luce del sole tutto* or "everything in the open." Everyone has a mouth to sing and speak, and there is also the time for everyone to forget. Regardless of what others said we didn't allow their judgments to stop us. She was mine to love.[421]

This story demonstrates that *fuitina* could encompass a range of meanings. It was not only heterosexual couples who used the practice resist family and community authority. Armomino and Giallombardo's story introduces yet another layer of complexity and

[420] Giorgio Ruta. October 11, 2018. "Palermo, 45 anni fa la *fuitina* fra donne: Ora si sono sposate." *Repubblica.it TV*.
[421] Ibid.

demonstrates that the practice could be deployed to undermine not only parental authority but also the entire institution of marriage as dictated by church and state.

In addition to the oral histories found in chapter six and the story highlighted above, other recent stories in the Italian media demonstrate that a modernized version of *fuitina* still exists today. These news stories indicate that the practice is not confined to the island of Sicily. Given the fact that the law and culture governing *fuitina* has changed since the abolition of the honor codes in 1981, today's *fuitina* is typically an expression of the sexual desires. For example, in 2004 *larepubblica.it* published a story about a *Fuga d'amore* or love escape orchestrated, according to the article, in *maniera moderna* or modern style. Angela, a 17-year-old girl, left home for an overnight adventure with her boyfriend to a seaside resort without consent of her parents. Angela's case was brought to the court of Ancona where her 18-year-old boyfriend and his brother were charged as adults for the consensual abduction of Angela, who was still a minor.[422] According to reports, the boyfriend, Giovanni, had convinced Angela to leave her home and stay with him at a beach resort in the Marche region without her parent's knowledge. Giovanni's brother, Luciano, helped the couple secure a place to stay. Angela's parents sued the two men for compensation for the abduction of their daughter. In court, the young men appealed the case arguing that this was not an abduction given the short stay at the resort and the fact that Angela's parents were well aware of the couple's relationship. However, the court condemned Giovanni and Luciano's actions, declaring their arguments inadmissible and asserting that the days at the resort, even if Angela was consenting,

[422] Unknown author. November 20, 2004,"La Fuitina d'amore costa cara I genitori di lei vanno risarciti." http://www.repubblica.it/2004/k/sezioni/cronaca/fuitina/fuitina/fuitina.html?refresh_ce

were illegal and endangered the relationship between the girl and her parents.[423] The two men were found to be in violation of Article 537 of the Italian criminal code which addresses the abduction of a consenting minor.[424]They were forced to pay an unspecified sum of money to Angela's parents in order to avoid jail time.

The practice of *fuitina* has also taken new dimensions in the age of the internet. In 2016, *livesicilia.it* featured a story about a *fuitina* between two young teens from Palermo. The young couple, a 16-year-old boy and a 14-year-old girl, were found by their parents after they had been reported missing. The young couple had met online, and after many conversations and the exchange of several photos, they decided to meet each other in person. The young man bought an airplane ticket from Bergamo to *Punta Raisi* airport in Palermo. The young woman apparently waited for him at the airport with open arms. The couple spent 24 hours together without the knowledge or consent of their parents.[425]The coverage of cases such as these, and the continuation of the term *fuitina* to describe them, demonstrates the deep history of the custom across Italy. It also shows that today's *fuitina* is a combination of *fuitinas* of the past; it is an escape, a transgression, and a way for young couples fulfill their sexual needs and desires.

This dissertation is the only academic monograph devoted to the custom of *fuitina* in Italy. Further studies of the custom should involve cross-cultural comparisons of bride kidnapping practices across Europe and in other parts of the world such as Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Comparing the practice could provide insights into the cultures of

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[423] Ibid
[424] Ibid.
[425] Monica Panzica, March 15, 2016, "La *fuitina* al tempo di Internet ritrovati due giovani innamorati." *Livesicilia.it*. See link https://livesicilia.it/2016/03/15/la-fuitina-al-tempo-di-internet-ritrovati-due-giovani-innamorati_727113/.

gender ideology and sexual violence across time and space. In the past, scholarly work by feminists about bride kidnapping typically viewed the custom as singularly oppressive to women and a remnant of patriarchal society. More recently, scholars have considered more nuanced explanations for the persistence of this practice and have looked to bride kidnapping to understand varying levels of consent and power relations between men and women. Comparative studies could give more insight into consensual and non-consensual bride kidnapping customs and could examine diverse types of family arrangements and power relations. Comparative studies could also interrogate the cultural, legal, and economic conditions associated with bride kidnapping in different contexts. In general, these studies would broaden our understanding of the evolution of marital customs, sexual relations, and gender identities as they are impacted by global factors or economic, political, and legal change.

By using the lens of the *fuitina* practice, this dissertation has created insight into various aspects of Italian culture: feminism, law, modernity, the Southern Question, and the nature of sexual violence. On the surface, *fuitina* may seem like a backward or antiquated practice, but upon closer examination it is actually a more layered and complex tradition that could be both oppressive and empowering for men and women. Perhaps most significantly, this study has emphasized the importance of utilizing oral history in historical research. By pulling together a variety of perspectives, local and national, this work explores Italian attitudes and manners about honor and sexuality; how they have both persisted and changed over time. Finally, by exploring the *fuitina* practice within the broader context of women's history and gender studies, this work will

ultimately inform further research related to matters of sexuality and gender violence in modern Italy.

Map of Sicily

Fig. 1-Map of Sicily
Source: https://www.lonelyplanet.com/maps/europe/italy/sicily/

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UDI documents and newspaper clippings on sexual violence folder #57 (1978-1995)

Le Onde Onlus-Palermo

Interviews with local feminists groups:
Arcidonna
Piu done piu Palermo
Le donne del digiuno contro la mafia

RAI online television and documentary archives

Centro Di Documentazione Giuseppe Impastato-Cinisi, Sicily

More Newspapers and Periodicals:

La Repubblica
L'Unita
Rivolta Femminile
Epoca
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