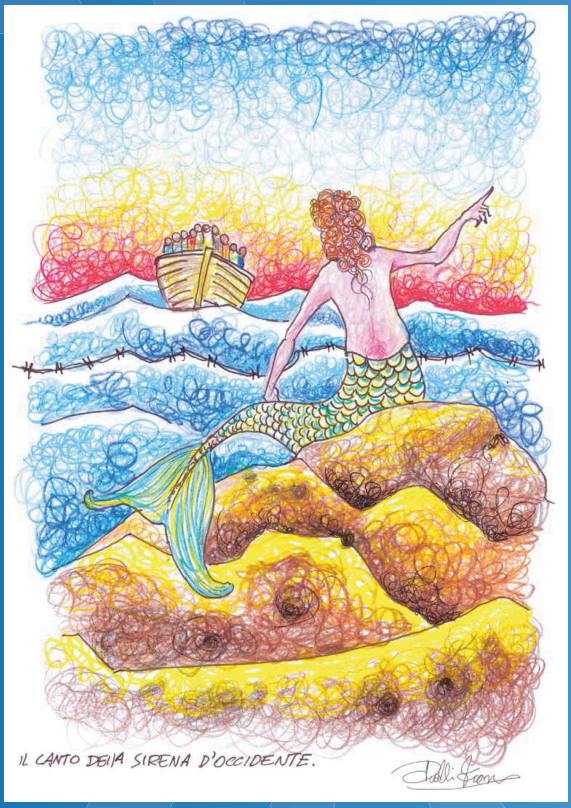
NEWCOMERS AS AGENTS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE: LEARNING FROM THE ITALIAN EXPERIENCE

A Recourse Book for Social Work and Social Work Education in the Field of Migration



Edited by
Hannah Reich, Roberta T. Di Rosa

Fondazione Nazionale Assistenti Sociali

FrancoAngeli

Fondazione
Nazionale
Assistenti Sociali

Condivisione del sapere nel servizio sociale

collana della Fondazione Nazionale Assistenti Sociali/FNAS

La collana si propone come luogo di pubblicazione del sapere emergente in servizio sociale: uno spazio, quindi, nel quale rendere pubblico, condivisibile e oggetto di confronto il patrimonio ricco e rinnovato di conoscenze, scoperte e pratiche degli assistenti sociali (*Social Workers* nella dizione internazionale) progettato e curato dalla Fondazione Nazionale degli Assistenti Sociali, anch'essa strumento e opportunità a servizio della comunità professionale.

La letteratura di servizio sociale, in tutte le sue declinazioni (storica, etica, giuridica, antropologica, sociologica, politica, economica e organizzativa) è vieppiù cresciuta anche in Italia nel corso degli ultimi decenni, prevalentemente per la spinta propulsiva di docenti e studiosi, interni ed esterni alla disciplina professionale, orientati a trasmettere conoscenza e competenza nelle aule dell'università. Sono meno evidenti, invece, seppure presenti, le pubblicazioni sulle pratiche e sulle tematiche affrontate quotidianamente negli interventi sociali e nelle nuove frontiere in cui operano i *professionals* di servizio sociale.

La Fondazione, dunque, cura e promuove questa collana per valorizzare le ricerche, le proposte culturali e le pratiche progettuali che animano e concretizzano la disciplina di servizio sociale, per sostenere i professionisti nello sviluppo di nuove competenze, per portare ad evidenza le notevoli potenzialità di produzione disciplinare già presenti e provocare criticamente ulteriori capacità.

I volumi pubblicati sono sottoposti a valutazione anonima di almeno due *referees* esperti.

 ISBN 9788835134329

Fondazione
Nazionale
Assistenti Sociali

La *Fondazione Nazionale degli Assistenti Sociali*, istituita nel 2015 dal Consiglio Nazionale dell'Ordine, ha l'obiettivo di valorizzare la professione di assistente sociale, promuove studi e ricerche scientifiche direttamente e attraverso collaborazioni esterne, svolge indagini e rilevazioni al fine di acquisire e diffondere conoscenze inerenti alla professione e ai settori d'interesse del servizio sociale (metodologia e deontologia professionale, politiche sociali, organizzazione dei servizi, innovazione), organizza attività finalizzate all'aggiornamento tecnico-scientifico e culturale degli assistenti sociali, anche avvalendosi di convenzioni con Università ed enti pubblici e privati, partecipa a bandi di progettazione e gare internazionali, europei e locali. Promuove, inoltre, iniziative editoriali e attività tese a consolidare la connessione tra la professione e il sistema culturale nazionale e internazionale.

 ISBN 9788835134329

NEWCOMERS AS AGENTS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE: LEARNING FROM THE ITALIAN EXPERIENCE

A Recourse Book for Social Work and Social Work Education in the Field of Migration

Edited by
Hannah Reich, Roberta T. Di Rosa

Fondazione Nazionale Assistenti Sociali

FrancoAngeli

The publication was funded by:
DAAD Programme: Hochschuldialog mit Südeuropa 2020; Dipartimento Culture e Società dell'Università di Palermo, Fondi PJ_D02_FAS – contributo liberale per progetto Migration and Societies in the Italian coast nell'ambito del progetto DiROMA

Cover image: *Il canto della sirena d'Occidente*, by Francesco Piobbichi

Copyright © 2021 by FrancoAngeli s.r.l., Milano, Italy. ISBN 9788835134329

Images in the text by Francesco Piobbichi

Welela
Chi salva una vita salva mondo intero
3 ottobre
Noi e loro
È il capitalismo bellezza
Tu!
Ciao mamma, sono vivo
Esodo
Senza nome (onorare la memoria)

A special thanks to Francesco Piobbichi, who has made drawing his weapon against the indifference and violence that permeate the world of migration in the Mediterranean and, unfortunately, sometimes also the reception system. He, a witness to the times in which we live, with a notebook and his pencils, offers us chronicles and memories of stories that the sea has bequeathed to us, so that they are not completely lost in that sea.

Thank you, Francesco, for generously sharing your drawings, and for helping us to honour the lives and memories of so many people we will never know.

 ISBN 9788835134329

Index

Part II
Activism and practical approaches: creating spaces of belonging

Part III
Newcomers as change agent mirroring host societies:
... and how Social Work can respond

 ISBN 9788835134329

Introduction. Social Work with newcomers: entering into the field

by Hannah Reich, Roberta T. Di Rosa

For about thirty years, Sicily has assumed the role of a gateway from Africa to Europe, acting as a bridge between cultures, ethnic groups and religions. When we talk about immigration in Sicily, therefore, we are referring to a structural reality, which the island's inhabitants have generally accepted with a sense of hospitality and openness. Sicily is the first Italian region, which had been invested by the arrival of foreign workers from Maghreb countries (Castronovo, 2016). It is in a position signifying historical continuity for newcomers[1], given that Sicily has always been the crossroads for migrants from Europe, Asia and Mediterranean Africa for the most diverse types of encounters and transits. It is an interesting observation point from which it is possible to look at the social and political implications generated by immigration movements in the understanding of contemporary migration phenomena.

Within these new geopolitical structures, Sicily has assumed a position worthy of attention. For its geographical position it can be considered the land of immigration par excellence, confirming its strategic and central role in the involvement in theatres of wars, invasions, and dominations. Because of its economic, social, and territorial peculiarities, it is actually a difficult and unattractive land from the occupational point of view. In it, therefore, two souls coexist: an immigratory, which exerts a strong attraction of masses from the neighbouring countries, which are in greater difficulty and an emi-

[1] We use in the title this term purposely instead of migrants or refugees, to denote the since the beginning of humankind constant migration of humans over this planet. So, for example: The newcomers of former ages are now part of the inhabitants of Sicily, constituting the host community, and many former inhabitants have migrated further in the North Italy and in Europe. This term is employed by the "new comers" themselves, who migrated from Vietnam to Taiwan (Cheng-Hsiang, 2020) and expresses in our view more profoundly the reality on the ground of steady human migration.

gratory one, which pushes the residents towards the more prosperous regions in the centre and the North of the Italy or towards foreign countries.

However, it is important to keep in mind that in the 21st century the character of migration induced by natural, economic, and political causes (persecution and especially conflicts) has undergone a change, reaching the proportions of a "humanitarian diaspora" (Battistelli, 2021, p. 23). According to UNHCR (2018), 68.5 million refugees fled their homes in 2017. Of these, 25.4 million men, women and children fled violence perpetrated by armed actors in the context of persecution and conflict, such as wars, insurgencies, terrorist attacks, direct or indirect foreign military intervention. Among those who have attempted to cross this sea, UNHCR notes, the 1,720 victims in the first nine months of 2018 show an increased risk of death, in the face of the forced abandonment of rescue operations by NGO ships. Thus, while voyages and landings have decreased, the incidence of deaths in 2018 reached a record of one in every 31 people compared to one in every 49 people in 2017 (Battistelli, 2021, p. 24).

In 2020, Sicily was once again in the centre of international migration flows: the number of migrants landed illegally in Sicily (26,702) more than tripled compared to 2019 (the year 7,123 landed) (Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, 2021). Although these figures represent the majority of landings that occurred throughout the Peninsula, they cannot be representative of the real Italian situation, where, in all of 2020, a total of 34,134 people landed. Most of these migrants, about 38%, come from Tunisia. A country that has never fully recovered after the 2011 revolution against the regime of Ben Ali and that has been struggling a lot due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting economic crisis. This has deprived many people (especially young people) of their work and dignity, which should be guaranteed to them within a democracy. The majority of arrivals occurred in the summer months (July and August). This peak has inevitably led to a chaotic management of the migratory phenomenon by the national government, with the consequent overcrowding of the island's hotspots. The ones who paid the most, as always, were the migrants who, after having had to face an inhuman journey to reach Europe, spent many days in first reception centres that housed many more people than they could contain. A problem that, if in normal times was "acceptable", in times of pandemic has become very dangerous, with the real risk of transforming hotspots in real hotbeds of Coronavirus.

Yet not much is known in the wider public about the realities on the grounds Social Workers, who work with the newcomers are facing in Sicily. As of April 2020, the Government's management of the pandemic has involved the introduction of measures aimed at quarantining people arriv-

ing by sea, including MSNAs, on quarantine ships or in Covid-Hotels, for a length of stay, in some cases, longer than required by health protocols. Further, the situation of promiscuity – overcrowding, lack of physical distance, the presence in the ships of swab positives (Save The Children, 2020) – in addition to the state of health and psycho-physical stress of migrants did not ensure adequate conditions for a proper management and care of the migrants' situations.

This publication is intended to be a Resource Book for Social Workers working in the field of migration. It aims to, on the one hand display facts about the living realities on the ground migrants and Social Workers active in the field are facing in Sicily. This is an important first step to bring the reality of the lived experiences into the public awareness, as they are not adequately represented in the media. It also presents theories on the meaning making processes and on why certain facts are not widely distributed via the media. It thus has purposely chosen the format of a book to present voices deriving from *experience* via articles and images.

On the other hand, it presents methods and approaches, how to act in such a complex situation as a Social Worker and extracts from these experiences and reflections insights, which are significant for the Social Work in the field of migration and thus also for the Social Work educational practice. This has to change and adapt to these new challenges of the 21st century[2]. As our security of tomorrow, our global cooperation and social well-being depends on the education of today, we do aim to specifically address the path for transforming our educational practices of International Social Work education.

Thus, in the first part this handbook presents the recent research about the situation in Italy, with special focus on Sicily and offers explanation grounded in current social theories and migration debates. It also takes into considerations the impact of the Covid-19 crisis, which consequences are not yet fully clear (Simone, 2021; Di Rosa, 2021).

In "Scrutinizing the situation on the ground in Sicily", Giuseppina Tumminelli analyses the difficulties of the conditions of refugees and migrants in Sicily. In recent years, migration has become one of the most debated issues in public opinion because of its political, economic, social, and cultural implications. In addition to defining problems, doubts, epistemological errors, conflicts that the categories used (e.g., regular/irregular, refugee/asylum seekers) trigger.

[2] It thereby builds on works such as Roßkopf, Heilmann (2021); Kleibl, Lutz, Noyoo (2019). We would also particularly like to thank Prof. Dr. Ralf Roßkopf, who has placed the founding stone of the fruitful cooperation between FHWS and UNIPA.

Iasonas Apostolopoulos presents the experience of the Mediterranea Saving Humans ONG, discussing about the effects of the closing of the ports together with the past years of criminalization of sea rescue have brought a new reality in the sea. They have changed the behaviour of the passing vessels. Despite continuous calls on the radio urging them to interfere, often they don't even reply to us, they just sail away and leave the migrants at sea. This is exactly the reason the concept of the "European civil fleet" is now more urgent than ever. It is important to emphasize that we are not just rescuing shipwrecked people, civilian and ONG vessels are rescuing fleeing slaves, people that their only way to escape from slavery, torture, and mass rapes in Libya, is through the Mediterranean Sea. His rescue testimony was essential not only to provide information about what is really happening in the Mediterranean Sea but also to strongly oppose the mainstream media and some political parties accuse of being the pull factor of illegal immigration, meaning that the rescue NGOs attract migrants with their presence and encourage them to start their journey from Libya, this is fake news and misleading propaganda.

Giuseppe Platania shows criticalities in the implementation of reception in Sicily through a paradigmatic study case: the CARA of Mineo and the CAS of Rosolini. The lack of basic services, the slowness of the asylum process, and the low rate of recognition have led to migrants' uprising and creation of a welfare from below.

Francesca Rizzuto focuses on the newscoverage of migrants in Italian journalism in the last decade, which has been deeply influenced by the success of the infotainment logic. This is a central issue of the democratic debate because the description of migratory phenomenon, spread by journalists, influences public opinion and policies.

Riccardo Ercole Omodei focusses in his paper on the controversial role of the migrant in the criminal law system, with special regards to the human smuggling and human trafficking. It is analysing the existing and significant gap between the criminological and normative dimensions of the two criminal phenomena, and the related consequences. In doing so, after a brief normative and criminological outline, the paper underlines the inadequacy of the dominating normative point of view.

Ignazia Bartholini describes the phenomenon of proximity violence, which by the author of this article is considered an umbrella concept that takes on different forms of violence against women. In fact, migrant women are often exposed to parental violence that denies their very subjectivity as women and human beings. Migrant women are often victims of proximity violence which is accentuated in contexts with a high rate of vulnerability such as migration.

It becomes even more tangible precisely in their condition of vulnerability associated with their status as asylum seekers/refugees. The lack of alternative ties to parental ones, and of points of reference other than those of one's fellow countrymen, means that the vulnerability of personal situations facilitates the use of violence and make permanent the resulting condition of oppression.

Glauco Iermano introduces us to the experience of the Dedalus Cooperative, which has been engaged since the 1980s in the field of research, planning and management of services of social value, with the aim of intervening in the field of problems related to the social exclusion of vulnerable groups. Here they work together to contribute to the construction of a welcoming community, supportive, inclusive, free and fair, focusing on the protection of rights and equal opportunities, the fight against discrimination, marginality and discomfort. Their work fosters the social, educational, cultural, and working inclusion of many categories of migrants and vulnerable people: unaccompanied foreign minors; young people of the second generations; victims of trafficking, exploitation and violence; homeless people and people addicted to alcohol and substances; asylum seekers and protection.

Giulia Di Carlo addresses the issue of the autonomy of lonely migrant minors, starting from her experience in the field in Palermo and in some Sicilian provinces. The transition to adulthood is for these boys and girls a very critical moment, and it must be faced by supporting them in their paths to autonomy. This means supporting the transition to adulthood through a construction of a solid social capital, encouraging the development of skills useful for entering the labor market but also listening to their needs, dreams and concerns.

We conclude this first part with Roberta T. Di Rosa delivering a framework of Social Work in the field of flight and migration, pointing also to the challenges for and demands on Social Worker.

The second part takes a closer look on practical approaches, referring to experienced based knowledge from practitioners and practitioner researchers to ask the question: How can one act in such deteriorated contexts, with scarce resources and within structures challenging human dignity on a deep and profound level? How can one reconcile contradictions and act if one is facing dilemmas? And mostly what competencies and self-understanding are demanded and thus have to be trained in the International Social Work Education, enabling Social Workers to face these challenges? Just like the "tetralemma process[3], this recourse book, doesn't aim at delivering the final

[3] The tetralemma process supports non-linear thinking and process orientation, for further discussion see Sparrer, Varga von Kibéd (2009.

answer to such questions. Rather, it aims at *keeping the question alive.* And in doing this moving forward towards new understandings, framings, and actions. Its intention is thus to strengthen the capacity to resist an automatic pilot mode of action and an implementation of habitual socially legitimized practices, which might deep inside contradict Social Work values.

It strives for fostering an authentic, creative response of Social Workers to the difficulties they are facing in acting within lack of means, resources, marginalization and within harsh structural disbalances. It intends to honour every small step, every moment of dignified eye to eye contact, which allows humanity to emerge as a universal human collective. It does so by listening to those active in the field, on the ground.

We are entering into the field with Ravinder Barn's chapter on: "Empowering Refugees and Migrants: Experiences in Sicily". There she focuses on the theoretical notion of empowerment and explores how this can be utilised in practice to help improve the situation of refugees and migrants in Sicily in general, and unaccompanied minors in particular.

Maria Chiara Monti takes us to the consequences of torture and extreme violence causing severe trauma to displaced persons and refugee migrants who need multidisciplinary and multi-perspective care, in order to restore the human dignity, which was lost in places of violence. The reception system for refugee migrants risks reproducing the same traumas or activating the old ones, causing human suffering.

Francesco Piobbichi presents the experience of Mediterranean Hope, a project of the Federation of Evangelical Churches in Italy launched in 2013 that aims to change the European policy on the border. Now they are operating in Lebanon with the project of humanitarian corridors, in Lampedusa as a migration observatory, in Rosarno with agricultural workers, and in Bosnia finishing assistance to transit workers of the Balkan route.

Salvatore Inguì presents the experience of the Libera Orchestra Popolare, which is part of a series of initiatives aimed at creating concrete opportunities for integration of people who are different from each other. This is making diversity a reason for richness and joy and not exclusion. In LOP are in fact young people who have come out of communities for drug addicts, ex-prisoners, young people with psychiatric diagnoses, others with physical disabilities, immigrants and asylum seekers, Christian Catholics and Protestants, Buddhists, Muslims, atheists, etc. learning to sing and play music. The door is always open for anyone who wants can come in and out.

Ilaria Olimpico outlines in her paper how Social Arts can facilitate a process of awareness. It refers to the experiences of two Asylum Integration Migration Funds (AIMF) projects: PUZZLE, a project about capacity build-

ing in the "Welcoming" System and LIFE, a project about socioeconomic inclusion of Migrants. The article points out the strengths and the challenges of the projects, starting with the underneath challenge of social work: to move from there to the horizon of aid to the vision of a paradigmatic change.

Angelo Miramonti analyses a case study of the use of a Forum Theatre to explore the perspective of Senegalese families towards migration. We use action-research methods to gather data: a theatre workshop was offered to a blended group of on Senegalese young adults and Europeans living in Senegal and the stories shared and the reflections generated by the dialogue with the audience are analysed. This process broad to light how decision-making processes concerning migration issues are taking place within broader power dynamics: within the family of origin, the expectations of families of origin and the new context, where the migrant is living. Shedding light on these interconnections are crucial as they can play a protective or potentially damaging role on migrants' mental health. Further, the process found out how effectively art and body-based methods can effectively complement other qualitative methods based on observation and elicitation of oral productions.

The second part concludes with "Meaning, Story and beyond the story", where Hannah Reich points to importance to understand meaning making processes and representation for stories, storytelling, and identity construction. She is embracing a foucaultian understanding of discourse in which the "visible" can't be reduced to the statements and thus emphasises the need to go out and see, smell, experience the "visibilities" on the ground.

In the final chapter, we take the findings and reflection further into a discussion on Social Work educational practices. Social Work has developed its profession out of a welfare and missionary attitude has to liberate itself further from that perception and has move on in its self-understanding by dwelling further into the deep believe in self-organisation and empowerment, to which it can simply be a midwife. Empowerment of the beneficiary as well as of the social worker, as both have to liberate themselves from impeding structures manifested in the broader social-political and economic context but also within the thoughts, mindsets and behaviour. Both are to be seen as agents to bring about a desired social-economic, political, and ecological sustainable change.

International Social Work has a good chance to depart from old patterns of aid delivery and to embody an understanding of herself as a *transformative actor* (Wintergerst, 2017, p. 236). A profound behavioural change cannot be sufficient accomplished in a "more" in techniques, more in competencies,

but has to move up on the scale into changing believes and the construction of identity (Dilts, Hallbom, Smith, 2012). But how could this look like within the Social Work Education? This is the direction the final chapter is heading to.

To conclude this introduction, we would like to acknowledge all participants of the summer school Italy: "Migrations and Societies at the Italian Coast: Human Lives, Reception Systems and Social Work approaches" which took place in September/October 2020 in cooperation of the FHWS and UNIPA funded by the German Academic Exchange Programme (DAAD) for all their insightful contributions and fruitful discussions.

We would also like to thank Francesco Piobbichi for offering his paintings to illuminate the content of this book and metonymically indicating the fact, that experiences resist written or verbal presentations in a magical way and easily slips out of the written exchange and discussions. Yet, at the same time, it's precisely the representations of the experience, which have the power to write another story about our collective humanity.

In deep appreciation of all of this work done towards a universal human understanding of us within this ecosystem of our planet.

References

Battistelli F. (2021), *Italiani e stranieri. La rabbia e l'imbroglio nella costruzione sociale dell'immigrazione*, FrancoAngeli, Milano.

Castronovo A.E. (2016), "Genesi e sviluppo dell'immigrazione in Sicilia: alcune chiavi di lettura", in *Dialoghi Mediterranei*, marzo 2016, available at: http://www.istitutoeuroarabo.it/DM/la-genesi-e-lo-sviluppo-dellimmigrazione-in-sicilia-alcune-chiavi-di-lettura/.

Cheng-Hsiang H. (2020), *The Taiwanese New Inhabitant: Integration in Taiwan*, MA Theses, non-published.

Dilts R., Hallbom T., Smith S. (2012), *Beliefs: Pathways to Health & Well-Being*, Crown House Publishing, Bancyfelin.

Di Rosa R.T. (2021), "Servizio sociale e Covid-19 in accoglienza: strategie di prossimità e di cura", in G. Tumminelli, S. Greco (a cura di), *Migrazioni in Sicilia 2020*, Mimesis, Milano.

Kleibl T., Lutz R., Noyoo N. (*eds.*) (2019), *The Routledge Handbook of Postcolonial Social Work*, Routledge, London.

Roßkopf R., Heilmann K. (*eds.*) (2021), *International Social Work and Forced Migration*, Opladen, Berlin; Verlag Barbara Budrich, Toronto.

Save the Children (2020), *Superando le barriere. Percorsi di accoglienza e inclusione dei giovani migranti*, Report, Roma.

Simone D. (2020), "Il servizio sociale con le persone immigrate", in M. Sanfelici, S. Mordeglia, L. Gui, *Il servizio sociale nell'emergenza Covid*, FrancoAngeli, Milano, pp. 96-115.

Sparrer I., Varga von Kibéd M. (2009), *Ganz im Gegenteil, Tetralemmaarbeit und andere Grundformen Systemischer Strukturaufstellungen – für Querdenker und solche, die es werden wollen*, Carl Auer, Heidelberg, 6ste Auflage.

Wintergerst T. (2017), "Die Entstehung der Menschenrechte als kultureller Transformationsprozess, Reflexionen über Soziale Arbeit als Transformationsakteurin auf dem Hintergrund von Hans Joas: Die Sakralität der Person, eine neue Genealogie der Menschenrechte", in H. Uwe Otto, H. Thiersch (hrsg.), *Neue praxis, Zeitschrift für Sozialarbeit*, *Sozialpädagogik und Sozialpolitik*, 3, Verlag neue praxis GmbH, pp. 224-239.

 ISBN 9788835134329

Part I
Facing the realities on the ground: systems and structures

 ISBN 9788835134329

Welela

 ISBN 9788835134329

1. Scrutinizing the situation on the ground in Sicily

by Giuseppina Tumminelli

1. Introduction

Conditions of refugees and migrants in Sicily are very difficult because there are a lot of implications, variations, observations, problems, difficulties.

In recent years, migration has become one of the most debated issues in public opinion because of its political, economic, social, and cultural implications. In addition to defining problems, doubts, epistemological errors, conflicts that the categories used (e.g., regular/irregular, refugee/asylum seekers) trigger.

The focus on migration has become the topic for the clashes among political forces and to justify the difficulties that the country complains about. In this frame there is a gap between "reality" and its "representation": as it happens for example, to select some of the actors of migration, such as refugees, and to neglect others; or not to distinguish between asylum and migration; to establish continuously a ranking between who has rights to stay and who has not; to support the rhetoric of the "unstoppable invasion" recently aggravated by the risk of the Covid-19 virus (Tumminelli, 2020).

In this paper, the situation of migration in the Sicilian territory will be presented in a national framework also with the aim of starting reflections on the theme and to think about adequate inclusion policies.

2. The collective imagination of migration

In recent years, the theme of immigration has taken on a structural and structuring value for our society to the point that social conflicts are largely coagulated around this theme which has radically changed political spaces,

as well as the collective imagination, which rarely manages to correctly perceive the real dimensions of the phenomenon.

People fleeing by persecution, the "transnational clandestine actors" (Andreas, 2003), are not free to move and access legally other states.

These movements involve both refugees and those who are called economic migrants, who are also unable to take other legal ways of entry into the countries. For this reason, the inflows are considered "mixed", because they include those fleeing both persecution of various kinds and hunger and poverty.

The reasons to escape are different: economic inequalities in access to primary goods (such as water and food) or even for land grabbing (Mateos, 2015, pp. 693-694), i.e., the increase of environmental disasters caused by climate change. The escape is not linked to the choice of the country where to go to live but is driven by the choice of the country where someone is able to escape and ask for protection[1]. Travel is always dangerous and deadly, and the identification of refugees is particularly difficult. As already emerges at the global level, recent years have been marked by the arrival of refugees who, despite the difficulties and obstacles, have undertaken the journey and overcome the "walls" of demarcation between States, but also by the deterioration of their living conditions because of reception and protection systems in the countries of arrival, not adequate to meet the needs of migrants.

Consequently, the presence of refugees raises numerous questions related to both their agency and the social responsibility of the country of arrival in ensuring an adequate reception system and helping to activate processes of accompaniment, integration, and growth. The use of the refugee agency (Bolzoni, Gargiulo, Manocchi, 2015) is used to counter the images and approaches that would see refugees as passive subjects. The actions that refugee take, despite the difficulties and limitations of a system that does everything to close itself instead of opening up, go towards the activation of forms of resilience.

However, it is necessary to consider that the image of refugees oscillates between two poles that feed knowledge traps: on the one hand they are seen as victims unable to act and on the other as profiteers. We lose sight of the fact that refugees, if they have the ability to act independently, are subjected by the system to limits that can hardly be overcome. An example is the application of the eternal label of "victim" and the regulatory constraints that would limit the ability to move freely, decide, act and could also have repercussions on the refugee's emotional balance. The consequence would

[1] See the contribution of Iason Apostolopoulos.

lead to situations of marginalization and difficulties in social, economic and housing integration.

A further prejudice to be debunked is that refugees arriving in the new country can fit into predefined paths by understanding, joining, and adapting to them. The picture, as one can guess, is complex and seems to threaten the resilience of refugees and weaken agency, i.e., the set of psychic and social qualities that allow a social actor to achieve intentional states of the world (Bruun, Langlais, 2003), in which the refugee realizes of his own behaviours.

3. The situation in Italy

The increase in the number of entries in the national territory must be included in a broader dynamic affecting Europe, which is one of the main destinations of migration at global level. The presence of migrants has contributed to changing scenarios. In 2019, the ten countries of origin of foreign citizens in Italy are: Romania, Albania, Morocco, China, Ukraine, Philippines, India, Bangladesh, Egypt, and Moldova. The first three nationalities represent 40% of the foreigners residing in the national territory.

In line with the progressive stabilisation of the foreign population, the number of acquisitions of Italian citizenship has grown, with an increase from 2013 to 2018. This picture has to deal with other aspects. One cannot overlook the flows of foreigners crossing Italy to reach other European countries, as well as the internal migration from the southern regions to those in the north of the country, which are reminiscent of the differences within the territory in terms of labour supply and demand, for example.

The main problem is the lack of adequate legislative instruments to ensure legal channels of access for employment, as has become apparent over time in the number of irregular migrants. This figure decreased during the amnesties for irregular migrants and increased with negative opinions on applications for international protection and the expiry of residence permits for humanitarian protection.

Migration flows to Italy take place via dangerous routes managed by 'human traffickers' from criminal organisations. The conflicts that have erupted in the areas of sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, the worsening of economic conditions in sub-Saharan African countries, and the reduction in the possibility of regular access to the territories draw an alarming scenario in terms of the consequences both for relations between countries and for the health and safety of the people themselves. International protection is the only possibility of entry in Italy.

On a global level, even for 2019, Italy is not the country that has taken on the responsibility of welcoming and protecting refugees. There are three routes to cross the borders: the western route (Morocco, Algeria), the central route (Tunisia, Libya) and the eastern route (Turkey, Greece, Balkans).

Three-quarters are found in countries bordering their own, 85% in middle or low-income countries. Turkey is the first country with 3.6 million refugees (mostly Syrians), followed by Pakistan and Uganda with 1.4 million each, Germany with 1.146.700 and Sudan with 1.055.489. Italy is in 24th place with 208 thousand and 47 thousand (IDOS, 2020, p. 45).

In recent years, Italy has faced the arrival of migrants with different modalities according to the characteristics of the territories of arrival, but the number of immigrants is not compatible with the image of an invasion of Italy.

In 2019, 11.471 migrants arrived in Italy by sea, 49.1% of those arrived in 2018 who were 23.370. If we compare the data with that of the previous year 2017, the detectable decrease is 90.4% (IDOS, 2020, p. 14).

The presumed end of the landings is not motivated by the choice of people to undertake the migratory path, but in the consequences, for example, that the agreements between Italy-Libya have determined in terms of a 90% decrease, already starting from 2017, in the number of departures from Libya. 72% of those who arrived at 31/12/2019 are men, 10% women and 18% minors.

The most significant data is the number of migrants arriving from Tunisia (23%), Pakistan (10%), Ivory Coast (10%), Algeria (9%), Iraq (9%), Bangladesh (5%), Iran (4%), Sudan (4%), Guinea (3%), Somalia (2%).

The unaccompanied foreign minors were 1.680, 50% less than the number recorded in 2018 (3.536) (IDOS, 2020, p. 165). The issue of unaccompanied foreign minors is quite complex and deserves attention, on the one hand because of their needs, desires, expectations, and projects and, on the other hand, because of the lack of protection caused by being alone. Unaccompanied foreign minors are a particular target that becomes a challenge for host societies for the protection and accompaniment interventions to be implemented. In this direction, Law 47 of 2017 (known as *Zampa Law*) aims to introduce a series of interventions including the "Voluntary Guardian" that place the supreme interest of the child at the centre.

91,421 are the migrants included in the hospitality system in the national territory. The most interested regions are Lombardy with 12,680 presences and Emilia-Romagna with 9,406.

According to data from the Ministry of the Interior, the number of asylum seekers had already decreased in 2018. An increase was recorded in

the number of applications submitted by women (23.8%). Citizens from Asian countries recorded a higher incidence (41%), and the number of people from the American continent increased (17% from Central and South America).

3.1. Some points about presence of migrants in Sicily

In 2019, in Sicily, resident migrants are 200,022, 4% of total residents (ISTAT, 2020). The foreign presence on the island is linked to the possibilities offered by the territory.

The main citizenship present is Romanians (58,480), followed by the Tunisians (20,839) and the Moroccans (15,457). Migrants are young and 9% are still minors. In 2018, 2,408 foreigners were born in Sicily, with a constant growth trend over the last five years in absolute terms, but in relative terms, as a propensity to procreate, foreign families are approaching the lowest rates of Italians: the birth rate in Sicily goes from 12.9 per thousand in 2014 to 12.3 per thousand in 2018.

There are 14.815 new residence permits issued in 2018 in Sicily, a value up by almost 10% compared to the previous year. As many as 56.2% of these new residence permits are issued for asylum or humanitarian reasons, compared to "only" 26.8% at national level.

More than 70% of new residence permits are issued to men, Bangladeshis, Nigerians, and Gambians. There are differences at provincial level. In Trapani, the permits issued to Tunisians prevail, in Catania only, more than 20% of the new residence permits were issued to US citizens residing at the Sigonella air base.

A characteristic that highlights the greater vulnerability of non-EU citizens is the lower share of long stay permits, which allow them to maintain their presence on the territory and have access to welfare protection. These are 46.5% of the total, compared to 62.3% of the national share.

Considering residence permits valid but expiring (not long term) on 1 January 2019, in Sicily, humanitarian or asylum reasons account for 38.0%, family reasons for 32.2% and 24.0% for work.

In 2018, 2.433 foreigners acquired Italian citizenship, the majority of whom were women (1,300 female citizens or 53%). The province with the most "new Italians" is Catania, with 790 new citizens, followed at a distance by Palermo (390) and Ragusa (380). The main reasons for obtaining citizenship are marriage and *jus sanguinis*. The latter case represents 22.1% of acquisitions compared to only 8.6% at national level.

The labour market is increasingly segmented along ethnic lines linked to the condition of the migrant and the structure of opportunities. Positions in the agricultural sector are growing, reaching 27.7 thousand positions, while domestic workers are falling to 19.3 thousand, with a loss of over 11 thousand positions. In 2018, the component of self-employment, at least for the part detected by the INPS observatory limited to artisans, traders, and self-employed agricultural workers, shows a growth.

In 2018, foreigners living in Sicily sent 223.6 million euros abroad, 3.8% of the remittances sent from Italy. Also, 2018 was characterised by the collapse of Chinese remittances; the first position in the regional ranking in 2018 is occupied by Romania (€ 42.4 million), followed by Bangladesh (€ 34.4 million) and Sri Lanka (€ 26.8 million).

Sicily is the sixth region with 6.307 immigrants in reception[2]. Of these, 78 are present in the island's hot spots, 3.316 in reception centres and 2.913 in SIPROIMI.

As in previous years, Sicily is the region where the largest number of unaccompanied foreign minors are present (1,164, or 19.2% of the total), coming from Bangladesh, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Eritrea, Mali, Gambia, Senegal, Nigeria, Somalia, and Tunis.

4. Food for thought

The processes of integration of refugees in the country do not respond to homogeneous logics but are heterogeneous. The reception system has been linked to solving emergencies rather than proposing structured interventions, as shown by the choice of large reception centres.

The socioeconomic inclusion of refugees is a central challenge for integration in order to enhance their knowledge and skills and determine their economic autonomy through access to employment.

Integration can only be achieved when refugees are enabled to realize their potential, to use the same services as the natives and to contribute to the development of the territory.

The integration paths of refugees must take into consideration, on the one hand, objective factors such as the social, economic and cultural conditions of a context and the length of stay of a refugee in the territory, on the other subjective factors such as the individual approach to the society of arrival, the quality of relationships with natives, previous skills, the degree

[2] See the contribution of Giuseppe Platania.

of resilience, the capacity for autonomy and personal development, family history, expectations towards the new country (Mannino, Cuccia, Schiera, 2017). The integration process, involving the two poles, that is the migrants and the arrival community, can take place if the arrival community is willing to insert the migrants through the reception and the provision of social behaviours, such as respect and if the migrant is interested in entering the new context by adapting his lifestyle to the new circumstances.

There are a lot of experiences of labour inclusion that, starting from local characteristics, try to respond to the needs and opportunities of the territory. An in-depth analysis has shown that the support offered to migrants in the early stages has been fundamental for the start of the process of social and occupational inclusion, as you learn the language, acquire the patterns of behaviour, orient yourself among the services and you can begin to plan a possible path of occupational integration.

The knowledge of the Italian language is the basis for inclusion in the local community, for the construction of social relations, to access to services, for the start of training and work pathways.

In 2018, 22,347 were the beneficiaries who attended language courses. 8,081 were in 2018 training promoted by territorial projects, especially in tourism sector (more than 90%), agriculture and fishing (54.1%), crafts (46.0%), industry (42.0%) and personal services (41.1% of projects). 1,758 were the work placements. Another aspect is the accompaniment to independent living because housing is the condition to overcome social exclusion. Among the difficulties emerge the job insecurity and the difficulties to rent a house, for example. The issue is very complex, it must be addressed at an international level, and must refer on the one hand to the issuing of permits and, on the other, to find adequate solutions to allow refugees and their families to live with dignity and security. In pursuing this objective, it is not possible to think of exceptions regarding respect for human rights and the dignity of all migrants.

Migrants living in increasingly divided, polarised societies where individualism is rampant and often the basis for conflict and the climate is increasingly uncertain. Ethnicity, socioeconomic elements, religion mark divisions. Anti-immigrant positions become the expression of populist rhetoric that sees them as competitors in the labour market and as rival recipients of welfare services. Fear of the other, especially of those who arrive and bring different cultures, triggers false representations such as invasion, loss of identity, insecurity, and job loss.

On the other hand, there are many reception initiatives that come from below and are financed by non-profit organisations (Caritas, Community of

Sant'Egidio, Evangelical Churches). One example is the experience of the "Humanitarian Corridors".

While Sicily remains at the centre of the discourse on the reception system for migrants landing on the island, it is also facing difficulties in managing the phenomenon.

References

Andreas P. (2003), "Redrawing the Line. Borders and Security in the 21st Century", *International Security*, 38, 2, pp. 78-111.

Bolzoni M., Gargiulo E., Manocchi M. (2015), "The social consequences of denied access to housing for refugees in urban settings: the case of Turin, Italy", *International Journal of Housing Policy*, 15, 4, pp. 400-417.

