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**ADNICH**



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Italy - Albania - Montenegro



**ADNICH**



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(editors)

# Cultural Heritage and Social Relations across the Adriatic Sea



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INTERREG IPA CBC  
ITALY-ALBANIA-MONTENEGRO PROGRAMME

*ADriatic Network of artistic production for  
the development and enhancement of  
Intangible Cultural Heritage  
(ADNICH)*

ALESSANDRO ISONI  
*Towards an “Adriatic Cultural Landscape”*

The ADNICH project has been funded under the Interreg IPA CBC Italy-Albania-Montenegro Programme. Its main task is to propose the creation of a cultural network among Italy, Albania and Montenegro which can enhance the intangible heritage of the three countries through art and theatre. Intercultural dialogue is both a premise and the main output of the project: by putting together different elements of the anthropic landscape (i.e., identity and traditions) it aims at promoting innovative and cross-border interconnections.

By involving local communities, public institutions, schools, theatrical academies, opinion leaders and local artists from the three beneficiary countries, the project aims to produce a network of people, with a strong commitment with both the natural and cultural landscape and to intangible assets, which may have cultural as well as economic consequences (e.g. tourism).

The project is led by the Royal Zetski Dom Theater of Cetinje in Montenegro and involves Teatro Astragali, the Italian Center of the International Theater Institute/UNESCO, the Department of History, Society and Human Studies at the University of Salento, the Municipality of Pogradec and the University of Arts in Tirana, Albania. After an initial phase of social analysis, ADNICH intends to develop theatrical residencies and workshops involving the local communities of its three partners, in order to develop joint productions to be experimented through a theater festival in the southern Adriatic.

Concerning the scientific aspects of the project, the Department of History, Society and Human Studies of the University of Salento, together with the University of Arts in Tirana, has promoted desk as well as field research. The

research activity, carried out by scholars coming from Italy and Albania, has focused on two main topics: on the one hand, the study of gender and inter-ethnic relations in Southern Italy and, on the other, the study of blood vengeance in Albania.

Over the last decades Salento – the South-Eastern part of the Italian peninsula – has witnessed a very important change in its culture, principally deriving from the spread of modernization phenomena that have affected the whole Italian society. Thus, Salento has slowly shifted from a traditional kind of society, strictly connected with customs and values coming from the past, into a society that has accepted and is facing all the challenges of modernity.

As a result, Salento has been experiencing a long phase of change that researchers have tested on field through the data collected in San Cesario di Lecce, a little town in the outskirts of Lecce which during these years has experienced all the problems and opportunities related to this fast cultural and social “revolution”. Investigations focused on the main fields where changes have been more visible and, at the same time, more conflicting, probing into a wide range of issues that provide the readers with a variety of viewpoints.

The first contribution, significantly entitled *Genealogy of the Migration Phenomenon in Italy*, is an interesting study written by Katia Lotterita on changes taking place between the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century in Italy, a country that has become a place of migration after a centuries-old experience of Italian farmers leaving for North and South America, Australia and European countries. This radical mutation of the inner essence of Italian society has certainly affected Salento, as it is characterised by a long tradition of migration towards Switzerland, Belgium and Germany and is now witnessing important migration flows, which are well analysed in this first essay.

The second contribution focuses on *Gender Issues and Foreign Immigrants: Experiences, Relationships and Representations* in San Cesario, thanks to a large amount of data and field research led by Giuseppe Gaballo, a scholar with an excellent know-how in this kind of analysis. The outcome of the research amply reveals how difficult it is for migrants coming to Salento to have a traditional identity despite the new individualistic model proposed by Western societies. The research results are backed up and strengthened by two other contributions, mainly focused on the data collected and processed by two young scholars, Valerio Preite and Simone Rollo who, in their contributions respectively entitled *Focus Group Analysis. Lives, Relationships and Gender Representations* and *The Third Dimension as Meeting Point with Diversity* analyze how cultural

differences deeply affect both the household dimension and gender relationships within the migrant families.

The last contribution of the first part differs from the others, since it focuses on *Women’s Magic. Socio-Psycho-Anthropological Studies on Female Identity in the Salento Area. Magic, Disease and its Cure*, thus moving away from the topic of migration. This very multi-faceted research paper, written by Maria Grazia De Donatis, follows the excellent tradition of studies devoted to Salento folklore that includes De Martino and other scholars, all engaged in finding in archaic rituals the roots of a different culture, not corrupted by the modernity and able to represent itself as the living manifestation of an authentic popular culture.

This important feature is confirmed by the contributions included in the second part of this book, all devoted to the theme of “blood vengeance” in Albania. Often considered a legacy of an archaic society, blood vengeance is one of the most privileged observation points in order to examine Albanian identity, as it allows scholars to shed light on the development of society through the observation of a phenomenon dating back to the Middle Ages. Particularly, the role of women is amply investigated, because they are always the true victims of this kind of justice, entirely declined according to masculine values, as honor, virtue and so on.

To conclude this short foreword, it is important to underline how the Adriatic Sea represents an extraordinary open-air laboratory in which it is possible to study all the changes caused by the spread of modernity models and values. Even though the Albanian and Italian contexts appear to be very different, they do share a lot of common issues, thus confirming Braudel’s vision that considered the Adriatic Sea as an exception within the whole Mediterranean basin. In spite of the recurrent political cleavages dividing the two shores of the Adriatic Sea, the social and economic flows have never stopped, so contributing to create a real Adriatic community, intended as a place where people share interests, values, cultures and customs. Moreover, this research demonstrates how intangible cultural heritage represents one of the main fields where to build common paths of peace and mutual identification.

The ADNICH project is based on the assumption that the process of dialogue and cultural interaction between the different shores of this basin could be a great opportunity to build more cohesive societies, thus leading to the establishment of a kind of “Adriatic landscape”, where the term “landscape” in its Italian translation of «paesaggio» amply demonstrates the inner meaning of this concept. As a matter of fact, the origin of this term is the Latin term

“*pagēnsis*” that could be translated as “countryside” and originates from the Indo-European word “*pagus*”, from whose root *pag-* (to tie, to unite) derive the terms “page”, “pack”, “pact” and, last but not least, the word “peace”.

