

The Journalistic Representation of Femicide in Italy

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Abstract : In recent decades, the issue of gender-based violence, particularly femicide, has been increasingly presented to the public by Italian media. However, it is often treated in a trivialized and sensationalistic manner, focusing on cases that exhibit the most "attractive" elements (brutality, sex, drugs, the young age and/or good looks of the victims, stories with "mystery," "horror," etc.). This "newness" of media visibility has led to a proliferation of research on the subject, mostly centered on the analysis of national daily newspapers. These studies have highlighted ways of representing the phenomenon that tend to refer more to a psycho-individualistic paradigm, focusing on the psychological and individual characteristics of the perpetrator, rather than referencing feminist and/or constructivist paradigms. According to the latter, the causes of male violence against women do not lie in the individual problems of the perpetrator, but in the social and cultural construction of the power hierarchy between men and women. The following study presents the results of qualitative research on the journalistic approach to male violence against women in Italy, aimed at examining the limitations of the narrative strategies used by the media. The research focuses on the case of Giulia Cecchetti (killed by her ex-boyfriend Filippo Turetta on November 11, 2023), which has fueled the debate on the narrative surrounding male violence against women. This case was chosen based on its significant media coverage and the victim's family's commitment to combating gender-based violence. The research involves a content analysis of 80 articles from four different national newspapers («Corriere della Sera», «La Stampa», «Il Giornale», «la Repubblica»). Additionally, the study analyzed the social media use of two Italian newspapers («Corriere della Sera» and «la Repubblica»), examining 10 posts and their 100 related comments, highlighting the various types of public responses, including criticisms of how femicide is represented by the media. Furthermore, the paper will reflect on the role that the Italian women's movement and certain journalist communities have played in promoting a narrative of femicide that is more attentive to power dynamics and free from gender stereotypes.

Keywords : gender-based violence, femicide, gender stereotypes, Italian newspapers

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