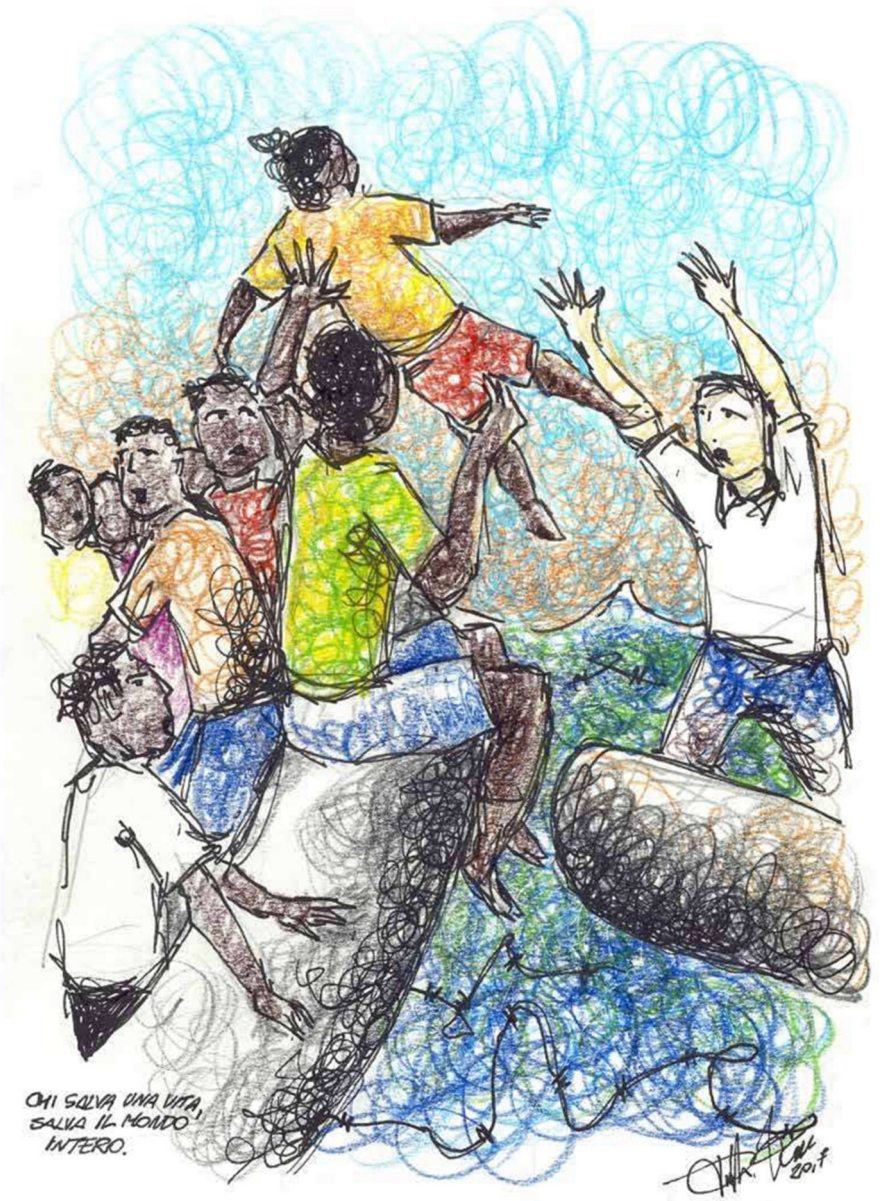
Bruun H., Langlais R. (2003), "On the Embodied Nature of Action", *Acta Sociologica*, 46, 1, pp. 31-49.

IDOS (2020), *Dossier Statistico Immigrazione 2020*, IDOS, Roma.

Mannino G., Cuccia E.M., Schiera M. (2017), "Il sistema di protezione dei richiedenti asilo in Sicilia: integrazione o assistenzialismo?", *Esperienze Sociali*, 101, 2, pp. 63-80.

Mateos O. (2015), "L'Africa subsahariana nel mondo multipolare", *Aggiornamenti Sociali*, 10, pp. 687-697.

Tumminelli G. (2020), "Integrazione dei rifugiati: un percorso complesso", in IDOS, *Dossier Statistico Immigrazione 2020*, IDOS, Roma, pp. 181-184.



Chi salva una vita salva il mondo intero

2. Just in front of Sicily: migration crisis in the Mediterranean Sea

by Iasonas Apostolopoulos

1. The context of the search and rescue operations in the central Mediterranean

It took four years to Europe to forget the Lampedusa tragedy. In October 2013, a boat that departed from Libya sank near the island causing the death of more than 360 people. This resulted in mass outrage and shame, leading to the Italian authorities proclaiming a day of national mourning and reviewing the laws on reception and integration of refugees. In the wake of that deep mourning, Italy launched the "Mare Nostrum" search and rescue operation, saving thousands of lives. After a short time, the European Union suspended "Mare Nostrum" and replaced it by sea border control operations, which led to an increased death rate among migrants in the Mediterranean Sea. The European society reacted again and gave way to the rise of civil search and rescue missions, financed by private donors. The "Mediterranea Saving Humans" mission is the result of that reaction, and it was born as a way to fill a void.

"Mediterranea Saving Humans" it is not a typical humanitarian NGO, but rather a network of different anti-racist groups, social centres, associations, and collectives throughout Italy. We have a rescue ship, called "Mare Jonio" and we are patrolling in the international waters off the Libyan and Maltese coastline, searching for refugee boats in distress, with the objective to rescue them, provide them with medical assistance and transfer them to the nearest place of safety.

Most of the migrant boats start from Libya and in particular west Libya. The distance they have to cross up to Sicily is 260 nautical miles, which is equivalent to 520 km of open sea. With the kind of boats that they travel, many of these people are sailing to their own death and their main chance of

surviving is to be spotted by a ship, either a fishing ship, a commercial ship, or a rescue ship. The boats are usually low-quality rubber dinghies with 50-120 people onboard, while almost no one from the passengers is wearing a lifejacket and almost everyone is a vulnerable case. Most of the migrants that we rescue have been kidnapped, tortured, or raped in Libya. In every rescue, we find exhausted, starving, and injured people including unaccompanied children and pregnant women.

In the past, we used to find boats carrying up to 600 people, big wooden boats with shelves on the inside, in the lower decks, where the people are crowded in to such an extent that one steps on the head of another, some die of asphyxiation and the living ones travel together with the dead for hours. By the maritime law, almost every migrant boat is a distress case due to their vulnerability, the excessive number of passengers and the lack of lifejackets and navigation/communication equipment. Counter to the common belief, distress is not only when the boat is sinking.

On numerous occasions, the migrant boats cannot even make it up to the international waters off the Libyan coastline. We had cases where we learned that boats started from Libya and disappeared in the middle of the journey, they were never seen again. The worst of our experiences was in October 2017, when two boats disappeared just a few miles away from us, resulting to more than 250 deaths in one day. It is shocking how many people die in the central Mediterranean and they don't even count as a number in the figures of the UN. This is because, after a shipwreck, only the dead bodies which are recovered count to the total number for the dead migrants at sea. For the missing people, we are doing an estimation based on the reports and the testimonies of the survivors.

The central Mediterranean is by far the deadliest sea crossing on the planet. Over the past 5 years, more than 15,000 people have lost their lives. Actually, the phrase crossing is misleading. It's a huge vast area with hundreds of nautical miles of open sea.

It cannot be compared with the crossing between Greece and Turkey where the refugee boats can travel all the way up to the Greek islands. Thus, it is important to stress that the vast majority of migrants that arrive in Sicily from Libya are people that have been rescued by a ship. That's why when then the Italian authorities confiscate a rescue ship, when they block "Mare Jonio", "Iuventa" or "Aquarius", they are condemning hundreds of people to certain death.

2. The conditions inside the Libyan camps

"I prefer to die in the sea than go back to Libya". These are the exact words of almost every rescued migrant in the Mediterranean Sea. Libya has become a place of extreme suffering, like a huge concentration camp for migrants.

Over the past 9 years, Libya is under civil war, thus there is no central government, instead there are thousands of different armed groups and militias across the country. In the western part, where the majority of the migrants depart from, there are armed gangs and criminal groups who kidnap arriving migrants and put them in improvised prisons, where they can stay for months in horrifying conditions. Each militia, each gang has its own private prison, its own private holding point, that can be a farm, a warehouse or an abandoned building. Migrants are crammed in huge numbers in these places and are subjected to daily torture, beatings, starvation, and any other kind of abuse in order to extort money from their families back home.

This is the testimony of one of the persons we rescued with Mare Jonio on August 2019, 70 miles off the Libyan coastline.

> In Libya they don't distinguish between minors, women, or children, they torture us all. It's completely lawless, every gang acts the way it wants. They capture us in the middle of the street like wild animals and they hold us in private prisons. Every day you see people die in these centres, every day. From torture, diseases, executions. If you don't give them the money they demand, they cut off your fingers, they electrocute you, they flog you until you faint. Their only aim is to take ransom from our families back home. To hasten payment, every week they gather us in the yard, put us in a line and randomly execute one of us. I have seen tens of people murdered this way. One man, they splashed gas all over him and burned him alive. Some nights we hear cries from girls who are being raped by the guards. Sometimes they even rape the woman in front of her husband as a method of torture[1].

If the migrant's family has no money to send, the migrant is sold as a slave to a Libyan owner who will use him for any kind of "donkey jobs", that's how the Africans call them. In fact, detention centres in Libya are slave houses. Slave owners can go and buy migrants, they can even get a paper as a receipt. The persons that buy the migrants usually force them to work in any kind of hard labor, like construction, farming, or even carrying ammunition and equipment for the ongoing military operations.

During our last rescue in July 2020, all the rescued people told us that they were sold as slaves 3-4 times each and all of them were forced to work

[1] Conversations on the boat 2020; names are not mentioned.

for months under the threat of guns. They tell us that there is no point escaping, because everywhere is the same. In fact, we have testimonies saying that many people prefer to be sold as slaves than stay inside the detention's centres. In slavery, there is more food, more space to move and less torture.

Whoever survives months or even years of a life like this, might then eventually be "granted" a free place on a boat by the slave owner to make the journey to Europe. After they exploit them enough, they put them on a boat and send them to the sea. This enables a constant flow of newcomers to Libya, a constant flow of working hands. Therefore, many people haven't paid to be on the boats, hey are ex-slaves who run away. Humanitarian organizations estimate that there are currently around 700,000 people in Libya living like this. This living hell of Libya can be verified by many institutional reports, including UNHCR, IOM, the UN mission in Libya, providing evidence of all the above-mentioned atrocities.

It is important to emphasize that we are not just rescuing shipwrecked people, we are rescuing fleeing slaves, people that their only way to escape from slavery, torture, and mass rapes in Libya, is through the Mediterranean Sea. That's why, when the mainstream media and some political parties accuse us of being the pull factor of illegal immigration, meaning that the rescue NGO s attract migrants with their presence and encourage them to start their journey from Libya, this is fake news and misleading propaganda.

There is no such thing as pull factor. The only things that exist are the push factors, the horrifying conditions of Libya which force migrants to do anything they can to escape from there. Hence, if we check at the statistics, even when there are no NGO ships operating in the sea, migrants keep departing from Libya. The most recent analysis of ISPI (Institute for International Political Studies) with figures from the Italian Ministry of Interior, proved that the number of departures from Libya doesn't depend on the presence of the NGO ships, the number is almost the same with or without the activities of the rescue ships.

As far as the women are concerned, rape and human trafficking is the rule. In every rescue we detect several victims of rape in Libya and many women learn from our doctors onboard that they are pregnant.

3. The stance of the European Union

European Union not only does not say a word against the Libyan camps, but in fact it is funding them and sees them as part of the European plan against immigration. According to official records, most of the EU funding for the stabilization of Libya goes towards migration containment.

The EU has recognized a coalition of militias in Tripoli, as the legitimate government of Libya (the GNA, "Government of National Accord") and is giving them money to build more detention centres.

At the same time, the EU is funding and training the so-called Libyan coastguard on how to intercept boats and return migrants back to Libya, implementing the Malta agreement. The Malta agreement was signed in February 2017 by all the European member states and includes 200-million-euro funding, technical equipment and patrol vessels to the so-called Libyan coastguard for its anti-immigration service.

In July 2020, the Italian parliament renewed this agreement for a period of 3 more years. Backed by the EU, Italy will continue to aid the Libyan coastguard even though the situation in Libya is still catastrophic even worse than 3 years ago. Over the last 3 years, Italy has "donated" more than 48 patrol vessels to the Libyans, France has given 6 vessels, while hundreds of Libyan coastguards have been trained so far by the EU with a single purpose. To stem migration towards Europe and return refugees back to the slavery and the torture camps of Libya.

In this way, European states have signed a new agreement in their effort to reduce the number of arrivals by sea, like the EU-Turkey deal, but this time not with a state like Turkey, but with private entities, with warlords and militias in Libya who kidnap and sell people on the streets. It is surprising that this agreement with Libya doesn't get the attention it deserves from the international community and press, even though it is much more devastating regarding the violations of human rights compared with the EU-Turkey deal in 2016.

The official statement of the EU is that they train them on how to combat smugglers and carry out rescue operations. The truth is that under the pretext of "rescue" they are turning boats back and they are returning refugees to the hell of the Libyan detention centres with the blessing of Europe. Many of these illegal refoulements are carried out in joint operations with the European assets. The aircrafts of Frontex, the border agency of the EU, are constantly patrolling and searching for migrant boats and when they spot them, they directly call the Libyan coastguard to return them to Libya.

Thus, the EU is actively returning tortured people back to their torturers, it is returning abused women back to their abusers. This is exactly the reason why the EU is accused of crimes against humanity at the International Criminal Court. In May 2019, human rights lawyers issued a 200-pages report to the ICC, urging for the prosecution of the EU for crimes against humanity, the same EU that in 2012, was awarded the peace Nobel prize.

The Libyan coastguard feels so empowered after the agreement with the EU that self-declared a huge SAR zone, 80 miles off the Libyan coastline,

and became much more aggressive towards the civils' society rescue fleet, the NGO ships. There have been many cases of violent interventions committed by the Libyan CG. The most recent one was in April 2020, when the "Alan Kurdi" rescue ship was attacked and threatened with firing shots into the air by Libyan coastguards, while it was trying to rescue tens of migrants from the water.

We have countless testimonies from refugees saying that they have been attacked at sea by Libyan gangs who shot at them or stole their engine and left them drifting to die. Other people testified that the Libyan coastguard arrested them and then sold them as slaves. Amnesty International, as well as other human rights organizations, have released several strong reports saying that the EU-funded Libyan CG is involved in torture and killing of migrants and that the EU is complicit in this kind of crimes.

4. The new challenges under the Covid-19 pandemic

The Coronavirus pandemic has made the situation in the central Mediterranean even more complicated. In April 2020, both Italy and Malta officially closed their ports to every foreign vessel carrying rescued migrants. In fact, Malta and Italy declared their ports unsafe to migrants crossing the Mediterranean considering the Covid-19 pandemic. This is like Italy relating itself to countries at war, or countries where extreme violations of human rights take place, because this is the definition of an unsafe port in the context of the maritime and the human rights law. There is absolutely no legal base or common sense in this statement.

Covid-19 is a global pandemic, it is not only an Italian or Maltese problem, so what will happen if France and Spain seal their ports too and deny shelter to survivors of the sea. Where will the rescued people finally disembark?

It is clear that Covid-19 is just a pretext, an opportunity for European states to pass even more hard-line measures against immigration, an opportunity to withdraw even farther from their responsibilities and obligations regarding refugees and migrants, obligations that derive from the international law.

Refugees are one of the most vulnerable populations in the world. Unfortunately, during the Covid pandemic, the depiction of refugees as a threat to western countries was severely reinforced. In the Greek and Italian media there were speeches and articles associating incoming asylum-seekers with a potential spread of the pandemic, despite scientific evidence showing otherwise.

This narrative led to the closing of the ports, and the closing of the ports has led to a dramatic situation in the sea. Over the past 8 months, more than

500 people have drowned, while around 6,000 were forcibly returned to the war zone of Libya. Many of these refugees have disappeared and it is feared that they were forced to join the militias in the civil war.

Right now, European states are refusing to rescue people in distress even inside their SAR area, depriving them of a port of safety and abandoning them at sea for weeks, like the last case of the "Marsk Etienne" tanker ship, where 27 rescued migrants were stranded onboard that ship for 40 days.

It is beyond any doubt that all the above-mentioned actions consist extreme violations of international law. The obligation of every ship to rescue people in distress is included in three different international conventions, SAR, UNCLOS and SOLAS and it is clearly stated that assistance must be provided to any person in distress at sea, regardless of the nationality, the legal status of the person, or the reason for flight. Moreover, the international law states that the rescue is completed only when the rescued people are transferred onto a place of safety. Not to any place of safety but to the nearest one. Hence, by closing the ports they are hindering rescue operations. It's like having an ambulance carrying patients and blocking its way to the hospital.

Libya has no port of safety, and this has been clearly stated by the EU commission. It consists of a violation of the Geneva convention if fleeing refugees are returned to the warzone of Libya.

The closing of the ports together with the past years of criminalization of sea rescue have brought a new reality in the sea. They have changed the behaviour of the passing vessels. It is known that the central Mediterranean is an area with a lot of marine traffic due to the presence of the offshore oil platforms. Under the current circumstances, whenever commercial ships find migrants on their way, they have two options. Either they will rescue them and head to Europe, but then they might find themselves without a port resulting to financial losses for the shipping company due to the long stand-off, either they will rescue them and return them to Libya which is a warzone and the captain will commit crimes against humanity. As a result, most captains choose to ignore them, and pretend they don't see them.

Every day, we are witnessing large merchant vessels passing by migrant boats refusing to rescue people in distress. Despite us continuous calls on the radio urging them to interfere, often they don't even reply to us, they just sail away and leave the migrants at sea. This is exactly the reason the concept of the "European civil fleet" is now more urgent than ever.

Unfortunately, we have reached the point where the civils' society rescue fleet, the ships managed by initiatives of the European societies, are the only hope that's left for the people in distress at sea. The hope is not just to survive the hundreds of miles of open sea, but also to escape from the hell Libya.

References

Action Aid (2021), *The big wall. An ActionAid investigation into how Italy tried to stop migration from Africa, using EU funds, and how much money it spent*, https://thebigwall.org/en/.

Amnesty International (2020), *Libya: "Between Life And Death": Refugees And Migrants Trapped in Libya's Cycle of Abuse*, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde19/3084/2020/en/.

Branco J., Shatz O. (2019), *EU Migration Policies in the Central Mediterranean and Libya (2014-2019)*, Communication to the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. Pursuant to the Article 15 of the Rome Statute, https://www.academia.edu/39389018/EU_Migraiton_Policies_in_the_Mediterranean_and_Libya_2014_2019_?fbclid=IwAR1DKXcV7uboaAOLiQN1viUpSbLSwh1sMtFeuodSQZ5ugnSZU58E0HebeaM.

FRA (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights) (2019), *NGO ships involved in search and rescue in the Mediterranean and criminal investigations*, https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2019/2019-update-ngo-ships-involved-search-and-rescue-mediterranean-and-criminal.

IOM (2021a), *Libya – Migrant Report 35 (January-February 2021), International Organization for Migration (IOM)*, https://migration.iom.int/reports/libya-%E2%80%94-migrant-report-35-january%E2%80%94february-2021.

IOM (2021b), *Missing Migrants Project*, https://missingmigrants.iom.int/.

ISPI – Institute for International Political Studies (2020), *Migrant arrivals in Italy with or without the presence of the rescue NGO ships*, https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/migrazioni-nel-mediterraneo-tutti-i-numeri-24892.

MEDU – Medici per i Diritti Umani (2020), *The Torture Factory- Report on Human Rights Violations Against Migrants and Refugees in Libya (2014-2020)*, https://mediciperidirittiumani.org/en/29831/.

Moreno-Lax V. (2021), "Protection at Sea and the Denial of Asylum", in C. Costello, M. Foster, J. McAdam (*eds.*), *The Oxford Handbook of International Refugee Law*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, forthcoming, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3623029.

UNHCR (2016), *Detained and Dehumanised. Report On Human Rights Abuses Against Migrants in Libya*, UNHCR and UN Support Mission in Libya, https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/LY/DetainedAndDehumanised_en.pdf.

3 ottobre

3. Asylum seekers' exploitation and resistance. Evidence from Sicily

by Giuseppe Platania

1. Introduction

Abdel recounts the story of when he first arrived in Sicily, "I was in this beautiful prison" referring to the reception centre, where he had lived for more than three years. "A jail curtailing your freedom to go to a place or to another, to be in touch with society. But I say beautiful because it was a beautiful place, one should be very happy to have such a facility, something like a luxury!"[1].

The sumptuous edifice that Abdel describes is the recently closed CARA of Mineo, a former civil USA military camp, later turned into an enormous hub for the reception of asylum seekers during the onset of the Arab Spring. Being a former civil base, it was meant for military personnel families of the close-by USA Sigonella military base, with 140 raw houses, and several other buildings hosting different facilities, from canteens to entertainment halls, and a few football pitches.

In this sense, it was, as Abdel clearly claims, a beautiful place, surrounded by nature, with oranges occupying the visible horizon. It was nonetheless a prison, whose precincts although open were divided by an 8 km steep hilly road from the first urban centre (Mineo), and by at least 40 minutes bus drive from the largest city of the area (Catania). This hindered freedom of movement for asylum seekers who did not have any individual means of transportation to be in touch with, the rest of society.

Had it been a temporary permanence, merely to begin the asylum procedure while waiting to be transferred somewhere else, Abdel and the other guests of the CARA would not have been much concerned. However, they soon realised that their stay at the CARA would be extended for a long time.

[1] Interview with Abdel recorded 14/4/2019.

The commission [to grant international protection] was in Siracusa, doing 3 people per week. There were 3 thousand of us. When we calculated in how many years the last of us can arrive, it was 120 years, almost. Nobody had the intention to die there waiting for the commission, because in the end it's not [enough] to arrive to the commission. So actually, that's how it was, and we went out rioting[2].

The situation described by Abdel dates 2011, when the CARA had just opened. However, in the following years, not much did change. As Peppe Cannella, a psychiatrist of MEDU team (Doctors for Human Rights) allowed to enter within the centre told me, "When we arrived in 2014, the wait for the commission was around 14-15 months, just to be interviewed, then you need to wait for other 4 months to get the results"[3]. According to him, this waiting hampered psychiatric therapies due to the uncertainty felt by the patients.

Between 2018 and 2019, the period of my fieldwork at the CARA, general waiting time for the results was a year and a half. After the first interview, regardless of the result, either asylum seekers who obtained a first rejection or holders of various protections were still entitled to stay in the centre. This means that people could stay in the CARA for up to 4 years.

This specific case is a representative example of how reception has been implemented in the south of Italy echoing studies done in other parts of the EU. The isolated-far away camp has become the ordinary system of reception, most likely introduced due to security concerns, it excludes asylum seekers from active participation to citizenship, while generating an economic geography tying the camp to the workplace. In this article, I explore the concept of camp/reception centre as the main technological tool devised to exclude and alienate asylum seekers from civil society through two case studies located in Sicily: the CARA of Mineo and the CAS in Rosolini. The data exhibited in this article stem from my two-year work as a social operator in Sicily, for a small NGO, Borderline Sicilia monitoring border practices and migrant reception.

While in the first section, I will briefly elucidate how reception works in Italy and how the alienated far-away camp has become the ordinary way to receive migrants, in the second section I will conceptualise the concept of camp by referring to its historical roots and discussing current literature. In the last section, I will show how migrant agency has been capable of shaping the space and obtaining new liberties.

[2] Interview with Abdel recorded 14/4/2019.

[3] Interview with Peppe Cannella, psychiatrist of Medu, recorded 10/4/2019.

2. Italian asylum system

The asylum system has often been compared to an industry producing irregular individuals (De Genova, 2013; Tazzioli, Garelli, 2018). In Italy, the comparison could not be more striking now that the rate of negative response on first instance has reached 81%, after the introduction of harsh new asylum policies abrogating national permits based on humanitarian reasons – beforehand accounting for more than 30% of all protections given between 2015 and 2018. This implies that less than the 20% of people receive a protection within the first year and a half from their arrival (Ministry of Interior, 2020).

Most people, of course, lodge an appeal against the negative decision, but the duration of the trail can even be longer than the wait for the asylum interview. As Paola Ottaviano, a lawyer from Borderline Sicilia, explains the appeal "can take up to 4 years. Most of the time, proceedings get delayed, even to the day before the hearing, and put off for months! Usually, the explanation given is the lack of personnel, which is also true, but if you arrive in Italy being a 20 years old, you can't wait until being 24 to receive a full-fledged document, or to discover that you are going to be irregular from now on"[4].

However, chances to revert the first decision are low; according to Eurostat, only 30% of appeals ended up with a positive outcome in Italy, in 2019 ("News Release", 2020), which means that only in 2019 more than 20 thousand people have definitely become irregular.

Until the definitive definition of one's own juridical status, including all possible appeals against adverse decision on the international protection, asylum seekers are entitled to live in reception centres.

In Italy, there are two main typologies of centres: the CARA/CAS and the SIPROIMI (ex SPRAR). This division mirrors the diehard distinction between "real refugees" and "economic migrants" introduced to distinguish between those who deserve to be in the EU and those who are "illegals" and thus need to be returned (Zetter, 2007). In fact, only the few who have obtained an international protection are entitled to live in a SIPROIMI, a reception centre which provides for a series of services aimed at the social integration of the refugee (school, training, and job opportunities). The others are placed in the "extraordinary reception centres" (CAS) which in spite of the name represent the ordinary way reception is implemented in Italy.

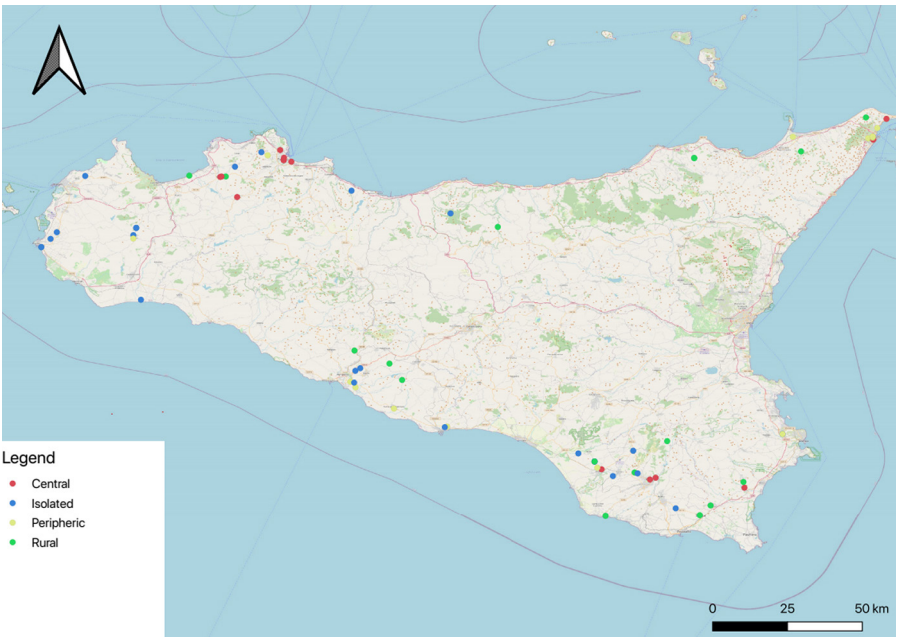
The CAS are usually basic dormitories, which do not provide any sort of services. They are not under direct control of municipalities, which often have protested against the placement of such facilities within their territories.

[4] Interview with Paola Ottaviano, 8/7/2020.

To avoid altercations with mayors and due to "security" concerns (Ambrosini, 2020), Italian prefectures have opted for placing centres outside the urban boundaries, often in rural and abandoned place.

Through freedom of information acts, Borderline Sicilia accessed the location of all the CAS in 2019. I have divided them according to their relative position to the city/town they belong to. Inside the city/town, centres are central; at boundaries of the municipality, they are peripheric; within 5 km outside of the urban boundaries, centres are isolated; more than 5 km from the perimeters of the municipality, centres are in a rural position.

As possible to see, most of the CAS are either in isolated or peripheric position, with very few central CAS. This placement hinders integration and inclusion, makes impossible to connect with the local society, and favours exploitation and illegal labour. This was before the Covid period when many other centres had to open to enforce quarantine.



3. Camp as method. The CARA of Mineo and the CAS in Rosolini

The usage of camps to concentrate people is not a new nor a Nazi invention. They have been introduced during the 19th century in European

colonies and they have soon become a consolidated biopolitical instrument, which includes detention and concentration camps, but also tourist and training camps (van Houtum, Boedeltje, 2009; Minca, 2015). In this sense, despite the different usage and features of historical mass camps, literature points out how the camp has become the main device implementing racialised regimes, alienating the foreign-other from the local (Gregory, 2004; Agier, 2011; Martin, 2015; Pasquetti, 2015; Katz, Martín, Minca, 2018; Martin, Minca, Katz, 2019; Umek, Minca, Šantić, 2019).

Reception centres in Sicily do not differ from historical mass camps. They perform an exclusion of the asylum seeker from civil society on two different levels: spatial and temporal. While the former exclusion is attained through the displacement of the camp, the alienated labour places, and the impossibility of locally integrating, the latter occurs through bureaucracy and policies of exclusion at the municipal level (Ambrosini, 2013): asylum seekers are absorbed in the dilated temporality of asylum, made of waiting times, lines and slow access to services, while living the temporality of the camp, made of long and slow routes to reach the labour place or urban centres, the impossibility of changing the camp routine (time of meals, activities, school).

Both the centres here analysed are quite far from the closest urban centre. While the CARA of Mineo was 8 km away from Mineo, divided by a steep hilly road, hard to walk and even harder to cycle, the CAS of Rosolini is also located outside the urban boundaries, within a fast state road without any kind of pedestrian way. Moreover, these are small towns that are in the process of emptying out, abandoned by the youth which preferred to move to bigger cities.

This double exclusion generates an exceptional place where a different legal, social, and economic regime is implemented. For this reason, Agamben, who defines the camp as the "nomos of the century" (Agamben, 1995, p. 166) considers the camp as a state of exception, dehumanising the subjects living inside, which are reduced to bare life (Agamben, 2005). A life deprived of its political rights. This interpretation clearly stems from Foucault's conception of panopticon, as the etymology suggests, a detention facility overseeing everything and everyone.

Yet, comparing asylum centres to panopticon structures is misleading for at least two reasons. Firstly, the securitisation enforced in the camps does not oversee everything, as will be shown in the next section, there are many ways in which asylum seekers bypass the centre's control; secondly and consequently, migrants are not merely reduced to bare life, which would amount to claim that asylum seekers as soon as they are placed in a reception centre lose their agency and cannot resist the dehumanisation process.

Moreover, as Mezzadra and Nielson claim (2013), conceiving the camp as a state of exception implies a specific focus on the absence of legal regulation. However, in this way, the issue of the exploitation of labour is completely overlooked. When the CARA was open, while the declared aim was not to benefit from cheap migrant labour force, the official motivation was, that the centre would have boosted the economically depressed situation of the region through the creation of jobs (cleaning, food catering, security, etc.) (Tozzi, 2013; Bert *et al.*, 2014). In this way, while the exploitation of migrant labour could be considered a byproduct of the location of the CARA, its positioning was nonetheless influenced by economic concerns.

For this reason, Papadopoulos and Tsianos (2008, p. 197) conclude that the "camps represent less the paradigmatic incarceration milieu in the age of authoritarian neoliberalism than the spatialised attempt to temporarily control movement, i.e., to administer traffic routes; to render regulated mobility productive".

In this way the camp produces "differential inclusion" (De Genova, 2002; Mezzadra, Neilson, 2013; De Genova, 2017), namely how the exclusion from active citizenship marks the inclusion within illegal labour.

However, despite showing migrant strategies to subvert the control of the centres and to negotiate their status, Papadopoulos and Tsianos still conceive the production of movement as originally orchestrated by the camp, which implies that migrant agency is always a response against the repressive actions enforced in the camps. This implies believing that there is a central plan tailored to exploit migrant labour. Yet, we cannot assume that the original intent was to administrate movements and channel it towards illegal labour, but to earn from migrant reception (paid 30 euros per person per day) and boost economy through the reception related jobs. In this sense, the seclusion of centres is likely due to security concerns rather than a purposed intention to generate illegal labour.

Yet despite the reasons why these centres were located so far-off the urban environments, and despite the securitisation put into practice within the camps, movements have multiplied, often in original ways.

4. The production of movement

4.1. Riots and securitisation

The production of movements differs in the camps analysed here, which show two different possibilities of achieving movements.

In the CARA of Mineo, the possibility of movement was possible due to the porosity of securitisation protocols: despite of the presence of soldiers

and a police station within the centres, the recruitment of illegal labour and phenomena of forced prostitution happened before the eyes of the security. As the lack of human? Security allows exploitative movements, it also generates the possibility of escaping and concocting strategies to overcome the bare conditions of the camps.

While this example resembles the theory expressed by Papadopoulos and Tsianos since the porosity of security could have been purposefully designed to allow the exploitation of migrants and thus their counteractions would merely be a byproduct of the lack of securitisation, in Rosolini the reverse occurred. There, asylum seekers were not able to go out without authorisation. However, authorisation was given only for formal or institutional reasons (school, etc.) and never for personal or frivolous ones. Clearly, the aim was to completely contain movement and avoid migrant strolling in the city centre. As David recounts:

> The first time when we arrived, the manager of the camp told us we cannot go out, we cannot do anything, we cannot walk in the road, we are asking "are we slaves?" even in Libya sometimes we do walk in the road[5].

Only after several protests and riots, the manager allowed the guests to go out without authorisation.

Riots in both Rosolini and Mineo were important to make their voice heard by the manager and the media. In the CARA after the first riot described by Abdel in the introduction, one commission to assess international protection, was introduced within the CARA. Other protests criticising the conditions of the camp followed. As Alfonso, an activist from the anti-racist network in Catania, told me:

> Protests have kept on happening, in 2014. We had the biggest protest: more than a thousand migrants blocked the state road and arrived to Palagonia, where they submitted to the mayor a platform with their requests, making a super civil popular assembly, basically. After this case the central element was to avoid migrant self-organisation to avoid protests[6].

Rioting and self-organisation seem fundamental in opening a space for agency. In both the examples, participatory politics had a key role in advancing the requests of the asylum seekers and obtaining new freedoms.

[5] Interview with David recorded 10/9/2020.

[6] Interview with Alfonso Di Stefano recorded 12/3/2019.

4.2. Means of Transportation

Movement needs also means of transportation, especially in places far away from urban centres and without any public system of transportation.

In the CARA of Mineo, in 2016 more than 4 thousand people had to reach daily Catania, which was 40 minutes driving from the centre. For this reason, former migrants who had lived in the centre decided to start an informal company of taxies doing the route CARA-Catania every 15 minutes for a cost of 5 euros each way. As Efi tells me, the lack of means of transportation was a huge problem for the CARA and fortunately, "fellow African people that come here, they would give help, to take you to Catania. I f they were not giving help to us, I wouldn't be able to go to the city. No. This people that come here, they help us, but I know that there is no other means for us to go to the city"[7].

Landry shares the same opinion:

> I'll tell the truth, I know this transportation is abusive, but if this wasn't here, how can we go to all the places we have to go? For us it's okay since we can go to Catania to buy stuff, see friends, we don't have to stay in a place like a prison[8].

While of course this is the way some people decided to benefit from the situation and earn some money, it shows how despite the attempted effort to contain movement, migrants were able to self-organise and create effective means of transportation, at a fair price. The introduction of means of transportation compensated for the lack of official services, implementing a sort of welfare coming from below (Belloni, 2016).

In Rosolini, there was no need for a taxi service since distances were not as long as in Mineo. Here the possibility of having a bicycle was already revolutionary. While at the beginning, the manager was not agreeing and even seizing bikes, he had to face the protests organised by migrants. As David tells me: "For me the bicycle is important because you know where we are living is out of town and we need it to find work"[9].

Having a bike marks the difference between staying at home the entire day or going out to earn some money.

[7] Interview with Efi, recorded 13/3/2019.

[8] Interview with Landry recorded 13/3/2019.

[9] Interview with David recorded 10/9/2020.

4.4. Transforming the camps

Given the amount of people living in the CARA and the huge dimensions of the premises, here asylum seekers have found many other ways to shape the space. Through the taxies, many asylum seekers started bringing inside the camps objects to sell. In few months, an open-air market spread out in all the internal roads of the CARA. It was a mixture of a typical European flea market, with second-hand clothes, old and more recent technologies, and some sort of furniture, and a classic African bazar, with colourful textiles, goods hanging on ropes or laying down on a carpet.

Paradoxically, the market started through cigarettes. As Eric told me:

They said [the staff of the centre] they need to give us 115 euros per month. But they only give us cigarettes; therefore, we are forced to start a business between us migrants, you sell the cigarettes for about 45 euros, but they say it is 115 euros[10].

After selling illegally the cigarettes, the best you could do with 45 euros was to reinvest them in goods that would have had a higher value in the CARA.

[10] Interview with Eric recorded 12/3/2019.

As possible to see, CARA itself was transformed into a vibrant city with means of transportation, markets. Asylum seekers were able to turn the camp into something different from the alienated space it was initially.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, I have shown how reception centres have become biopolitical instruments generating a racialized and differentiated regime, which alienates asylum seekers from the local population. Here, I have analysed two camps: The CARA of Mineo and a CAS in Rosolini as exemplifying the situation in Sicily. In the first section I have described the way asylum system has been implemented in Italy, by looking at the typologies of reception centres and how they mirror propagandistic division between asylum seekers. I have also shown how most reception centres for "economic migrants" are either in isolated or rural position within the Sicilian territory.

In the second section, I have elucidated the concept of mass camp, starting from its historical roots to define the new modern conception of camp. The centre performs a temporal and spatial movement of exclusion in the effort to contain movements and possibly making it productive.

In the last section, some evidence from my fieldwork shows how migrant agency has been capable of shaping the space in spite of the attempted effort to contain the movement, generating a series of services that form a sort of welfare from below.

References

Agamben G. (1998), *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, Stanford University Press, Stanford (CA).

Agier M. (2011), *Managing the Undesirables: Refugee Camps and Humanitarian Government*, Polity, Cambridge (UK).

Agmeben G. (2005), *State of Exception, translated by Kevin Attell*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago (IL), http://site.ebrary.com/id/10395644.

Ambrosini M. (2013), "'We Are against a Multi-Ethnic Society': Policies of Exclusion at the Urban Level in Italy", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 36, 1, pp. 136-155.

Ambrosini M. (2020), "The Urban Governance of Asylum as a 'Battleground': Policies of Exclusion and Efforts of Inclusion in Italian Towns", *Geographical Review*, March, pp. 1-19.

Belloni M. (2016), "Learning How to Squat: Cooperation and Conflict between Refugees and Natives in Rome", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 29, 4, pp. 506-527.