In this vein, the present book aims to become one of the elements within this cultural and metaphorical “Adriatic landscape” in order to test the creation of new research paradigms, foster new ways of scientific cooperation and create fruitful links between different cultures and people coming from the south-east Europe.

— FIRST PART —

Gender and inter-ethnic Relations.

The case of San Cesario, Lecce (ITALY)



# I.

## Genealogy of the Migration Phenomenon in Italy

*Katia Lotteria*

### 1. Introduction

Experts – i.e. the Academia, NGOs, operators and/or experts from the Third Sector and Welfare – have always affirmed the fact that immigration is a natural phenomenon, as it naturally concerns – in other words – both the man and the animal and plant kingdom. The biological individual, even when apparently inanimate, moves and changes according to the surrounding environment, if deemed unfavorable to its own survival.

Although this assumption seems obvious, in a certain part of common sense and political propaganda, migration remains an undesirable and therefore controllable phenomenon to be controlled/stopped; depending on the political and social declination of its readers and actors, migration is sometimes narrated as useful (as in Italy from the 1990s to the beginning of 2000), sometimes also dangerous, something to be afraid of and from which to defend. In the last twenty years, in Italy and in Europe the narrative on migration issues has mostly been expressed in the words *emergency, security, danger, landings, borders*.

There are two great narratives that we can identify by analyzing the phenomenon as a whole.

One tells of a country that has too many immigrants: the subjects of the story are described as bullies, men who do not work and, if they do, they steal the job; moreover, there are too many of them, they create violence, they take advantage of the Italian welcome. The entire management of arrivals from Africa and Asia weighs on Italy in the face of a lack of accountability on the part of European countries. The second narrative introduces elements that are partly utilitarian, ethical and solidarity-related: it tells of a different Italy, declined as “human”, a term often present, for example, in pro-immigration slo-

gans in numerous public initiatives. The subjects of this second story come from places of conflict, they flee from hunger, they would not have decent alternatives for life. In this case, Italy has the duty of help and solidarity or for common sense and in the political sphere we listen to the consolidated statement “we need immigrants: they increase our GDP, they can have more children, they can carry out jobs that we do not want to do it anymore, they look after our mothers”.

Beyond these often misleading narratives, we need to ask ourselves what the Italian migration phenomenon really looks like, whether it is a recent phenomenon, the composition of the immigrant population in Italy, and finally the degree of adaptation of local communities in the Salento area.

The following reflection relocates current migrations within the framework of a broader genealogical context, which originates in the 1980s and is articulated in relation to the regulations issued in Italy on the subject. A focus of attention falls on migratory specificity in the Salento area, which obviously also depends on the national legal-historical context.

## 2. The movement of bodies in the world

Immigration in Italy is neither a new nor an emergency phenomenon – although, as we have said, common sense and political propaganda restore this image. Indeed, the numerical incidence of the increase in migrants on the national territory represents, as we will see, a stable percentage if we compare the first demographic survey with the most recent one concerning the years 2018-2019: an organic and fixed migratory structure is observed in the which it is possible to identify migratory waves with different characteristics. Despite this, the perspective of the immigration narrative is rarely placed in the context of the rights of the person and of the citizen, nor is it almost ever, as mentioned before, placed in a discourse outside the racism / solidarity dichotomy. In this regard, the recent publication by Bruno Tertrais and Delphin Paphin (2018) helps to effectively clarify the real question.

The Atlas, which was drawn up by the aforementioned authors shows, among others, that there are currently 323 land borders out of 250,000 km in the world. As Marco Aime explains in the Introduction to the Atlas, the world is divided into national spaces which are not always recognized, but also into invisible borders dictated by cultural, religious and ethnic elements (Tertrais, Paphin, 2018: 15). The concept of frontier in the West dates back to the Treaty of Westphalia (1648), but it was necessary to wait until the nineteenth century



for the idea to approach the principle of its intangibility – *uti possidetis juris* (Ib.). When we reflect on the landings of migrants fleeing from the Libyan coasts to southern Italy, when we mention Schengen or read about the tensions between North and South Korea or between the countries of the European Union and Putin’s Russia, do we really know the subject of our discussion? Could we define the difference between a political, a natural and a cultural border? Is Europe really the biggest immigration attractor in the world? By reading the historical, social and geographical maps of the atlas by Tertrais & Paphin and by observing the current migratory routes, it becomes immediately clear how the most substantial migrations occur within states and continents and only subsequently between them; conversely, only a small portion of the population tries to reach famous Europe through the coasts of the Mediterranean. The reasons why the “transition” does not take place differ according to the contexts and places we are talking about.

The map below effectively shows the routes currently traveled in migratory flows as well as the borders, whether natural or not, that often block these flows. The black circles identify the entity of the number of deceased people during the movements and crossings of the borders: the latter not only referring to the physical borders, but also to those that are structured as a “passage” between places, starting from the criminal circuits that manage bodies and routes. This is certainly one of the thorniest and most intricate contemporary issues: people, needs, the reasons for departures and movements leave room for a single category, i.e. the body. Because bodies become the people managed by the processes of trafficking, whose stories are canceled and lost among traffickers, costs, governments, negotiations.



Figure 1. Migration flows, borders and deaths (Tertrais, Paphin, 2018: 68-69)

### 3. Globalization and migrations

As is well known, migrations are not an effect of modernity. However, current migrations have specificities that make them different, because they are linked to the processes of modernization that globality imposes: that westernization of the world that wants the poor countries of the planet to be condemned to growing degradation which, starting from impoverishment of life in the countryside, determines the incessant expansion of new enormous urban agglomerations. Cities swollen from outskirts to outskirts, “so that the last is always the penultimate” (Perrone, 2005: 16) in a process with no way out:

Expelled from the countryside, they seek solutions in the endless suburbs of their cities and, subsequently, in the heart of the empire”; “Planetary interdependence and debt exposure worsen the levels of existence and living conditions of the populations of technologically backward countries, exposing them to growing migratory pressure [our translation]<sup>1</sup>.

