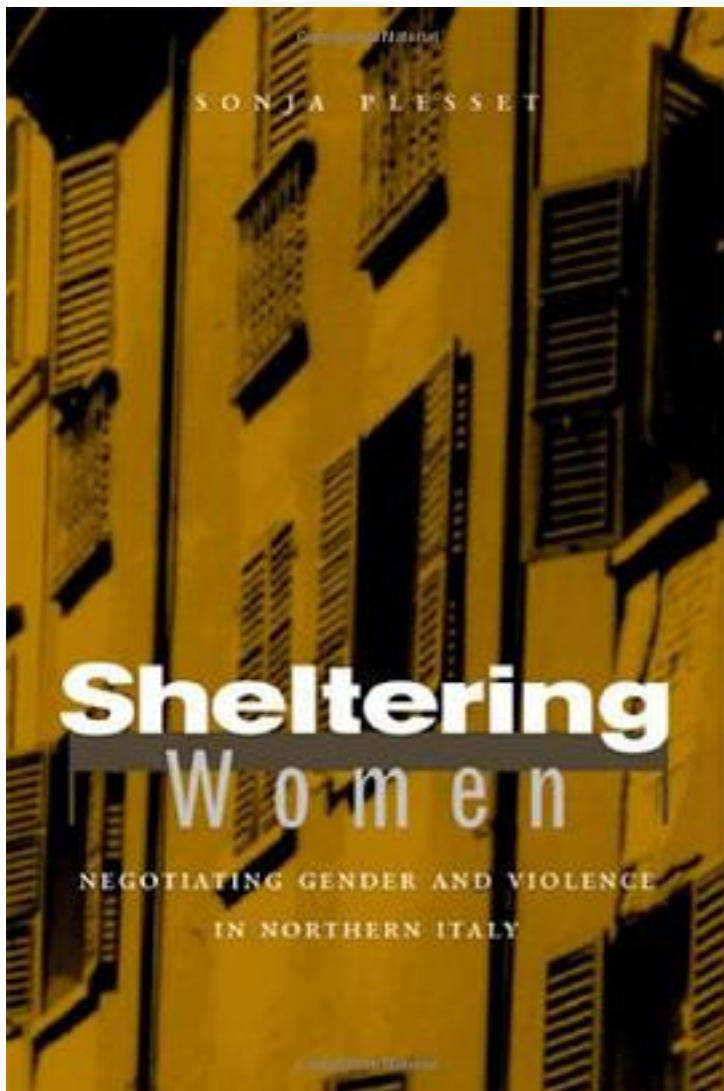


Sheltering Women



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Residents of Parma, Italy pride themselves on their sophistication and connection to European modernity. But despite a reputation for civility, intimate partner violence continues to take place, largely hidden from public view. Offering a detailed ethnography of two women's shelters--one leftist, the other Catholic--this book provides the political, cultural, and legal contexts of competing explanations for intimate partner violence. Some contend that violence against women reflects the cultural and historical gender inequalities embedded in Italian society, including "old-fashioned" or "traditional" understandings of masculinity. Others argue that it stems from confusion and ambivalence over "new" or "modern" forms of gender relations. While the first explanation places the blame on tradition and the second cites the transition to modernity, both emphasize societal understandings of gender and point to collective, rather than individual, responsibility. Through an intimate portrayal of everyday life, "Sheltering Women" reveals how violence against women can be studied as one part of a continuum of locally relevant understandings of gender relations and gender change.

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