Bert F., Gualano M.R., Di Stanislao F., Scondotto S., Restivo V., Siliquini R., Study group, Tozzi Q., Draghi E., Fulvi S. (2014), "The Reorganization of Reception Centers for Asylum-Seekers in Sicily: The Validation of the New Italian Guidelines for Health Impact Assessment: Fabrizio Bert", *European Journal of Public Health*, 24, suppl. 2, October, cku162-012, https://doi.org/10.1093/eurpub/cku162.012.

De Genova N. (2002), "Migrant 'Illegality' and Deportability in Everyday Life", *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 31, 1, pp. 419-447.

De Genova N. (2013), "Spectacles of Migrant 'Illegality': The Scene of Exclusion, the Obscene of Inclusion", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 36, 7, pp. 1180-1198.

De Genova N. (2017), *The Borders of "Europe": Autonomy of Migration, Tactics of Bordering*, Duke University Press, Durham-London.

Eurostat (2020), *"News Release" 2020*, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/10774018/3-27042020-AP-EN.pdf/b8a85589-ab49-fdef-c8c0-b06c0f3db5e6.

Gregory D. (2004), *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq*, Blackwell, Malden.

Houtum H. van, Freerk B. (2009), "Europe's Shame: Death at the Borders of the EU", *Antipode*, 41, 2, pp. 226-230.

Katz I., Martín D., Minca C. (2018), *Camps Revisited: Multifaceted Spatialities of a Modern Political Technology. Geopolitical Bodies, Material Worlds*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, London.

Martin D. (2015), "From Spaces of Exception to `campscapes': Palestinian Refugee Camps and Informal Settlements in Beirut", *Political Geography*, 44, pp. 9-18.

Martin D., Minca C., Katz I. (2019), "Rethinking the Camp: On Spatial Technologies of Power and Resistance", *Progress in Human Geography*, June, 030913251985670.

Mezzadra S., Neilson B. (2013), *Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labor*, Duke University Press, Durham.

Minca C. (2015), "Geographies of the Camp", *Political Geography*, 49, November, pp. 74-83.

Papadopoulos D., Stephenson N., Tsianos V. (2008), *Escape Routes: Control and Subversion in the 21st Century*, Pluto Press, London, http://orca.cf.ac.uk/29395/.

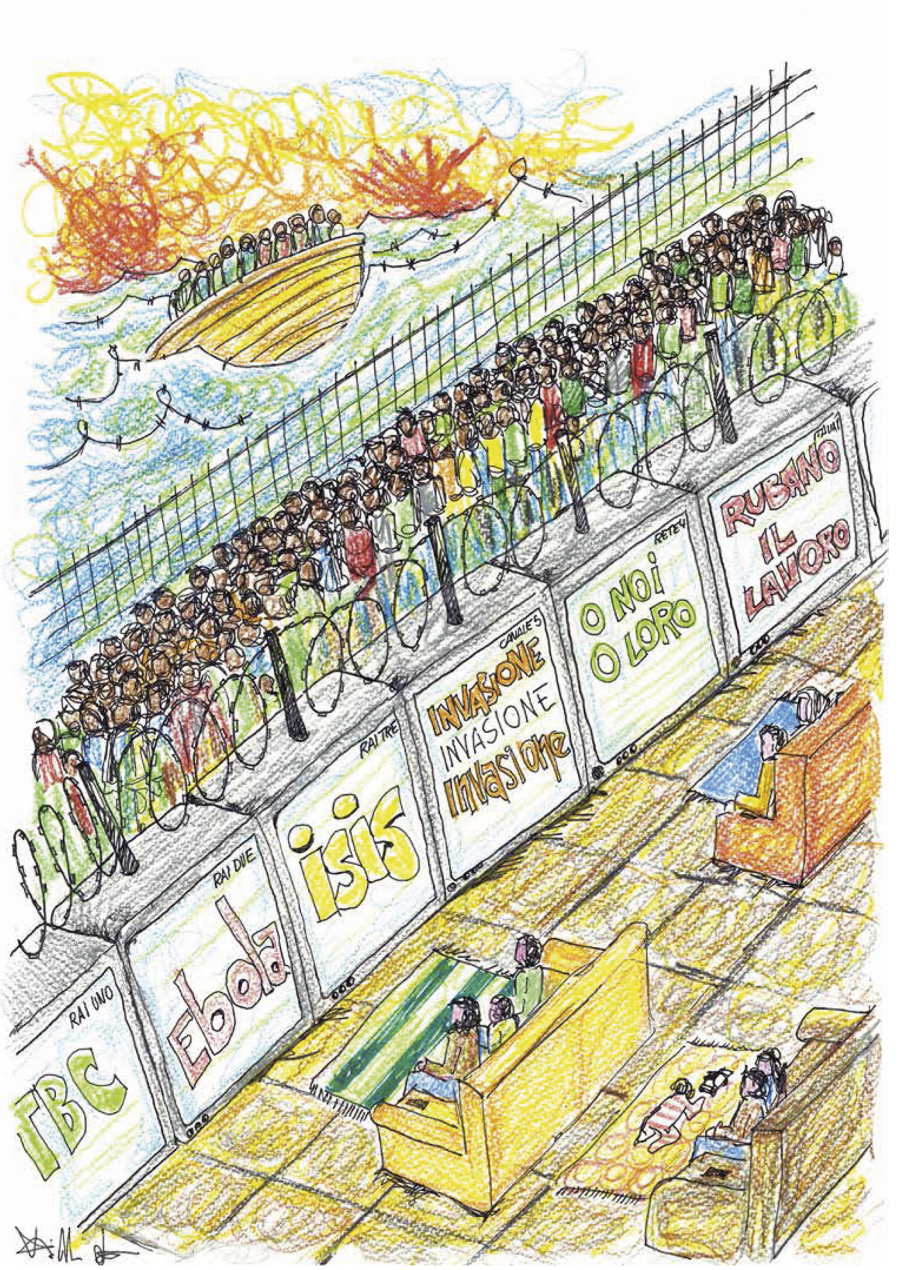
Pasquetti S. (2015), "Negotiating Control: Camps, Cities and Political Life", *City*, 19, 5, pp. 702-713.

Tazzioli M., Garelli G. (2018), "Containment beyond Detention: The Hotspot System and Disrupted Migration Movements across Europe", *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 26, pp. 1009-1027.

Tozzi E. (2013), "Il Centro di accoglienza richiedenti asilo di Mineo: il simbolo di un fallimento", *Scienza e Pace*, 4, p. 9.

Umek D., Minca C., Šantić D. (2019), "The Refugee Camp as Geopolitics: The Case of Preševo (Serbia)", in M. Paradiso (*ed.*), *Mediterranean Mobilities*, Springer International Publishing, Cham, pp. 37-53.

Zetter R. (2007), "More Labels, Fewer Refugees: Remaking the Refugee Label in an Era of Globalization", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 20, 2, pp. 172-192, https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fem011.



Noi e loro

4. Migrants in Italian spectacular journalism. Fuel for racism?

by Francesca Rizzuto

The role played by newsmedia in the perception of the *Other* is central in a democracy because the *foreigner-enemy frame* and the description of the migratory phenomenon as a menace offered by journalism may contribute to the spread of racism and influence migration policies in order to ensure *safety*. In this paper I will underline the presence of some linguistic strategies used by Italian newsmedia to present migrants as a *danger* and will put them in connection with infotainment logic and the new flow of direct digital communication between individuals and leaders. From 90s Italian newsmedia have privileged a softer and recreational use of news, imposed by the success of the market model in journalism (Schudson, 2003; Rizzuto, 2018), which has weakened the traditional supremacy of literary and political journalism.

News has always a narrative scheme with many different segments, so that it is not possible for the viewers to separate reality from media re-construction of reality (Postman, 1985; Thomas, 1990) and even the most violent crimes or tragedies are given an entertaining slant (Polesana, 2010). In a context in which the boundary between true and plausible has become opaque, the ambiguous connection between the logic of *emotainment* (Santos, 2009) and the duty of telling true stories calls for a reflection on many crucial journalistic "issues": the new role of the viewer, who has become both a news-producer and a performer and the difficulty of controlling the content as well as the sources of all informative pills. In Italy, the spectacle of news about crime and tragedy has recently become very successful: using reality as a simple platform on which journalists build intriguing and exciting info-entertainment programs, news is interpreted above all emotionally so that the main task of journalism is to provide exciting stories (Codeluppi, 2013; Rizzuto, 2020). Consequently, to offer emotionally engaging narratives, newsmaking favours special effects, excess of horrors, drama and

violence, preferring a suggestive content than a more relevant but "boring" issue (Thussu, 2007). In this perspective, Italian newscoverage of migrants perfectly follows the logic of infotainment and journalists don't help the rational participation of the viewers, while aiming only at their superficial and disengaged reaction to the "spectacle of the sufferings" presented (Boltansky, 1993).

Wieworka (2000) highlighted two opposing positions in the scientific debate on the role of the media in the formation and spread of racism: on the one hand, the perspective according to which the media have only the ability to *reproduce* racism, whose origin, therefore, must be found elsewhere. On the other hand, scholars who directly connect the recent increase of racial prejudices to the pervasive presence of contemporary infotainment, with its dramatizing and emotional logic.

In the first case newsmedia would be only mirrors of a racist society while, on the contrary, the media power perspective perpetuates prejudices by daily reinforcing stereotypes in biased reporting.

Therefore, the real power of journalism would be the increasing cognitive dependence of individuals on media resources: journalists produce narratives that become pervasive and are discussed by citizens even if they are biased. In order to understand the relationship between racism and the media, therefore, it is necessary to overcome a too simplistic perspective since journalism *tells facts* but it is not a simple transfer from the event to the word: it is a real "transformation" (Sorrentino, 2008), because newsmaking is a "routinized professional process", which produces stories and provides an interpretative framework to the receivers (Zelizer, 2004).

The journalist selects and defines the content, extrapolates a segment of reality, which is recontextualized in the format of a narrative product with some characters at its centre; moreover, he chooses an observation point and offers an interpretation. Many studies underlined that Italian newsmedia offer a banal and partial account of events involving migrants, in which stereotypes emerge and prejudices are confirmed (Mansoubi, 1990; Binotto, Martino, 2004; Corte, 2006; Cotesta, 2009; Ireton, Posetti, 2018; Rizzuto. 2019): infotainment and its excesses, as well as false news (Riva, 2018), could be considered as responsible for a deep trivialization of the contents in Italian public debate because of the dominance of dramatic and conflicting elements. According to the spectacular logic events like crimes committed by foreigners or the shipwrecks in the Mediterranean Sea are very newsworthy because they offer personal tragedies, with tears or shouted denunciation, and the emotional and visual dimension are central. Therefore, infotainment news values might represent a concrete risk for those who fear a bigger

spread of racism, because the spectacular logic tends to encourage racist attitudes by giving, for example, weight and visibility to those racist criminals responsible for cruel actions, without a rational and argumentative analysis of the migratory phenomenon. Scholars have highlighted a tendency towards a spectacular journalistic construction of foreigners based on commonplaces, which erase the differences among individuals, through a "depersonalizing process", useful to confirm prejudices on some specific ethnic groups. As Cotesta argued, the "Other" is usually presented as a cause of problems:

> It is an image based on the contrast between Us/Them and on the traits of a positive characterization for us and a negative characterization for them, because "us" implies order, rationality, solidarity; "them", on the contrary, refers to privileges disorder, irrationality, need, thus legitimizing our superiority and their inferiority (Cotesta, 2002, p. 281).

Italian journalists tend to focus more on migrants' crimes rather than presenting stories of successful integration: as a matter of fact, there is a great discrepancy between the media representation of migrants and official statistics so that journalists build a vicious circuit, in which the situation is often described in terms of emergency, both as a crisis and as a threat to Italian society (Binotto, Bruno, Lai, 2018).

The presence of migrants is covered above all as a criminal issue, since they provoke conflicts or disorders while, on the contrary, the natives appear in the newspapers only if they involved in protest actions or, more often, as victims. One of the most dangerous strategies used in Italian newscoverage of migrants is the frequent use of a metaphorical and hyperbolic language to deform facts like literary or religious metaphors (*exodus* or *odyssey*), an epic style or reference to the far west as well as derisory lexical choices. A *westernizing* vision of the migrants is also present, evident in many references to clothing, religious habits, or physical habits, which contribute to socially building the image of *Others* as too different (Van Dijk, 1987; Dal Lago, 2004). The descriptions often use a physiognomic repertoire or somatic indicators, which help create deep group boundaries, so that a category of people is "created" simply by naming it (*the Maghrebi*) or attributing the adjective of colour (Blacks) as a "natural" indicator (Surette, 2007). The first consequence is that differences among foreigners are reduced, while those with the natives are maximized. Consequently, newsmedia become responsible for the cultivation of some racist equations like, for example, Albanian = criminal, Romanian = thief, Arab = terrorist (Cotesta, 2009). Moreover, through a strategy of "inferiorization", visible in terms as *poor* or *desperate*, a condition of marginality and inferiority is continually reaffirmed and the image of

the Other-migrant is connected to the dimension of irregularity, seen simply in terms of an administrative or a police problem (Mazzara, 1998; Dal Lago, 2008; Colombo, 2020). In this perspective the word "extra-comunitarian," which focuses on the fact that migrants are "outside" of the European/accepted world, is another way used to present migrants as "different" from Italian citizens, supporting the social construction of a category of individuals, non-EU citizens (Sibhatu, 2004): *extra* indicates, by exclusion, non-belonging to the new European homeland but it is ambiguously used by newsmedia only to refer to citizens from some African or Asian countries and not, as the word should indicate, to all citizens from all non-European states (therefore also Americans, Japanese, Australians). Since 2015, the Pavia Observatory has collaborated with the Association Carta di Roma for the creation of an annual report on the media representation of the migratory phenomenon. Through data and case studies, the main trends of the story of a year in which immigration was at the center of the institutional and political debate are traced: from the constant internal and international comparison on the management of migration flows, to the wave of populism that it crosses across Europe by resorting to xenophobic arguments and hate speech. Moreover, these reports reinvigorated public discussion about the relationship among newscoverage and racism as well as the growth of awareness of the role of social media in the dissemination of information on sensitive issues such as immigration. Reading the diachronic analysis presented in the different editions of the Report (from 2015 to 2020) it is useful to focus both on the list of the symbolic words of each year, which have a significantly high relative recurrence, and the crisis frames outlined by the lexicon can be updated. The most frequent element of Italian information on the migratory phenomenon from 2013 to today appears that of the *permanent emergency*: the words used outline a frame of "infinite crisis", endemic, which changes over time and spreads from the news to the political debate, within Italy and between European institutions and beyond. In this flow, "Lampedusa", a place of hospitality and tolerance but also of emergency and humanitarian tragedy, was the symbolic word of 2013, in a setting of humanitarian crisis. "Mare Nostrum", identifying the military and humanitarian rescue operation at sea of migrants instituted by the Italian government, was the symbolic word of 2014, in a context of endless crisis, due to the number of arrivals, the difficulties of containment and the epoch-making lexicon that marks the story. In 2015, the symbolic word was "Europe", due to the evidence of the supranational dimension of the migration issue, in a context of political crisis, due to the predominant political thematization of the phenomenon. The "walls", real and symbolic raised at the borders and in the heart of Europe, were the sym-

bolic term of 2016, in a setting that is rampant in the systemic crisis of the European Union, undermining its founding principles. The symbolic word of 2017 was "NGO", with the genesis of suspicion on humanitarian workers and a setting that turns into a rejection crisis, fueled by intolerance and brutal cases of crime that feed the news. In 2018, the year of parliamentary elections, the symbolic word was "Salvini", the absolute protagonist of the titles, in a setting that changes into a crisis of values, due to the exacerbation of political debate. In 2019, the leader of the Lega was joined as a symbolic word by the humanitarian activist "Carola" (Rackete), main antagonist of a narrative frame with a divisive crisis, where the polarization of positions is widening. Recently, the report focused on the new symbolic word of 2020 which is unsurprisingly "virus", in a setting that has been transformed by many parts into a health crisis, due to the alleged transport and spread of the infection (Milazzo, 2020, p. 20). In discontinuity with the past years, in the 2020 survey, the frame of *crime* disappears as an autonomous semantic core, a conceptual sphere that has proposed the binomial immigration-crime, fueling the sense of insecurity of Italians. The crime frame, however, has been partially replaced by another adverse frame, that of the health alert for Covid-19 and the risk of spreading the infection due to the arrival of new migrants so that the term "clandestine", legally wrong, is still widely used in the headlines of Italian newspapers (ivi, p. 21). In the year of the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, events and statements concerning immigration and its protagonists maintain newsworthiness for Italian media: 834 news on the front pages of the 6 national newspapers were analyzed over time, with a 34% reduction compared to 2019. The two newspapers that have dedicated the most headlines to the immigration issue in the 2015-2020 period are *Avvenire* (a Catholic newspaper) and *Il Giornale* (a right politically oriented newspaper) that confirm, with divergent perspectives, a strong interest in the topic. In 2020, *Avvenire* remains the newspaper with the biggest number of news (291), followed by *La Stampa* (129), *la Repubblica* (117), *Il Giornale* (116), *Corriere della Sera* (91) and *Il Fatto Quotidiano* (90). The trend of the daily visibility of the migratory phenomenon alternates, due to the health emergency, peaks of attention to phases of absence from the front pages (ivi, pp. 16 et passim). As a matter of fact, during 2020, attention to the topic of migration was discontinuous, higher in the summer months – July, August, and September – and more contained in the months of the health emergency.

3. Conclusions

In Italian newsmedia, migration is generally associated to social problems, conflicts, cultural threats and crime is too often connected to behaviours specific to certain ethnic and cultural differences, which are described to highlight a substantial inferiority. In conclusion, we can assert that the representations of Other-migrants offered by Italian journalists are more and more distorted and dramatized, producing relevant and dangerous effects on public opinion. In the contemporary cognitive dependence on media narratives, the media build normality, define acceptable behaviours and may reinforce the cognitive dimensions of racism. There is no doubt that media encourage prejudices and create an atmosphere of general intolerance towards migrants-others, because individuals continually use media images to legitimize their attitudes and behaviours: the media ambiguous tendency to describe migrants as criminals has made them objects of many political controversies. As a consequence, laws about migrations as well as policies for a repression of migrants criminal activities have been at the centre of recent electoral campaigns in 2018, where parties like Lega or Fratelli d'Italia, who have used spectacular crimes committed by migrants to promote punitive intervention, received millions of votes. However, especially in conflict situations, a simplistic explanation directly connecting media content with racist attitudes may become misleading, since journalism always intervenes and acts with many other political, cultural, social factors.

References

Binotto M., Bruno M., Lai V. (a cura di) (2018), *Tracciare confini. L'immigrazione nei media italiani*, FrancoAngeli, Milano.

Binotto M., Martino V. (*eds.*) (2004), *Fuoriluogo. L'immigrazione e i media italiani*, Pellegrini, Cosenza.

Boltanski L. (1993), *La soufflance a distance*, Editions Metailie, Paris.

Codeluppi V. (2013), *L'era dello schermo. Convivere con l'invadenza mediatica*, FrancoAngeli, Milano.

Colombo E. (2020), *Sociologia delle relazioni interculturali*, Carocci, Roma.

Corte M. (2006), *Stranieri e mass media. Stampa, immigrazione e pedagogia interculturale*, CEDAM, Padova.

Cotesta V. (2002), *Lo straniero. Pluralismo culturale e immagini dell'altro nella società globale*, Laterza, Roma-Bari.

Cotesta V. (2009), *Sociologia dei conflitti etnici. Razzismo, immigrazione e società multiculturale*, Laterza, Roma-Bari.

Dal Lago A. (2004), *Non-persone. L'esclusione dei migranti in una società globale*, Feltrinelli, Milano.
Dal Lago A. (2008), *L'esclusione dei migranti in una società globale*, Feltrinelli, Milano.
Hallin D., Mancini P. (2004), *Modelli di giornalismo*, Laterza, Roma-Bari.
Ireton C., Posetti J. (*eds.*) (2018), *Journalism, "Fake News" & Disinformation*, Unesco, Paris.
Mansoubi M. (1990), *Noi, stranieri d'Italia. Immigrazione e media*, Fazzi, Lucca.
Mazzara B. (1998), "Stampa e migrazione: due casi a confronto", in M. Delle Donne, *Relazioni etniche. Stereotipi e pregiudizi*, EDUP, Roma.
Milazzo G. (a cura di) (2020), *Notizie di transito. VIII Rapporto*, Carta di Roma e Osservatorio di Pavia, available at: https://www.cartadiroma.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Notizie-di-transito.pdf.
Polesana M.A. (2010), *Criminality show*, Carocci, Roma.
Postman N. (1985), *Amusing Ourselves to Death. Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*, Penguin, New York.
Riva G. (2018), *Fake news*, il Mulino, Bologna.
Rizzuto F. (2018), *La società dell'orrore*, Pisa University Press, Pisa.
Rizzuto F. (2019),"Reality versus Emotions in Italian journalism", *Soft Power, Revista euroamericana de teoria historia de la politica y del derecho*, 6, pp. 229-245.
Rizzuto F., Cappello G. (2020), "Journalism and fake news in the Covid-19 era. Perspectives for media education in Italy", *Media Education*, 11-12, pp. 3-13.
Santos J. (2009), *Daring to feel. Violence, the Newsmedia and their Emotions*, New York, Lanham.
Schudson M. (2003), *The Sociology of News*, Norton & Company, New York.
Sibhatu R. (2004), *Il cittadino che non c'è. L'immigrazione nei media italiani*, EDUP, Roma.
Surette R. (2007), *Media, Crime and Criminal Justice. Images, realities and policies*, T. Wadsworth, Belmont.
Thomas B. (1990), *Finding Truth in the Age of Infotainment*, Congressional Quaterly, Washington.
Thussu D.K. (2007), *News as Entertainment: The Rise of Global Infotainment*, Sage, London.
Van Dijk T.A. (1987), *Communicating Racism: Ethnic Prejudice in Thought and Talk*, Sage, London.
Wieworka M. (2000), *Il razzismo*, Laterza, Roma-Bari.
Zelizer B. (2004), *Taking journalism seriously*, Sage, London.

È il capitalismo bellezza

 ISBN 9788835134329

5. Human smuggling and human trafficking. A normative and criminological outline

by Riccardo Ercole Omodei

1. Introduction

Human Smuggling (from now on HS) and Human Trafficking (HT) are both criminal phenomena that characterize our modern and interconnected world. On one hand, the need to address increasing migration flows pushed the States to criminalize and punish HS. On the other, the high demand of illicit markets (such as prostitution, forced labour, human organs, etc.) fosters the repugnant sale of human beings. Against these illicit services stands the multilevel legal order (International, European, and national legislations) which provides several and detailed criminal and procedural provisions. The action of the law makers is so plenty of zeal to show an uncommon level of homogeneity and strength. Nevertheless, the issues related to the matter are manifold and they mainly concern the compatibility with the criminal law principles.

Among the several issues I will focus here on one specific topic related to the controversial role of the migrant in the criminal law system and to the existing and significant gap between the criminological and the normative dimension of the two criminal phenomena. As a matter of fact, by the normative point of view, HS and HT are totally different events, therefore our criminal legal orders treat in two different ways the migrant and the trafficked person. If the latter is considered a victim, the migrant is treated as the object of the crime or even as perpetrator of the offence.

According to the multilevel legal system, HS and HT are criminal provisions characterized by different *wrongdoings*[1], because they affect different interests. The smuggling of migrants causes a harm to the right of the State

[1] For the notion of *wrongdoing* see Fletcher (1998), p. 77-ff.

to control the borders whereas trafficking of human beings is a direct threat to the person and his/her dignity. Moreover, usually the HS is conceived by law as an act that requires the consent of the migrant, in opposition to the HT where the person trafficked is the victim and his/her consent is absent or vitiated.

Summarizing, if human smuggling is punished just as a service of transportation from one State to another, trafficking is criminalized to prevent the diffusion of the modern forms of slavery.

This strict separation that informs the normative dimension sometimes is not useful in the counteraction on the phenomena. The criminological dimension suggests that, even if the two conducts are different also at this level, far more frequently than the legal systems can think they overlap in a tangled-up situation in which it is not easy to separate them.

In the following pages, I will try to show the extent of this gap and its consequences. Firstly, I will focus on the normative approach on HS and HT. Secondly, I will give a brief criminal outline of the two phenomena. Finally, I will try to underline the inadequacy of the dominating normative point of view.

2. The normative approach on human smuggling

I get started with the supranational law on HS that shows two different facets. On one side, we have the definition provided by the Additional protocol on human smuggling to the 2000 UN Convention on organized crime (also known as Convention of Palermo). The main purpose of this act is to prosecute and punish the international criminal organizations and their manifold activities, such as also the human smuggling. Thus, the criminal phenomenon is faced to counteract the criminal associations.

Different is the approach of the European Union law. According to the latter, HS is an act that has to be punished because it affects the common market and the common area of free movement of the European citizens, therefore the criminal offence is focused on the wrongness of the irregular migration.

The two different approaches obviously have consequences on the structure of the criminal provisions.

2.1. The point of view of the additional Protocol to the Convention of Palermo

As said, the UN Protocol on smuggling criminalizes the HS for countering the criminal organizations and, in doing so, it takes into account the rights of the migrants, as provided for by the Article 2[2]. The choice to deal with this criminal phenomenon by this point of view has clear consequences on the criminal provision of HS. In fact, this is structured around the idea of the exploitation of the migrant's vulnerability. Thus, the Protocol on smuggling does not punish every kind of HS but only the one realized in order to obtain a *financial or other material benefit*[3]. It is evident that, according to the UN Protocol, the migrant is not the subject of the criminal offence, but it is a victim of the crime. By making the material benefit a definitional element of the crime, the UN law maker decided to shape the wrongdoing of the offence in terms of exploitation, punishing the commodification of the human beings (Gallagher, David, 2014; Militello, Spena, 2018; Mitsilegas, 2018).

This approach, that pays particular attention to the rights of the migrant, is emphasized by the following provision (Article 5) according to which "migrants shall not become liable to criminal prosecution under this Protocol for the fact of having been the object of the conduct set forth in Article 6".

In conclusion, after this very brief description, we can state that the UN Protocol punishes HS to protect the migrants from the many risks they may face whenever involved in this criminal process.

2.2. The European Union's point of view

Totally different is the European Union's point of view. The EU law on this topic is firmly dominated by the aim of fighting irregular migration (Mitsilegas, 2015), therefore the Directive 2002/90/EC and the Framework Decision 2002/946/JHA tend to protect the common area of free movement instead of the single migrant. This is clearly underlined by the definition

[2] "The purpose of this Protocol is to prevent and combat the smuggling of migrants, as well as to promote cooperation among states Parties to that end, while protecting the rights of smuggled migrants", https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNTOC/Publications/TOC%20Convention/TOCebook-e.pdf.

[3] According to the art. 3 (a) of the Protocol, "smuggling of migrants shall mean the procurement, in order to obtain, directly and indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident" (emphasis added).

provided by the European legislator. In the EU law the phenomenon is not addressed as human smuggling, notion that recall the idea of the migrant as an object or as a victim of the crime, but it is defined as *facilitation of unauthorized entry, transit, and residence*.

It is evident the change of focus. The wrongdoing of the EU criminal offence is not linked to the exploitation of the migrant, but it is connected to the help given to migrants who aspire to enter to Europe. What is punished in Europe is, therefore, every conduct that "assists a person who is not a national of a Member State to enter, or transit across, the territory of a Member State in breach of the laws of the State concerned on the entry of transit of aliens"[4], without the need of a financial gain or a material benefit. The main purpose of the European legal system is to protect the right of the State to control the borders, and in doing so it indirectly criminalizes irregular migration by means of a wide criminalization of the facilitation of irregular migration[5]. The will is to punish every kind of assistance or facilitation given to the irregular migrant.

The strict approach of the European Union is widespread among the western countries, especially in the European region (Militello *et al.*, 2018), therefore it is possible to state that HS is usually perceived as *facilitation to irregular migration* and, as a consequence, it tends to protect the borders of the State instead of the migrants' rights.

3. The normative approach on human trafficking

Conversely to what realized for the HS, the multilevel legal system about the HT is coherent in all its degrees of legislation with each other (international, European and national one). The different law makers get along about this criminal phenomenon and they decided to fight it in order to enhance the struggle against the modern forms of slavery. Thus, the slavery it is opposed not only with a counteraction on the different exploitation's area but also by the opposition to the preparatory conducts that can lead to the privation of liberty for the victim. This preparatory conduct is mainly represented by the trafficking of human beings.

[4] Article 1 (a) Directive 2002/90/EC, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32002L0090&from=EN.

[5] The EU law does not completely disregard the rights of the migrants. They are taken into account in two different provisions: The Art. 1 sec. 2 Dir. 2002/90/EC, that allow the State to introduce the humanitarian assistance provision; and the Art. 3 of the Fr. Dec. 2002/946/JHA, that provides an aggravating factor when the conduct is realized with the purpose of the financial gain.

Therefore, this criminal offence is only devoted to the protection of human dignity, and it tends to prevent the illicit activities aimed at exploiting human beings for criminal purposes.

This is evident if we analyse the structure of the criminal offence, given by a very broad definition based on three "pillars": The acts, the means and the purposes. In order to punish all the manifolds actions of the trafficking process, the law makers consider as HT different kind of actions (such as the recruitment, the transportation, the transfer, the harbouring, etc.) realized with different means (coercion, abduction, fraud, etc.) when they are aimed at the exploitation of the victim[6]. What put all the elements together is clearly the final purpose of exploitation that become the core of the criminal offence (Gallagher, 2010).

4. A criminological outline

The criminological perspective is characterized by a sharp distinction between the two phenomena as well. From the HS point of view, conversely to the narrative of the mass media, the literature usually concludes for the absence of a strong and hierarchical criminal organization able to manage all the different phases of HS. Human smuggling is usually addressed as a process managed by horizontal criminal networks composed by largely independent agents and structured by way of loose links (Campana, 2018, p. 481; Triandafyllidou, 2018, p. 676; Militello *et al.*, 2019). Thus, there is no single organization that can control the entire criminal activity but a network of different criminal groups, which cooperate based on a partition of competences and/or geographic areas.

This flexible nature of the network is the strong point of this criminal activity. Thanks to this kind of structure, they are totally able to adapt to the changes (the normative or the sociological ones) of the criminal scenario and so they can change routes, means of transport, etc. without relevant costs in order to optimize the activity.

Different is the scenario of the HT. According to the majority of the literature, trafficking of human beings is characterized by the presence of strong ethnical organizations able to control all the phases of the trafficking: from the recruitment to the final exploitation (Campana, 2015, p. 68; Aronowitz, Theuermann, Tyuryanova, 2010). Dissimilar is also the *modus operandi* that

[6] This structure is followed by all the supranational text about HT: the additional protocol on human trafficking to the Palermo Convention, the Directive 2011/36/UE and the Convention of Warsaw of the Council of Europe.

has to be adapted to the nature of the criminal activity. If in HS smugglers are selling a transportation service and the profit is mainly realized during the journey, in HT the transportation phase is just preparatory to the final utilization of the victims, without it the criminal organizations gain nothing. Therefore, usually in HT the criminal actors transport the victims little by little, with few people per journey, in order to assure that the victim will reach the destination. On the contrary, broadly speaking, in HS the numbers are totally different given that the profit is linked to the quantity of smuggled people.

5. The Central Mediterranean route and the need to fill the gap

Until now, HS and HT seem to be different phenomena both from a criminological and a normative point of view. This is true in most cases. But in some scenario, not irrelevant if we take into account the number of people involved, HS and HT are connected and it's difficult for the law enforcement agents to understand what kind of criminal activity they are facing until the end of it.

This is the case, among others, of the Central Mediterranean route. This route is the one that links Libya (as country of last departure) to the south part of Italy, and usually it collects the migration flows from a big part of Africa. Nevertheless, in the last years the numbers of this route constantly decreased, passing from the almost 200.000 arrivals of 2016 to the 14,000 of 2019 (*Frontex Annual Risk Analysis*, 2020). This was due also to the more than controversial role of the Libyan coast guard. Beyond the problematic role played by the Libyan authorities, I want to underline how in this route the borders between the two criminal phenomena are very evanescent, as it is testified by the reports of several international authorities, such as Europol and IOM.

As a matter of fact, in this route, the criminal organizations act as a service platform able to manage different kind of traffics (human smuggling and trafficking, drug trafficking, cigarette smuggling, trafficking of cultural heritage, etc.), that, as a result, are often connected and overlapped. In the context of huge migration flows, the trafficking of human beings is often a direct consequence of the HS or a part of it. It is possible that the person smuggled is exploited throughout the journey, but it is free to go at the end of it, or also it could happen that the migrant particularly vulnerable, for instance minors or women, can be distracted by the final destination and attracted by force or violence to forms of exploitation and slavery.

This strong connection has been underlined also by the NESMeS international project (*the New Era of Smuggling in the Mediterranean Sea*) conducted by a research team of the Department of Law of the University of Palermo (2017-2019). One of the goals of the project was to enlighten the connections between different traffics in the Mediterranean Area, and in doing so, the team realized interviews to law enforcement agents in different European countries (Germany, Italy, Spain, and Portugal).

As it was underlined by several interviewees, the connections are various. According to a Frontex employee "we have no statistically significant evidence that in the same boat there are drugs and migrants, but we have evidence of connections between trafficking and smuggling of migrants". Furthermore, a representant of the IOM tell us that this connection concerns especially, but not only, women and minors, and he declared that "we believe that almost all the migrants who reach Italy has been victim of exploitation during the journey, also in Libya for a very long period of time". Again, a prosecutor of the Criminal Court of Palermo told us about this connection. He said "during the smuggling there is the rape, the murder, the sexual violence. Broadly speaking it gets start always as smuggling, rarely we found a victim trafficked by force from the beginning. Instead, the trafficking is realized at the beginning mainly with the deceit".

To conclude, the "routine" of some kind of HS is characterized by a strong interconnection with the HT, therefore, more often that we can think, the two criminal phenomena overlapped. This should bring to a reconsideration of the entire normative system. The dualistic system that firmly separates HS, that affects the State's right to control the borders, and HT, punished in order to prevent the new forms of slavery, proved to be unsatisfactory because it postpones the migrants' rights.

To fill the gap, it could be useful to introduce a criminal offence, in the middle between the HS and HT, conceived as the HS of the UN Additional Protocol, and so a provision that can punish in a harsher way the smuggling realized with the exploitation of the migrant. Truthfully, a similar regulation already exists in most of the Member States, but it is structured as an aggravating factor and not as an autonomous criminal offence. In order to avoid the problems related to the nature of the circumstances of the crime (such as the balancing between aggravating and mitigating factors), the insertion of an autonomous offence is an indispensable step to ensure the coherence of our criminal policy with the current aspect of the criminal phenomena and to better protect the vulnerability of the migrants.

References

Aronowitz A., Theuermann G., Tyurykanova E., *Analising the business model of trafficking in human beings to better prevent the crime*, available at: https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/c/f/69028.pdf.

Campana P. (2015), "The structure of human trafficking: lifting the bonnet on a Nigerian transnational network", *British Journal of Criminology*, 56, p. 68-ff.

Campana P. (2018), "Out of Africa: the organization of migrant smuggling across the Mediterranean", *European Journal of Criminology*, 14, p. 481-ff.

Fletcher G. (1998), *Basic concepts of criminal law*, Oxford University Press, New York.

Frontex risk analysis Report, 2020, available at: https://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/Risk_Analysis/Annual_Risk_Analysis_2020.pdf.

Gallagher A. (2010), *The international law on human trafficking*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Gallagher A., David F. (2014), *The international law on migrant smuggling*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Militello V. *et al.* (2018), *Traffico di migranti e tratta di esseri umani. Studio comparato sull'implementazione degli strumenti dell'Unione Europea*, Paruzzo, Palermo.

Militello V., Spena A. (2018), *Between criminalization and protection*, Brill, Boston.

Militello V., Spena A., Mangiaracina A., Siracusa L. (a cura di) (2019), *I traffici illeciti nel Mediterraneo. Persone, stupefacenti, tabacco*, Giappichelli, Torino.

Mitsilegas V. (2015), *The criminalization of migration in Europe*, Springer, London.

Mitsilegas V. (2018), "The normative foundations of the criminalization of human smuggling. Exploring the fault lines between European and International law", *New Journal of European Criminal Law*, 10, p. 68-ff.

NESMeS (the New Era of Smuggling in the Mediterranean Sea) research realized by a team of the University of Palermo, available at: https://www.unipa.it/dipartimenti/di.gi./progetti/nesmes---pmi-/en/home.html.

Triandafyllidou A. (2018), "Migrant smuggling: novel insights and implications for migration control policies", *Annals*, 676, p. 212-ff.

Tu!

6. Female alliances against the proximity violence

by Ignazia Bartholini

1. Introduction

Today, the overestimation of the migratory flows – also called the "refugee crisis" – has meant that Italy, as a politically strategic borderland of Europe, coincides with a battlefield between sovereign impulses and solidarity tensions.

As Italy as the European Union, moved, aiming from opposing political views, collide in identification of the reception' levels of migrants and the criteria by which minors, and women victims of violence should be considered refugees. The restoration of systematic checks at national borders and the suspension of the application of the Schengen rules have produced unacceptable costs in terms of human lives as well as violation of fundamental rights, widely and repeatedly documented by humanitarian organisations. Reductions in the overall numbers of arrivals is not accompanied by a corresponding drop in the numbers of women and minors arriving here. According to the UNHCR, UNFA and WRC report (2015), "women travelling alone or with children, pregnant women, nursing mothers, teenage girls, unaccompanied girls, girls victims of early marriages, people with disabilities and the elderly, are among the people most at risk and require a coordinated response and adequate protection".

Migrant women are often victims of proximity violence which is accentuated in contexts with a high rate of vulnerability such as migration. The lack of alternative ties to parental ones, and of points of reference other than those of one's fellow countrymen, means that the vulnerability of personal situations facilitates the use of violence and make permanent the resulting condition of oppression.

The following pages will describe the phenomenon of proximity violence, which by the author of this article is considered an umbrella concept that takes on different forms of violence against women.

In fact, migrant women are often exposed to parental violence that denies their very subjectivity as women and human beings. It becomes even more tangible precisely in their condition of vulnerability associated with their status as asylum seekers/refugees.

The migrant women hosted in the shelters are a macro-group, vulnerable by definition emphasising the asymmetrical dimension of forms of subordination attributable to customary, moral and collective attitudes rooted in values of male domination (Bourdieu, 1998), religious beliefs, practices handed down historically which normalise abuse, especially in situations where weaker subjects are particularly exposed. It is, therefore, a matter of "violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately" (Istanbul Convention of 2011).