There is no doubt that there are previous phenomena, starting with the colonial dimensions, which divide the planet into large geo-economic-political areas in continuous evolution – i.e. one of expulsion, the other of attraction (Böhning, 1984); however, today the classic categories of expulsive and attractive factors have been superseded by purely commercial, licit and illicit logics.

In principle, globalization should have balanced international incomes, thus helping to replace flows of people with flows of consumer goods and money. In reality, the financial logic, which has determined this globalization, has produced a more unequal world, marginalizing more and more people and encouraging them to undertake dangerous journeys to find exploitative jobs. International migrants have become the shock absorbers of the global economy (Stalker, 2003). Considering the trend of international flows, internal migration and urbanization processes, it is estimated that between 750 million and one billion people live in a place other than the one in which they were born. Eighteen million people are involved in a daily movement, to which substantial shares of nomadic or semi-nomadic movements are added (Ib.).

1 From the original version: “Espulsi dalle campagne cercano soluzione nelle periferie infinite delle loro città e, successivamente nel cuore dell’impero”; “Interdipendenza planetaria ed esposizione debitoria peggiorano i livelli di esistenza e le condizioni di vita delle popolazioni dei Paesi tecnologicamente arretrati, esponendole a una crescente pressione migratoria (Perrone, 2003: 168)”.

The issue originated towards the end of the fifteen century, when the equilibrium of the “ancient world system” – without a center or with several “centers” – was subverted by the process of formation of the world market and the worldwide spread of capitalist social relations. The result is an increasingly unified and polarized system with a single world center, which at the beginning is Europe, then the United States, followed by Europe and Japan: these countries are in a position of clear supremacy over the remaining parts of the system and have progressively downgraded to the status of suburbs, including areas that were once among the most advanced countries, such as China and India. The mechanism of the international division of labor, which was established on the basis of an authentic (“original”) dispossession of the colonized areas by the colonizing countries (Basso & Perocco, 2003: 82-84), has been kept alive over the years through the recruitment of low-cost labor for the needs of agricultural and manufacturing production, as well as services to people and things, both in the US and in Europe. For example, from 1970 to 1991, 4% of the population of Mexico was pushed to move to the US, and this phenomenon still takes place despite the physical and electronic walls and the dangers involved in crossing them (in 1998 there were 300 deaths, 14,500 people were arrested, 20,746 were repatriated).

The black slave trade had no less lasting effects for Africa. Over the course of four centuries, it has involved at least 25 million Africans. In comparison, the fate of Asia appears fortunate, as it “only” experienced the great forced migration of the *coolies* (1830-1920), i.e. hired workers in a condition halfway between slavery and servitude, transported or deported from Indonesia, from India, China and Malaysia to North America, Australia, the Caribbean or South Africa (Ib.: 85-86).

In this regard, Potts identifies two precise phases: the first, linked to traditional colonialism, which continued into the twentieth century, in which the use of physical violence in the exploitation of (non) migrant labor had a central role; a second phase, linked to the establishment of a unified world economy, in which the indirect violence of the market, especially financial ones, and therefore financial colonialism, caused the migratory movements. The recurrent element is the use of the migrant workforce as a low (or very low) cost workforce without any rights. This is a mechanism destined to last as long as the economic-social mechanism and the development inequalities that generated it last (Ib.: 86-87): “Come la colonizzazione, l’immigrazione costituisce un sistema di rapporti determinati, necessari e indipendenti dalle volontà individuali” (Sayad, 2002: 220) (“Like colonization, immigration represents a system of determined, necessary relationships which are independent from individual wills”; *our translation*).

In fact, among the many natural characteristics that make up an emigration system, the dominant relations prevailing on an international scale are fundamental. If we do not adhere firmly to this vision of a “system” of migratory movements, it is then easy to slide towards a representation of migration centered on the ideal-typical figure of the “global migrant” who is sociologically built, on the basis of the empty abstractions of political, ultra-individualistic economy.

Charles-Andr  Udry spoke about it as a “mythology of cretins”: The so-called global migrant arises from the so-called concrete sociology of the United States, which takes a particular case and transforms it into an emblematic phenomenon. The global migrant is configured as a rational social actor who acts on the global market freely, free from any determination other than that of his ability to calculate benefits (Sassen, 1998:144). However, the movements are not free choices of migrants, they are obligatory “choices” (...) the obligation to work for a living and the fear of losing one’s job (...). This is really immigration: not a free choice, therefore, not the adventure of the global migrant, which may even exist, but rather represents a completely secondary aspect of the phenomenon (Ib.: 96-97).

#### **4. Italy between international and internal migrations**

Despite the clich  believes (and would like) a Europe with tight borders through the implementation of specific stop policies, the continent continues to be considered one of the lands of attraction. Racism in general and today’s institutional racism and, more specifically, the European one do not derive, as many argue, simplistically from “eternal fear of the other”. The conflict between the Europe of business, governments, states and immigrants is fundamentally a class conflict, which is an integral part of the wider conflict between capital and labor (Basso & Perocco, 2003: 17): the criminalization of migrants up to the point of stigmatizing migration itself; the condition of social minority, the multiplication of prohibitions and restrictions on entry and stay with the objective multiplication of the risk of “clandestinity” – these are all effects of the states’ punitive policies against immigration benefit companies because they deliver in their hands a workforce that must sell itself on conditions that it cannot in any way negotiate (Ib.: 13-14).

#### 4.1 Italy: from country of emigration to country that imports labor

“Italy, country of immigration”, this is the watchword that the national Caritas used to launch the “2003 Immigration Statistical Dossier”. This was echoed by the work of G. Sciortino and A. Colombo (2003): “Un’immigrazione normale”. Two apparently trivial editorial choices but in reality justified by the need to underline the “normality” of a phenomenon that the public debate wanted at all costs to force into the sphere of exceptionality and problemat-icity.

Immigration, therefore, being felt as a normal and structural fact. Besides being a country of “Italians” and (still) of “emigrants”, Italy was increasingly discovering itself as a country of “immigrants”. In other words, our country fully participates in what Castles and Miller (1993) define as the “process of globalization of international migration”, by virtue of which modern migratory movements not only involve a growing number of peoples, but overturn the classic interpretative models: countries that were once traditional places of departure also become places of destination. It can be said that Italy from a traditional country of emigration has in recent decades also become a country of immigration.

It all began in 1973, the year in which, for the first time, Italy recorded a positive demographic balance, a sign of a reversal of the trend from a country of emigration to a country of immigration (Sciortino, 2003). The 1970s were years of a decrease in the great emigration from the South and the decline of internal emigration. However, the radical reduction of flows (i.e. the number of people either leaving or returning) and of the migratory balances themselves (i.e. the difference between the number of those who leave and those who return) does not mean so much the “end of emigration” but, above all, a radical modification of the characteristics of the phenomenon (Pugliese, 2002: 55): the first arrivals in Italy of workers from the Third World are very particular flows in terms of ethnic composition, work and profoundly different gender. The first of these flows is made up of Tunisian workers engaged in agriculture and fishing in some areas of Sicily (the fishing port of Mazara del Vallo and some areas of intensive agriculture, especially in the Trapani area). The other, on the contrary, has very different and distant origins (Catholic countries of Latin America and Asia or former Italian colonies) and is made up mainly of women engaged above all in domestic work.

In those years, interest in the issue was very modest. The focus is still mainly on the phenomenon of return emigration, that is, the return of Italian emigrants from European countries. It is with the publication of data from the

12th General Population Census of 1981 that Italy becomes aware of being a “country of immigration”. In fact, the Census shows that more people arrived (or returned) in Italy than those who left. However, even after the publication of the 1981 Census data, knowledge of the phenomenon remains modest and the first articles in the mainstream press – often more imaginative than documentary – correspond to little interest on the part of social scientists. A single important exception is represented by demography studies, which question the extent and characteristics of immigration (Maciotti & Pugliese, 1993: 67-68).

A more careful and detailed reading of the data showed that – unlike what happened in the country considered as a whole – in the southern regions the difference between the resident population and the present population continued to the advantage of the former (thus confirming a historical trend). Obviously this was a much more modest difference than the one recorded in the previous decades, but is still big enough to continue to characterize the South as an area of emigration. Furthermore, the “social balance” – that is, the change in the size of the population due to migratory movements – was positive only in the North (Ib.: 68-69).

While the departures of Italians to emigration countries in the last two decades have remained stable at rather modest levels (and in any case offset by returns), the flow of immigrants to our country has continued, albeit not regularly. Not only has the number of immigrants increased, but the number of countries of origin has also increased. Furthermore, in relation to these increases, there has been a continuous modification of the foreign presence in Italy, since some nationalities have lost numerical relevance and importance, while others, which at the beginning were much less significant, have progressively increased in terms of size and social relevance. Currently the Maghreb countries and those of Eastern Europe represent the two most consistent components. However, while the former have a consolidated migratory experience in our country and have now stabilized, the latter have started to play a leading role in the migration scene only in the last decade: this implies, among other things, the fact that immigration in Italy, traditionally with a large Islamic component, is increasingly characterized by the Christian presence. Hence, the already complex picture of nationalities and ethnic groups has progressively been developing (Ib.: 73).

The debate around the phenomenon found its beginnings in the 1980s when foreign immigration seemed to intensify. Initially the choice of our country as a migratory destination was thought to be due to the opportunities offered by the Italian labor market and the immigration variable was interpreted as the most evident indicator of the level of industrial development reached by

our country, capable even of satisfying a surplus job offer elsewhere. In reality, the migratory movement was taking place in all the countries of the Mediterranean basin – such as Greece, Spain and Portugal – regardless of their degree of development, their economic situation and their current unemployment rates. In other words, all the countries of the Mediterranean area – by virtue of the aforementioned process of globalization of international migration – had become immigration territories, while retaining significant outgoing flows, as well as the consolidation of their communities abroad.

When the immigration phenomenon began to affect Italy, significant economic and political changes began to take place on a global scale, which would have profoundly marked the character of international migration and the placement of immigrants in the destination societies. We refer, in the first place, to the overcoming of the Fordist phase of industrial development and to the presence of a demand for work which was no longer based on large companies and mass production but on tertiary employment, including the area of services to people. It is no coincidence that the prevailing employment in this sector and the often precarious nature of the occupation itself were going to be the characteristics of the new immigration that were going to distinguish it from the one of the previous period.

Secondly, flows from the South of the world begin to take place towards Mediterranean Europe, when from the 1970s (in particular after 1973, the year of the first oil shock) the traditional labor-importing countries – France, Switzerland and Germany (West) – and the European Community itself had activated restrictive policies on immigration, considerably increasing the legislative production in this regard. It is the time of politics for international migration (Calvanese, 1983). In those years, in other words, a phase begins in which the governance of flows becomes a priority objective for immigration countries. In Europe, that is, “l’immigrazione, oltre che un fattore di crescita economica, diventa soggetto di preoccupazione politica” (“immigration, besides being a factor of economic growth, also becomes a subject of political concern”, *our translation*) (Tapinos, 1979: 215). As the flows increased, in fact, the various States reacted by adopting intervention policies of a predominantly restrictive nature (stop policies), aiming more to consolidate the situation of residents (*immigrants policies*), rather than to favor the arrival of new immigrants (*immigration policies*). For example, in 1973 with a federal law (*Anwerbestop*) West Germany closed its borders and blocked (or deluded itself to block) new inflows.