Secondly, it will explore the contribution of the female stakeholder and the elements that connote their gaze towards otherness and the support tools used, in order to focus on its distinguishing features of a female relationship in order to support migrant women victims of proximity violence.

To testify the importance of female agency in the empowerment process of migrant women victims of proximity violence, I refer to the research carried out in 2019 that was financed by the European Commission.

2. Proximity violence

One element that characterises the contemporary migratory phenomenon is proximity violence of which women, in particular, are victims. The proximity violence highlights as the perpetrator is not either an extraneous or neutral subject, but "the" person or "one of the" persons, legitimized by the tradition, culture and religious believes, to dominate the victim herself (Bartholini, 2013; 2020). The contextual reasons that legitimize male power towards the victim are mainly two. The proximity violence is made possible if the perpetrator enjoys a special type of habitual proximity with the victim for:

- reasons of *jus sanguinis* (a father or a close relative), because of being a consort (partner);
- due to *causa simulandi* (that is simulation whereby the perpetrator "makes believe", "pretends").

Both the proximity violence perpetrated by right of blood or by fictitious right belong to the cultural bedrock of patriarchy and considered "a woman's destiny" in migratory contexts (Bartholini, 2019).

Furthermore, it is appropriate to highlight how proximity violence perpetrated because of *causa simulandi*, is a degeneration of the former because

it incorporates justifications typical of a patriarchal system accompanied by manipulation of the victims and pretence by means of which immunity and rights over the victim are acquired with the consensus of the victim herself.

For both these perspectives, proximity violence is a mode of expression, a product of masculine power legitimises and justifies every form of oppression, symbolic and physical, towards migrant women.

As demonstrated, established vulnerabilities are not only those inherent to the victim, normally grounded in age, illness, gender and poverty, but also those socially created and that to strength the potential vulnerability in a victim. Therefore, the persistence of the victim within a condition of subordination cannot be attributed solely to relationships based on domination and violence (Bartholini, 2020b). Rather, to the smallness of the relational capital available to him outside the circle of her relatives and compatriots.

We are talking about forms of violence that are often linked to genealogy and intimacy, but which just as often testifies to a pact of sale by the same family members who "hand over" them to traffickers. Parental authority, or presumed as such, marks the fate of most refugees/asylum seekers by virtue of proximity violence considered normal. For some of them, the sexual violence they are in at worst has become a practice connected to corruption, if not extortion, to cross a border crossing, which always sees close men as main actors in the exchange of the sexual victim.

3. The alliance in the relationship between operators and women hosted in the reception centers

Since the abusers are almost always husbands, brothers, cousins, and friends – real or presumed – of the victim's, it is not easy for the operators to recognise abuse/violence hidden within the folds of parental relations or grounded in affective involvement, treat it as "real imbalance between vulnerable victims and abusive persecutors" and take the victims into charge.

It is not easy to understand, for example, what the deepest and most intimate needs of newly arrived women may be. Their weariness and prostration tend to be attributed to what has surely been an extremely tiring journey across the desert first, the sea, then, though this is often not the most remote and profound cause of the tiredness and exhaustion "visible to the eye". Even if the specialised medical assistance, psychological assistance and legal aid are provided at the first reception centres, in the opinion of the operators, it is extremely difficult to grasp the needs of those coming from countries where they are "exposed" to male alterity because they are women belonging to

segregating cultural systems, and therefore, victims of rape and psychological abuse considered "normal" by their communities.

Recognizing and receiving refugees-asylum seekers victims of proximity violence both in the contexts of origin and during their migration route to Europe, is a theme that requires a broader reflection not only as regards the situations and conditions that allow a suitable reception, but as regards the creation of relationships of trust between reception operators and asylum seekers.

The difficulty in establishing a helping relationship with such victims is often aggravated within the reception systems, which are not sufficiently structured, on level of management protocols, to manage these situations effectively and flexibly, so much so as to be considered problematic the same identification of victims of trafficking (UNHCR, 2017).

Other times, the same recognition of the migratory violence victims occurs in a problematic context, due to the extreme resistance to self-recognition of an experience of oppression and violence.

Wherever violence is normalized by those who suffer it, the possibility of recognizing it as such becomes an extremely difficult operation (D'Ignazi, Persi, 2013).

Therefore, success or failure of the work of a multidisciplinary team depends on the alliance that is created in the individual relationships between the migrant women hosted in the shelters and the operators. It allows the recognition of the violence of which asylum seekers are often victims already within family contexts (Macioti, Pugliese, 2010; Tognetti, Bordogna, 2012; Tizzi *et al.*, 2018).

The possibility of transforming the relations between operators and refugees/asylum seekers victims of proximity violence into authentic alliances will subsequently depend on the implementation of the most appropriate interventions, aimed at the effectiveness of individual inclusion paths, capable of achieving a change of perspective in the women hosted in the hosts of reception centres.

With PROVIDE (Proximity on Violence: Defence and Equity) project[1] we conducted some focus group and 68 qualitative interviews professions in facilities of different types or in different institutions, for the most part, identifiable as first-stage reception centres (CAS), second-stage reception

[1] Is one of the projects funded by the European Community through *The Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme 2014-2020*, "that contributes to the further development of an area where equality and the rights of persons, as enshrined in the Treaty, the Charter and international human rights conventions, are promoted, protected and effectively implemented" (https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/ opportunities/portal/screen/programmes/rec).

centres (SPRAR for adults, SPRAR for minors), facilities made available by the Municipal Authorities and by the Prefectures, anti-violence centres and Hotspots with professionals and representatives of the anti-violence centres and CAS (temporary reception centres) and SPRAR.

Most of the female professionals interviewed agree that the quality of the relationship with the migrant women hosted in the reception facilities depends by the trust in the relationship among women. It permitted the migrant women to tell the story of the episodes of violence they had experienced. This bond of trust fostered communication, at least after some time, according to about 70% of the participants. It was precisely about the importance of preliminary relationships to the "charge taking" of migrant victims, that it was mandatory to highlight three elements of the reception circuit.

The first concerns the structure the horizontal structure of the third sector, by its network, whose pieces no longer depend on roles, but on bonds and social "worlds of life", the configuration of which can predict the behaviour of social actors (Di Nicola, 1998). The concept of a "network strategy" emerges as a marker of the adaptability of the social actor.

The second, closely linked to the first one, concerns the importance of the human capital incorporated in the very make-up of the third sector, particularly in the fiduciary effects that reverberate within the relationships. Social capital, from this angle, rests on a double theoretical-empirical matrix (Bagnasco *et al.*, 2001; Andreotti, Barbieri, 2003; Tronca, 2003; Donati, 2004). If, in one sense, as Putnam (1993; 2002) intended, social capital is a collective resource (produced by a sense of belonging, rules, trust and civic commitment), of which the community and its institutions take advantage, on the other, according to J. Coleman (1990), social capital is a function of the very structure of relatively stable social relationships which permit individuals to attain goals they could never reach on their own behalf.

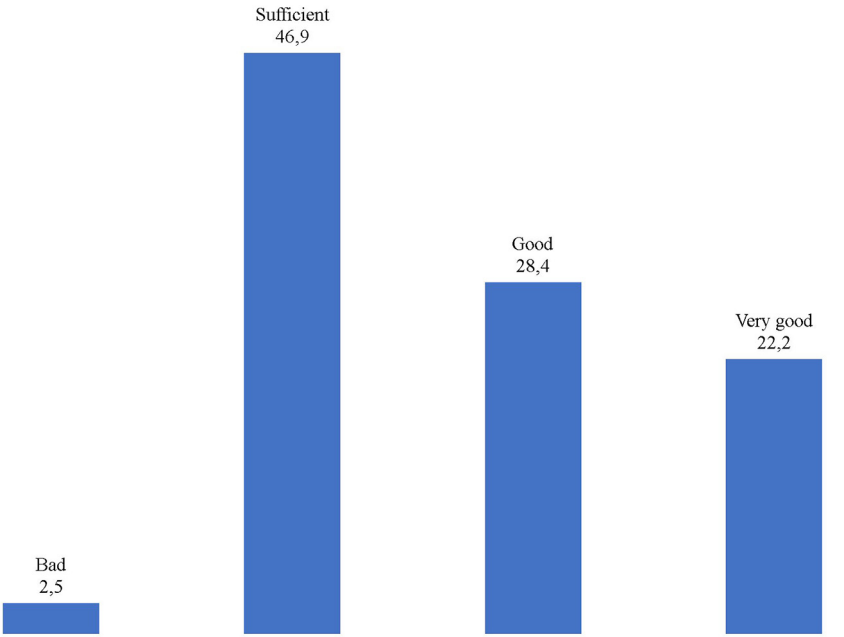
Another crucial element is cultural mediation and multidisciplinary work, two phenomena indispensable to female operational staff. The figure of the cultural mediator was deemed indispensable as a support to staff dealing with migrants victims of proximity violence and while they accompany them during their complicated pursuit of the recognition of themselves.

The last one concerns the prevalence of female over male operators (Walby, 2005; Tiessen, 2007). If it is true that care has traditionally been entrusted to women as a "less important form of commitment" (Rao, Kelleher, 2003), and if working with migrants who have been subjected to proximal violence and affected by forms of motivational deficit is their task, one may observe that "women are able to help other women" (Bartholini, 2020a). Compared to the critical issues, most of the operators during the workshops

reported that working with women was more difficult than working with migrants in general.

It also emerged that communications between the female operators and female beneficiaries of the reception facilities is the only possible solution. In this case, relationships based on a commonality of gender defies the objective criteria of scientific management and is typical of many "mature" care-providing professions, that is, those involved in mature construction of professional relationships that do not disregard the need for empathetic rapports between beneficiary and operators (Fig. 1). It is a matter of mechanical rationality and affective neutrality that yields to the trusting and empathic modality based on relationality and empathy that is, on an "emotional kind of work" required to address the complexity of migrants' needs and requiring a suitable amount of time and proper ways of building it up.

Figure 1 – How would you rate your relationship with the migrant women you work with? (%)



Source: own elaboration

Gender fatigue (Kelan, 2009) which still seems to "persecute" women in many professions – and which coincides with real forms of gender segregation – becomes a veritable advantage within the context of the migratory

circuit and of trust relationships thanks to the use of skills more closely related to emotional and gender intelligence. Gender-sensitive connotations are, therefore, accompanied by gender professional, relationship-promoting skills.

4. Conclusions

The relationship among refugees/asylum seekers victims of violence and professional is an important, crucial milestone for a female alliance. The ability of the operators – to communicate with other and to take care him – facilitate the acceptance by migrants of the opportunities offered to them. The network made up of teams of professionals favors and strengthens the strategies for accompanying victims, precisely through the "safety belt" that the female operators themselves create in the gender alliance with migrants. These are women – professionals – who can recognize proximity violence, to flush it out by making it visible. It is also about women – refugees seeking asylum – who, through sisterhood, transform their vulnerability into agency.

The institutional reception system turns out to be a privileged analysis laboratory, because it seems to favor a double relationship between migrants and professionals and between women. A relationship of subjectivation, which, in the best experiences we have been told, passes from the degrees of suspicion to that of recognition in gender homogeneity and participatory agency.

References

Andreotti A., Barbieri P. (a cura di) (2003), "Reti e capitale sociale", *Inchiesta*, 139, numero monografico.

Bagnasco A., Piselli F., Pizzorno A., Trigilia C. (2001), *Il capitale sociale. Istruzioni per l'uso*, il Mulino, Bologna.

Bartholini I. (2013), *Violenza di prossimità. La vittima, il carnefice, lo spettatore e il "grande occhio"*, FrancoAngeli, Milano.

Bartholini I. (2019), *Proximity Violence in Migration Times. A Focus in some Regions of Italy, France, Spain*, FrancoAngeli, Milano.

Bartholini I. (2020a), *The Provide Training Course. Contents, Methodology, Evaluation*, FrancoAngeli, Milano.

Bartholini I. (2020b), *The Trap of Proximity Violence. Research and Insight into Male Dominance and Female Resistance*, Springer Nature Switzerland, Cham.

Bourdieu P. (1998), *Male domination*, Gallimard, Paris.

Coleman J. (1990), *Foundations of Social Theory*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge.
D'Ignazi P., Persi R. (2013), *Migrazione femminile. Discriminazione e integrazione tra teoria e indagine sul campo*, FrancoAngeli, Milano.
Di Nicola P. (1998), "Capitale sociale e società civile: reti e strategie di prossimità", in I. Bartholini I. (a cura di), *Capitale sociale, reti comunicative e culture di partecipazione*, FrancoAngeli, Milano.
Donati P. (a cura di) (2004), *Famiglia e capitale sociale in Italia*, San Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo.
Kelan E.K. (2009), "Gender Fatigue: The ideological Dilemma of Gender Neutrality and Discrimination in Organizations", *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences*, 26, pp. 197-210.
Macioti I.M., Pugliese E. (2010), *L'esperienza migratoria. Immigrati e rifugiati in Italia*, Laterza, Roma-Bari.
Putnam R.D., Leonardi R., Nanetti R. (1993), *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.
Putnam RD. (2002), *Democracies in Flux: The Evolution of Social Capital in Contemporary Society*, Oxford University Press, New York.
Rao A., Kelleher D. (2003), "Institutions, organizations and gender equality in an era of globalization", *Gender and Development*, 12, 1, pp. 142-149.
Tiessen R. (2007), *Everywhere/Nowhere. Gender mainstreaming in Development Agencies*, Kumarian Press, Bloomfield.
Tizzi G., Albiani S., Borgioli G. (2018), *La "crisi dei rifugiati" e il diritto alla salute. Esperienza di collaborazione tra pubblico e privato no profit in Italia*, FrancoAngeli, Milano.
Tognetti Bordogna M. (2012), *Donne e percorsi migratori. Per una sociologia delle migrazioni*, FrancoAngeli, Milano.
Tronca L. (2003), "La costruzione reticolare del capitale sociale", *Sociologia e politiche sociali*, 6, 3, pp. 58-72.
UNHCR (2017), *L'expérience des centres d'accueil et d'orientation (CAO) et des centres d'accueil et d'orientation pour mineurs isolés (CAOMI) en France – observations du HCR*, retrieved from https://www.unhcr.org/fr-fr/59e9c70b4.pdf.
Walby S. (2005), "Gender Mainstreaming: Productive Tensions in Theory and Practice", *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, 12, 3, pp. 321-343.

Ciao mamma, sono vivo

7. Social Work with young migrants in the South of Italy

by Glauco Iermano

1. The phenomenon of Unaccompanied Foreign Minors (UAFM) and young adults and the integrated reception and management system in Italy and Naples

This document aims to be a tool for knowledge and reflection concerning the model of intervention in the work, that Dedalus Social Cooperative has been producing for about 20 years (from 2002 to date) for unaccompanied foreign minors and young migrants' sociocultural inclusion pathways.

It offers a reflection on a complex phenomenon, aiming to witness and remember some innovative and effective social work practices, which may be replicated within new contexts and scenarios, both at national and international levels.

It is essential to consider not only the causes and the international geopolitical scenarios at the origin of the migrations, the so-called Push & Pull factors, but also the transformations and changes in migratory and political-institutional phenomena over the years both in national and local and regional spheres.

Within this narrative path, it is therefore important to investigate the phenomenon and the characteristics of unaccompanied foreign minors and young adults in Southern Italy, as well as the state of the reception system and the taking charge of UAFM[1].

[1] It is necessary to remember, starting from the 1990's and 2000's, the first increases in the flows of *young immigrants in Italy*, to then move on to the management of the so called "North Africa Emergency" (started in Naples on 3 July 2011 and lasted until 2012-2013), passing from the landings of Mare Nostrum and Triton in Italian ports and the development of the SPRAR/CAS System (2014-2017), to reach the new reception and integration systems (and repatriation) of migrants, structured to manage migration policies at European and national level: AMIF/FAMI and SIPROIMI (2014-2020).

2. Who are unaccompanied foreign minors (legislation in Italy)

All guarantees for all unaccompanied foreign minors are provided by the New York Convention of November 20, 1989, on the rights of minors (ratified in Italy by the law n. 176/1991). Italy has also ratified, with the law n. 77/2003, the European Convention of Strasbourg of 25 January 1996 on children's rights.

In Italy all foreign minors are recognized the right to education, health care and all the protections in the field of work, including admission to work only after the completion of the sixteenth year and after having fulfilled the school obligations. In addition, unaccompanied foreign minors are also granted special legal protection and assistance measures, including the reception in a safe place, the non-expulsion, the right to a *residence permit* for minor age and the possibility of receiving support by *legal guardian* and *foster family*. In Italy the rights of foreign minors are regulated by the Civil Code of the RD n. 262 of 16/03/1942, with the art. 403 and following, which grants for the "safe placement of abandoned children" and entrusts to the State, through the Municipalities[2], the taking charge of the child alone. Subsequently the Law n. 184/1983 "Discipline of the adoption and custody of minors", regulates the condition of the child in the context of assignment, adoption, and relationship with the family. For the analysis of the Italian context, we use the first official definition provided by the legislator in the Regulations concerning the tasks of the Committee for Foreign Minors (DPCM of 9 December 1999, No. 535)[3]. To date, this Law is supplemented by Law no. 47 of 7 April 2017 "Provisions on measures to protect unaccompanied foreign minors" (the so-called *Zampa Law*), the first law in Europe exclusively dedicated to UAFM, which has important regulatory indications and novelties, yet it is still far from being fully and homogeneously applied on the regional and national territory.

[2] According to the articles 22 and 23 letter C. Presidential Decree n. 616/1997, Municipalities are responsible for interventions in favor of minors within the administrative and civil jurisdiction.

[3] Law 6 march 1998, n. 40, "Disciplina dell'immigrazione e norme sulla condizione dello straniero" (c.d. *Turco Napolitano*).

3. Legal status and sociocultural profile of unaccompanied foreign minors

Unaccompanied foreign minors are adolescents who live in constant contradiction between the need to be "adult", to face the road, with its precarious situations and with "big" dynamics, and the desire to be "young" to be recognized their needs for sociability, affection, "pampering" and play.

Their legal status is twofold and complex because they are located between two different (often opposed) regulations. On the one hand there is the national and international child protection legislation (from the "superior interest of the child" to the principle of non-discrimination and non-expulsion, to the right to be placed in a safe place and protection, etc.) accompanied by a series of interventions aimed at social protection paths in which numerous subjects and entities territorial intervene. On the other hand, there is a conspicuous, complex and often restrictive legislation on immigration, which influences the taking charge of the young person during the minor age[4], but it becomes central, often in a negative and discriminating way, once the young foreign has reached the age of majority.

In short, the young foreigner is guaranteed a complete and complex system of protection, but when he reaches 18 years ("and one day") he loses his protection to find himself suddenly catapulted into the adult world and into another regulatory regime.

It is precisely this dual socio-juridical condition of the minor and of the foreigner/immigrant that complicates both the definition of the phenomenon and its regulation and management, also in consideration of the numerous normative references and actors, institutional and not, involved in the important and demanding work in this field.

The sociocultural profiles of the UAFM, as well as the projects and paths of adult migrants, are generally defined by the nationality and place of origin. These elements, which are typical of the migrations of adults (the migratory chain, the ethnic specialization on the labor market, the settlements of the various communities in the different areas of the country, etc.), also characterize the migrations of minors. In fact, even the small migrants exploit the resources of the community networks already in the territory (particularly related to housing and work), such as compatriots, friends, family members, etc. In this way, they receive from their community the first indispensable help to start to orient themselves and define better the path to be taken.

[4] Unaccompanied minors become "Badly Accompanied Minors", because of the weakness of the social public system.

The *paradigm of complexity* characterizes the recent international migratory phenomena, the contradictions of the local welfare system and the difficulties of the labor market. It is in this specific context that the arrival, the forms of settlement and the departures of foreign minors must be read[5]. Finally, UAFM's arrivals are part of the geopolitical dynamics of the years 2011-2019 (North Africa, Libya, Syria, in particular) within the new flows of migrants and refugees towards the southern coasts of Europe (Italy and Greece in the first place). This has contributed to create a fragile reception system in Italy, also managed by many speculators (and criminals) and creating an alarm and a perception of insecurity in the population (like in other many UE countries…!).

4. Topics, work areas and multi-actors in the work with the UAFM's paths

The phenomenon of unaccompanied foreign minors is part of more general migration processes and concerns a quite peculiar "segment" of the migrant population[6].

Migratory subjects with specific features of dynamism and criticality, minors urge us to construct modalities and practices of intervention that can take charge of the complexity of their paths.

Therefore, taking care of an unaccompanied foreign minor implies having knowledge and skills in many areas, such as educational, sociological, legal, anthropological, health, intercultural, psychological-relational, training-work, etc.

Here are the main topics about working with UAFM:

- knowledge and management of cultural and intercultural processes (with support of MLC);
- reception and protection system for UAFM *social inclusion*.

[5] In the 1990s – with the provisions of the Agreement and the Schengen Convention (1985-1990) – the circulation of foreigners was restricted, thus reducing legal immigration. These measures have in fact led to the development of illegal immigration (in its various forms of smuggling and trafficking). Consequence of all this was also the fact that from some areas the average age of new arrivals has dropped considerably: adults could not leave and the very young did not see any promising future in their country and emigration became the only hope for a better life.

[6] An important criticality of the system of taking charge of UAFM in Italy: before 2011 UAFM's national responsibility was in charge of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies (Welfare). After 2011, following the c.d. "North Africa Emergency", the competence moved to the Ministry of the Interior, with a change of approach to the phenomenon focused more on the security/immigration side than on the socio-educational-cultural side for the integration of minors.

Here are the main topics and themes concerning for UAFM's *social inclusion paths*:

- causes and characteristics of migration (migratory phenomena, push and pull factors, etc.);
- definition and terminology issue "minor and foreign" (separated children);
- social and juridical profile of Unaccompanied Foreign Minor;
- quantitative and qualitative data of the specific phenomenon;
- historical-legal social phenomenon of UAFM (in EU, Italy and Naples);
- actors involved (integration and inter-institutionalization of work);
- areas of intervention in the work with UAFM (thematic map and skills);
- intervention methodologies (MLC, PEI, Network);
- education, training, and work placement;
- identification and age assessment (causes, legislation, and practice);
- minors "untraceable/missing/lost" (characteristics and causes);
- the *triple transition* from the minor to the age of majority/adulthood;
- lack of perspectives as an increase of vulnerability for young migrants.

The completion of the eighteenth year of age by the young migrant marks the transition to adulthood and represents a fundamental moment that may negatively affect his future migratory path in terms of marginalization and falling into irregular conditions.

The dynamics and the perverse effects that this "borderline" position produces arise from its complexity. This complexity is well described by the concept of *triple transition* (ISMU, UNICEF, UNHCR, OIM, 2019, p. 19) experienced by foreign minors in the passage from the childhood to the age of majority:

- *an evolutionary transition*; the passage from adolescence to adulthood;
- *a transition linked to migration*, with the management of suspended identity between two worlds and cultures;
- *a psychological transition*, concerning the overcoming of the traumas experienced during the journey.

Foreign minors and young must be encouraged, supported and accompanied to grow in the European society. If they are supported in their pathways of insertion, education, and training, they become a wealth for themselves and a resource for the whole society. Furthermore, not only in observance of its democratic principles, but also regarding its convenience, Europe (an old and tired continent) is in need of young and productive human resources, in terms of birth-rate, labor market, welfare system, social equality, etc.

5. Dedalus Social Cooperative and its work in support of unaccompanied foreign minors and young migrants in Naples

Since 2002 the work *Area MSNA* regarding "unaccompanied foreign minors" of Dedalus Social Cooperative[7] has been an important reference point for unaccompanied foreign minors in Campania and in the South of Italy, offering services of "social and legal assistance, support to education and employment and, more generally, to sociocultural and work inclusion and to a full citizenship".

The working methodology is based on a series of "individual programmes" (PEI) that call the minors and young adults to actively participate in the definition of their own path: this is a *social contract* based on shared objectives and activities, in which both young people and operators work together in a fair exchange and respecting roles in order to achieve their goal.

The main methodological pillars to implement Accompanying actions for the autonomy of unaccompanied foreign minors in their *transition to adulthood* are:

- intercultural centres and semi-autonomous apartments (HOUSE);
- legal assistance and support; job training and work inclusion;
- education with schools promoting intercultural dialogue and L2 Italian language courses;
- MLC (Cultural-Linguistic Mediation) and peer education.

Today, the MSNA team/equip consists of *9/10 social workers* (educators, linguistic-cultural mediators, peer operators, teachers) and some *volunteers*. Actually we are hosting and taking care of 18/20 boys in 4 facilities (*Grecale*, *Vado a Vivere da solo*, *Aliante* and *Marhaba*), and we take charge of about 50 young migrants involved in the daytime educational – training activities in Dedalus intercultural and educative centres (*Nanà*, *Palmieri* and *Gomitoli*).

From 2007 to 2020 Dedalus welcomed in its Apartments several boys, between 16 and 21 years, coming from Nigeria, Ghana, Mali, Burkina Faso, Mali, Chad, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Gambia, Congo, Cameroun, Niger, Eritrea, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, Bangladesh, Albania, Kosovo, Ukraine, China, Pakistan, Libya. From 2002 to 2006 Dedalus intercultural

[7] Dedalus Social Cooperative was established in Naples in 1981 in order to develop social research about issues relating to the Labour Market in the South of Italy. The main goals of Dedalus' activities are the social inclusion and the achievement of full citizenship for immigrants, with special attention toward the most vulnerable among them: *unaccompanied foreign minors*; *abused women*; *victims of exploitation and trafficking*; *asylum seekers*; *homeless*; *second-generation foreign minors*; *LGBT*.

centres welcomed and followed about 800 unaccompanied minors, from 13 to 19/20 years.

From 2007 to 2019, this number raised to 2,898, as a result of the huge increase of arrivals in 2011 due to the so-called "North Africa Emergency" and to the overall increase of migration flows to Europe from 2014 onwards. More than 90% of them is male, from 16 to 20 years old.

	2007	*2008*	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*	*2014*	*2015*	*2016*	*2017*	*2018*	*2019*
City of Naples	54	80	85	115	230	123	206	335	235	190	250 +/-	120 +/-	70 +/-
Dedalus	100	150	170	160	270	348	280	300	250	250/+	250/+	295	75

The graph shows the number of UAM taken, welcomed and hosted by the Municipality of Naples and those taken over and followed by Dedalus Social Cooperative (2900) from 2007 to 2019.

In these 20 years of work in favour of foreign minors and their paths of inclusion, emancipation, and autonomy, Dedalus has realized numerous projects and services addressed to them[8].

Furthermore, the experience gained over the years has made it possible to identify themes, topics and areas of intervention concerning the whole universe of UAMs, which is subject to continuous transformations and changes (as always happens with the complex phenomenon of migration). Consequently, the working methods are from time to time adapting to these continuous changes, trying to keep the objectives of social inclusion and autonomy. These methodologies necessarily include the direct participation of young people, in order to make them protagonists and aware of the path of inclusion aimed at their growth, independence and autonomy.

In recent years, the operators of the MSNA Area of Dedalus, in addition to having welcomed almost 4,000 children and young people in Nanà Centre and about 160 minors and boys in the houses[9], have been able to support,

[8] The work in favor of the UAFMs started from the first "street interventions" in 2002, to move on to the opening of the Nanà Intercultural Center in 2004, and then to carry out all the numerous initiatives and projects built from 2006 to today (MLC projects with Iqbal, Remis, IMC; ANCI, MSNA Coordination Desk with the Municipality of Naples, 2007-2010; Reception of minors in the North African Emergency in 2011; FAMI projects 2014-2016; FAMI projects 2017-2021; Grecale apartments groups 2008, Vavisol 2014, Aliante 2021; PAG and Marhaba for 18+).

[9] Grecale Apartment Group welcomed 54 teenagers (from 2007 to 2020); Baobab social housing welcomed 13 teenagers (from 2010 to 2012); Vavisol Apartment Group has welcomed 48 teenagers (from July 2014 to today); PAG intermediate autonomy accommodation has welcomed 20 young people (from February 2018 to today), Marhaba autonomous accommodation 14 young people (from July 2018 to today). Aliante Apartment Group has welcomed 5 young people (from January 2021 to today).

know and appreciate the extraordinary live stories of foreign Minors alone in Naples, but above all it knew how to listen to the voice, the point of view and the wishes and desires of our teenagers.

References

ISMU, UNICEF, UNHCR, OIM (2019), *A un bivio. La transizione all'età adulta dei minori stranieri non accompagnati in Italia*, Università degli Studi di Catania, Università degli Studi Roma Tre.

8. Social Work with unaccompanied minors in Sicily: the SAAMA project

by Giulia Di Carlo

Thanks to the SAAMA project, the CIAI – Italian Centre for Childhood Aid – was able to continue the work of the Ragazzi Harraga project[1], started in 2017 in Palermo, promoting pathways towards autonomy for migrant minors who arrived in Italy on their own and lived in the territories under the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court of Palermo (districts of Palermo, Agrigento, and Trapani). Who are the unaccompanied children on our territory to whom the SAAMA project is directed?

They are boys and girls who arrived in Italy between 2016 and today, hosted in reception and care centres with the aim to guarantee fulfilment of their rights and to promote their social inclusion and guidance to autonomy. In 2019, Sicily was the region with the highest number of unaccompanied foreign minors (1,164 or 19.2% of the total (ISTAT, 2019) and maintains the trend in 2020 with 1,351 unaccompanied minors registered in October, 21.7% of the national total (Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, 2021). Due to the significant presence of boys and girls arrived unaccompanied on the Sicilian coast, the SAAMA project was implemented basing its actions on the promotion of the social, work, and economic autonomy of these minors and teenagers recently turned adults.

The focus on the guidance to autonomy is a consequence of the critical moment that the phase of transition between childhood and adulthood represents for these young people, coming out from care and protection contexts, and also very vulnerable due to the complexity of the migratory path. As Agostinetto (2017) observes, the variable "time" is a risk factor since the age of majority represents the due date for obtaining the fundamental requisites for autonomy and also the bureaucratic and formal requirements for receiv-

[1] The Ragazzi Harraga project was funded in 2017 by the Cariplo Foundation's Never Alone initiative, https://www.non6solo.it/ragazziharraga/.

ing the residency permit. However, the time for educational work together with these young people is very short considering that they arrive at the centre usually at the age of 17.

What does it mean to promote the autonomy of unaccompanied migrant minors?

It means supporting them in their process of inclusion in our territories, supporting the transition to adulthood through the creation of a solid social capital and promoting the development of useful skills for their integration in the labour market, but also listening to their needs, dreams, and concerns. It means guiding them without making decisions for them.

For this purpose, the project analysed the parties interacting in the territories concerned and their roles. It emerged that a sociocultural and economic inclusion model that would guide unaccompanied migrant minors and young adults on their pathway towards autonomy is still missing. The complexity of the reception system has increased from year to year, mainly due to the bad management of the first and second-line reception centres on the Sicilian territory and the lack of implementation of individual pathways. Moreover, the poor social and legal skills of the operators in the reception centres do not allow an adequate listening to and support of the migrant minors needs. Because of this situation, the young boys and girls live a deep frustration waiting for their residency permit, which is very difficult to obtain, also because of a forced immobilism. Even if implemented, individual projects often risk being standardised and not focusing on the skills and expectations of the person concerned. The lack of connection and sharing among the different institutions interacting with the minor in the definition of educational projects, and the inadequate professional training offered to the operators involved increase the fragmentation of the pathways and the disorientation of the unaccompanied migrant minors and young adults.

The conversion of many centres for minors into centres dedicated to the reception of unaccompanied migrant minors did not take place with proper preparation of the operators, who often do not have specific tools to build adequate pathways for these young people. Moreover, with the establishment of the Provincial Centres for Adult Education (CPIA) in 2018, teachers who have been trained for adult education had to teach foreign teenagers for the first time, without any specific training or guidance. From the interviews carried out in some host communities in Palermo, Marsala, and Agrigento, it can be concluded that there is an inadequate access to the services present in these cities. In addition, the services offered are not well known among unaccompanied migrant minors and community operators. This has the consequence of generating a serious risk of social isolation. The transition to adult-

hood also includes the problem of finding a job. The absence of connection between the CPIA or high schools and the vocational courses and orientation programmes makes even more difficult for unaccompanied migrants to find employment opportunities in this suffering labour market. This is also due to the fact that these young adults often have a weak or absent vocational education and a poor knowledge of the labour market. In addition to this, there is a lack of self-reflection and long-term planning, that expose the young migrants to risks, such as failure to enter the labour market or mistreatment. This situation is aggravated by the persistence in the social and economic structure of negative stereotypes towards unaccompanied migrant minors, for their condition as minors and foreigners and for the lack of a parental network and social capital.

In the light of the critical issues that have emerged, the project is experimenting and evaluating innovative pathways towards autonomy during the transition to adulthood, through social inclusion, education, orientation, and job placement for hosted unaccompanied migrant minors. The proposed model considers that, in order to promote an effective social inclusion, a participatory approach is necessary. The potential and the expectations of the unaccompanied foreign minors, the need to develop both social and work skills, to have legal support, and to grow up in a familiar and emotionally positive environment have also to be taking into account for a correct psychophysical development of these young people.

The networks activated in the territories in question, have been evaluated as very positive by unaccompanied migrant minors and young adults and by the various social co-workers interviewed. This is because the networks allow them to feel supported in the difficult process for accessing fundamental rights, such as the formalization of their residency and the approval of their administrative status. Their participation to different workshops during the Harraga project and the activation of work orientation programmes, promoted by the SAAMA project, are only two examples of the activities supported by the CIAI organization. These various projects allowed them to weave a network that in the most difficult moments, such as the damaging wave of denials caused by the governmental security decrees in 2018, was able to guide and support them, without making them lose sight of the autonomy pathway already started.

These pathways, many still in progress, have been made possible above all by the networks of participants built during the HARRAGA and SAAMA projects. The social capital is in fact a determining factor for accessing job opportunities. This was evident in the projects carried out by the CIAI (together with different partners) with young people who arrived alone in

Palermo. From the follow up activities, it resulted that 80% of the 300 young people guided on autonomy pathways, and of the 30% of the young people who twelve months after the end of the project were still employed, evaluated as "very important" the belonging to wide relational networks. Approximately 60% of these young adults indicated the supervisor of the company, where the internship was carried out, as one of the most significant reference people known in the host city.

There are a lot of people who have taken an important role in the social integration of different boys and girls. Among these, the relationship that many of them have developed with the owner of the company that hosted them for the internship was very significant. These people went beyond the only role of company supervisor and responsible for the achievement of the learning goals during the internship activities and become an important mentor and social guardian.

What mentioned above, supports the idea that it is necessary to set up integral pathways of guidance to autonomy including all the fundamental aspects for the life of these young people.

The last in-depth study about unaccompanied minors in Europe was carried out by CESPI (Centre for International Policy Studies) in July 2020 after a careful analysis of the rights of unaccompanied minors and young adults in Europe. This study underlines the decrease in the migratory flows in the last two years, but also points out that this phenomenon is not something that will disappear. Therefore, all EU Member States should be able to take care of these young people by providing protection and guiding them in every aspect of their lives, without losing sight of them and supporting them until they are truly autonomous.

As already reported by various studies carried out in Italy, including that of the ISMU (Foundation Initiatives and Studies on Multiethnicity), the legislation regarding unaccompanied foreign minors (L. 47/2017) in Italy is innovative and very important for the protection of these young people. However, that is overshadowed by the slow bureaucracy of the procedures for obtaining official documents. This often poses a risk of destroying migrants' socioeconomic integration paths. Moreover, as pointed out in the study, the lack of economic support by the above-mentioned law and the short time (between 16 and 17 years old) to become autonomous, jeopardise any kind of pathway that has been already started.

Therefore, we believe it is important to promote a project of integral inclusion, which involves social, economic, and housing integration for each individual and can go beyond the age of 18. Nowadays in Sicily there are many young adults waiting for the recognition of their status, often with

a rejection and a pending appeal, who find it difficult to move towards the much-wished autonomy. From this point of view, the fragmentary nature of the reception system and the difficult visibility of the people who, although very young, live-in large reception centres as the CAS (Emergency Reception Centres), makes the implementation of pathways toward autonomy even more demanding. Hence the importance of paying the utmost attention to the quality of the interventions that are carried out on the territory, considering unaccompanied migrant minors as citizens to all intents and purposes.

M. said that he has no more dreams. I do not believe it, I answered. But he seemed determined to stop dreaming. He said he just wants to study. Isn't it a dream to study? The future for M. could be made of books[2].

Saama means *tomorrow* in Mandinka. A language spoken by many in Palermo, Marsala, Agrigento and many other cities and villages in Sicily. We chose this word because SAAMA is a project based on the idea of a possible future for all those boys and girls who have come to our territory alone. A future made of care and enhancement of their skills. A future built on the idea of migration as resource and opportunity for all of us.