All of this contributed to undermine the classic interpretative paradigm of the migratory phenomenon, namely the so-called “push-pull factor” which, al-

though valid in its general aspects, was going to become increasingly unsatisfactory in the light of the new types of migration: symmetrical attraction factors are not necessarily the consequence of expulsion factors.

Italy therefore begins to transform itself into a country of immigration alongside the introduction of closure policies by the other large European states and it cannot be excluded that the direction of the flow towards Italy for some nationalities was determined by the increase in the difficulties of entering countries with more traditional immigration. This is the case, for example, of the flows from French-speaking Africa (especially from the Maghreb area and Senegal) which, always directed towards the former colonizing nation, will be oriented precisely in coincidence with the stop policies promoted towards Italy by the latter, starting from the end of the 1970s.

Since then, the number of immigrants in our country has grown regularly, and so have the nationalities concerned and the channels of entry which have undergone significant changes, especially since the 1990s.

From the free immigration market (albeit with known exceptions and limitations), to use Calvanese's words again, there was an organic line of direct intervention by the states with the aim of blocking or, at least, controlling the entrances of new workers making them more and more selective: we move from managing flows to managing stocks, through quotas, permanent control and the same integration policies.

Furthermore, we must not forget the increasingly significant role that the European Community has assumed since the 1980s, which involved, among others, an ever greater coordination of policies at the supranational level (Pugliese, 2002: 78-79).

It is in such a distinctive context that Italian immigration begins on a significant scale and the problems of migration policy begin to arise for our country. This is happening just as in Europe a new data of great importance is emerging: labor policies, and immigration policies in general, began to be two distinct aspects among citizens of the Community (and then of the Union) and non-EU citizens. Starting from these issues, the term non-EU comes into current use and so does the progressive separation and differentiation between the condition of foreigners from EU countries and that of foreigners from outside countries (Ib.).

However, if on the one hand the policy of closure and control of flows becomes central and is officially endorsed by all states, on the other, in contradiction with the overt objectives of these policies, the number of immigrants increases in all developed countries both of new and traditional immigration. With formally closed borders, a significant number of immigrants manage to



enter and place themselves in the labor market. This is a phenomenon affecting all countries in different ways and dimensions. Cornelius, Martin and Hollifield (1994) argue that Stopping immigration even in a period of economic contraction has proved extremely difficult, also due to the push-and-pull factors. Labor demand-driven immigration sets in motion processes that have unforeseen consequences. The authors give considerable weight to both the push and the recall effect, showing how these are deeply intertwined and that in both cases the economic factors are added to other factors, especially of a cultural nature. However, there is something even more complex about what they call “rights-based liberalism”: the practical fact that in Western democracies there is still an enlargement of rights to marginal groups and ethnic minorities, including foreigners, precisely on the basis of the principle of equality of opportunity. In other words, for these authors, once foreigners have entered, they cannot be excluded from the enjoyment of civil and social rights. In order to understand the characteristics and extent of current migratory movements at the international level – and the consolidation of the presence of immigrants in the countries of arrival – neither is it enough to consider the growing imbalances between population and resources in the countries of the South of the world, i.e. push factors, nor the additional consideration of the importance of pull factors on an economic and cultural level, as noted by Harris (2000). The orientations and outcomes of immigration policies and social policies of these countries must be taken into account, since “once you enter, you can stay” in all countries that import labor – regardless of the conditions of entry. The presence of irregular and clandestine immigrants in all European countries and in the USA as well as the recourse with variable character and deadlines to amnesty regulations are the result of this process (Wayne, Martin & Hollifield, 1994: 81-82).

#### 4.2 Migratory flows in Italy: types, models and phases

The most significant stages in the evolution of immigration in Italy are intertwined with the events of migration policy and with legislative intervention. In particular, statistical survey of migration is often linked to the issue of regularizations.

Within the overall migratory flow that has taken place in Italy in recent years, different phases can be distinguished that have involved different subjects over time, implemented different migration projects and, last but not least, witnessed the implementation of multiple adaptation strategies in the destina-

tion territory, in the choice of which the migration policies implemented by the Italian government are certainly not extraneous.

A first phase (1970s and early 1980s) is the expression of distinct migratory processes whose protagonists are groups of very different nationalities, sex, ages, migratory reasons and presence in our local geographic areas. Among the leading groups of this phase, one of the significant components is the one represented by domestic workers employed, and often also domiciled, with families residing in large urban areas both in the North and in the South. These are young Somali, Latin American and above all Cape Verdeans and Filipinos who emigrated individually from their own countries (and this constituted a strong differentiation from previous migratory flows in the West) through private channels (often religious) and who arrive in Italy already in possession of a contract or in any case with information about the organizations able to make the first reception facilities available and thus facilitate the start-up to work. This phenomenon referred to as “turnkey” (Perrone, 2003: 20) underlines the peculiarity of this typology and the decisive intervention of Catholic organizations (*Caritas in primis*) which, in this phase, act as a real “office of placement” able to meet the needs of demand with those of the job offer. It was no coincidence that the women of this first group were all of Catholic tradition, a non-secondary element for the allocation in the domestic sector, in which employers clearly showed that they preferred “culturally-homogeneous” collaborators.

The second important group characterizing this first phase is made up of workers from the Maghreb areas, mainly Tunisians – as already mentioned – employed in Sicilian agriculture and fishing as seasonal workers. The differences with the first group are very clear: they are, in fact, males belonging to different age groups, often “commuters” between their country of origin and the workplace, of Muslim religion and located exclusively in rural areas. Alongside these two easily identifiable groups there are other smaller realities with respect to the two main poles. Friuli, for example, following the reconstruction processes of the earthquake-stricken areas, has experienced the migration of workers from Yugoslavia, generally employed in construction. Large cities, especially Milan and Rome, are beginning to be the destination of citizens from Eritrea and also from Chile engaged as workers in tertiary and industrial activities.

Despite the diversity of the migrant components, it is possible to affirm that the distinctive features of this first phase are the strong territorial concentration of immigrants along with a quite defined migratory space, as Calvanese states (1984) – since there is a close relationship between the geographical area of immigration and the country of origin – as well as a correspondence between

sex, religious tradition and employment sector of allocation. The latter is an indicator of what will later be called the “ethnic imprint of work”. At the same time, the complexity of the motivations underlying the new migration is also beginning to emerge, since if it is true that all foreign presences undoubtedly constitute workforce, it is also true that for some of them (for example, for Eritreans and Chileans) the drive to emigrate is undoubtedly of a political matrix; even if, after all, as A. Sayad (2002) states: “emigrare costituisce oggettivamente – cioè all’insaputa di tutte le parti in causa e indipendentemente dalla loro volontà – un atto che senza dubbio è fondamentalmente politico” “emigrating constitutes objectively – that is, without the knowledge of all the parties involved and regardless of their will – an act that is undoubtedly fundamentally political” (*our translation*).

Starting, however, from the first half of the 1980s and up to 1990s, we are witnessing a new cycle, which sees the opening of the range of nationalities as protagonists of the flows, a more widespread presence of immigrants in the area and the increase in professions / occupations within which they will find allocation. These are also the years in which the first two Italian immigration laws were enacted: no. 943/1986 and n. 39/1990 (known as the “Martelli” law), which with the respective amnesties allowed many immigrants (115,000 with the former, 240,000 with the latter) to get out of the condition of a-legality (Pugliese, 1991) in which they were forced for the absence of legislation on the matter. Until the mid-1980s, in fact, the only reference text for the management of the phenomenon was the 1931 Consolidated Law on Police and the only subject actually regulated was the one relating to residence permits. In recent years, the attention and the scientific studies on the phenomenon have also grown – with the consequent organization, in June 1990, of a National Conference on Immigration in which ISTAT, for the first time, produces a significant document on the dimensions of the migratory phenomenon in Italy. Alongside the communities already registered during the first phase (whose entries would continue regularly), the presence throughout the national territory of citizens from Morocco (which would later become the largest community) and Senegal becomes significant. These are men belonging to the middle-age group and engaged, at least initially, in small businesses. Almost inexistent is the presence of women – an element which, if associated with the age group, suggests an individual male migratory model.

The Chinese also begin to become visible and, although dating their first entry from the second half of the 1930s (Carchedi, 1992), have also begun to reach significant presences since 1985. Unlike the two previous groups, their migratory model is of family type, since the presence of women is almost equal

to those of men and the presence of children is immediately recorded within them. The Italian regions with the greatest settlements are Lombardy, Tuscany and Lazio, where they start the management of small businesses (especially leather goods) or of restaurant chains, giving rise to the phenomenon (absolutely predominant in this community) of *ethnic business*.

The worsening of the civil war between Sinhalese and Tamils in Sri-lanka activates the flows from that region which, almost non-existent in previous years, starting from 1983 begin to become consistent. In fact, between the first two laws (that is, within the phase we are examining), about 10,000 Sri Lankan citizens manage to officialize their status and, together with the Moroccans, will be those who will benefit most from the two amnesties. Among them a third belongs to the Tamil population, two-thirds to the Sinhalese population which, among other things, sees a large presence of women (about 50%). As for the Chinese community, it is a family migration: the latter is a particular model of migration linked to political factors. The most widespread work solution is within the domestic sector for both men and women (the work is often carried out in pairs with slightly different tasks, women are waitresses, men are instead drivers or cooks), but also the one within the unskilled tertiary sector (e.g. catering and various services).

In recent years, the flow of workers from Pakistan, Ghana, Egypt, Eastern countries and the Balkans has also began, albeit without any particularly significant numbers, and has contributed, together with the other groups, to spreading the foreign presence across the national territory: an archipelago of existences, stories and cultures is now fully visible. At the same time, in this period the flows from Cape Verde, Somalia and the Philippines continue, with regard to which the first family reunifications begin to be registered.

Already at this stage we can glimpse the first signs of a migration phenomenon that tends to stabilize: on the one hand, the flows register new arrivals whose settlement methods seem to retrace the steps seen previously (job insecurity with sometimes exhausting rhythms, unhealthy and makeshift accommodations...); on the other, the groups arrived during the first phase undertake new adaptive strategies. First of all, the phenomenon of family reunification, by means of which "labor migration" (both male and female) turns into "population migration" (Sayad, 2002), is an evident indicator of some form of sedimentation on the territory (possession of adequate housing able to accommodate the family unit, a salary that is sufficient to support it); secondly, the improvement of working conditions not only in terms of wages, but also in terms of the times and methods of work. In this sense, exemplary is the case of Filipino domestic workers who, in recent years, not only have managed to

obtain more adequate salaries, but also have succeeded in conquering forms of part-time employment, thus escaping the condition of almost slavery to which full-time contracts have forced them; finally, the first cases of re-immigration, especially from the South to the North and from the peripheral areas of the labor market to the central and more guaranteed ones: this is the case of Senegalese and Moroccans who, as soon as regularization is obtained, abandon the “refuge” of their being street vendors to go to the industries of the north.