References

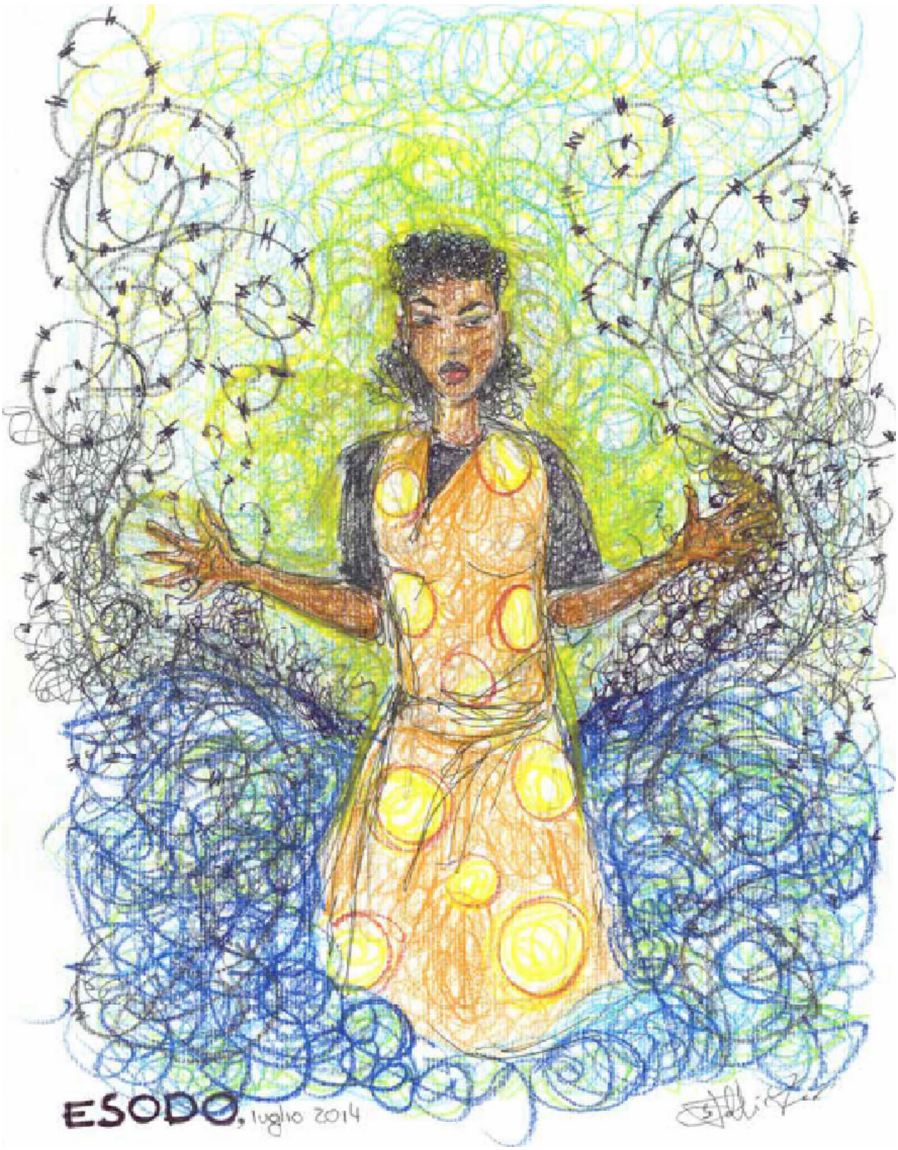
Agostinetto L. (2017), "La pratica educativa con i minori stranieri non accompagnati (The educational practice with unaccompanied migrant children)", *Studium Educationis*, 18, 3, ottobre.

ISMU (2019), *Rapporto "A un bivio: la transizione all'età adulta dei minori stranieri non accompagnati in Italia"*, UNICEF, UNHCR, OIM, available at: https://www.ismu.org/a-un-bivio-la-transizione-alleta-adulta-dei-minosri-stranieri-non-accompagnati/).

Report statistici sulla presenza dei MSNA in Italia, https://www.lavoro.gov.it/temi-e-priorita/immigrazione/focus-on/minori-stranieri/Pagine/Dati-minori-stranieri-non-accompagnati.aspx.

Morgano F. (2020), *Approfondimento n. 4/luglio 2020, Unaccompanied Minors (UAMS) in the European Union*, CESPI available at: https://www.cespi.it/sites/default/files/osservatori/allegati/approf._4_-_uams_in_the_eu_0.pdf).

[2] Interview with M. recorded 12/12/2019.



Esodo

9. Lessons learned from the facts on the ground and political demands for future agency

by Roberta T. Di Rosa

1. Introduction

Since the first "emergency migration" event in Italy (1990s), social work represented the interface and the filter between the Italian reception system and migrants, acting for initial assessment, orientation and "sorting" of migrants into the various local and national welfare agencies and in the network of public and private services within the reception system (Simone, 2020).

In Italy, we still observe a prevailing focus of social work intervention in the first reception or management of migrants in centres, that can be understood in relation to the master narrative of migration predominant in Italy. There is still a lack of a clear mandate for social work to offer a contribution towards social justice and protection of human rights, going beyond their professional contribution in the reception system. Currently, national policies seem unable to decide what to do for immigrants, concentrating almost exclusively on entry and security issues (Di Rosa, 2017a); in fact, it may be noted that interventions aimed at containment or refoulement of migrant flows do receive significant financial resources, whereas the inclusion and integration of legal immigrants is seen as a secondary investment (Barberis, 2010).

Moving towards the acceptance and coexistence of this diversity entails introducing structural changes in society and political institutions (Torres, 2011). Migrant access to (and exclusion from) welfare services has been widely discussed (Calavita, 2005; Barn, 2008; Zincone, 2011; Baldwin-Edwards, 2012: Saraceno *et al.*, 2013).

Only recently, it is being developing the reflection on the political and social potential of interventions aimed at integration and social cohesion through the development of studies and research about di best practices in intervention and training for social workers (Spinelli, 2013; Barberis, Boc-

cagni, 2017; Di Rosa *et al.*, 2019; Marzo, 2017; Pattaro, Nigris, 2018). Also, the social work training and further education is currently focusing on the development of intercultural professional skills, on the development of helping relationships in situations of cultural diversity, to re-direct interventions in the migration field, by investing in competences and responsibilities (Blunt, 2007; Shier *et al.*, 2011; Cohen-Emerique, 2017; Di Rosa, 2017a). Beyond these competences, on the light of the rising awareness of the international dimension in social work praxis and education, it seems essential to support social work in the accrual of a professional awareness towards new form of politic, civic, and social engagement to protect vulnerability, but also in order to bring about individual and collective well-being.

2. Social work with migrants in relation to legislative changes

In Italy, the phenomenon of immigration is mainly addressed in terms of security and in an alarmist sense. This contributes to creating the conditions for the emergence in society of strong forms of racism and prejudice against migrants, which hinder their access to opportunities and the pursuit of social justice. From the point of view of social policies, a micro-regulation model prevails in which the management of the issue is connected to local welfare resources and cultures and not to the rules set at a central level (Di Rosa, 2017a; Cesareo, 2020); while interventions aimed at containing or rejecting flows have considerable financial resources, the insertion and integration of legal immigrants is considered a secondary investment (Barberis, 2010).

Regarding the political response to immigration in recent Italian history, it is possible to discern four distinct phases (Di Rosa *et al.*, 2021). In a first moment, up until the 1980s, when Italy was a strictly mono-cultural country, legislation referred to 1931 and had the sole aim of public safety, stipulating the obligation for immigrants to present themselves to Italian authorities in order to register their presence. In this period, the key words on migration were security and economic utility. In 1986 the first specific regulations were issued (L. 943/1986), which perceived immigrants as merely employed workers. At the beginning of the following decade, law L. 39/1990, known as the *Legge Martelli* was issued, placing those immigrants in the labour market at the centre of the debate and aiming to regulate the flows of manual labour in support of national economic activity.

In 1998 we witness the opening up to a process of social integration. The first systematic regulation regarding immigration only came into effect with law L. 40/1998, signed by the Ministers for Social Solidarity and Home

Affairs, a manifestation of awareness of the established structural character of immigration and the need for a carefully detailed, long-term, programme. In fact, Italian legislation outlines a system encouraging the integration of immigrants, via the acknowledgement, for legitimate foreigners, of the same right of access to services as Italians. At the same time, it states that the fundamental right to an education must be guaranteed to all (including illegal minors), as well as a general right to health services (also extended to illegal adults), albeit only in the case of urgent operations.

This extremely positive moment, which had led Italy to move towards a multicultural future, came to an abrupt halt and a step backwards towards an act of closure with law L. 189/2002, known as the law *Bossi-Fini*, there was a return to the prevailing "criterion of the immigrant's economic utility, relegating to a second level other determining factors for integration, such as identitary elements or social and cultural capital […]. From this moment, attention to the subjectivity of the immigrant seems drastically reduced, as is the fostering of approaches geared towards harmonious integration into the hosting country (Di Rosa, 2017a, p. 123).

A further negative shift occurred in 2018 with the predominance of a political narrative centred solely on the issue of security. Two decrees (October 4, 2018, no. 113, better known as the Security decree or the Salvini decree), which became law L. 132/2018, and the decree of June 14, 2019, no. 53 (second Security decree), which became law 77/2019, placed the phenomenon of immigration exclusively in an overall framework of national security, providing for further measures to prevent arrivals and permanent stays in Italy; measures for control have been tightened in Italy, while rescue and safeguard operations carried out at sea are beginning to be criminalized. Between the end of 2018 and the beginning of 2019, the boundaries, for regulations regarding the system for welcoming, were redefined, profoundly reducing the immigrants' exercise of their rights, as well as those of the aid workers and the reception bodies. As we shall see subsequently, these changes in the regulations, albeit described extremely synthetically, represent a decisive element in understanding the changes in the role, today, of the social services in the immigration sector.

Starting from the 2018 Security decree, there was a change in the conception of the reception centres, which lost their role as departure point on the path to integration, to become places where the presence of migrants was to be considered a question of law and order (Spinelli, Accorinti, 2019). Being a transitory, extraordinary, and temporary situation, there it was no longer considered necessary to provide adequate social services and access to territorial health services, nor to create opportunities for migrants to interact with the

local context, nor to spend time on the handling of trauma and enhancement of skills geared towards entering the labour market. A significant reduction in the recognition of rights to social and health services, will have far-reaching consequences with regard to potential social inclusion (Open Polis, 2019).

It appears evident that the current system of government presents at least two main lines of risk: on one hand, the danger of wasting, if not excluding and sometimes criminalizing, the human potential represented by migrants, asylum seekers, and in particular by the UAMs; on the other, the risk of turning errors and deficiencies into social tension and discord, not to mention general instability, both for immigrants and the local population (Vassallo Paleologo, 2018; Peris Cancio, 2019).

> The political centrality of the immigration issue is evident […] it lends itself, as effectively as few others, to tracing the boundaries between parties and signaling to voters' ideological affiliations (which, with the advent of the new populist and nativist right-wingers, have not disappeared but have simply changed their skin). The debate, in these cases, tends towards a level of rationality that is inversely proportional to the seriousness of its implications, in the sense that the more serious the issues are, the more irrational the attitude they inspire (Battistelli, 2021, p. 63).

Where conflicts are more frequent it is possible to verify how much the rhetoric of populists and nativists has a hold, but also how much social deprivation, administrative neglect and political isolation of the citizen's count. The attitude that takes shape spontaneously is not a priori opposition to "foreigners", but rather a feeling of deprivation in the treatment received by institutions, compared with the "privileges" that would be enjoyed by them. Much more than ideological or identity-based, the real battleground is the use of the difficult and sometimes uncertain welfare provisions (Pattaro, 2018).

Social work role, in the last few years, has been threatened by changes in regulations and policies that, in the name of security and cuts in reception costs, risks engendering more illegality and social marginalization, more exploitation and exclusion, the consequences of which, in terms of social unrest, are more and more evident everywhere and especially on the outskirts of cities. Social workers risk every day, wittingly or unwittingly, to collude with these political orientation's contrary to ethics and professional mandate, attempting to navigate organizational imperatives that compromise their professional values, living a strong disjuncture between our professional proclamations and commitment to an anti-oppressive/ethical social justice practice and the realities of our activities (Jönnson, 2014).

As has been described in other previous studies (Ferguson, Lavalette, 2006; Loakimidis, Teloni, 2013), social workers are increasingly facing

"loyalty problems" based on the discrepancy and sometimes conflict of interests between the needs of "service users" and the new practices and methods of social work.

The greatest risk facing social work, in the wake of the most recent legislation dating 2018, is that of becoming a social control agent, instrumentalized by a system that presents migrants as a danger to be managed. In the current system, the dividing line between "aid" and "control" is more and more indistinct, the possibility of being heard, on the part of professional social service operators, is being reduced considerably (Di Rosa, 2021).

In this complex world of migrations, the operational choices of each professional are obviously linked to his ethical and civil position. In the reality of services for migrants, there is a plurality of solutions, which are different declinations of these dilemmas, and they are not always resolved according to the code of ethics and the fundamental principles of social work.

By consciously accepting the existence of this grey area, sometimes dark, of the relationship with migrants in the Italian reception system, the experiences narrated by the colleagues who have preceded me acquire even greater value, in comparison of some negative realities that do exist. They have shown the other face of social action, that of total and unconditional commitment to safeguarding human life and rights.

3. Widening the vision, expanding the sphere of action against global injustice

Even if social work has played a central role in the reception system, the analysis of the Italian situation shows that, instead, it has not played a very decisive role in the implementation of national immigration policies and in so-called integration policies, remaining more linked to the management of reception and issues related to vulnerability than to the development of new citizenships. This is a function of the social work that should be rediscovered and strongly implemented by professionals, with an action of claiming their participation in the planning tables of social policies.

Moreover, the awareness of the now stable presence of people with a migrant background in Italy should lead the social service to invest heavily in another field of intervention, that of community intervention with immigrants who are legally resident in Italy, with various levels of integration in local communities. These are "nearly citizens" that can approach social services for the same requirements as their indigenous citizens, but which maintain peculiar traits to which attention and specific expertise should be directed.

Another direction in which to invest in terms of community work is in the promotion of participation at the level of associationism, in order to foster a sense of responsibility and encourage participation in public life (Pattaro, 2018). On the professional level, there is a need for a collaborative relationship with immigrant associations, enhancing existing informal networks among "less protected" subjects, because of their weak legal status, and taking on an active role in the promotion, development and advancement of all integrated social policies aimed at fostering social and civic advancement, emancipation and responsibility within the community and minority groups, including activities that encourage dialogue and integration.

This entails building a bridge between the various parties in order to accompany them towards mutual recognition in a serene and non-prejudicial context, where migrants may find access to services (health, social services), social integration paths (neighbourhoods, schools), protection of cultural specificities (associations) and prevention of violence and discrimination.

At the same time, the resident population there may find social reassurance and help in redefining the concept of citizenship in the social sense, with sensitization as regards avoidance of stereotypes and prejudices and education towards democratic coexistence.

As declared in *The Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development: Commitment to Action* (2012) by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW), it is important to enable social workers to make a stronger contribution to the impact of human rights in order to fight global injustices and inequalities and promote human rights for everybody irrespective of their socioeconomic and legal status. In such circumstances, social work should relate global transformations with local and national issues. Practitioners are also speaking subjects on behalf of the collective social imaginary. Despite good intentions they remain within a society that exerts pressure on them. Their work is made of everydayness therefore of stereotypes, routines, and collective meanings (Olivetti Manoukian *et al.*, 2003).

Translating these indications in concrete terms, with respect to the Italian reality, it can be observed that there is an urgent need to develop certain areas of social work that go beyond the emergency and management of migration as a security action. Community intervention is becoming increasingly necessary also in response to the racism and rejection that are spreading throughout Italy, putting at risk the even limited integration laboriously achieved by migrant families. Mainly in the case of long resident immigrants, a specific attention is needed in terms of promoting participation to deal with the urgent

necessity to satisfy not only needs and essential rights (Barberis, Boccagni, 2017), but also the higher level of community and social needs and rights, something that is even more pressing at a moment in history when openly nationalistic and discriminatory episodes are becoming more frequent.

One of the areas in which social work intervention should be urgently strengthened is the care of the relations of coexistence in the territories, where social workers could act as interface between migrants and the local population "placing them in a network with a view to reciprocal enhancement" (Pattaro, 2018, p. 8); this requires, for example, a strong commitment for the social worker in sensitizing the resident population, paying attention to the socio-relational dimension of the processes of insertion locally, and monitoring the risks of conflict or tensions linked to co-habitation, especially in multi-ethnic housing.

If accompanied in an appropriate manner, immigration favours the accumulation of human capital and development: the social worker's commitment, therefore, must be directed towards an innovative approach based on recognition and participation, which cannot disregard the promotion of social rights, the realization of equal opportunities and the valorisation of subjective resources.

Only in this way will it be possible to achieve a culture of acceptance and respect for differences, stem the spread of stereotypes and prejudices against immigrants and at the same time contribute to the implementation of interventions oriented to the pursuit of a substantial type of justice.

4. Towards professional awareness of social work international dimension

Globalization, migration, and diversity need to become mainstream concepts in contemporary social work (Cheetham, 1972; Ewalt *et al.*, 1996; Lyons, 2006), with a strong investment in defining the shared standards necessary for the development of professional mobility, via the funding of international research and training programmes aimed at strengthening "common values, knowledge and skills" (Harris, 1997, p. 429).

National focus on vulnerabilities and responding to immediate needs has very often neglected to consider the global contexts of issues impacting on the migrant such as colonialism, slavery, wars and exploitations (Jönnson, 2014); in Italy, these issues are still quite unexplored, even if the debate has been open for years on questions surrounding the methodological framework of practices and the universality of social work val-

ues and practice of international social work (Williams, Mekada, 2014). In fact, it is observed that the "international" in the social work profession has developed slowly in Italian reality (Di Rosa *et al.*, 2021), by contrast with happened all around the world (Lyons, 2006; Healy, 2008; Dominelli, 2010), leaving many open questions about how forging robust and flexible responses to issues of migration.

The comprehension difficulties of the professional worker in helping relationships with migrants concern the multiple variables of a personal, social and cultural nature, the critical aspects of carrying out everyday life, the ability to find and accept help and the attitude of perceived hostility that the immigrants might adopt in everyday contexts (Argento, 2017). These factors often render the helping process problematic, especially in the passage from the cognitive phase to the subsequent shift to the evaluative phase and the completion of the intervention of control/support and to the smoothing over the complexity generated by "the interweave of multiple variables of a personal, social, and cultural nature that affect the path towards insertion: resources and difficulties of every member, functioning of the family, capacity to find and accept help, as well as the welcoming features or hostility of context" (Dellavalle, 2012, p. 75).

At this time in history, it seems essential to secure the bonds between professional practice and the founding principles: "principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversity, constitute the bedrock of the social services", as stated in the *Global Definition of Social Work*. At the same time, there is a need to reaffirm advocacy (Bressani, 2013) and policy practice (Campanini, 2015), something that the social workers can address with regard to institutions dealing with migrants, so as to help foster eligibility to one's rights, as well as ways of facilitating access to services, and more generally, foster the establishment of services that might respond to the needs of the new Italian citizens.

> Developing new approaches to grappling with ethical dilemmas when participating in the implementation of unjust policies; pioneering responsive methods for social workers to engage in dialogue with varied stakeholders to address xenophobia, nationalism, restrictive migration policies; and promoting innovative practices for the integration of asylum seekers and refugees are all vitally needed" (Popescu, Libal, 2018, p. viii).

However, the current moment appears to be one in which the link with the international community and with international practices of action and training is becoming more urgent. Alongside existing challenges, there are new ones involving social workers in world-scale intervention processes, such as

trafficking in human lives, responses to disasters and now the Covid-19 pandemic calling for a need to provide responses to transnational phenomena.

> Intensification of the forces of globalization has increased attention to international aspects of social work. In many ways, the "distance" between the local and the global has been shrinking, resulting in recognition that we face problems that cannot be solved within the boundaries of a nation-state (Healy, 2014, p. 370).

Consequently, in addition to the more operational competences, social workers need to be supported by training, in-service training and supervision, in order to acquire, along with updated methods and knowledge, full awareness of the dictates of their deontological code; in accordance with this, there should be an affirmation of their role as agents of social justice, something that is often lost in the difficult working conditions and emergencies of the daily routine of receiving migrants (Kohli, 2006).

Also, it would be appropriate to develop a scientific and methodological commitment to understanding and knowing the complex process of international migration and its connections with the local situations in which it operates. Even the small local context becomes international and influenced by globalisation: this is a concept that the 21st century social worker must have very clear, otherwise all his territorial work will be meaningless, because it will lack connections with the surrounding reality.

In Italy, it remains to be developed, in particular, "the integration of exemplars and approaches to social work practice regarding migration as an issue in advancing social justice and human rights" (Popescu, Libal, 2018, p. x). This line of professional development could well benefit from connection and exchange with the international community (Raya, Lopez Pelaez, 2017).

References

Argento G. (2017), "Servizio Sociale e famiglie straniere", *Studi Emigrazione. International Journal of Migration Studies*, 206, pp. 275-290.

Baldwin-Edwards M. (2012),"The Southern European model of immigration", in M. Oko´lski (*ed.*), *European Immigrations*, AUP, Amsterdam, pp. 149-158.

Barberis E. (2010), "Il ruolo degli operatori sociali dell'immigrazione nel welfare locale", *Autonomie Locali e Servizi Sociali*, 33, 1, pp. 45-60.

Barberis E., Boccagni P. (2017), *Il lavoro sociale con le persone immigrate*, Maggioli, Bologna.

Barn R. (2008), *Dealing with social services: migrants' experiences and perceptions of Institution*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg.

Bressani R (2013), "Advocacy", in A. Campanini (a cura di), *Nuovo dizionario di servizio sociale*, Carocci, Roma, pp. 31-33.
Calavita K. (2005), *Immigrants at the Margins*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
Cesareo V. (2020), "1994-2019: Twenty-five Years of Migrations to Italy", in V. Cesareo (*ed.*), *The Twenty-fifth Italian Report on Migrations 2019*, Fondazione ISMU, Milano, pp. 5-18.
Dellavalle M. (2012), "Valutare e sostenere la genitorialità in contesti interculturali. La prospettiva del servizio sociale", *Minori e Giustizia*, 2, pp. 71-79.
Di Rosa R.T. (2017a), "Politiche, servizi e migranti. Questioni aperte sull'integrazione", *La Rivista delle Politiche Sociali*, 1, pp. 121-131.
Di Rosa R.T. (2017b), "Towards Cross-cultural Social Work. A Teaching Approach for Development of Intercultural Competences", *Comunitania. International Journal of Social Work and Social Sciences*, 13, pp. 121-135.
Di Rosa R.T. (2021), "International Social Work: Professional Debates about Global and Local Practices", in V. Favarò, S. Marcenò (*eds.*), *Rethinking Borders. Decolonizing Knowledge and Categories*, UnipaPress, Palermo, vol. 3, pp. 129-153.
Di Rosa R.T., Gerbino G., Simone D. (2021), "Social Work with Refugees and Migrants in Italy", in R. Roßkopf, K. Heilmann (*eds.*), *International Social Work and Forced Migration*, Opladen, Berlin, Verlag Barbara Budrich; Toronto, pp. 111-137.
Di Rosa R.T., Gucciardo G., Argento G. Leonforte S. (2019), *Leggere, scrivere, esserci. Minori stranieri non accompagnati: bisogni formativi e processi di inclusione*, FrancoAngeli, Milano.
Dominelli L. (2010), *Social work in a globalizing world*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
Healy L.M. (2008), *International Social Work. Professional Action in an Interdipendent World*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2nd ed.
Jönsson J.H. (2014), "Local Reactions to Global Problems: Undocumented Immigrants and Social Work", *The British Journal of Social Work*, 44, suppl_1, June, pp. i35-i52.
Lyons K. (2006), "Globalization and social work: international and local implications", *British Journal of Social Work*, 36, 3, pp. 365-380.
Marzo P. (a cura di) (2017), *Accoglienze provvisorie*, La Meridiana, Bari.
OpenPolis (2019), *Rapporto Centri di Italia. La sicurezza dell'esclusione*, available at: https://www.openpolis.it/esercizi/la-stretta-del-decreto-sicurezza-al-sistema-di-accoglienza/ (accessed on May 16, 2020).
Pattaro Amaral F., Bartholini I., Di Rosa R.T., Miranda Medina C. (*eds.*) (2018), *Migrations: a global welfare challenge. Policies, practices and contemporary vulnerabilities*, Corporación Universitaria Americana, Barranquilla.
Pattaro C. (2018), "Introduzione. Le sfide delle migrazioni, le sfide dell'aiuto", in C. Pattaro, D. Nigris (a cura di) (2018), *Le sfide dell'aiuto. Assistenti sociali nel quotidiano dell'integrazione*, FrancoAngeli, Milano.
Peris Cancio L. (2019), "Peggio se vulnerabili: gli effetti del Decreto Sicurezza sui minori non accompagnati", *Minori e Giustizia*, 1, pp. 81-92.

Raya E., Lopez Pelaez A. (2017), "Social Work Research: innovating to respond to the challenges of a complex world", in E. Raya, A. Lopez Pelaez (*eds.*), *Social Work Research and practice. Contributing to a science of social work*, Thomson Reuters-Aranzadi, Madrid, pp. 21-32.

Santagati M., Colussi E. (a cura di) (2020), *Alunni con background migratorio in Italia. Le opportunità oltre gli ostacoli. Rapporto nazionale*, Fondazione ISMU, Milano, pp. 157-196.

Saraceno C., Sartor N., Sciortino G. (a cura di) (2013), *Stranieri e diseguali. Le disuguaglianze nei diritti e nelle condizioni di vita degli immigrati*, il Mulino, Bologna.

Simone D. (2020), "Servizio sociale e immigrazione", in A. Campanini (a cura di), *Gli ambiti di intervento del servizio sociale*, Carocci, Roma, pp. 217-236.

Spinelli E. (2013), "Servizio sociale e (im)migrazione", in A. Campanini (a cura di), *Nuovo Dizionario di Servizio Sociale*, Carocci, Roma, pp. 613-616.

Spinelli E., Accorinti M. (2019), "L'attività degli operatori sociali tra aiuto e controllo nel nuovo sistema di accoglienza", *La Rivista delle Politiche Sociali*, 2, pp. 103-120.

Torres J. (2011), "La cuestión de la diversidad en un mundo en continuo cambio", in E. Gualda (*ed.*), *Inmigración, ciudadanía y gestión de la diversidad*, Universidad Internacional de Andalucía, Sevilla, pp. 85-100.

Vassallo Paleologo F. (2018), "La disciplina in materia di minori stranieri non accompagnati nella legge 47/2017", in S. Greco, G. Tumminelli (a cura di), *Migrazioni in Sicilia 2017*, Mimesis, Milano-Udine, pp. 242-250.

Williams C., Graham M. (2014), "'A World on the Move": Migration, Mobilities and Social Work", *The British Journal of Social Work*, 44, suppl_1, June, Pp. i1-i17.

Zincone G. (2011), "The case of Italy", in G. Zincone *et al.*, *Migration Policymaking in Europe*, AUP, Amsterdam, pp. 247-290.

 ISBN 9788835134329

Part II
Activism and practical approaches: creating spaces of belonging

 ISBN 9788835134329

 ISBN 9788835134329

10. Empowering refugees and migrants: experiences in Sicily

by Ravinder Barn

1. Introduction

This chapter is an extended version of a presentation made at the University of Palermo for a three-day conference on the theme of Migration and Societies at the Italian Coast: Human lives, reception system and social work approaches. This conference took place online during the 2020 pandemic and included a range of topics and perspectives on the theme of migration. Located within a framework of social exclusion, this chapter focuses on the notion of empowerment and how this can be utilised to help improve the situation of refugees and migrants in Sicily in general, and unaccompanied minors in particular.

1.1. Background

The southern border of Italy, over the last several years, has been a point of arrival and reception of significant numbers of refugees and asylum-seekers. In relation to young people who travel alone or become separated during their journey, between 2015-2018, Sicily was the Italian Region that welcomed the largest number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC), with an acceptance rate of 43.6% of the total number (Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, 2018). According to international helping agencies, the reception system in Italy has not always been adapted to the specific needs of these children (Save the Children, 2019). The Table below shows the figures from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and the demographic representation of migrants per region. With over 40% of the migrant population, it is evident that Sicily as a region faces particular challenges in

relation to the integration and empowerment of this grouping. In the relatively recent peak of migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea in search of safety and protection, Sicily, after Greece, became the second main area of arrival in Europe.

Table 1 – Demographic Representation of Migrants Per Region (Italy, 2016)

Region	*Presence*	*%*
Sicily	7,052	40.9
calabria	1,460	8.5
Emilia Romagna	1,065	6.2
Lombardia	1,029	6.0
Puglia	907	5.3
Lazio	888	5.1
Campania	853	4.9
Sardina	711	4.1
Friuli Venezia Giulia	661	3.8
Tuscany	625	3.6
Piemonte	539	3.1
Veneto	315	1.8
Basilicata	301	1.7
Liguria	259	1.5
Marche	194	1.1
Abruzzo	128	0.7
Molise	79	0.6
Autonomous Province of Bolzano	79	0.5
Autonomous Province of Trento	62	0.4
Umbria	14	0.1
Valled'Aosta	3	0.0
Total		100.0

Source: Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (2016), p. 3

According to Todaro and Romano (2019) however, there has been a marked decrease in the number of sea landings since 2017. It is reported that between January and December 2018, a total of 23,370 migrants arrived in Italy by sea. This amounted to a 93% decrease compared to 2016. The vast majority of non-EU migrants who land on the shores of Sicily include largely males under the age of 40 from north Africa, and the horn of Africa. With an ageing population, and a falling birth rate, there is a demographic advantage of these arrivals to the Italian economy. The increasing hostile

immigration environment however has led to a significant decline in their numbers. Additionally, the link between irregular migration and organised crime has become an important challenge. Such entanglement in organised crime becomes a route to social exclusion and disadvantage. The term social exclusion is "a shorthand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health, poverty and family breakdown" (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998). Moreover, Social exclusion is the gateway to discrimination and disadvantage. For our purposes here, in relation to refugees and migrants, it is important to understand four dimensions of exclusion:

- impoverishment, exclusion from adequate income or resources;
- labour market exclusion;
- service exclusion;
- exclusion from social relations.

1.2. Empowerment

Given the potential for disadvantage and discrimination, the notion of empowerment provides us with an important lens from which to understand the needs and concerns of refugees and migrants. As a concept, empowerment has had much currency over the last several decades and yet it remains theoretically elusive. Woodall *et al.* (2012) define empowerment as "an approach to enable people who lack power to become more powerful and gain some degree of control over their lives…" (ivi, p. 742). So, are we to understand empowerment as something that takes place at the level of the individual? If so, how does this lead to crucial structural/systemic change that is sustainable? Spencer (2014) conceptualised empowerment to operate at the level of the individual and/or the community. Such an approach would help move beyond increasing self-efficacy, self-confidence, and self-esteem of an individual to help tackle structures of disadvantage and discrimination at the level of the community.

Importantly, a broader framework that incorporates the three levels of the individual (micro), the community (meso), and society (macro) is deemed to be necessary to challenge power structures through processes of community organisation, community building and development and advocacy (Labonte, 1994). Such an approach would entail social and community work processes that help to engender autonomy and control over events that influence everyday life whilst transforming relations of power.

Arguably, the process of empowerment is not passive. It requires an action (Richards, 2010). So, in other words, it is not something that can be simply bestowed upon individuals, families, groups, and communities. The concept of empowerment therefore must be related in a meaningful fashion to the notions of equality, agency/autonomy, self-confidence, self-efficacy/resilience, dignity, belonging, social connectedness/social inclusion, and full potential/capacity building.

1.2.1. Empowerment and refugees and migrants

Within the context of social exclusion and disadvantage and discrimination experienced by migrants and refugees, an empowerment framework that seeks to operate at three levels could be useful:

- firstly, to develop individual self-efficacy, self-esteem, and confidence in one's own capacity;
- secondly, to strengthen, to help develop, to support individuals, families, groups, and communities to achieve sustained empowerment;
- and finally, increasing social, economic, political, cultural/spiritual strength of individuals, families, groups, and communities, through challenging systems and structures of power that maintain disadvantage and discrimination; and to achieve sustained social change and social justice.

Rania *et al.* (2018) report that much of the previous research that can be drawn upon to understand the needs and concerns of refugees and migrants has focused upon integration processes (Vacchiano, Jiménez, 2011; Giovannetti, 2016), emotional & behavioural problems (Derluyn *et al.*, 2008, Thommensen *et al.*, 2013), ethnic identity and ethnic related stress (Petersen *et al.*, 2012), and Vocational identity with regard to study and work (Oppedal *et al.*, 2017). An understanding of such research is crucial for professionals and organisations seeking to operate within a framework of empowerment. In their study Todaro and Romano (2019) cite two key projects – "Giocherenda" and "Ragazzi Harraga" – in the city of Palermo. These projects serve as good examples of empowerment where the key aim is to tackle poverty and marginalisation and to help achieve integration. The focus of the work is at the three levels mentioned above to bring about sustained change. For example, in providing guidance to unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people, project Ragazzi Harraga seeks to strengthen the existing networks of private and public actors to provide employment opportunities and to encourage possibilities for interculturalism and active citizenship. This includes a range of actions to address important challenges such as "lack of pedagogical moni-

toring, consistence and coherence of their learning paths, the difficulty in accessing reception facilities, the lack of connection among institutional actors" (Todaro, Romano, 2019, p. II).

2. Child well-being and empowerment of unaccompanied minors

In partnership with Professor Roberta Di Rosa, and Gabriella Argento, the author engaged in a study of unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors in Sicily in 2018 (Barn, Di Rosa, Argento, 2020). Using a mixed-methods approach involving written exercises; focus group discussions, 1-1 interviews, and drawings to elicit children's views and experiences, this study included a total of 50 UASC who were recruited from schools and migrant centres (all boys, aged between 16-17 years old). Except for two Bangladeshi UASC, the vast majority of the participants were from African countries including Burkina Faso, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Senegal, Tunisia, and Bangladesh. The study adhered to ethical considerations to preserve anonymity, confidentiality, informed consent, and data storage.

Our research was very much informed by the notion of childhood as a structural category, and an axis of difference alongside that of childhood as a social construction. We focused on child wellbeing within a broader framework of key questions around child agency, universality of childhood, and the locality and diversity of childhood (Holloway, Valentine, 2000; Jenks, 2005). These areas of focus can therefore help frame our thinking around empowerment and UASC.

Child well-being is defined in many ways. Indeed, a wide variety of domains and measures are used to assess levels of child wellbeing. The different foci of wellbeing initiatives (for example on needs, poverty, quality of life, social exclusion, or children's rights) has implications for the type of policies and programmes that are supported. There is some emerging consensus that child well-being is multi-dimensional, should include dimensions of physical, emotional, and social wellbeing; should focus on the immediate lives of children but also consider their future lives; and should incorporate some subjective as well as objective measures (Statham, Chase, 2010).

Our study (Barn, Di Rosa, Argento, 2020) shows that some of the key issues and concerns involving UASC included *hosting conditions*, *social cohesion*, *(un)belonging*, and the maintenance of *social and personal relationships* (including family re-unification in the European Union). Moreover, *building a stable future* is the ultimate goal for UASC through secure immi-

gration status, education and training, and job security. Such goals can be rather elusive for these youngsters without the help and support of relevant professionals in the domains of education and training, health, housing, and social care. Requisite action at different levels (micro, meso, and macro) is necessary to help achieve the goals of empowerment, security, stability, and sustainability of UASC (Oppedal *et al.*, 2017). This will ultimately benefit society in which these youngsters find themselves. It is evident that much can be achieved in improving the hosting conditions for UASC by embedding these structures within mainstream services, and in providing adequate opportunities for a stable future (Derluyn, 2018).

UASC in our study emphasised the importance of social and personal relationships in their life. Although they were far from their home and family, it was evident that maintaining contact with their personal and social networks was crucial to them for their own well-being. Parents (mothers in particular) were identified as key individuals who needed to be kept informed with updates. Notably, maintaining contact with family and friends back home was a challenge for UASC, and for their well-being. Several reasons were put forward to explain this challenge including lack of money, lack of facility, and family expectations and pressures. The sending of remittances to mothers, however small, were considered vital but also a key challenge.

How UASC can be supported and empowered to help maintain their social and personal relationships is a key area for intervention. Operators in education, migrant centres and other settings could work with these young people to build a rapport, gain their trust, help them in managing relationships both in Sicily and back in their home countries. The emotional and financial pressures on these young people need recognition in order to target appropriate help and support. In their exploration of intervention models in the process of supporting UASC, Rania *et al.* (2018) stress the importance of inclusion, active citizenship, and a sense of belonging. Focusing on the meso level in the empowerment of UASC, they argue that the "community context can be considered the privileged dimension of social action aimed at the prevention and protection of young people and vulnerable groups of citizens affected by complex situations" (Rania *et al.*, 2018, p. 103).

Indeed, the notions of inclusion, active citizenship and a sense of belonging are key ingredients in the process of integration. And this remains a key challenge for nation-states. Indeed, care and support provided to UASC varies across countries and regions. Parusel (2017, p. 13) identifies "integration, education and work opportunities", alongside "positive asylum decision and permanent residence" as key factors in the process of integration. Young people in our study stressed the importance of education and training to help

secure adequate job opportunities. They also expressed their capability, resilience, and resourcefulness in the arduous journeys they had made and how empowering the process had been for them. Recognition of the efforts of key operators within educational settings and migrant centres was in evidence on the part of our participants who believed that with such professional and organisational help and support, there were possibilities of sustained change and social justice.

The notion of belonging and its relevance to the situation of UASC is central in the understanding of their context. Our study showed that at times small changes can help empower young people to achieve a sense of belonging. For example, the availability of wi-fi in the centres/shelters in which these young people reside could help empower them and transform their lives in terms of social connectedness with their home country and their current landscape. Young people in our study expressed a sense of boredom within the confines of their migrant centres, and wished to engage with local boys in a game of football, etc. Thus, empowerment through leisure activities including outdoor sport has the potential to help improve psycho-social well-being, as well as help with a sense of belonging. Empowerment to help generate a sense of belonging is essential to achieve social cohesiveness, and to prevent alienation, disengagement, and disillusionment.

3. Conclusion

The notion of empowerment is a useful framework from which to not only understand the situation of UASC, but to seek to improve their lives. Through a three-level conceptualisation of empowerment that seeks to operate at the level of the individual, family, group, community, and structural systems of power; this xhapter advocates that professionals in education, health, housing, and social care settings need to develop holistic ways of working. Such practices would entail helping to improve/develop individual self-efficacy/capacity in tandem with community and systemic level social change and social justice. Partnerships with immigrant and other government and non-government organisations are essential to achieve meaningful and sustainable futures.

References

Barn R., Di Rosa R.T., Argento G. (2020), "Unaccompanied minors in Sicily: Promoting conceptualisations of child well-being through children's own subjective realities", in L. Gaitán, Y. Pechtelidis, C. Tomas, N. Fernandes (*eds.*), *Children's Lives in southern Europe: Contemporary challenges and risks*, Edgar Edward, Cheltenham.

Derluyn I. (2018), "A critical analysis of the creation of separated care structures for unaccompanied refugee minors", *Children and Youth Services Review*, 92, pp. 22-29.

Derluyn I., Broekaert E. (2008), "Unaccompanied refugee children and adolescents: The glaring contrast between a legal and a psychological perspective", *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, 31, 4, pp. 319-330.

Giovannetti M. (2017), "Reception and Protection Policies for Unaccompanied Foreign Minors in Italy", *Social Work & Society*, 15, 2, pp. 1-22.

Holloway S.L., Valentine G. (*eds.*) (2000), *Children's Geographies: Playing, Living, Learning*, Routledge, London.

Jenks C. (*ed.*) (2005), *Critical Concepts in Sociology*, Routledge, London.

Labonte R. (1994), "Health promotion and empowerment: reflections on professional practice", *Health Education Quarterly*, 21, 2, pp. 253-268.

Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (2018), *Foreigners in the Italian Labour Market, Eighth Annual Report*, July, https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/librarydoc/foreigners-in-the-italian-labour-market-eighth-annual-report, accessed on 16 November 2020.

Oppedal B., Guribye E., Kroger J. (2017), "Vocational identity development among unaccompanied refugee minors", *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 60, pp. 145-159.

Parusel B. (2017), "Unaccompanied minors in the European Union–definitions, trends and policy overview", *Social Work & Society*, 15, 1, https://www.socwork.net/sws/article/view/501/1005, accessed on 4 November 2020.

Rania N., Migliorini L., Fagnini L. (2018), "Unaccompanied migrant minors: A comparison of new Italian interventions models", *Children and Youth Services Review*, 92, pp. 98-104.

Richards K. (2011), "Restorative justice and 'empowerment': Producing and governing active subjects through 'empowering' practices", *Critical Criminology*, 19, 2, pp. 91-105.

Save the Children (2019), *Atlante dei minori stranieri non accompagnato in Italia*, Rome.

Social Exclusion Unit (1998), *Truancy and School Exclusion: A Report by the Social Exclusion Unit*, Stationery Office.

Spencer G. (2014), "Young people and health: Towards a new conceptual framework for understanding empowerment", *Health*, 18, 1, pp. 3-22.

Statham J., Chase E. (2010), *Childhood wellbeing: A brief overview*, Childhood Wellbeing Research Centre, Loughborough.

Thommensen S., Laghi F., Cerrone C., Baiocco R., Todd B.K. (2013), "Internalizing and externalizing symptoms among unaccompanied refugee and Italian adolescents", *Children and Youth Services Review*, 35, pp. 7-10.
Todaro L., Romano F. (2019), *Impacts of refugee flows to territorial development in Europe*, ESPON, Luxembourg.
Vacchiano F., Jiménez M. (2012), "Between agency and repression: Moroccan children on the edge", *Children's geographies*, 10, 4, pp. 457-471.
Woodall J.R., Warwick-Booth L., Cross R. (2012), "Has empowerment lost its power?", *Health Education Research*, 27, 4, pp. 742-745.

11. Ethnopsychological approaches to combat trauma and vulnerability in the reception process

by Maria Chiara Monti*

1. Introduction

In 2008, I founded the Ethnopsychology Centre to offer psychological care to foreigners, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, men, women, and minors. The service was set up within the University Hospital in Palermo. I have been working for many years as a clinical psychologist and psychotherapist in a transcultural context.

Practising my work, I meet everyday people who come from very far countries, refugees, people on the run, mainly from the African countries of the Sahel region (Senegal, Mali, Gambia, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Ghana) and the countries of southern Asia (Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka). These people ask for psychological support to help them process the traumatic events and atrocities they have suffered in their countries of origin or during their journey to distant countries searching for better living conditions.

In 2015, I co-founded the non-profit association Penc Centre with a multidisciplinary work team: psychologists, anthropologists, linguistic-cultural mediators, social operators, and volunteers. Since 2017 the Ethnopsychology Centre has been cooperating with the Guarantor Authority for Children and Adolescents of the Municipality of Palermo.

But how does the encounter with the Other take place? And how does the Other adhere to psychological support?

The Penc Centre is an organization that works in a network with other private social organizations and with local social services; this allows social workers and care givers who are in contact with foreign people (operators of reception centres, social workers of local services, guardians of unaccompa-

* Translation by Sabrina Del Gallo.

nied foreign minors, etc.) to refer them and accompany them to our centre when a suspicion of vulnerability arises: states of anxiety or sadness, restlessness or irascibility, sleep disturbances, relationship difficulties, crying fits, tendency to isolation; also evident and recent signs or scars, somatic symptom disorders, such as pain, weakness, shortness of breath, without medical explanation. These are just a few examples.

The centre provides the service free of charge and without bureaucratic barriers: to access the support the people do not need health requirements; residence permits or documents of any kind; all foreign people can take advantage of an initial evaluation process and then – if there is the patient's motivation – proceed with psychological care.

The transition from the knowledge phase (evaluation phase) to taking charge (psychological support path) is decided by the patient, and never by the therapist; this step establishes the creation of the working alliance between therapist and patient, in which the objectives of the therapeutic work are defined.

In the ethnopsychological context, the cultural linguistic mediator is a very important element in this phase, since his presence reassures the patient that he can bring his cultural peculiarities into the session: his ethnic language, behaviours, values, habits are included in the setting. For this reason, it is necessary that cultural mediators have training on the methodology of mediation in the field of mental health. In fact, at the Penc Centre mediators regularly participate in training on issues relating to the approach with survivors of violence and torture, relating to the procedures for protection from exploitation and sexual abuse of minors, relating to the safeguarding child policy and Code of Conduct. The mediators are integrated into the working group, and all participate in ongoing cases supervision meetings; these working groups have the purpose of allowing the sharing of knowledge on the case and on the therapeutic project. Through the group, mediators and psychosocial workers share their feelings of resonance activated during the sessions with vulnerable patients. This part of the case discussion work is very important for the treatment and prevention of vicarious trauma and burnout. The meeting also allows mediators to share with the psycho-social operators knowledge about their country: inter-ethnic or religious conflicts, geopolitical and cultural framework (value systems, myths, traditions).

Hundreds of foreigners arrive at the Centre every year asking for psychosocial support: women alone or with children, survivors of violence, victims of human trafficking; foreign minors unaccompanied, lost, disoriented, alone; adult men, victims of torture and intentional violence, refugees for several years before arriving in Italy.

The clinical work of the Penc Centre is focused on the psychosocial approach and ethnopsychiatry: the patient is taken care of according to an ethnopsychological aid model. Psychological health and social needs are assessed and taken into account with a strong emphasis on the anthropological and cultural background of the people who come to the centre, and also giving importance to their local languages and idioms. According to our approach, the original language plays a central role in the psychological care system. Only through it, our patients can "put into words" the most horrific human events that they have often experienced.

In fact, our task as clinicians is to give voice (also through language) to people who have been forced into silence because of the atrocities they have suffered; give them voice respecting their language is the first step in giving people their dignity back, often lost in the places and experiences of extreme violence.

2. Torture and extreme trauma: the lost dignity

The concept of trauma is a very ancient concept and has long been used in medicine to indicate a wound that occurs suddenly and violently. The psychoanalysis adopts this term giving emphasis on the event able to arouse such "wound" and it draws attention to the relation between that event and the person involved. Therefore, according to a definition of Laplanche and Pontalis, the trauma is "an event in the subject's life defined by its intensity, by the subject's incapacity to respond adequately to it, and by the upheaval and long-lasting effects that it brings about in the psychical organisation". Even if many authors from different psychoanalytic school of thoughts agreed on the notion of trauma, some of them have tried to underline the difference between traumatic event and *extreme trauma caused by intentional violence*, observing some characteristics that make extreme trauma "a real enigma", as Marcelo Viñar writes, "with heterogeneous, chameleonic and changeable effects".

The extreme trauma caused by intentional violence is a life experience that marks a sharp division between the person one was before and the person one has become after it. The detention in prison camps, the segregation for torture, the collective violence marked by genocides, repressions, disappearances, and violations of human rights are something profoundly different from the shock caused by natural disasters or accidents; in the case of intentional violence, the upheaval of the psyche is an apocalypse of the inner personality and of the whole world as it was known. The experience of

intentional violence and torture represents an event of existential transition to a non-being: dehumanisation is the result of the erosion of the individual's human dignity and is an extreme form of denial of the other as human being. It is the result of structured behaviours of extreme violence, often found in contexts of geopolitical conflict, where different (ethnic, religious, political) groups are fighting each other, driven by the desire to destroy the identity of the opposing group. Therefore, the victim chosen by a group of executioners is destroyed and deprived of his/her own dignity: one is no longer man among men, but he is transformed in an empty being.

During my experience as ethnopsychologist, meeting with survivors of violence and torture, I observed that the horrors of the harrowing and dramatic actions suffered make the victims mute; words are trapped in the psyche, the events experienced can no longer be narrated but remain alive in the person's memory. This leads to a crystallisation of the events, a fixation in nightmares, in intrusive and recurrent thoughts, or even in flashbacks, however without a real sharing of the disturbing memories in the form of words. Memories of torture are often very vivid, and the patient is tormented by the impossibility of forgetting the face of his jailer, executioner, torturer, but is never able to really talk about it.

The only way for the memory of violence to manifest itself is in the form of symptoms: sleep disorders, headaches, intrusive thoughts during the day, up to severe dissociative phenomena.

3. Ethnopsychiatry: competent care for survivors of extreme violence

Ethnopsychiatry is the theoretical and methodological approach that guides the clinical work of the Penc Centre in Palermo; it is a discipline that combines psychology and anthropology in the understanding of the human suffering of people who come from other cultures, from other worlds.

The meeting with the foreign patient is based on the interest in the human being, carrier of existential values, although sometimes very different and even considered bizarre. The migrant, the refugee, confronts us with languages, customs, habits, values, and illnesses that we do not understand or that we often only know superficially, satisfied only by prejudices and stereotypes, even by mythological stories, useful only to underline the distance between our world and that of others. A distance that serves to emphasize our superiority over others, different from us. On the other hand, the ethnopsychiatry approach demand us to be very careful about judging what we do not

know: Who is this person? What is he/she saying? What language is he/she speaking? How is he/she manifesting his/her malaise?

This approach considers the role of the linguistic-cultural mediator crucial in the meeting between professional and foreigner. The mediator with his/her presence supports and legitimises the cultural diversity of the other: the client can introduce himself/herself to the professional with his/her language and describe his/her own belongings, habits and values. For example, the illness due to possession by invisible spirits is perfectly understood by the mediator who can therefore be the spokesperson of the other's world, or sometimes the dialectal idiom is accepted by the mediator because it is shared.

In a transcultural approach, it is necessary to question what we do not yet understand, in order to provide a professional and competent support and to give the person asking for help the opportunity to be recognised in his/her unique and irreducible individuality.

For effective help, it would be necessary to have an in-depth knowledge of the role a person had in his/her country of origin and the identity he/she had before arriving in our country. Healthcare professionals must never be satisfied with narrations based on poor information. I have often seen that healthcare professionals filled in patient information forms only with general information, for example indicating the country of birth or a list of transit countries, the so-called migration route, without focusing on information about the original existences. Migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers often had an identity which they had to leave behind; political activists, graduates, widows, traditional healers, spiritual guides, once they arrive on our territory, they are grouped together only considering the country of origin indicated on the registration forms: they become only Nigerians, Senegalese, Ivorians or Ghanaians, to name but a few countries. In this way the process of dehumanisation, often began months or years earlier in places of forced captivity or collective violence, continues.

The ethnopsychiatry approach deals also with geopolitics because in caring for the other is necessary to know the logic of transit places and the history of the relations between countries. Any transit place may have been significant in the existence of a migrant person because transit places can play a transformative role in people's identities. There are people who, before coming to our country, spent months, or years, in unofficial prisons in Yemen, where a large number of young men and women every year die or suffer violence and torture (water and food deprivation, sexual abuse). Some of the people we meet may have fled from refugee camps, places of deprivation and human rights violations, such as the Cox's Bazar camp in Bangladesh, considered the largest refugee camp in the world, inhabited mostly by Burmese

Rohingya refugees who fled from their country surviving persecutions, torture, and mass violence. Every year, acts of violence take place in the camp, there is a lack of basic subsistence, and no rights are guaranteed.

It is our task as healthcare professionals to know the stories and recognise the languages of the other. The linguistic-cultural mediator, a professional who works together with the clinicians and shares the patient's culture and language of origin, is the person who can introduce in the relationship between the patient and the professional (psychologist, social worker, legal practitioner) the knowledge of the migrant's identity: with the shared language is possible to give words to unspeakable facts or events and to allow people to reconnect with their roots and their lost identity.

4. The role of the reception system

Our reception system is not adequately equipped to take care of people in their individuality, to recognise their identities, but rather tends to form homogeneous groups in terms of nationality, gender identity and age group. To give just one example, sometimes groups of Nigerians are put together in the same centres, ignoring that in Nigeria there are hundreds of ethnic groups, with different religion, habits, and values. The same happens to Ghanaians, grouped all together, but perhaps not everyone knows that in Ghana there are many ethnic groups, with different histories, customs, founding myths, who may be very close in origin or even inhabit the same geographical area, but have been at war for centuries. It happens that women are brought in women's camps, minors grouped with minors; the same for adult men, sometimes separating families that are not recognised by our system (because of the traditional marriages, so widespread in other cultures). People who had shared tragedies, pain, hopes and strategies for surviving together, once they arrive in Sicily are housed in reception centres far apart, losing track of each other.

Friendships, bonds, even familiar relationships (except for first-degree relatives) are completely ignored and broken; people are separated destroying bonds, under an illusion of control by the host system.

We talk about competent care when healthcare professionals deal with these relationships, with each individual history, ethnicity, original identity, and with the identity transformations, which often occur as a result of traumatic events of extreme violence and torture.

So, who are the real people we meet? What stories they have? What atrocities have they suffered?

Refugees, asylum seekers and displaced persons who ask for our psychological help in Palermo are people who arrive in Sicily having left the Libyan coasts and crossed the Mediterranean Sea, often survivors of shipwrecks (because the conditions of the boats are increasingly precarious) and imprisonment of Libyan places of segregation (torture camps). Once they arrive in our ports, often rescued by large rescue boats, migrants begin a long identification procedure in order to regularise their asylum application.

This procedure can be a narrow path on which all applicants are pushed forward, head down, losing themselves in the crowd; or this same path can become an opportunity for all, applicants, and professionals, to meet and talk about their own belongings, roots and the mutual human dignity.

5. Conclusions: operational steps for a multidisciplinary approach to taking charge of the vulnerable foreign patient

The phenomenon of migration that involves the Sicilian territory is characterized by the arrival of foreigners who, for the most part, pass through Libya; the migrants who arrive in Sicily and whom we meet in our Center are – as I tried to describe above – often people deeply traumatized by the violence and torture suffered in Libya: arbitrary detention, violence and abuse, inhuman and degrading conduct, deprivation of food and no access to treatment. Our reception system has often caught itself unprepared in the assistance of these wounded souls, producing instead mechanisms of re-traumatization. Therefore, the psychosocial work of listening to and caring for foreign patients is delicate and complex at the same time; the psychosocial worker needs training to have multidisciplinary techniques in his professional background so that he can make use of other experts: experts in the culture of the world of the Other, experts in the language of the world of the Other, experts in mental health in the world of the Other. Working in a multicultural team of operators (including the linguistic-cultural mediator who comes from the patient's world) is one of the keys to allow the surviving foreigner to first access a specialized support service and subsequently receive treatment. The psychological work is therefore carried out first in the constitution of a group of team operators; they share the work mission centered on the respect and hospitality of the foreign patient, who must be hosted in the clinical session with its peculiarities: habits, behaviors, dialects, values, even when these are different from those of the working group. For this reason, another key to the functioning of psycho-social work is the continuous training of the team through structured moments of reflection on the resonances and

feelings of the operators who encounter new and unknown ways of existing. Furthermore, it must be remembered that often vulnerable people and victims of trauma cannot quickly tell their stories about the migratory journey, since the narration itself can have an effect causing suffering in the patient. In our clinical practice we follow the indications of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC, 2007) regarding the Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support: usually the experiences of extreme violence seriously impact on people's mental health and when people are also in a condition of displacement, this impact can dramatically increase its scope. IASC indicates a step-by-step operational scheme for taking care of survivors in an emergency situation or humanitarian crisis, where sending the person to a specialized service such as the Ethnopsychology Center represents the apex of a complex intervention system and which has at its base a careful work of reconstruction of lost ties (reconstruction of families and friendships dismembered upon landing), attention to individualities (recognition of languages and ethnic affiliations), identification of primary needs (early recognition symptoms and vulnerabilities for referral to care services). Reporting a sentence of the guidelines, we read: "a key to organizing mental health and psychosocial support is to develop a layered system of complementary supports" (IASC, 2007, p. 11).

References

De Pury S. (2005), *Comment on dit dans ta langue? Pratiques ethnopsychiatrique*, Les Empêcheurs de penser en rond, Paris.

Herman J.L. (2011), *Guarire dal trauma. Affrontare le conseguenze della violenza, dall'abuso domestico al terrorismo*, Magi, Roma.

Laplanche J., Pontalis J.-B. (2000), *Enciclopedia della psicoanalisi*, Laterza, Roma-Bari.

Nathan T. (1993), *La follia degli altri*, Ponte alle Grazie, Firenze.

Nathan T. (2003), *Non siamo soli al mondo*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino.

Sironi F. (2001), *Persecutori e vittime. Strategie di violenza*, Feltrinelli, Milano.

Viñar M.N. (2007), "Civilation and Torture: beyond the medical and psychiatric approach", *Intrenation Review of the Red Cross*, 89, 867, pp. 619-633.

Volpato C. (2013), "Negare l'altro. La deumanizzazione e le sue forme", *Psicoterapia e Scienze Umane*, 2, pp. 311-328.

12. Drawings from the border: autobiography open to collective storytelling

by Francesco Piobbichi*

I started drawing the stories of migration while working as social operator in the Mediterranean Hope project in Lampedusa.

It was not a personal choice, rather a necessity to tell the events of the context I was working, to combine storytelling with social actions. It all started almost by chance, during the nights when the images of the tragedies we were documenting in the project appeared in my mind. I wanted to narrate the stories I heard from the migrants who had just disembarked, I had the need to represent the unspoken. The feelings that were inside me, together with the stories I heard, built up, drawing by drawing, an autobiography in which denounce the present and predict the future. This became the only possible act of resistance in the tragedies of the Mediterranean.

The drawings represent a reconnection with the unspoken, they go deeply into the most intimate part of the observer, while the stories strengthen the emotional aspect. My attempt was and remains to construct an open biography in order to describe the present and turn it into memory and to strengthen the solidarity in relations between individuals. I use the term autobiography open to collective storytelling because my work is an educational journey that allows not only me, but also the people I meet in Lampedusa to give voice to stories through drawings. I used my drawings several times as real subjects in the storytelling to tell with them the memory of a journey in which I was also part of. Drawing precedes writing, it allows to overcome every communicative obstacle of language and reconciles humanity to its original history. I was able to work not only on the concept of the memory of survivors but also of those who have died, whose dignity is erased by the cold numbers of an indifferent border that clearly marks the difference

* Translation by Sabrina Del Gallo.

between Us and Them. I was able to narrate, together with Keita, our first meeting in front of the steel wall on the border of Ceuta in Morocco and our embrace on the Favaloro dock in Lampedusa after months of believing him dead in Libya. I was able to describe, together with Stephane, in Marseille our meeting after the shipwreck of 3 November in Lampedusa. I was able to read the poems written by Segen, who died of hardship a few days after we rescued him with Open Arms. The memory becomes a political and social action, an action against forgetting and an opportunity to give voice to the stories. The story of Welela that I tell in my drawings is therefore significant, because it serves to build memory by eliminating the reporting of cold numbers. Welela arrived in Lampedusa already dead after having died at sea from the burns she suffered in an explosion of a gas tank in the camp where she was imprisoned (instead of treating her, the traffickers put her into the sea in a rubber dinghy with other people). As often happens, she was buried in the cemetery of Lampedusa without a name, only with a number on her grave. By chance, because of an e-mail from her brother and because her companions sang her name in mourning, we were able to engrave her name on her gravestone. I draw Welela with the fire behind her back, with a sea of barbed wire under her feet and an eternal look of accusation toward the West. She is no longer a number but a story.

The emotion of remembering is self-healing for those who remember and for those who listen. The memory, the story, the personal experience, express a power of narrative meanings that I have woven into the concrete practice of drawing. One of the most important elements that led me to use drawings instead of images is the respect for the dignity of the people I met in emergency situations, who are filmed and photographed without any consent and often used as objects in the marketplace of emotions.

During the Open Arms stand-off outside Lampedusa, I gave pencils and sheets of paper to a migrant woman, who in a few hours filled those sheets with colours, so that she could speak to the world and tell the stories of her journey. Those simple and direct drawings allowed the people on the boat to tell their story without mediations.

I call myself a social illustrator because my drawings are related to the work I did with the Mediterranean Hope project in Lampedusa, to the experience of humanitarian corridors, to the work in Rosarno with labourers, to the struggles I experienced in the last years as a social activist. These drawings are not meant to be just mine, but I think they also belong to my colleagues and to the project I work for. Outside of this communicative process, the risk is that the story about borders becomes, as often happens, a factory for the production of commercial goods, and that the drawings degrade to objects.

The most significant example is the constant use of photos of migrant children exposed without any filter to cover their faces, which never happens for Italian children.

In storytelling there is a power of self-care for oneself and the others, but the real challenge for those of us working as social operators on the border is to tell our personal stories, giving migrants a voice and creating collective awareness. It is a process of personal introspection, of interpretation and synthesis of complex meanings. It is a creation of stories and images that start from our own experience and become images of a collective dimension, moving from a personal autobiography to other autobiographies in which different experiences, symbols, stories, and artistic dimensions come into play. In my opinion, these are the steps that create contemporary myths, which arise from the layering of many stories. Stories that act as bridges between real life and the universe of social meanings. The use of myth allows me to represent life as a human adventure, to introduce the epic journey in my drawings. That journey that has always been a characteristic of the deep culture of the Mediterranean. The more intense the stories we live in this border, the more dramatic and heroic their emotional charge; this allows mythological figures to re-emerge and make us understand the unspoken. With strong experiences of the storyteller, the mythological figures become more intense and an integral part of the reality we live in. If the myth allows a culture to find its founding soul, to answer the question of who I am and wo we are, its use in the stories from the border makes it possible to build solidarity against hate. Myth, however, is only generated within the stratification of the collective narrative, it is the product of biographies which through a slow process become popular narrations with common and easily comprehensible symbols. The function of myth is useful in my research because it is not left in the past, but finds its meaning in the future, as it offers a reinterpretation of the present reality. My drawings mix with the tale of sirens whose song of the West gives migrants hope, of Medusa with his barbed wire hair petrifying man's consciences, of Neptune weeping for the dead in the sea.

Since my research is aimed at the regeneration of collective social narratives, I think my drawings could be used as Tarot cards. Cards that can be continuously recombined to tell more stories depending on who is narrating. One of the first drawings I did in Lampedusa was related to the tragedy of 3 October 2013 in which I depict a mother with her child. Years later I found this drawing used by other people to describe another tragedy that occurred in Lampedusa in 2019 where other mothers with children died. It represents the present that dies in sea of barbed wire without giving the future a chance to be born. It is a metaphor for a present from which we cannot escape. It is

no longer connected to a single story, but a plot of interchangeable drawings that is the story of humanity and its journey. That is why in my drawings there is often no frame but a circular vortex, which builds a plot that binds the drawings together like barbed wire that becomes a sea of iron, a barbed wire that binds to people's skin for life, making them become mobile borders wherever they go. As if it were a curse one pays for arriving safely in the promised land.

The hotspot areas of the mobile borders of the Mediterranean have been constructed as stages to create hatred and fear or to offer humanitarian actions that however degrade migrants to useful objects for our economy without being considered as social subjects with rights.

With the drawing I want to reconstruct the social narrative meaning of the story of a journey that meets the obstacle of the border as a metaphor. I draw this limit and make it visible to everyone in a sea full of barbed wire that degrades the dignity of the saved, while erasing the memory of the dead. The border I draw is not just a sociological or political concept, it is not just a physically represented barrier, it is what, more than any other limit in the global world, confines impoverished human beings. The border is therefore the plot that unites the story, building a logical thread with common symbols. In this epic story, there is also a heroic act, the good triumphing over the evil, which I represent by drawing the two hands that lift the boat out of the sea, saving all humanity from damnation. Those hands save not only the people on the boat, but also the indifferent ones who would let it sink without the slightest remorse.

13. If notes were not different, they would not make music

by Salvatore Ingui*

In 2010, we had already decided some time ago to bring our Association "Libera contro le mafie" (Free against mafias) and the office of the Social Services for Minors (service of the Division of Juvenile Justice) to the most marginal areas of the city of Marsala. Neighbourhoods with a very high rate of school evasion, economic hardship, and cultural issues, including a large presence of widespread lawlessness and people in conflict with the law and the social norms. For some time, we have been working in the northern and southern districts of the city, with periodic and not continuous activities. The lack of a fixed location did not allow a more far-sighted and realistic planning of activities.

The right opportunity arose when the Marsala municipal hall allowed the Office of Social Services for Minors the permanent use of the municipal premises that had already been entrusted to the parish priest of the Sappusi district in the north of the city. That space slowly became a place for meeting and exchanging ideas but also for responding to the needs of the neighbourhood people, especially to the children and young adults. The helpfulness of the municipality and the parish priest gradually made it possible to bring in new activities of other associations, and so little by little that place became a real Social Centre, run in cooperation by the Social Services for Minors, Libera and other associations, including the foundations Archè and Amici del terzo mondo.

The meetings and the activities focused on the topics of legality, fight against mafias, justice, environment, and poverty. The centre also organised workshops for the development of shared projects, as well as football tournaments, planting workshops, canoeing, and windsurfing courses, involving

* Translation by Sabrina Del Gallo.

also many unaccompanied migrant minors. Thanks to these activities the young people were able to establish good friendships.

Since we had a lot of space and we wanted to support a specific request, we started to use a large room to install a gym. In fact, many young people in the neighbourhood told us that they wanted to go to a gym, but there was no sports centre there. In fact, to access a gym they would have to leave their district, but they did not have the means to do so, and even less would they have the money to pay for it. So, we decided to launch a public appeal, among friends and acquaintances, asking anyone who had gymnastic and sports equipment to donate it to us, so that we could set up the gym. Within short time weight training benches, stationary bicycles, dumbbells, barbells, weight plates, treadmill, and other tools began to arrive… enough to be able to set up a gym without envying the powerful and super-efficient gyms in the city centre.

As we began to bring in the pieces and set up the centre, word spread around the neighbourhood and many people came to watch, to look around, but also to help. And so, we arrived at the official inauguration, with the tricolour Italian band cut by the municipal councillor for Social Policies. There was a big crowd, a big public and a big participation… Everything that we became was free, and so we called the place "Libera palestra popolare" (Free Local Gym), free because organised by the Libera association and because participation was free; local because it was desired by the local people, because it was simple and for the neighbourhood.

Young people from the neighbourhood and other from nearby areas, some from the penal area for minors and many African young people from the various reception centres around the city began to spend time at the gym. This was probably because it was free and there were no special requirements for the access. In the first few days after the opening, Antonio, a young man from the neighbourhood, came to me and suggested that we could differentiate shifts in order to have more room for the activities and when I asked in what way, the prompt answer was to make differentiated shifts between whites and blacks. I did not shout out the scandal, I did not shout out the racism and I did not reprimand the young man, who evidently thought the proposal was perfectly natural. I simply replied that we would take care of it soon and that in the meantime they could all continue to train together while waiting for a new organisation. It did not take me long to observe how the boys from the neighbourhood looked in admiration at the physiques of the African boys and how they had less sophisticated but more efficient and effective training standards. So, I let a few days pass and then I called the boy who had put forward the proposal to divide the groups and asked him how we could proceed with this separation. Antonio was surprised by my request, and he asked me

why they should separate. I emphasised my astonished attitude and I replied that he was the one who had suggested it. But he made me clear that he had obviously expressed himself wrongly, because everything was going well and also that Mamadou, a big boy from Guinea, had been elected as their trainer and the colour of his skin was not a problem. From this moment on, there were more and more young people of different nationalities in the gym.

Even today, three years later, these young people, despite their different and often difficult backgrounds, and also without supervisors and written rules or regulations, live and train peacefully without any moments of tension, dispute and even less of altercation or violence. There was an absolutely peaceful and relaxed atmosphere, we could see the boys training in the gym but also playing on the football pitch that we, together with the boys from the Social Centre, had meanwhile set up in the neighbourhood.

About a year later, together with friends of other associations, we thought "why not try with music courses?". I must admit that this idea was completely instinctive, there was no explicit or implicit request for it from any of the guys… but I liked the idea anyway.

All I had to do was to take my two guitars to the Social Centre and leave them against the wall and see what would happen. As you could imagine, everyone who passed by took one and tried to play. Seeing their reactions, I asked if they could play it and if they did not, I said we would have a trial lesson the following week, so whoever wanted could come and try it out. And so, the following week we collected 5 guitars, assuming that more than a few would not come, and we waited for the people to arrive… They came shortly afterwards but there were at least twenty of them. Both from the neighbourhood and from outside and of every nationality. Evidently the news that we spread through our friends and non-public channels worked better than we thought.

Those who could do four chords in C became immediately guitar teachers. But we soon realised that the number of interested would increase considerably in the days to come, so we launched another solidarity and support campaign. We asked anyone who had guitars or other musical instruments to donate to contact us or bring them to the Social Centre. Once again, a kind of miracle. We started receiving guitars from Marsala and many other places in Italy, as well as keyboards, percussion, djembes, and a complete drum kit… Things were getting serious. We differentiated the courses. Guitar, percussion instruments, keyboards and singing lessons and we also called real teachers. The courses were chaotically crowded. Dozens of people at every lesson. Within 15 days we had 30 guitars, 20 djembes, 4 keyboards, 2 drums, several tambourines, and exotic instruments.

1. Playing for our harmonious diversity

The first courses started in April 2018. All that hustle and bustle was a pleasure to see. No one had ever played a musical instrument; they did not even know what position to hold it. Then I had a brilliant idea. The 20th of June is the World Day of Migrants and Refugees and every year we organise a day full of events. "This year one of the events will be the first concert of the Libera Orchestra Popolare (Free Local Orchestra)". I announced to the people who were still learning the first notes. Little by little they realised that I was not joking at all. They were all incredulous. We had less than fifty days to the 20th of June but the pleasure of being together and accepting the most unlikely challenges evidently prevailed over wisdom.

When someone came up to the concert hall where we were holding classes or rehearsing songs, I would ask if he/she could play any instrument or sing, and to her/his negative answer, I would replay that he/she was perfect to be part of the Libera Orchestra Popolare. We committed ourselves for a month with perseverance and much trembling joy. We were a group of over 50 people, including Nigerians, Nigeriens, Malians, Ghanaians, Guinean, Ivorians, etc. They strummed guitars, jumped on the keys of electric pianos, banged on djembes, congas and various drums. And always with big smiles. Finally, we put together a set list of five or six songs, in Italian, English and Swahili.

Before the big event, we were invited by a TV station for an interview, and we decided to go. Many of our young people were there, a large representation of our group. We all went in red T-shirts. The same T-shirts as the mothers used to make their young children wear before entrusting them to the dinghies sailing for hope. So that, if by misfortune, they fell into the water, perhaps due to a shipwreck, the red colour would be easily seen by the rescuers. The little red shirt, like the one Alan Kurdi was wearing when they found him on the beach, face down, as if he were sleeping…

That evening in the TV studios we realised that we were very close and had become friends. The interview was an opportunity to laugh, joke, play but also to affirm that all the diversity we had was a source of pride and wealth for us.

And so, on the 20th of June we went on stage in front of over 600 people and sang, played, and danced. It was a resounding success. With only 4 chords we held our concert and shouted our joy and pride of diversity, without realising we had some out-of-tune moments, which our audience certainly forgave. We thought we played like professionals.

The concert was so successful that we decided to go on… We took part to other events, other concerts, always with the same motto: a few chords, a lot

of courage, humility, with the desire to show that a world of peaceful coexistence was possible. At a time in history, in which the topic of "black invasion" was dominant, when many front pages of the newspapers were dominated by headlines against the NGOs saving lives at sea, when Captain Rackete was insulted because she had disembarked shipwrecked people on the docks of Lampedusa, when there were no longer people but only illegal immigrants.

Since then, we still sing proudly today, despite the pandemic, even from a big distance, and we sing for our harmonious diversity and so we present ourselves: "we are whites and blacks; men and women; young and old; Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, Buddhists, atheists; we came out of prison; we were drug addicts; we are heterosexuals and homosexuals; we are supervised by psychiatric services; we are people with disabilities… in all these differences, we are the humanity".

2. Social work means also to dream for the future

Now my dream is that tens and hundreds of free popular orchestras can be born. There are already experiences of orchestras and musical groups of clear fame (one for all the experience of the Venezuelan orchestra), but the characteristic of this Marsala orchestra is its absolute precariousness, that is, the awareness that those who come to rehearsals and then also participate in some concerts, do not do so because they intend to undertake the profession, the career of a musician, but only to be able to spend a little of their free time in an atmosphere of serene fraternity, with no excessive commitment, no demands on anyone, no exams and no failures.

An open place where you can come and go as you please. Staying for the pleasure of sharing.

Today the orchestra consists of around fifty members, but over the years more than three hundred people have passed between these instruments. And they have stayed as long as they have deemed it necessary or as they have had the opportunity.

This premise allows a light-hearted attitude on everyone's part and also allows the less able (musically) to not feel judged and therefore enjoy the moments without stress.

The success of the experience, however, depends on the availability of a good range of instruments. This is where the importance of people's generosity comes into play, and the possibility that they may donate their instruments or accept the promotion of fundraising activities for the purchase of musical instruments and other necessities. But all this is perhaps subordinate

to the credibility that the promoters of the initiative have been able to generate around themselves. The greater the sense of trust that people have, the greater the support will be, which is why we did not wait for the funds or the instruments and then later start the activity. On the contrary, we undertook rehearsals, lessons, and targeted concerts with what we had, through our personal tools, our individual availability.

When people see what you can do with little, and they see the generosity of what you do, the absence of ulterior motives, the joy you feel and convey, the simplicity of the project, then an empathy phenomenon takes place, which makes the involvement of the outside world become a chain reaction. And when Fabio or Luca gave us their first guitars and we published a photo of them on social media, we were joined by dozens of people who wanted to give us their guitars, and we thanked them one by one. And so it was the turn of keyboards and drums and percussion and everything else that we needed and still need.

It goes without saying that necessarily out of fifty pseudo-musicians, there are 4 or 5 who are really good and who act as "teachers", as well as one who acts as "Maestro and conductor". Well, among them there may be, at some point, the urge to professionalise musicians, and this is a more than legitimate tension, especially if they are professionals themselves. Perhaps some individuals may find in music their way of realising their life, but it must be clear that this is not the objective of the group. The masters must therefore be credited with a high level of patience, self-denial, and endurance.

Certainly, having a place to gather and make music and lessons has facilitated the work; and having the ability to keep the doors open has allowed people from the neighbourhood or anyone who happened to be passing by to approach. Having a physical location has allowed us to have a place to shelter from the cold or possibly the rain. But when we can (from June to September, always) we prefer to play outside. Outside means inside the neighbourhood, between the buildings, almost in the middle of the street. And I think that is, and should be, the most natural venue. People in the neighbourhood look out from their balconies and see us, hear us. I know that even if they don't look out, they listen to us. And they laugh at our out-of-tune and out-of-time gaits. The children are all around us: they either stop to look at us and listen to us or they try to pick up an instrument, and we really like that last one.

So even without a fixed venue or in makeshift situations, under a tree or against a wall, we can still make music.

In short, I would really like everyone to feel that this venture is within the reach of anyone with a little good will; that it is possible to realise this dream; that there is an effectiveness of integration between people like few other experiences. All we have to do is try!

14. Social arts as an awareness process. Experiences in intercultural contexts in Italy

by Ilaria Olimpico

If an atom were as large as St. Peter's Dome,
the nucleus would have the size of a grain of salt and the electrons
would be like specks of dust dancing around
in the vast space of the dome.
(Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics*)

I wanted to start with this metaphor because it brings together some of the ingredients that characterized my work.

Social Arts are about symbolization, making visible the invisible, knowing through senses and felt sense. Even if the general idea of arts is related to the sphere of expression and creativity, I want to shed light on Social Arts as a research and as an awareness process. They navigate in between the territory of arts therapy and social intervention, salutogenesis, and social healing, personal growth and community building.

I am fascinated by the concept of space and the so-called emptiness as a possibility of movement, dance, change. There is exterior space as well as inner space. In both cases, I could see, sense, and feel that transformation in awareness is related to the space opening up to a movement and at the same time, the movement opening up space. The shift in awareness often is referred to as "seeing with new eyes".

I do believe that we can't know about the elements of a system. Still, we can understand about the Inter-connection among the elements of a system, being aware that – far from being detached observers – we are part of the system.

What if we look not just to the electrons, the dust, but their dance in the vastness?

What if we look not only to the nucleus but to the emptiness that is full of possibilities and dances?

I studied International and Diplomatic Sciences at Orientale University in Naples. I worked in the international cooperation field. Step by step, my attention and passion moved into what we call now "global education or peace and intercultural education". Today, I would define myself as a Social Arts Facilitator. Since I left work in the international cooperation field, I have been asking myself: What does my work serve? Does my work bring the highest

future possibility or just give some relief to the system slowing down its transformation? The challenge of social work is to move from the horizon of aid to the vision of a paradigmatic change. The mantra that accompanies my work is the sentence of Frederic Leboyer: *Without love, we will be just able.*

Here I am called to share about my experience in Social Arts as an awareness process in intercultural contexts in Italy.

I would refer mainly to two projects financed by the EU Asylum Integration Migration Funds (AIMF). Both took place in Umbria Region, Italy:

- PUZZLE, a project about capacity building in the Welcoming System;
- LIFE, a project about socioeconomic inclusion of Migrants.

I want to give you a glimpse of the two projects through memories and reflections on the strengths and the challenges, more than illustrating them in a classical technical way. I invite you to keep in mind the image of the atom as a dome, and focus on the questions that I arose in the beginning: What if we look at not just the electrons and the dust, but their dance in the vastness? What if we look at not only the nucleus but the emptiness that is full of possibilities and dances?

We are in a hotel, not a bad one, in a neighbourhood of Perugia, a good one. The hotel became a CAS (centre of emergency welcoming). Me and my dear colleague, a cultural mediator from Nigeria, are waiting for the participants of our theatre workshop for women. We are in a hall where the guests, asylum seekers, just had their breakfast.

Some women are coming. Two women, then three, then one goes away, and three more are coming. Another one with a baby is coming, and others are going out and then coming back. Meanwhile, there are the usual bureaucratic papers to fill up.