The third phase seems to coincide with the 1990s during which we mainly witness the arrival of the Albanians (through the two most important waves of 1991 and 1997), refugees from former Yugoslavia (1992) and Kosovo (1999), but also to that of immigrants from Eastern European countries – which still today constitute the most significant part of stable immigration in Italy – and, finally, of Kurds, Chinese, Africans, Indians who, starting from the second half of the 1990s, found in Albania a privileged channel for accessing Italy. Regular admissions are very few, so much so that the 1990s are defined as the years of the “new clandestinity”. In fact, these are the years during which Italy participates in the process of trans-nationalization of migration policies (Sassen, 2015: 30), now oriented towards the containment of flows (remember that 1990 is the year in which our country adheres to the Schengen agreements) and in which an attitude of “denial” (Rivera, 2003: 50) towards the immigration phenomenon reaches its progressive dramatization and tendency to inflate a quantitative aspect. In 1994, for example, when the number of immigrants was less than one million, the then Undersecretary of the Interior declared that in Italy there were four million immigrants. A completely isolated alarmist attitude (to which the mass media contribute significantly) which will lead to the so-called “siege syndrome” and will start in a short time a process of inferiorization-stigmatization of immigrants, who will be regularly associated with Italy’s social ills / problems (unemployment, crime, housing shortage, etc.). The positions of openness and availability initially expressed by the indigenous population<sup>2</sup>, give way to fears and feelings of closure. The prevailing image with which immigration is presented is that of the “threat”, “of the army invading and storming” and the immigrant is identified as “irregular”, “illegal”, “clandestine”. The

- 2 In this regard, we recall the candidacy for the 2000 Nobel Peace Prize by the populations of Salento and Puglia for the welcome they gave to refugees in the previous ten years. The candidacy proposal, then launched by the newspaper ‘La Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno’ of Bari, obtained the support of the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, ministers, Italian and European parliamentarians from every political group and from various geographical areas.

outcome on the legislative level is the issue of measures aimed at reducing the spaces for citizenship and increasing the repressive ones. In 1998, in fact, law 40/98 (called “Turco-Napolitano”) will see the light which, conditioned by the intense anti-immigrant campaign conducted during the summer of 1997, will override the envisaged article 38 (right to vote in administrative elections) and will instead set up Temporary Stay Centers with which for the first time in Italy administrative and extrajudicial detention is introduced for a specific category of people: irregular immigrants.

The important novelty of this phase is that it is no longer a predominantly individual migration but also a family one, which naturally raises different questions and needs: from the inclusion of children in schools, to the search for more suitable homes to accommodate families, etc. It is a phase of transition: the new arrivals are added to the old immigrants, who have already begun their stabilization process in the area, by establishing a series of social networks capable of advancing citizenship applications.

The fourth phase is the one we are still experiencing: alongside the still incoming flows of citizens subject to forced diaspora (conflicts, landings in the Mediterranean, refugees and asylum seekers) we find the sedimentation of some communities (Albanian, Moroccan, Senegalese, Filipino, Sri-Lankan) which are now stable in the area. It is the phase of stabilization and rooting, since if the characteristics of precariousness and occasional work are still present for many immigrants, an area of permanently employed workers is also consolidating. Six out of ten immigrants are in Italy for work reasons and every 100 hires eight concern foreign workers (Censis, 2016); service cooperatives managed by immigrants are also growing (in Milan there are over 20) and the phenomenon of ethnic business – i.e. according to the model of Boening (1984), the achievement of the fourth stage of the migratory experience that sees the immigrant not only as a producer, but also a consumer. There are approximately 125,000 foreign entrepreneurs throughout the country and, according to a study conducted by Caritas and the Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Crafts and Agriculture (CCIAA) of Rome, 7,693 are in the Capitoline area: these are subjects aged between 30 and 40 with a medium-high level of education, a ten-year stay in Italy and a certain experience in the field of dependent work, which then led them to take the leap and become autonomous. This is a reality that seems to be reflected throughout the national territory, as revealed by similar research studies conducted in other provinces, especially in the North. The development of immigrant entrepreneurship is linked both to the emergence of new services (phone centers, money transfer, cultural mediation cooperatives, laundromats) and to a growing specialization of some commu-

nities in specific sectors. Hence, in the city of Rome, most of the construction firms run by foreigners are Romanian, whereas the Chinese are particularly engaged in wholesale and catering. The Libyans and Moroccans, on the other hand, are mostly traders.

Furthermore, as a result of family reunification, the second generation of immigrants is becoming significant: children, often born in Italy, live our country as their country and for them the hypothesis of a return to the lands of their parents becomes more and more remote.

Another significant fact and expression of the stabilization processes is the number of marriages between foreigners, or between foreigners and Italians and the increase in mixed couples, but above all the significant and growing number of births of children from these couples. There is also the volume of remittances to be considered, over 10 years from 103 million to over 790 million, against a 40% growth in the number of residents. However, if we also consider alternative channels of money transfer alongside the banking system, remittances can be estimated at around 1,500 million euros (Ib.). Furthermore, for many immigrants, staying in Italy is a definitive choice and those who can buy a house; the purchase of housing is a material and symbolic turning point in the migratory project: those who buy bricks put down roots. The data, albeit fragmentary, reveal a considerable and growing share of immigrants who own a house.

Finally, the multiplication of immigrant associations is also interesting: the forms of association between immigrants represent the concretization of the phenomenon of co-inclusion. According to a CNEL<sup>3</sup> survey, in 2003 there were already 900 immigrant associations established in recent years in Italy (representing 68 different communities), through which immigrant citizens asked for visibility by asking citizenship questions.

### 4.3 Migration policies

With regard to migration policies, the Italian case, as Perocco (Basso & Perocco, 2003: 212) reminds us, undoubtedly presents traits of originality within the European context. Beyond the *prêt à porter* idea of the absence of a real immigration policy or of a defective, disordered, disorganized policy, the concrete facts highlight, instead, the existence of a peculiar migratory model with its

3 <https://www.cnel.it/Archivio-Contratti/Studi-e-Indagini>.

own rationality aimed at producing a triple separation: in the life of the immigrant, among immigrant populations, between natives and immigrants.

A feature of this policy is the combination and simultaneous application of the negative aspects of the various European “integration” models, with the result of producing a condition of “special statute / legal regime” for now referring to immigrants, but in the future extendable to the entire Italian society. An almost premonitory function of immigration, having a “detonating” effect on unresolved national and international issues (Ib.).