We started with a circle of names and the short presentation of the workshop. We were more than 15. I don't remember now what I said, but I tried to be concise and clear. Some women were disappointed. Some harshly asked questions. One woman, in particular, seemed to say that they have more significant problems now, what is this workshop for? After a while, I said: "I understand this. I invite you to join us and see. If you are not interested, you can go away and even now, you can go back to your room and stay there as you do every day, or you can choose to stay and see if there is something new here".

The more critical woman, O.B., she would end up being one of the most active and present participants during all the sessions.

We had moments of joyful dance together with smiles and shining bodies; we had moments of bodies frozen in closed shapes, with a massive head and a lost gaze. We had improvisations about the relationship between operators and asylum seekers. We made visible how one can slide in the role of the

guard, and the other one slides in the position of the bagger. Body sculptures represented the blaming and the indifference of the Italian neighbours towards the Nigerian women. The Nigerian women were all suffering the stigma of the prostitute. I invited us to change the situation entering the scene. O.B. stayed in her statue, her body gently inclined towards the Italian houses with curious eyes, her hands softly on the long legs. And then she shook her body and said: "the only way is to change the colour of my skin".

Inspired by this scene, I proposed to have a walk in the neighbourhood with black and white women together. In the beginning, I thought about some Theatre Image in the square. But then I thought it could have been too much for this context. It would have been a simple action: white and black women walking together.

We had this walk, but it couldn't take place there because in the meanwhile the women asylum seekers were transferred to another location.

We were running a project about capacity building in the reception system, and the Ministry of Interior was changing the law with the famous *Decreto Sicurezza e Immigrazione Salvini*.

I facilitated this workshop in the frame of the action of the project called "mediation and conflict management". As I wrote in my report after the first part of the project: "The mediation of the conflict has gone through the creation of a context of trust and sharing. It was possible to feel heard and seen; to re-appropriate one's potential; to explore the vast and often unknown territory that lies between depressed resignation and violent anger. I have wondered if the mandate of the 'Conflict management' wasn't slipping into something that looks like temporary sedation of the conflict. I mean we were offering a relief valve but not a transformation, affecting systemic causes (CAS system). For this process not to remain a parenthesis, it is necessary that the modalities discovered and practised in the safe space of the workshop may have a reverb at all levels of the system".

The Project Puzzle had this potential: to offer a systemic change, or at least an awareness change in the whole system. Coming back to the metaphor, we had the chance to open our gaze to the entire space of the dome, searching about the interconnection and the possibilities of new dances among the electrons. The theoretical frame we shared was Theory U, a theory about the evolution of self and systems, elaborated by Otto Sharmer (Senior Lecturer in the MIT of Boston) and his colleagues. Otto Scharmer has developed the theory and practice of the U process, which is based on a notion he calls "presencing" (Scharmer, 2007, p. 3) This word is a blend of the two notions "presence" and "sensing" and it describes a heightened state of attention that brings individuals and groups to re-position the inner place

from which they function. When such a re-position happens, people begin to operate from a future space of possibility that they feel wants to emerge and not from the stuck place of the past. Theory U is a change framework and set of methodologies that have been used by thousands of organizations and communities worldwide to address our most pressing global challenges. Social Presencing Theater (SPT) is one of those methodologies, it is developed under the leadership of Arawana Hayashi, for understanding current reality and exploring emerging future possibilities.

Further, we adopted a multi stakeholder's approach. So, we worked with the asylum seekers, the cultural mediators, the operators of the welcoming centres, the health department, Prefettura (the arm of the Home Office in the area), the Police headquarters, the Italian citizens.

A new awareness started to emerge. Before the project, institutions did not see them as part of a system or as part of the problems within the system. They could sense the paradox of asylum seekers who had braved the Mediterranean Sea being suspended in an institutional limbo for over two years and being reduced to living off institutional charity.

Looking backwards, I think we – as the team of the project – didn't have enough courage to keep using some techniques from Social Arts within the institutional tables. We could have challenged them and ourselves more and have introduced more dialogue through our bodies and movements. Maybe it was also enough for that context: to transform a very formal table into a circle in which the participants recognized themselves and the others as people and not only as roles.

I felt that the workshops and all the activities carried on in parallel were, first of all, participatory research about the reception system in Italy. In terms of Theory U, we were trying to make the system see and sense itself.

We combined Social Arts with methodologies brought from Theory U, Dragon Dreaming and Facilitation of groups. Working in transdisciplinary team offered enormous richness and complexity.

This richness could manifest during the activities in CAS Colle Umberto, near Perugia. An agritourism transformed into a centre for asylum seekers, in the paradox of a nice place becoming a nonsense place in the middle of nowhere for isolated people waiting for papers.

The work that we carried on in Colle Umberto took two complementary directions:

- taking care and healing our past and present, through theatre, movement, and storytelling;
- envisioning our future, through Social Presencing Theatre, Dragon Dreaming, Participatory Planning and Group Facilitation.

I keep use the first plural person "we", and the relative "our", because we were all interconnected, asylum seekers and facilitators, all parts of the system, the dome were searching for new dances.

In the first part, we had encounters of community theatre, exploring identities, cultural shocks, the relationship between operators and asylum seekers, problems, and personal stories. I wanted to open the doors of Colle Umberto and break the invisible wall between the different clusters of the system. I invited the Italians to join the workshop. In one of the encounters, we shared stories about wounds; we were Italians and asylum seekers. I told a story as a symbolic map about obstacles and hope. Then I invited us to share our stories of wounds just using our bodies. We worked on our performance using symbolic elements of nature (sticks, flowers, stones, thorns) and a tracked path. We shared our performance one after another, in silence. It was very moving. Above all, it was not about pity or victimization, because we, Italians, and asylum seekers, we were there showing our wounds, meeting in the brokenness of our lives. One of the participants said in the final circle: "I thought my story was the most painful, but maybe it was not. Today I saw that each one has suffered" (CAS Colle Umberto, Perugia, Spring 2018).

This first part was about building trust among us, taking care of ourselves, recognizing our past and sharing our experience of the present. But it was not enough.

The community theatre workshop slowly became a co-planning session for a party inviting the Italians. The doors finally widely opened. We were Italian citizens, asylum seekers, persons from the Prefettura and local authorities and cultural mediators. We were all sitting in a circle: telling stories in different languages, sharing our talents, eating rice and vegetables, clapping a freestyle solo performance on the terrace of nowhere, being witness to the scene about the travel from Libya to Italy.

It was still not enough, but little seeds of a new awareness were planted.

I cherish the moment the asylum seekers showed up after their performance saying their names proudly, lively. There was a strong contrast with my memory of the first encounter: young men in flip flops, suspicious and oscillating between anger and depression.

As well, I adore the moment the representatives of institutions were accepting to dance with them. A new dance in the vastness of the dome! Did they see each other with new eyes? How could they (the representatives of the institutions) bring this new awareness to the headquarters? Probably they would use their power despite themselves. They were expected to implement procedures that they felt and knew were not fair, not useful, not healthy for anyone.

One of my roots in Social Arts work is Theatre of the Oppressed and the ethic to work with the oppressed. Moreover, I took the insight offered by Theory U to involve the people that can have leverage in the system, in that case, the institutions.

The Project Puzzle strengths were to have a systemic vision, to create bridges among different stakeholders, to work in a transdisciplinary team.

The Project Puzzle challenges were keeping aligning intentions and actions and of course, the challenge to work in a system that in the middle of the project was implementing a new legislative framework that was changing for the worse.

A woman shows us her statue. She is standing, legs slightly apart, her head lowered slightly with her hands behind her neck in light pressure, with her elbows open. She doesn't want to stay more in this statue. I took the image on my body, to mirror her and "to keep her company" while she held it. I asked her to stay a little bit more in the statue, to feel what the body was requiring, what movement wanted to emerge.

Meanwhile, I was in her position; I felt a great willingness to put my arms down and relax my neck. But what she did was to close her elbows and lower her head even more. When I asked her for a word or a sentence from that position, she said like this: "surrender, find some peace of mind, cry".

Opposite her, another girl (in a similar position) felt like opening up. She threw her arms away from her head where they pressed on her temples.

The transformation of the first woman reminded me of the following words: "Stay with the brokenness", despite all the calls to happiness, openness, resolution. There is a season to close and a season to open, and only those who are living it know the season.

This memory comes from "Life", a project for the socioeconomic inclusion of migrants. At that moment, we were in a storytelling workshop, exploring our obstacles, our challenges, integrating Theatre of the Oppressed and Social Presencing Theatre.

The same woman of the closed statue, at the end of the workshop, said: "I had the opportunity to say, to remember who I am. I could see myself with new eyes".

That was precisely my intention for this workshop: to see ourselves with new eyes, to be empowered, to become aware of our gifts and dreams, and finally to write a portfolio with experiences, skills, and professional path, enhancing employment possibilities.

One participant said: "Before the workshop, I couldn't see possibilities. Everybody around me was saying I can just be a caregiver for older people. I am a creative person, I would like to start over my handcrafted activity" (Centro Caritas, Terni, Participative Evaluation, 2nd March 2020).

We use stories, participative storytelling, creative writing, images, and embodied exercises for weaving in meaning experiences and desires, fears and dreams, challenges, and possibilities. Also, in this project, I wanted to dismantle the reproduction of dividing lines between Italians and migrants, so we had both mixed and not mixed groups.

We adopt the intercultural approach as Margalite Cohen Emerique conceives it: to be sensitive to the "culture" of each one without irrevocably flattening them into their culture; to remember the dynamism of cultures and people; to recognize the subjective nature of cultural belonging and the multiplicity of belonging of each.

Project Life is still active. We needed to transfer the workshop into an online version during the lockdown for the COVID-19, and now we are starting again. The challenge of project Life is synergizing all the actions of the project (workshop about skills, laboratory of idea accelerator, institutional table about socioeconomic inclusion).

For me, the horizon of this project is the recognition of the uniqueness of each person, the uniqueness of talents and gifts, personal story, and dreams. This recognition brings to a double entangled process: a personal process of seeing the self through appreciative eyes and a social process of removing labels.

On one side, *refugees* have been depicted by the media, political discourse, and public opinions as taking passive roles and rarely as active agents. On the other side, *migrants* are portrayed as crossing borders mainly seeking benefits of the host country's economy and as an economic burden. It seems they – refugees and so-called economic migrants – are condemned to be or victims without agency (human rights area: associations, NGO, advocacy movements) or criminals and dangerous inferior people (racist, xenophobic area). In both cases, their uniqueness goes lost.

Telling personal stories with a clear focus on skills and dreams gives the possibility to remove labels (the ones related to the victim aspects and the ones associated with the negative stereotypes) and let the human being emerge in his/her uniqueness. Furthermore, it is about seeing the others in his/her highest future possibility. It exists an attentional violence that is related to not seeing the other in his/her potential and desire. As Frantz Fanon puts it out: "I ask to be seen through my Desire".

One of the participants of the workshop said: "I am more aware of my capabilities. It was a shock to come to Italy and be seen as inferior. There is a sensation of being inferior that passes to us".

She had felt sorry for me even before she saw me. Her default position toward me, as an African, was a kind of patronizing, well-meaning pity. My American roommate had a single story of Africa… in this single story of Africa, there was no

possibility of Africans being similar to her in any way, no possibility of feelings more complex than pity.

Stories matter. Many stories matter… When we reject the *single story*, we regain a kind of paradise" (Chimamanda NGOzi Adichie, TED talk "The danger of a single story").

References

Bellia V. (2005), *Dove danzavano gli sciamani*, FrancoAngeli, Milano.

Boal A. (2002), *Games for Actors and Non Actors*, Routledge, Abington.

Boal A. (2006), *Aesthetics of the Oppressed*, Routledge, London.

Cohen-Emerique M. (1999), "Gli ostacoli alla relazione ed alla comunicazione interculturale: l'approccio interculturale per superarli", in G. Ianni, *Educare nella differenza,* IRRSAE Toscana, Firenze.

Fanon F. (2007), *I dannati della Terra*, Einaudi, Torino.

Fanon F. (2015), *Pelle nera maschere bianche*, ETS, Pisa.

Freire P. (1970), *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Continuum, New York.

Marshall Rosenberg B. (2015), *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*, PuddleDancer Press, Encinitas.

Novara D. (2011), *La grammatica del conflitto*, Sonda, Casale Monferrato.

Noy Meir U., Olimpico I. (2019), "Images and Stories", in *Ensayando el Despertar – Miradas Movilizadoras desde el Pluriverso del Teatro del Oprimido*, Hjalmar Jorge Joffre Eichhorn and Kickass Books, Hamburg.

Said E. (2013), *Orientalismo. L'immagine europea dell'Oriente*, Feltrinelli, Milano.

Scharmer O. (2016), *Theory U: Leading from the Future as it Emerges*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, San Francisco, 2nd ed.

Sclavi M. (2003), *Arte di ascoltare e mondi possibili*, Mondadori, Milano.

15. Migration from the perspective of an African family: a participatory theatre experience in Senegal

by Angelo Miramonti

What is done for me without me, is against me.
(Gandhi)

1. Introduction: decision making in the family of origin

Migration studies have recently stressed the importance of understanding decision making processes within the extended or nuclear family of the migrant to understand migration (De Jong, 2002; De Haas, Tineke, 2010). However, while the literature on migration has paid extensive attention to the conditions of the journey and the dispositive of reception and integration in the receiving country, research paid relatively less attention to how migration decisions are made within the communities of origins and which expectations and imaginaries shape these decisions within the migrant's family. Furthermore, research on mental health of migrants emphasized the potentially pathologizing effects of reception systems (Simich, 2015), while relatively less focus was put on the mental health implications of the relation between the migrant in the receiving country and her community of origin. Finally, more ethnographic work on migration was conducted in receiving countries and in reception structures, while social dynamics in communities of origin of migrants received less attention. Therefore, migration is currently conceptualized more from the viewpoint of the receiving country than from the perspective of communities of departure and the relation the migrants keep with their family once they have settled in receiving countries risk to be overlooked as a potential mental health threat. Concerning the methods of inequity used in migration studies, we can note that the recent epistemological debate on qualitative research stressed the need to complement research methods that elicit and analyse discursive productions of key informants (such as semi structured interviews, questionnaires and focus groups) with body-based and art-based methods to explore embodied imaginaries, representations of the self and the other and identities shaped on a sense of belonging to multiple communities (Stelter, 2010).

This article aims at addressing these two gaps. Concerning contents, this paper presents a case study on families of origin of Senegalese migrants and explores the communication between the migrant and the family when the migrant is living in the country of destination. We explore the on-going perceptions and reciprocal projections between communities of origin and destination, and we focus on how family and gender representations shape the intra-family negotiations that lead to the decision to choose a family member as a candidate for migration. Concerning research methodologies, we pilot a theatre-based workshop to investigate conflicts, perceptions and subjectivity of migrants and their communities of origin. We adopt drama-based methods to elicit and analyse embodied memories and autobiographical narratives on migration. We also use collective dramaturgy (Lynn, Sides, 2003) and Forum Theatre-based dialogue with the community (Boal, 2009) as part of a broader context of participatory action research. This project involved the informants in actively constructing the data and analysing them through their body, words and after-action discursive reflections. This case study was inspired by the field experiment methodology (Creswell *et al.*, 2003), where migration was not studied with covered or uncovered participatory observation, but by explicit elicitation of embodied narratives and perceptions.

Both the conceptual and methodological findings presented in this paper aim at equipping future social workers with tools to broaden their understanding of migration. The pursue of this case study is to contribute to the humanization of migration among all the stakeholders: the migrant, their families, and the receiving communities.

2. The context

The author of this article has been conducting ethnographic research in Senegal from 2014 to 2017 (Miramonti, 2018). During his stay, he was invited to facilitate a Forum Theatre workshop delivered in 9 sessions of 3 hours (from November 2014 to November 2015). The 13 participants (7 women and 6 men) were a group of Senegalese young adults and European expatriates, all living in Dakar. The group included two couples, where one partner was from Europe (Netherlands and France) and the other was from West Africa (Senegal and Mali). Some of the Senegalese participants had experienced migration in Europe or were family members of migrants living in Europe.

3. The method: Forum Theatre

The workshop was based on Forum Theatre (Boal, 2009), a participatory drama technique used to facilitate community dialogue on social issues. The key characteristic of this technique is the involvement of the audience in the search for transformative actions, using the stage as a safe space for experimentation of alternatives to oppressive social situations. The key steps in Forum theatre are:

- step 1: creating the play:
  - a facilitator goes to a community and leads a theatre workshop for a group of about 10-20 community members;
  - during the workshop, the participants identify real life stories of injustice and human rights violations they want to explore and put these stories on stage;
  - the play shows what the problem is (from the perspective of the participants) but does not suggest how to solve it. The play shows what the realistic the worst-case scenario could be in that situation;
- step 2: the replacements:
  - after the workshop, the group invites the community in a public space (marketplace, schoolyard, city Hall, church, etc.) and presents the play;
  - after the play, the facilitator/director invites the audience to share their thoughts about whose rights were violated on stage, and asks how they would improve the situation (which characters could act differently and which strategies of change they could adopt);
  - then the facilitator invites the spectators who have an idea of how to improve the situation to come on stage (one by one), replace the oppressed characters and rehearse their change strategy (trying to improve the situation);
  - the other characters (especially those who actively contribute to perpetuating the oppressive situation) improvise their response, challenging the idea of the spectator and trying to reproduce the oppressive *status quo* on stage;
- step 3: the embodied dialogue with the audience:
  - after a few minutes, the facilitator stops the improvisation and asks the audience;
  - do you think the proposed strategy improved the situation?
  - how realistic it would be to take it out of the stage and apply it in the real life of the community;
  - the audience makes comments on the proposed strategy. When someone has another idea to improve the situation, the facilitator invites

the spect-actor to come on stage and improvise her/his strategy, and so on;
– at the end, the facilitator wraps-up the session, inviting the community not to leave the strategies that worked only on stage and to apply them also in their community.

For the purposes of this paper, we highlight the following pedagogical aspects of Forum Theatre:

- *community and individual empowerment*. Forum Theatre is not "sensitization", it is a theatrical dialogue aiming at community and individual empowerment;
- *nonjudgement and deep listening* of those who have direct experience of the violation, especially the most voiceless (the assumption is that community members are "experts of their own lives" and can tap into their "collective wisdom" to address the conflict on stage);
- *ownership of the change strategies* (the facilitator does not suggest any solution, she invites to search together and test every idea on stage);
- *the use of play and creativity* to share wisdom and facilitate a collective learning process within the community.

3.1. The play

Following the process presented in step 1, the group developed the play presented below, invited a mixed audience of Senegalese persons and European expatriates, and presented the play in November 2015.

Characters:

- Moudou, the 19-year-old son.
- Moussa, Moudou's father.
- Aicha, Modou's grandmother.
- Alassane, Senegalese migrants' smuggler.
- Issa, Moudou's cousin (living in Europe).
- Celine, Modou's European girlfriend.

Scene 1 – The departure

Moudou is a 19 years-old young man living in the outskirts of Dakar, Senegal. He will finish high school in four months, and he wants to enter the university in Dakar. Moussa, his father, calls Moudou and informs him that the family chose him to go to Europe, he will have to go illegally, because there is no legal way to go. His father contacted Alassane, a man who already

manage to send many people of their community to Europe. Moudou will try to reach his cousin in a European town, the cousin will try to find a job for him. The extended family is collecting money, but he must go in few days, the family is putting high expectations on him: he was chosen because he the elder son, and he will be able to support his parents and sisters. Moudou does not want to go, he tries to explain that he wants to finish high school and eventually go to university, but the father forces him to go.

Scene 2 – Life in Europe

A few years later, Moudou, managed to settle in Europe, the first two years were extremely hard, but now he is working with the cousin, and he found a European girlfriend, Celine. Celine is asocial worker and met Moudou when he was still in a reception centre. They both have precarious jobs and they recently moved in a small apartment together. The scene open when Moudou return home after work and Celine informs him that they only have money for the electricity bills. She looks for the money they had left in a drawer, and she cannot find it. Moudou explains to her that the day before he sent it to Senegal, to the Marabout of his family: an important religious festival is approaching, and his family asked him to send some money to give to the Marabout and receive, like every year, a special blessing for all of them. Celine cannot believe it: she blames Moudou of being more interested in his family of origin that in them as a couple and ends the scene saying: "we have no money for the bills, and you gave money to your marabou?".

Scene 3 – The relation with the family in Senegal

Moudou is sad for the fight with Celine, when Aicha, his grandmother, calls from Senegal. She is very cheerful and asks him to send her 100 euros: the festival is approaching, and she wants to buy a new boubou to show everyone that she has a nephew in Europe. Moudou tries to explain, but the grandmother interrupts him asking why she gave birth to his mother if he is not able to support them and hangs off. Moudou feels desperate, he considers returning home, but he fears the moment when he will return home and his father will look into his bags and find no gift for them. He falls in a deep depression: he had to borrow money from his cousin Issa to send to the grandmother, but he is often absent from work and close to breaking up with Celine. After a few days Issa calls and informs him that he is fired. Moudou freezes.

3.2. Embodied alternatives proposed by the spect-actors

After the play, the facilitator invited the audience to explore alternatives to the oppressive situation by replacing Modou, Celine and Issa. The following strategies were proposed and rehearsed on stage:

- preparing migration differently: migrants should give a more realistic image of their socioeconomic situation in Europe;
- telling the truth to the family in Senegal on Moussa situation and refuse to send the money to the grandmother, accepting the shame and sense of failure and guiltiness that this refusal implies;
- adopting the western culture: not honouring the requests of the Marabout and the grandmother, etc. breaking up with the family of origin;
- breaking up with Celine: remaining in Europe but integrating only in the Senegalese community and getting married with a Senegalese woman when he will be legally living in Europe;
- trying to listen to both the European and Senegalese characters and ask to be listened; negotiate new values, mediating between different representations of the family and conflicting economic priorities.

Each strategy of change was rehearsed, and the consequences were discussed with the audience (see step 3 above). The audience empathized with Moudou but also with Celine, and equally understood the expectations of Moussa and Issa's concerns, so the dialogue did not lead to reciprocal blame and polarization between "good characters and "bad characters" but allowed all voices to be heard and lead to a collective search for transformation of the relations between the characters on stage.

3.3. Workshop evaluation

After the play, the group shared their emotions and discoveries during the preparation and the presentation of the play. Here are some quotes from the participants:

> Up until I enacted my story, I had never realised how much pressure I had on me when I was in Europe. I feel proud of what I did, now I realize it was not easy to face those challenges.

> The European reception system is dehumanizing, but also families in the countries of origin can make things very difficult for migrants, they can even cause mental health problems in the migrant.

The same consumerist behaviours our families learned from western culture are now putting a lot of pressure on the migrant, who is sometimes seen as a commodity, or an investment that has to give a return and this is dehumanizing, too.

We, the migrants, we often reproduce the same narrative that hurts us. When we are in Europe, we never talk about our difficulties we have, and we return only when we can afford a lot of gifts. We foster the narrative that all is great in Europe and in so doing, we push others to migrate without preparation, sometimes without even finishing secondary school, to follow the same myth that we contributed to create.

Both the European and the West African character in the couple say the other "does not understand". In our lives we often experience that dialogue based on words on deeply rooted cultural values is difficult. To enact these conflicts on stage and being seen by the others allowed for a much deeper level of communication between us.

4. Reflections

Reflecting from this experience we can make two sets of considerations: one on the conceptual findings of this pilot workshop and the other on the methodology we used. Concerning the findings, we can note that "in Forum Theatre the micro contains the macro" (Boal, 2009, p. 96): some structural aspects of migration appear in the individual story of Moudou: the choice of a young male in a Muslim society to migrate, the consumerist attitude of the family who decides to send the son to Europe with little consideration for his security and for his future living conditions. The play also showed the ambivalent role of Alassane, the "migrant smuggler", who is seen somehow in between as a benefactor and an exploiter by local communities. This representation does not correspond to the unilateral western narrative of smugglers as "human traffickers". This western perspective is providing justification for repressing illegal migration with the pretext of fighting human trafficking, while providing legal and safe paths to migration would be probably the most effective and economic way to fight migrant smuggling (Gallagher, 2002, p. 25).

Concerning the methodology, we can make three key considerations. First, this drama-based approach allowed to make visible some embodied memories of the participants, open a dialogue with the community and shade some light on the intra-family aspects of decision making. Second, the dramaturgy of the play was collective: every participant contributed staging a story where each character played a role in producing systemic oppression.

Third, the character building was based on the Stanislavski's principle of "living the character instead of showing it". When possible, the participants did not enact themselves, but their oppressors or people they had confronted in their real life, this choice allowed them to put themselves "in the feet of the other", embodying the biography, fears and ideology of their oppressors. The embodiment of "the other" built empathy with the human aspects of the oppressive character and allowed to understand his perspectives and attitudes, without justifying the behaviours.

5. Conclusions: "masters of two worlds"

The experience we presented showed that the participants felt oppressed by the conditions in the country of destination (represented the reception system and different cultural values embodied by Celine) but they also felt under the pressure of their family of origin, who had a mystified image of their life in the receiving country and saw the migrant as an instrument to improve their socioeconomic conditions, without consideration for the migrant's well-being. Traditional social obligations to bring gifts when returning from a travel were also seen as a source of stress in the context of cross-border migration. The worst-case scenario presented in the play (depression and failure of the migrant's economic project) showed how this tension has significant mental health implications for migrants (Nathan, 2013). The play highlighted the migrant as a subject caught in between opposite tensions: to support the family in the country of origin and to integrate (legally and culturally) in the receiving country. The play showed the permanent condition of liminarity of the migrant, who in not only crossing a border, but also *inhabiting a cultural boarder* and how this permanent state of "betweeness", of inhabiting two worlds at the same time can be a factor of vulnerability. However, the interaction with the audience showed that the migrant's exposure to multiple cultures can also become an opportunity to negotiate new multicultural identities and creatively shape the migrant's subjectivity.

In conclusion, this pilot project showed the challenge migrants are facing to become a "master of two worlds" according to Joseph Campbell's definition of the protagonists of myths who return from the journey that made them heroes. We believe what Campbell writes about them also describes the challenge migrants are facing: "after the journey, the hero has become able to live in both […] worlds, he achieved freedom to pass back and forth across the worlds […] not contaminating the principles of the one with those of the other yet permitting the mind to know the one by virtue of the other.

This is the talent of the master" (Campbell, 1949, p. 346). The challenge of becoming "master of two worlds" is a powerful metaphor to represent the wisdom that the migrants receive from the ordeals and discoveries migration implies, and this workshop proved to be an effective space for elaborating these experiences.

References

Boal A. (2002), *Games for Actors and Non Actors*, Routledge, Abington.

Campbell J. (1949), *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Pantheon Books, New York.

Creswell J.W., Shope R., Vicki L., Clark P., Green D.O. (2006), "How Interpretive Qualitative Research Extends Mixed Methods Research", *Research in the Schools*, 13, 1, pp. 1-11.

De Haas H., Tineke F. (2010), "Intra-Household Conflicts in Migration Decision making: Return and Pendulum Migration in Morocco", *Population and Development Review*, 36, 3, pp. 541-561.

De Jong G.F. (2000), "Expectations, gender, and norms in migration decision-making", *Population Studies*, 54, 3, pp. 307-319.

Gallagher A. (2002), "Trafficking, smuggling and human rights: tricks and treaties", *Forced Migration Review*, 12, pp. 25-28.

Kimberly D.F., al Sayah F. (2011), "Arts-based methods in health research: A systematic review of the literature", *Arts & Health*, 3, 2, pp. 110-145.

Krzyżanowski M., Wodak R. (2008), "Multiple Identities, Migration and Belonging: 'Voices of Migrants'", in C.R. Caldas-Coulthard, R. Iedema (*eds.*), *Identity Trouble*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Losi N. (2006), *Lives Elsewhere: Migration and Psychic Malaise*, Routledge, London and New York.

Lynn K., Sides S. (2003), "Collective Dramaturgy: a Co-consideration of the Dramaturgical Role in Collaborative Creation", *Theatre Topics*, 13, 1, pp. 111-115.

Lynn K., Sides S. (2003), "Collective Dramaturgy: a Co-consideration of the Dramaturgical Role in Collaborative Creation", *Theatre Topics*, 13, 1, pp. 111-115.

Miramonti A. (2017), *How to use Forum Theatre for Community Dialogue. A Facilitator's Handbook*, Lulu Press, Morrisville.

Miramonti A. (2018), *Amina, ritratto di una donna abitata dagli spiriti. Un'etnografia dei culti di possessione Ndöp in Senegal*, Lulu.com.

Moro M.R. (2002), *Parents en exil. Psychopathologie et migrations*, PUF, Paris.

Nathan T. (2013), *La folie des autres : Traité d'ethnopsychiatrie clinique*, DUNOD, Paris.

Simich L. (2015), "Negotiating Boundaries of Refugee Resettlement: A Study of Settlement Patterns and Social Support", *Canadian Review of Sociology*, 40, 5, March, pp. 575-591.

Sironi F. (2018), "Clinical Geopolitical Psychology: A New Approach Adapted to Planetary Changes and Emerging Identities", *Transactional Analysis Journal*, 48, 2, pp. 85-96.
Stanislavski K.S. (2013), *An actor Prepares*, Berg Pub Ltd., Oxford.
Stelter R. (2010), "Experience-Based, Body-Anchored Qualitative Research Interviewing", *Qualitative Health Research*, 20, 6, pp. 859-867.

16. Meaning, story and beyond the story: Social Work as a witness going beyond representation

by Hannah Reich

We see the world not as it is, but how we are
– or as we are conditioned to see it!
(Steven Covey, 1989)

1. Introduction

Theories and models of realty strongly shape our perception of reality and our action within it. We organise reality in accordance with our personal and collective models, our inner maps, in such a constant manner, that we are often not aware about this act. Rather, we tend to forget, that *the map is not the territory*, which means that we unconsciously or even sometime consciously act on basis of our maps, as if they are the reality[1]. In this context, we have to recognize the importance of the process of *representation*. Representation gives meaning to reality, capable to ignore brutal live experiences on the ground or to tell the story of such an experience. Yet not any representations are possible and not all utterances become "statements" ("énnoncés"; Foucault, 1974) within a discursive formation (Foucault, 1981) and are not equally influential for the "social construction of reality" (Berger, Luckmann, 1966). On a global level, this has been demonstrated in discussion of post-colonial studies and post-colonial theories and their central claim that our inhabited world can't be meaningfully understood without taking into consideration the relationship to the experience of imperialism and colonial rule (Said, 1978, p. 3; Spivak, 1988; Bhabha, 1994, p. 70), which led to the unfolding of the post-colonial studies discourse (Ashcroft et al 2006). With concern about power and representation, cultural studies emerged as an interdisciplinary discipline (Butler, 1990; Hall, 1994; Hook *et al.*, 1994) which analyse in depth the cultural signification of the social constructed reality within unequal power-relations. As Social Work is concerned about the mar-

[1] This e.g. can be done through a visualised representation in concrete maps as shown, by Giuseppe Platania in chapter 1. The power of such maps shows us palpably, how easy we see certain aspects and ignore others, if it might be more suitable to our interest.

ginalized, it is sensitive to the "left out" and the theory of discourse allows for grasping the perpetuation of exclusion of certain populations within the global, national, regional, organisational, and interpersonal systems. Post-colonial theories entered firmly into the discussions of International Social Work (Habashi, 2005; Askeland, Payne, 2008; Anand *et al.*, 2019; Ranta-Tyrkkö, 2011) and thus also the concept of discourse and the understanding of truth as constructed.

> There is no knowledge that is true in itself, that is independent of the languages and institutions that we create and invent. Empirical reality does not exist as a universal truth but as an unending collection of "stories" that we tell. The truth is made, not found (Begam, 1996, p. 15) (Iriving, 1999, p. 31).

Yet, this doesn't mean that within Social Work as such one is ready to part from a Cartesian understanding of truth.

> Social Work from the origins to the present has located its centre of gravity in these Cartesian foundations of modernism. The nature of knowledge, research and truth for social work has largely relied on the methods of Decartes (Irving, 1999, p. 31).

This leads to the fact, that the concept of reality as contingent and historical, constructed out of languages and cultural codes does not easily float into the researching, teaching and practice of Social Work. Further, references to the notion of discourse not necessarily take a foucaultian understanding of discourse as basis, where the non-discursive practices (the visible) are inevitable part of the constitution of the discourse (Foucault, 1981, p. 231-ff.). The visible can never be reduced to the articulable (Foucault, 1981) and need to be scrutinized to lay bare the discourse. How Deleuze has coined so precisely:

> If you forget the theory of visibilities, then you not only mutilate the idea that Foucault has of history, but you also mutilate his thinking, the idea that he has about thinking (Deleuze, 1987, p. 72; transl.).

A separation of the "articulable" and the "visible" occurred, as Foucault calls it, in a "reorganization of culture", where the eye no longer deciphers the "prose of the world," and where, therefore, "the eye was destined to see and only see; and the ear to only hear" (Foucault, 1974, p. 76; transl.). Analysing discourse, without seeing the non-discursive practice, can easily get lost in pure cognitive reasoning about notions and words, excluding the non-representable fullness of experience "out there" within its analytical horizon (Chambon *et al.*, 1999).

For us as Social Workers, working with those excluded in the collective meaning making processes, firstly have to be aware that we act within a discourse. This means that we have understand the processes of meaning making, of representation and discourse. That demands for our analysis to take the "visible" as much into consideration as the "articulable" in representations. We can't only analyse the represented, said, written, said, but also need to "see", to "sense" what is going on the ground. We need to be aware, that reality can never be re- presented in its totality within another context, another space-time as formed in the "non-represental theory" (Thrift, Dewsbury, 2000). It can only be experienced, and experience can be witnessed.

Secondly, we need to develop tools to dig out other stories – including our own –, excluded from the dominant narrations and discourse. These stories are not easily told, not so easily expressed. The words available within language shaped by the discourse might not feel appropriate, not suitable. Thus, we need to establish spaces in which people can reconnect with themselves, with their bodies, in which the experience is stored and find words, images, sounds to express to tell their story. Stories constitute and important part of the sense and meaning making practice and thus the construction of our own identity. To listen to the stories, to recognize them is essential for re-connection, community building and healing. On the other hand, while listening, we should not ignore the fact, that any representation reduces the experience to certain aspects and thus ignores others, as the truth of reality is nameless, ineffable. Having this in mind we can foster our capacities to listen beyond the words and witness the story told by the body itself, by its movement, by its presence and listen to the story of silence.

In the following, I will display some aspects, which are in my view important for Social Workers working in the field of flight and migration to have in mind: On the one hand, theories of sense and meaning making referring to the discussions within cultural studies. On the other, present some tools to create spaces for other stories used in the Italian case and add some of my reflections about them.

2. Seeing the unseen: The power of representation, the construction of meaning and the inherent possibility for change

Central to understanding of representation and sense making is the concept of "social construction of reality" (Berger, Luckmann, 1966). This model takes into consideration that humans can't perceive reality without its meaning and that meaning is constructed inter-subjectively (ivi, p. 23). By

using things in particular ways, but also by naming things and events and representing them in a new context, meaning attributed to the material world and the events occurring. This is thus distinct from a reflective approach to representation, in which language conceptualized as a like a mirror, reflecting the true meaning of an object, person, idea or event and is also different to an intentional approach, in which the words only mean what the author intends them to mean.

> Representation is the process by which members of a culture use language (broadly defined as any system, that deploys signs, any signifying system) to produce meaning (Hall, Evans, Nixon, 2013, p. 45).

These representations include cultural artefacts (architecture, sights, instruments, etc.), images and sounds, and importantly: verbal language as a system of signs. As important insight, Saussure dismantles the sign into two elements: the signifier, which is the form (e.g., the word "tree" or the image) and the signified, the corresponding *concept in your head* with which the form is associated. This concept in your head functions as a "map of meaning" ordering signs. Both elements are required to produce meaning. Yet this meaning is not fixed, as signs do not own an intrinsic, essential meaning within themselves. There is no necessary, inevitable link between the signifier and the signified, the word tree and the concept of tree in our head. Rather, signs – as elements of a system- are defined by their *difference* to other elements of that system ("tree" is not "bee"). We create meaning with the help of our semantic networks, in which each word/sign is different to – yet also connected and associated with – another word/sign. The differences are of crucial importance for the creation of meaning. They are defined by social conventions specific to each society and each historical moment and thus always subjected to modifications, to "slippages" (Butler, 1990) changing the signification. We create meaning by marking similarities to and differences from other things or experiences, as it is the "difference that signifies" (Hall, 1997; Hall, Evans, Nixon, 2013, p. 17).

To make sense of the world, we use language, which differentiates, make use of certain objects in our live in a particular way or simply perceive reality through our concept maps. All three processes are signifying practices we exercise.

Difference matters because it is essential to meaning. Meaning is relational and depends on the difference. This is often captured using language, which subsumes types.

A sign [has the] explicit intention to serve as an index of subjective meanings […] Language is capable of becoming the objective repository of vast accumulations of meaning and experience, which it can then preserve in time and transmit to following generations […] Language also typifies experiences, allowing me to subsume them under broad categories in terms of which they have meaning not only to myself but also to my fellowmen (Berger, Luckmann, 1966, pp. 35-39).

While the use of "types" is inherent to language and necessary for communication, it is not necessary, that these "types" become essentialized, the borders rigid and fixed dividing the "normal" from the "abnormal". The latter is what we call stereotyping (Hall, Evans, Nixon, 2013, p. 248). The mental concepts are maps of meaning, allowing us to bring order and thus sense to a chaotic world full of stimuli and creates structures. One important feature is that if structure is "*structurality*, only through its repeated reinstatement" (Butler, 1997, p. 13) it "means that the very possibility of structure depends on a reiteration that is in no sense determined fully in advance" (*ibid.*). And this understanding brings the temporality into the picture, a futurity of *becoming of social formations*. Further if shed a light on the constant "doing" of the structure, which means, that the "possibility of its own undoing is at once the condition of possibility of structure itself" (ivi, p. 14)[2].

This moment-to-moment re-iteration of hegemonies through the daily enactment constitute the backdrop for social-political transformation and change. It is in this moment, in which the seed of change is situated on condition that the subject is aware about its possibilities to give space to other, not so dominant versions of interpretations of the event. To include other "maps of meanings" into the hegemonic systems of interpretation of reality, the Social Worker has to be conscious, firstly about the difference between object and its meaning, the event and the signification and needs to know, that meaning is constructed through the discourse within power differences and through signifying practices. Secondly, the Social Worker needs to know her-self and understands herself as an agent, which is re-iterating the system through her signifying practice and representations with language. Thirdly, the Social Worker needs to encounter other modes of interpretations, then her own and enables herself to actively listen to other stories, which might contradict her own understanding of reality or even value system.

[2] "The essentially performative character of naming is the pre-condition for all Hegemony and politics' (Zizek, 1989, p. xiv). Performative means, that names do not merely bring into existence what they name, as divine names do. Names within the sphere of politics produce the possibility of identification, but also foil that possibility" (Butler, 1997, p. 14).

3. Creating spaces to listen to other stories… and to recognize reality beyond the story

The notion the performative character of identity and culture, the understanding of "identity as doing" is parting from a deterministic concept of structures – a perception of culture and identities as essentially given – and opens up the space to recognize the importance of agency for the construction of meaning and identity[3]. For Social Work this stresses the fact, that, if it deals with their clients as a receiver of help, services, gods, etc. it is part of a re-iterating system with impact on their identity construction emphasising on passivity and dependence. Different to this is an attitude, which recognises the client's capacity to be the creator of her/his live. This is a notion which focusses more on empowerment then on charity (see also the chapter of Ravinder Barn in this book).

But how to empower someone to tell her/his story, if the discourses do not represent her/his experiences and thus there is no collective material available to express?

That points to a crucial fact, that the pure experience has to become a story, so that it can be communicated.

> [T]he event must become a "story" before it can become a communicative event. In that moment the formal sub-rules of discourse are "in dominance", without, of course, subordinating out of existence the historical event so signified, the social relations in which the rules are set to work, or the social and political consequences of the event having been signified in this way (Hall, 2006, p. 163).

But what kind of story? And how can I find a story with which I identify as my story? Thus, we need to create spaces in which stories of the inexpressible can be found. Here several tools can be applicable. Yet, with this theory in mind, these spaces need to offer enough time so that the person can re-connect with their bodies, allowing their bodies to speak. It is within their cells of the bodies their experiences are stored. The fact to support to create a sensual presence in the bodies can e.g. be done through mindfulness activities, in which the silence speaks. This moment of being present in silence can become a powerful turning point from which new expression of experience can emerge. These often develop very slowly, so to resist an immediately ordering with regard to a dominant narration of the events and have to be accepted even if they don't make sense, are chaotic, very fuzzy

[3] I do cleaning, so I am a cleaner, I do write, so I am a writer and not what the status tells me I am.

and fluid, yet often emotionally charged. Here all kinds of expression, from body movement, images, colours, sounds, objects of nature, symbols can be of great support. This is what the actors in Italy have shown us: Using Music (Salvatore), Paintings (Francesco) or Theater (Ilaria/Angelo): they all open up a space to find another story, a story which suits more to the experience the people had, then the story told by the dominant narration of refugees.

Further, this space should allow for collective knowledge to emerge. Meaning is intrinsically something social and thus the process of sense making as well. If we look up on the works of Mikhail Bakhtin, then we recognize, that meaning is not owned by one of the speakers, but rather created within and established through dialogue. "The word in language is half someone else's" (Bakhtin, 1935, p. 3).

That's how the notion of dialogue enters the space. The stories are not simply discovered and told, but they are listened to, and dialogue occurs. In this telling and listening, interpreting, and retelling, understanding, searching and again telling embedded within an eye-to-eye contact a magic of connecting and thus belonging occurs. This process needs to be unfolded as a save space and in analogy with Monti inserted 1) within a regular, predictable, reliable timeframe. It has to 2) offer the possibilities for clear boundaries of the self and 3) needs to overcome notions of "us" *vs.* "them". Further, witnessing becomes part of the process, which means that not only the words are listened too, but also the body movements, facial expressions, sounds and silences.

Despite creating such a space where "other" stories are told, the experience can never be represented as such within a story. Seeking out to those places is thus something very much needed within Social Work. Here, we simply take the notion of the foucaultian discourse serious and go to the places, experience realities, and see the unseen. We cannot do Social Work without connecting to the spaces and places our fellow humans live in and observe the non-discursive practices imbedded in "normalization" processes, through which intolerable practices become "normal" and legitimized.

4. Conclusion

Social Work concerned with the marginalised, has to become aware that the struggle over truth takes place within a "battlefield of meaning", where power asymmetries are constitutive. International Social work can highly profit from the insights of cultural studies, recognizing the importance of meaning, representation, and power-relations. This is a theoretical back-up to move towards empowerment and focus less on charity. Giving meaning is

an active act constructing not only meaning, but also the identity of "doer" of the signifying practice.

To summarize: meaning does not arise directly from the object, but it is established through representation in different contexts, in meaningful systems, "languages". These are visual, verbal, sonic, material, etc. Even something as obvious as a stone within the woods can be a gravestone, a boundary marker, an object of worship, etc. depending on which context of use, within which "language" (mental map) it is decoded. To sum up:

- we give objects, people and events meaning by the framework of interpretation, which we bring to them (the language);
- we give meaning by how we use them or integrate them into our everyday practice. It's our use of the stone to make it a boundary marker or a piece of worship, our use of a pile of bricks and mortar which makes it a house, and what we feel, think, or says about it that makes from the "house" a "home";
- we give things meaning by how we represent them – the words we use about them, the stories we tell about them, the images of them, we produce, the emotions we associate with them, the ways we classify and conceptualize them, the values we place on them. Culture, we may say, is involved in all those signifying practices.

Yet, in cooperation the notion of discourse, the process of digging out stories, which give sense to the live experience of the addressees is not a simple one. These save spaces need to offer processes in which the "non-represential" (Thrift, Dewsbury, 2000) is given enough space (Reich, 2013). We have to listen to the story, the other story… but also go beyond the story. The story is just a story and never the experience as such. Thus, time and space have to be allocated to the training to reconnect to our senses, let go of thinking, telling and listening, but simply experiencing the here and now.

Cultural Study approaches are in so far extremely interesting for International Social Work, as they do consider the notion of culture, signification and meaning AND the power of structures reiterating inequalities and exclusion yet, also taking the constant "making", the fluidity, interdependencies, and margins into account.

Working solely on the individual client, without acknowledgement of the wider system and the structural formations, ignores the need for a social transformation. Yet, focusing only on the structures, observing the constant reiterations and its reinstatement and the immense incorporative and domesticating possibilities of capital might lead to a rather deterministic point of view, ignoring the human creative creation of structures and their agency. Such a view can be seen as complying with the status quo, as it ignores the

possibilities of transformation. Social Work is about change and agency, and thus can't allow itself to indulge in agony, self-pity, and sense of helplessness. It is important to identify structural inequalities, power misbalances and the systems strategies to naturalize opposition and resistance, yet, equally necessary to acknowledge the power of the "margins", their contribution to the constant "becoming" of social realities and to identify possibilities for transformation. This is a model cultural studies can offer.

References

Anand J., Das C. (2019), *Global Mindedness in International Social Work Practice*, Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, London.

Ashcroft B., Griffiths G., Tiffin H. (1995), *The post-colonial studies reader*, Routledge, London.

Askeland G.A., Payne M. (2008), *Globalization and International Social Work*, Routledge, London.

Bakhtin M. (1935), "Discourse in the novel', in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four essays by M.M. Bakhtin*, ed. by M. Holquist, trans. C. Emerson and M. Holquist, University of Texas Press, Austin.

Berger P., Luckmann T. (1966), *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, Anchor Books, New York.

Bhabha H. (1994), *The Location of Culture*, Routledge, London/New York.

Butler J. (1997), "Further Reflections on Conversations of Our Time", *Diacritics*, 27, 1, pp. 13-15.

Chambon A., Irving A., Epstein L. (1999), *Reading Foucault for Social Work*, Columbia University Press, New York.

Covey S. (1989), *The 7 habbits of highly effective people. Powerful Lessons in personal change*, Simon & Schuster, New York.

Deleuze G. (1987), *Foucault*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main.

Du Gay P., Hall S., Janes L., Mackay H., Negus K. (1997), *Doing Cultural Studies: The Story of the Sony. Walkman*, Sage in association with Open University, London.

Durham M.G., Kellner D.M. (2006), *Media and Cultural Studies: KeyWorks*, Blackwell, Malden.

Foucault M. (1973), *Archäologie des Wissens*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main.

Foucault M. (1974), *Die Ordnung der Dinge. Eine Archäologie der Humanwissenschaften*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main.

Hall S. (*ed.*) (1980a), *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972-1979*, Routledge, in association with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, London. https://archive.org/details/culturemedialang0000unse.

Hall S. (1980b), "Cultural Studies: Two Paradigms", *Media, Culture, and Society*, 2, pp. 57-72.

Hall S. (1992), "Race, Culture, and Communications: Looking Backward and Forward at Cultural Studies", *Rethinking Marxism*, 5, 1, pp. 10-18.
Hall S. (2006), "Coding/Decoding", in M.G. Durham, D.M., Kellner, *Media and Cultural Studies: KeyWorks*, Blackwell, Malden, pp. 163-174.
Hall S., Evans J., Nixon S. (*ed.*) (2013), *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practice*, Sage, London.
Hooks B. (1994), *Outlaw culture: resisting representations*, Humanwissenschaften, Frankfurt am Main.
Irving A. (1999), "Waiting for Foucault", in A. Chambon, A. Irving, L. Epstein, *Reading Foucault for Social Work*, , Columbia University Press, New York, pp. 27-50.
Ranta-Tyrkkö S. (2011), "High time for postcolonial analysis in social work", *Nordic Social Work Research*, June, pp. 25-41.
Reich H. (2013), *Frieden stiften durch Theater. Konfessionalismus und sein Transformationspotential: Interaktives Theater im Libanon*, Bielefeld, transcript.
Spivak G.C. (1988), "Can the Subaltern Speak?", in C. Nelson, L. Grossberg (*eds.*), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, Macmillan, Basingstoke, pp. 271-313.
Thrift N., Dewsbury J.D. (2000), "Dead geographies and how to make them live", *Environment and Planing D. Society and Space*, 18, pp. 411-432.

 ISBN 9788835134329

Part III
Newcomers as change agent mirroring host societies: ... and how Social Work can respond

 ISBN 9788835134329

 ISBN 9788835134329

17. Empowering social workers as transformative actors

by Roberta T. Di Rosa, Hannah Reich*

1. Living realities: migrants, refugees, new comers in Italy

What happens under the name of "security" or "protection" with regards to human rights violation at the boarders of Europe and within the reception centres for migrants and refugees is painful to acknowledge.

As the essays by colleagues Apostolopoulos, Platania, Tumminelli and Bartholini show, newcomers, refugees, and migrants, live a very hard condition both in the transit from Lybia to Sicily and in the reception system in Sicily, while aware of there are two different situation, two different level of problems and risks.

Moreover, difficulties met in Italy are strictly linked to the public and political debate issues and to the mistrust or indifference in public opinion, as the use of negative categories referring to migrants shows (e.g., regular/irregular, refugee/asylum seekers, illegals, foreigners) and for the climate of anxiety and suspicion that is spread to the population through the media, as Francesca Rizzuto describe above.

> The real danger, however, remains the political instrumentalization of anger and fear. This is the scam: aggravating the malaise (anger) with catastrophic diagnoses and simultaneously promising to cure it with unfounded diagnoses and dangerous drugs (Battistelli, 2021, p. 17).

* The chapter is the result of the joint reflection of the two authors; however, in order to attribute authorship to the parts drafted, paragraph 1 is to be attributed to both authors, paragraph 2 to Roberta T. Di Rosa and paragraph 3 to Hannah Reich.

The constant of the migrant's experience is that of exposure to violence. Undoubtedly, these forms are different depending on whether we are dealing with the stay in Libya, the dramatic conditions of travel by sea, or living in the first reception facilities. Colleagues Bartholini, on the one hand, and Di Carlo and Iermano, on the other, have introduced us to the study of different and specific forms of violence, such as those experienced by vulnerable categories such as women or minors. And it is also important to understand the implications of international trafficking in persons, as in the case of women victims of trafficking of which Omodei spoke to us.

Yet, as Social Work is concerned about the excluded and marginalized the profession cannot turn his head away from these cruelties. In Europe there does exist rule of law for European citizens (to some degree), an important achievement, which is not guaranteed anywhere in the world and the discourse does refer to the Geneva Convention and to Human Rights. Yet, the belief in the separation of humans into different categories, the vital protection of blunt private capital and interests, and the "othering" of the "Other" legitimizes exclusion and inhuman treatment. This is deeply undermining the heroic principles of human equality distorting, human rights and human dignity allowing them to become shallow lib phrases, despite their profound importance. The created circumstances seem not to open too many possibilities for action, for collective transformation and change. Yet, Italy shows, how despite these realities, Social Workers remain committed and engaged to milden the suffering and bring about change.

2. Principles for Social Work to work for transformation

Social Workers on the ground act within the described challenges, act within to bring about change, confronting themselves with these extreme brutal exclusions, inhuman live worlds, and suffering. Reflection on the practices of reception and mutual adaptation to the actual criticalities that social operators encounter in facilitating the access of new users and in building a helping relationship within acknowledging differences, therefore becomes urgently necessary. But it becomes especially so, if we think of the social worker as a professional capable of mediating between different actors (institutions, migrant families, migrants, the community of reference), networking them in a perspective of mutual valorisation. A figure is therefore to demand recompositing of the current welfare, able to trace and strengthen the conditions of an intervention conceived, planned, and managed together with the community (Pattaro, Nigris, 2018).

Strategies of social-political activism had been to raise the awareness about structural injustice, the functioning of discourses, which only allow certain voices to be heard and certain utterance to be made and to create a critical reading of meanings and interpretations. This included a critical viewing the race, cultural racism, intersectionality, and gender construction and opened a space to include "other voices", "the empire writes back" and the creation of third spaces, in which new meanings can occur.

This re-framing and re- writing are done, on the one hand by critical reviewing what exists, by deconstruction and by learning from the past. This learning from the past, is one method, yet there are more efficient ways to encourage paradigmatic social change. Yes, there is another mode of re-writing, which takes its inspiration from the future, anchoring its vision and intension there and from there deconstructs the blockages hindering the future to unfold the vision (and thus also looks to the past)[1]. Although, there are similarities in the two mentioned approaches, the second seeks more into the embodiment of the future and fosters a resource-oriented approach. *Creating from the future* is something, we did learn from using participatory, interactive theatre like Forumtheater as well as music or painting as shown by Ilaria Olimpico, Angelo Miramonti, Salvatore Inguì and Francesco Piobbichi, which represent the experience and don't shy away from it, but at the same time offer space for new futures to emerge.

Migrating from one culture, one place to another, demands new learning, un-learning and invention, creating some kind of in-between space, liminal space for reconstructing the self. Creating an identity which can embrace the past experiences and stories, but also allow to act within the now new cultural settings and circumstances. Here a lot of potentials are dormant for growth and change, also of the host community. The *authentic encounter* with each other is central for this potential to come to surface and for new creative solutions and communal creations to emerge. Therefore, in this essay we refer in the title to "newcomers" to emphasis the potential for growth of the host societies towards constructive change and positions the Social Worker in-between. Transformation needs a lot of ambiguity tolerance[2]. The way how societies behave towards newcomers is mirroring the state of the art of the host community: It shows us how we treat vulnerabilities. It shows us lacks in our educational

[1] For a more precise explanation of the future oriented mode of thinking or processing, see e.g., the method of "Causal Layered Analysis" by Sohail Inayatullah (2004) or Otto Scharmer's *U Theory* (Scharmer, 2016).

[2] Supporting diversity, demanding ambiguity tolerance explains why we kept the wordings from the authors and thus have throughout the book a quite diverse language; also, the terms newcomers, refugees, migrants etc are used in various ways.

practice, our social systems, economical distribution and cultural integration to constructively engage with differences (e.g., conflict culture) and how to distribute economical wealth constructively. It also points to the question; how do we normalize and homogenize individuals in our systems and how far are they prepared to engage into true diversity on very different levels? It thus refers on a deep level to the individual and collective constructed self-image and demands a shift in an understanding of the process of identity construction.

Scrutinizing global migration led to the understanding of the social construction of identity as necessarily hybrid in nature (a "third space", a postcolonial sociolinguistic theory of identity and community realized through language or education termed by Homi K. Bhabha. Whereby this "hybridity" is not an unaccomplished state of being. Rather it can be seen as the constant in every changing experience of live and thus emphasis the uniqueness of each person, actor, or context as a "hybrid" (Bhaba, 1994) as a natural state of being. To except the slippiness of the identity categories demands the acceptance of ambiguity. *Ambiguity tolerance* is something central in working on the borderlines.

If we look on the approach in working with music as was shown by Salvatore Inguì in in this book, then Social Work has to accept that integration is a long lasting process, not possible overnight and the ambiguities need to be dealt with one-by-one during a process. It depends on perceptions of the self and of the newcomers and demands to overcome fear and the acceptance of the "other". This cannot be forced into people's heads. Further, if the principle of self-determination is seriously accepted, then the Social Worker need to be ready to be confronted with solutions or/behaviour which she is not expecting nor endorsing. Here she needs to strengthen her trust into the process with a *process orientation* and as to accept not to have control over the content outcome; yet she can be the guardian of the process itself and foster a *participatory approach*. Such approaches do lead to empowerment, something which has to be central within the endeavour of the Social Worker in the migration context. The principle of *empowerment* emphasised by Ravinder Barn and central to the work of Ilaria Olimpico, Angelo Miramonti, Glauco Iermano, Salvatore Inguì, Maria Monti and Francesco Piobbichi in a certain way. They also show the power to use cultural tool for representation, for telling stories and thus the re-creation of an identity of the beneficiary, which is aligned with the identity construction of herself. The power of the story is also a magic shield, Maria Monti is using, skilfully allowing to tell everything, what was experienced and listen to it. Yet, at the same time – with process orientation – guiding towards a transformation of the victimization cycle.

Although conversation techniques and interviewing are part of the curricula of Social Work, the time constrains, the overload in work and the massive ad-

ministrative duties can easily lead to rush through the interpersonal encounters. Yet the fulfilment of the need to be seen and heard by another person is crucial for humans to feel understood, to connect and to belong. Thus, the quality criteria of "more and faster is better" has to transform into the acknowledgment of quality time as essential within the conversation. This becomes very evident in the articles of the Social Practitioners, particular in Ilaria Olimpico, Angelo Miramonti, Salvatore Inguì and Maria Montis approach.

So central to allow an authentic encounter to take place is, that in these few moments given, the Social Worker is fully present, fully in the here and now with an *embodied presence* and not already busy with the next step. She has to pause, and simply be there to observes, sense, feel and listen with her totality of being.

The capacity to be present and really open for what the other has to say, even if this is via the eyes and the body, as language might not be available, is crucial for the feeling of dignity. This presence is built on sensing with the whole body what is there right now. It goes beyond purely extracting information, rather is thriving towards a *recognition of the other* and listening to the story of the other in an open non-judging, appreciating way.

The last point, which is obvious given the difficult situations Social Work is facing in the field of flight and migration is the emphasis on *self-care*. This is something which easily gets overseen, particular within the "missionary" approach. Yet, only a person, who is stable enough to handle her own emotions, who doesn't feel powerless by herself and who has enough self-confidence and self-efficacy to act consistently can be of support for others. This doesn't mean, that the Social Worker has to be distanced and untouchable. Rather the opposite is true: She needs to be fluid and permeable to allow for different emotions to run through, while being stable connected to her inner self. This demands training, which has to be offered in Social Work education.

3. Social Work education: empowering future Social Workers

New challenges, along with existing ones, engage social workers in increasingly international intervention processes, such as human trafficking or disaster response, now in the pandemic from Covid-19. The field of global social service displays, today, on the one hand, the common need to give answers to transnational phenomena. On the other, it marks a movement into the identification of cooperation as a relationship of "cross fertilization in the profession" (Healy, 2008, p. 160).

Social Work embraces different disciplines. This means that it incorporates different scientific models of reality from positivists to constructionist. However unfortunately, the different scientific models are not often explicitly mentioned, nor are they discussed. Yet, to work in the field, we need to be aware about the effects of these different models on our perception of reality, how we organise it and act within it. This is what it is termed "culture", organisational culture, or the culture of a discipline. Often dominated by a positivist assumption, Social Work castrates itself if it reduces itself to this paradigm and sabotages its capacity to be an effective agent within intercultural settings and to act as force to transform destructive "maps of meanings" – cultures of separation into more inclusive ones. Social Work thus has to break free of this paradigm and has to fully embraces the knowledge generated by cultural studies about power, representation and meaning making processes as a similar important pillar into its curricula as positivist foundations are. The importance of understanding meaning and thus recognizing culture is very palpable in the Italian case. As previously shown, the need for legitimization leads to a battlefield over the meaning, which we don't easily recognize as we confuse representation with realities. Thus, Social Workers have to be educated in the processes of meaning making, of the construction of reality and have to be literate in "reading" categories, which are like maps, illuminating some things and ignoring others. Here the sensitivity to power relations, knowledge about structural violence exclusion and discourse constitute a basis to understand the principles of representation and the need to unlearn previous knowledges. This need to knowledge about meaning making and the principles of representation is further exemplified by Francesca Rizzuto's insight about newsmaking. This on top brings to light, the necessity to be emotionally intelligent. Only with appropriate training in emotional intelligence, Social Workers can distance themselves from the emotional triggers of media and remain a distance to contextualize the information within their broader framework of knowledge about it. This is part of a very much need self-competence for social works. If we listen to Maria Monti it becomes clear how much we need to strengthen the integrity and resilience to be confronted with extreme violence as this is the reality Social Workers are facing.

Social Work Education needs to respond and strengthen personal development within its curricula, which also demands a sufficient training for self-care, building strong characters not to be drown in the light of such immense suffering occurring and to resist to remain loyal to their professional principles despite exclusive, inhuman policies.

Not always are these ethical and deontological principles easy to realize; in fact, while it is true that the presence of different cultures acts as a catalyst

in the processes of change in society, this is equally valid for the professional category (Di Rosa, 2017 p. 132).

Here we need to react to the fact that Social Workers seem to easily adapt to such policies (Fazzi, 2013). To embody intercultural competencies and tackle certain fears of the "other" and stereotypes, the settings for Social Work education have to be in themselves intercultural. Because this experience is needed to confront prejudges and stereotypes about the other, as for the social workers' perception regarding their ability to build significant relationships with clients, and the way in which they perceive the issues involved (Dominelli, 2005).

Yet, this needs the possibility for true relationship building to occur between classmates and should be thus seen as a learning aim within the diverse classrooms. Differences have to be brought to surface and a space has to be created for the different stories to be occurred and different opinion to be raised. Given the hierarchical structure of the teaching setting, including the marks given to the students, trust first needs to be generated, so that people don't fear negative sanctions and the experience has to be made, that different "truth" are present at the same time, without one being "wrong" and the other "right".

Intercultural competence implies overcoming personal and professional prejudices on the part of the social workers, improving understanding and awareness of diversity, culture, marginality, and exclusion, adapting to particular individual situations and their own modes of operation (Di Rosa, 2017, p. 132).

Every violation of human rights is embedded into the meaning making system, into the cultural context and thus creating often not so simple answers to the question if a conduct is to be condemned or if it is culturally justified. In certain ways, it is about the question: "When difference is simply different and when is it unjust?" (Healy, 2007). To answer this question, the social worker needs to be aware about her interpretative system, her embeddedness into culture, sustained by power relation, yet, also recognizing herself and her power with no guilt but as opportunity to bring about change. To bring about constructive change, it is not so relevant, how the Social Workers interpret the event, but rather about how the people involved signify it and a space has to be given to the very different forms of interpretation of the situation. The capacity to hold such a space demands a proper education, which Social Work faculties have to offer.

Global social work deals with problems that are caused between countries, that occur across national boundaries or that are issues that countries work together to collectively solve (Harris, 1997, p. 429).

The competence required of practitioners engaged in this field is, first and foremost, that of being able to work in context-appropriate ways, whether at the level of individuals, families, communities, or service systems, and that of working flexibly, with a generalist approach that is adaptable and context-appropriate is preferable to a high degree of specialization, both in methods and approaches. This, in turn, has implications for how social workers are trained in international practice. In addition to training in the theories and methods of direct intervention (including counselling, casework, group work, and community work), it is vital that indirect theories, systems, and methods be covered in depth (including social policy, organization and management, and research).

Working with immigrants offers a challenge and, at the same time, an opportunity to provide a social service that is authentic, based on the defence of human rights and real integration, encouraging shared citizenship between foreigners and the indigenous population. To achieve this, it would be appropriate to foster multidimensional and synergistic change, with the participation of the academic world, in the social and institutional contexts in which social workers operate:

> Educational institutions must prepare their students for these kinds of challenges which they probably will meet as social workers in a multicultural society. Social work students must be given the competence needed to work with a diverse population in a well-informed and culturally sensitive manner (Bø, 2015, p. 562).

There are more training courses, masters and specializations dedicated to working with migrants. University programs, which until recently did not include specific courses for preparing social workers to interact with people belonging to other cultures, are starting to offer courses in migration and the dynamics of cross-cultural assistance, though the content of these courses varies greatly from place to place. It might therefore be opportune for the university, first, to integrate cross-cultural knowledge in its courses and, consequently, to urgently provide for training of the new generations of professionals (Di Rosa, 2017, p. 133).

There are three areas of knowledge and competencies, which seem to be of particular importance for Social Work Education in the 21st century: 1) theoretical knowledge and knowledge about the facts on the ground and the capacity for a critical reflection; 2) practical knowledge about participatory, collective methods for dialogues and empowerment; 3) personal and professional integrity, which includes emotional intelligence, self- awareness, self-care, mindfulness, and ambiguity tolerance. These elements seem to be of particular importance in the light of the rising of group-focused enmity, re-

pressive and despotic governments. We need to prepare Social Workers to be confronted with unjust structures and inhuman mindsets and prepare a shield so that they can protect their personal and professional integrity. Empowerment is not only a principle needed to work with beneficiaries or (neoliberal) the "client" but is also needed as a principle in Social Work education. Only empowered Social Workers can act as transformative actors embodying universal human values as Social Work, the human rights profession.

Although there is still a long way to go within the educational systems and outside in society, we would like to nurture with this collection the vision, in which we truly embrace differences and support authentic self-realisation, collective empowerment and equal distribution of resources, co-creating sustainable futures.

References

Battistelli F. (2021), *Italiani e stranieri. La rabbia e l'imbroglio nella costruzione sociale dell'immigrazione*, FrancoAngeli, Milano.

Bhabha K.H. (1994), *The Location of Culture*, Routledge, London/New York.

Bø B.P. (2015), "Social work in a multicultural society: New challenges and needs for competence", *International Social Work*, 58, 4, pp. 562-574.

Di Rosa R.T. (2017), "Towards cross-cultural social work: a teaching approach for development of intercultural competences", *Comunitania: Revista Internacional de Trabajo Social y Ciencias Sociales*, 13, Enero, pp. 121-135.

Dilts R., Hallbom T., Smith S. (2012), *Beliefs: Pathways to Health & Well-Being*, Crown House Publishing , Bancyfelin.

Dominelli L. (2005), *Il servizio sociale. Una professione che cambia*, Erickson, Trento.

Fazzi L. (2013), *Terzo settore e nuovo welfare in Italia*, FrancoAngeli, Milano.

Harris R. (1997), "Internationalizing social work: some themes and issues", in N.S. Mayadas, T.D. Watts, D. Elliott (*eds.*), *International Handbook on Social Theory and Practices*, Greenwoodpress, Westport, pp. 429-440.

Healy L.M. (2008), *International Social Work. Professional Action in an Interdipendent World*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2nd ed.

Inayatuallah S. (2004), "Causal Layered Analysis: an Integrative and Transformative Theory and Method", in S. Inayatullah (*ed.*), *The Causal Layered Analysis Reader*, Tamkang University Publications, Taipei.

Pattaro C., Nigris D. (2018), *Le sfide dell'aiuto*, FrancoAngeli, Milano.

Scharmer O. (2016), *Theory U: Leading from the Future as it Emerges*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, San Francisco, 2nd ed.

Sparrer I., Varga von Kibéd M. (2009), *Ganz im Gegenteil, Tetralemmaarbeit und andere Grundformen Systemischer Strukturaufstellungen – für Querdenker und solche, die es werden wollen*, Carl Auer, Heidelberg, 6ste Auflage.

Senza nome (onorare la memoria)

The authors

Iasonas Apostolopoulos is the Rescue Team coordinator of the Italian humanitarian organization Mediterranea Saving Humans, where he leads the Search and Rescue operations in the central Mediterranean Sea onboard the Mare Jonio rescue vessel. He has in-depth knowledge and understanding of migration in Europe and its socio-political context. Iason has been involved in humanitarian and solidarity projects since 2015, most of which were responses to the ongoing refugee reception crises at the borders of Europe, particularly in Italy and Greece. He also spent a year working in South Sudan with Médicins Sans Frontières. His formal education includes a Master of Science degree in Environmental Engineering and a Master of Engineering degree in Civil Engineering from the Technical University of Athens. In addition to his work onboard the Mare Jonio rescue vessel, Iasonas is a volunteer who actively organizes political and cultural events as well as grassroots actions for defending public spaces and oppressed minorities.

Email: iasonapostolopoulos@gmail.com

Ravinder Barn (PhD) is Professor of Social Policy in the School of Law and Social Sciences at Royal Holloway University of London. Much of her academic writing is international, and comparative in scope, focused particularly on family, children, and gender. She is a Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences, and a member of the Social Policy and Social Work subpanel for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) in 2021, UK.

Email: r.barn@rhul.ac.uk

Ignazia Bartholini (PhD) is currently Associate Professor of Sociology and Social Policies at the University of Palermo. In recent years she was visiting researcher at the universities of Belgrade (2014), Ljubljana (2016),

Sheffield (2018). She serves on numerous boards including the Council of the Research Network 32 (Women, Gender and Society) of the ISA (International Sociological Association).

Forced migration and disregarded rights. A gender look at frontier needs (with M.L. Piga, FrancoAngeli, 2021) and *The Trap of Proximity Violence* (Springer, 2020) are the most recent monographies.

Email: ignazia.bartholini@unipa.it

Giulia Di Carlo is cultural mediator and activist for the rights of women and migrants. Coordinator of Action 1 – SAAMA project. Coordinator of the projects area of the CIAI Palermo office. Coordinator of the "Counter against discrimination at work" of the Noureddine Adnane Observatory.

Email: giulia.dicarlo@ciai.it

Roberta T. Di Rosa (PhD), is a social worker and sociologist. Associate professor of Sociology of Migration and International Social Work. Coordinator of Master and Degree in Social Work, Department Cultures and Societies, University of Palermo.

Member of Council of Professor of the PHD course in "Estudios Migratorios" Instituto de Migraciones of the University of Granada and the in the PHD course in "Dinamica dei sistemi", Università di Palermo. Visiting professor at: Universidad de Murcia (2007); Universidad del Rosario di Bogotà (2007); Universidad Complutense de Madrid (2017); Midsweden University, Ostersund (2019); University of Applied Sciences Wuerzburg-Schweinfurt (2019).

She is currently engaged in national and international research programs on social work, social integration of migrants and on reception practices. Founder of Assistenti Sociali senza Frontiere (Social Workers without Borders).

Email: robertateresa.dirosa@unipa.it

Glauco Iermano is a social worker, he studied the phenomenon of "Migration" and has worked in the field of Education and Training (formal, informal and non-formal) since 1999 together with the Grammelot Intercultural Association. Since 2007 he also works together with the social cooperative Dedalus of which he is the partner and area coordinator. For about 15 years he has been working daily in the field of Inclusion Services aiming at migrants, with special focus on single foreign minors and young foreigners.

Email: g.iermano@coopdedalus.it

Angelo Miramonti (PhD) is a Community Theatre professor at the Institute of Fine Arts in Cali, Colombia, and lecturer of Testimonial Theatre at the University of Applied Science (FHWS) in Würzburg, Germany. Angelo is the founder and coordinator of the Arts for Reconciliation research program in the Department of Performative Arts in Colombia, focusing on the use of arts to accompany dialogue and reconciliation among former combatants and victims of the Colombian armed conflict. Angelo is a certified Drama therapist and trained in Theatre of the Oppressed, Theatre of Witness and Ritual Theatre. He also coordinated rehabilitation programs for child soldiers in Uganda, Congo and West Africa and carried out ethnographic research on healing and possession rituals in Senegal.

Email: amiramonti@hotmail.com

Maria Chiara Monti is a psychotherapist expert in taking charge of torture survivors according to the Ethnopsychiatry approach; founder of the Ethnopsychology Centre in Palermo.

Mail: mkmonti@hotmail.com – centropenc@gmail.com

Ilaria Olimpico is a social arts facilitator. She works with an awareness-based approach, weaving Social Presencing Theater, Aesthetic of the Oppressed, Focusing, and Participative Storytelling. She holds a BA in International and Diplomatic Sciences at University Orientale in Naples, with research on the Arab-Islamic world. She has been working for more than ten years in intercultural and peace education programs for teenagers and adults. In the last four years, she has been working on EU projects with migrants. During the pandemic, she developed the online format Stories that reconnect. She collaborates with the University of Florence, CISP University of Pisa, and University of Applied Science Würzburg (FHWS). She is co-founder of the collective TheAlbero (thealbero.wordpress.com), facilitator at ImaginAction (imaginaction.org), and a member of the Organizing Committee of PPLG (pplg.org).

Email: ilarialmp@gmail.com

Riccardo Ercole Omodei (PhD) is a postdoctoral fellow in criminal law at the Department of Law of the University of Palermo and currently Lecturer of criminal law at the Department of Cultures and Societies of the same University. His main area of research interest is criminal medical liability, but he has written articles on a variety of topics such as: trafficking in human beings, organized crime, and trade secret.

Email: riccardoercole.omodei@unipa.it

Giuseppe Platania is a social operator for Borderline Sicilia, NGO monitoring migration in Sicily, and currently a PhD student in Sociology and Political Science at the Scuola Normale Superiore of Florence. His studies are about system in Sicily, with a field work on the CARA of Mineo: in his case study he describes the lack of basic services, the slowness of the asylums process, and the low rate of recognition have led to migrants' uprising and creation of a welfare from below.

Email: giuseppe.platania@me.com

Francesco Piobbichi has been working on the phenomenon of migration for many years. He has worked in Lampedusa, Lebanon, Morocco, and now in Rosarno with labourers. He started working on the theme of the drawn story during his work in Lampedusa and since then he has been using social drawing as an integral part of the communicative work of the social practices in which he's involved. Mediterranean Hope is a project of the Federation of Evangelical Churches in Italy launched in 2013 which aims to change the European policy on the border. At the moment they are working in Lebanon with the humanitarian corridor project, in Lampedusa as a migration observatory, in Rosarno with farm workers, and in Bosnia finishing assistance to transit people on the Balkan route.

Email: fpiobbichi@hotmail.com

Hannah Reich (PhD) holds a professorship at the University of Applied Science Würzburg (FHWS) in movement and artistic oriented methods in Social Work. She holds an MA in Islamic Societies and Cultures and an M. Phil in Cultural Geography. Her PhD was an action research project using interactive theatre for post-war peace building in Lebanon. She also works as freelancer in the field of conflict transformation, peace education and social well-being & resilience, using various forms of interactive theatre, conflict management and mindfulness techniques (MBSR) for empowerment.

Email: hannah.reich@fhws.de

Francesca Rizzuto (PhD) is Associate Professor of Sociology of Communication and Cultural Processes – University of Palermo, Department Cultures and Societies. She teaches Public Communication and Sociology of Journalism in the Communication Sciences courses. Her favourite research themes are political and public communication in Italy and journalism.

Email: francesca.rizzuto@unipa.it

Giuseppina Tumminelli (PhD) is Researcher in Sociology at the Department of Political Sciences and International Relations of the University of Palermo. She is the coordinator of the Observatory of Migration in the Sicilian Region (Italy) for the Institute of socio-political formation Pedro Arrupe in Palermo. She is a member of many national and international research groups for projects dealing with migrations.

Email: santagiuseppina.tumminelli@unipa.it

Vi aspettiamo su:

www.francoangeli.it

per scaricare (gratuitamente) i cataloghi delle nostre pubblicazioni

DIVISI PER ARGOMENTI E CENTINAIA DI VOCI: PER FACILITARE
LE VOSTRE RICERCHE.

Management, finanza, marketing, operations, HR
Psicologia e psicoterapia: teorie e tecniche
Didattica, scienze della formazione
Economia, economia aziendale
Sociologia
Antropologia
Comunicazione e media
Medicina, sanità

Architettura, design, territorio
Informatica, ingegneria
Scienze
Filosofia, letteratura, linguistica, storia
Politica, diritto
Psicologia, benessere, autoaiuto
Efficacia personale
Politiche e servizi sociali

FrancoAngeli

La passione per le conoscenze

 ISBN 9788835134329

FrancoAngeli
La passione per le conoscenze

 ISBN 9788835134329

This publication is a resource book for Social Workers engaging in the field of migration. It aims to, on the one hand, display facts about the living realities on the ground migrants and Social Workers active in the field are facing, circumstances presented by experienced practitioners and researchers of this field. On the other hand, it presents methods and approaches, extracting them from these experiences and reflections insights, relevant for Social Work and consequently, also significant for Social Work educational practice. The new challenges of the 21st century ask Social Work education for a change, adapting curricula towards more experienced based teaching practices, intercultural, participatory learning sites and exchange, and future oriented personal empowerment and resilience training. International Social Work could take on a transformational leading role, as our global security and well-being of tomorrow depends on the educational foundations laid down today.

Hannah Reich, PhD, holds a professorship on artistic and movement-oriented methods in Social Work, with focus on interactive theatre, mindfulness and conflict transformation in the Faculty of Applied Social Science at the University of Applied Science Würzburg (FHWS), Würzburg, Germany. Her expertise lies in participatory, experienced based, empowering methods for individuals and for social transformation in intercultural contexts. She is head of the project "International Social Work Acting in Crisis – attitude matters (AttiMa)" which is implemented in a collaboration with Jordan and Lebanon and aims at fostering the resilience of social workers to act in integrity and constructively in crises situations.

Roberta T. Di Rosa, PhD, is a social worker and a sociologist. She is Associate professor of Sociology of Migration and International Social Work, coordinator of Master and Degree in Social Work, Department Culture e Società, University of Palermo, Italy, member of Council of Professors in the PHD course in "Estudios Migratorios", University of Granada and in the PHD course in "Dinamica dei sistemi", University of Palermo. She is currently engaged in national and international research programs on intercultural competences, international social work, community mediation for migrants' integration and on protection of vulnerabilities in reception practices.

FrancoAngeli
La passione per le conoscenze