Until the mid-1980s, immigration policies consisted essentially of police measures relating to foreign citizens. In fact, the reference text was the 1931 Consolidated Law on Police and the only subject actually regulated was that relating to residence permits. In the past, limited specific measures had already been issued, but there was no basic law on immigration until 1986 (Pugliese, 2002: 102).

The first significant intervention in the field of immigration was Law no. 943 of 1986. From the point of view of the statements of principle, this law is very advanced due to the clear equation of the foreign worker with the Italian worker. As far as social policies are concerned, many of the actual intervention operations and most of the responsibilities are delegated to the Regions. It is interesting to note that this first measure only concerned “immigrant employees”: this is because at that time the belief prevailed that immigrants came to satisfy a demand for work from Italian companies, deemed unfulfilled due to lack or unavailability of the local workforce. The complexity of the migratory phenomenon and its varied composition was underestimated, with the presence of itinerant workers, domestic workers, agricultural workers and so on. In order to benefit from the amnesty provision provided for by law, immigrants had to prove that they had been present in Italy on 31 December 1986 and that they had a job or were actively looking for it. The results from this point of view were disappointing: only 115,000 people proceeded with the regularization and among them more than two-thirds were regularized as job seekers. The image was absolutely distorted. Regularization was practiced both by self-employed workers (street vendors), for whom there was no possibility of regularization as they were not salaried, and by workers who were actually salaried but unable to prove the existence of an employment relationship due to their precarious nature, temporary employment and the employer’s unavailability. However, the law brought with it a definitely innovative element: it sanctioned the equality of the rights of immigrant workers to those of Italian workers (Ib.: 103-5).

A few years after the enactment of the first immigration law, in 1990 Law



n. 39 was enacted to perform an integrative and in some ways a corrective function with respect to the previous law. The Martelli Law also contained an amnesty provision aimed at promoting the regularization of people on the national territory regardless of their specific professional position, thus also allowing self-employed workers to directly regularize their position and report their activity without necessarily resorting to the registration with the employment offices as unemployed. It is no coincidence that the number of people regularized thanks to this provision was far greater than the previous one: about 240,000 people. Also in this case, however, as a proof of the condition of immigrants in the Italian labor market, a very high share of regularizations took place through registration in the placement lists; the incidence of those regularized as unemployed was higher in the southern regions. The law also allocated funds to the reception of immigrants and established a relationship between the state and local authorities for intervention in favor of immigrants. The lines of intervention regarding reception are established at national level, while the management of social policy towards immigrants is delegated to local authorities (Ib.: 105-106).

Simultaneously with the enactment of the law, Istat produced for the first time a significant document on the dimensions of the migratory phenomenon in Italy. Despite the cognitive effort exercised in the preparatory documents of the Martelli law, and in particular on occasion of the National Conference, the Italian institutional reality was still notably unprepared to manage this new phenomenon. Hence, a series of misunderstandings were created relating to the need for revision of the law which was even considered a lax and permissive provision, while in reality it represented a careful provision to limit new entries at the mass level while making conditions rather severe and selective for the renewal of the residence permit and the continuation of the stay. Therefore, during the first half of the nineties the number and incidence of people not provided with a regular residence permit increased, both because not all the already legal immigrants were able to demonstrate that they enjoyed the working conditions and income necessary for the renewal of their residence permit, and because the stricter rules relating to legal entries made the new entries effectively clandestine (Ib.:106-7).

That is why an intense debate took place in the first half of the decade on whether to issue a new and more organic provision capable of overcoming the shortcomings of law 39 and aimed at bringing some of the new immigrants out of hiding. In November 1995, the "Dini" Decree was issued, which contained a series of rules that were much more restrictive than the previous ones. Reiterated several times, the decree definitively lapsed in the summer of 1996,

but at the end of that same year the then Minister of the Interior G. Napolitano presented a bill consisting of a single article, which legitimized the regularizations thanks to the decree. This provision proved insufficient as it failed to correct the deficiencies contained in the previous decree; in fact, for example, many self-employed workers ended up being excluded from regularization because they were not taken into consideration either by the “Dini” decree or by the Napolitano law. As for the other parts of the decree (i.e. those relating to social policies) the new government, which emerged from the 1996 elections, referred the whole matter to a more general provision, a sort of organic law or framework law, which was adopted relatively quickly (Ib.: 108). In reality, the times were longer and only in May 1998 was a new immigration law approved, L. 40/98 “Turco-Napolitano”. This is a complex law, which deals with a large number of issues ranging from the conditions that allow the stay in Italy to the rights guaranteed to immigrants, the control of the phenomena of crime and deviance concerning the immigrants. The part relating to the right of asylum for political and religious refugees was immediately removed from the original proposal, to which a special provision was to be dedicated. However, the area of issues dealt with by the law has remained vast, ranging from health care to conditions for expulsion and camps for immigrants awaiting deportation. The main novelties of the law concern precisely the conditions for the stay of immigrants in Italy on the one hand and the conditions and methods of expulsion on the other.

The Bossi-Fini law of July 2002 only makes the possibility of regular entry much more rigid and selective (eliminating the provisions of law 40 regarding entry for job search) and the practice for renewing the residence permit, thus strengthening the forms of repression against illegal immigrants and illegal immigrants.

Hence, analyzing the various jurisprudential measures there has been in fact a recognizable migration policy since the 1980s, that is a rationality even in the absence of an explicit organic model based on the following elements: denial of rights; periodic regularization on expiry; precariousness regime; distorted social representations. Rather than a failure of the European goal “zero immigration”, we are fully achieving “immigration-zero-rights” since zero-immigration cannot exist. As Perocco theorises (cit.), we are faced with the realization of a repressive and control system which, on the one hand, limits and selects the movements and, on the other, precarizes and inferiorizes the immigrants already present or those who manage to enter: we test the creation of underclass social strata, of excluded people without rights, functional to neoliberal policies that aim at the “development of underdevelopment” (Basso & Perocco, 2003).

## 5. The migratory phenomenon in Salento

It has already been mentioned how the migration phenomenon in Italy began to be studied systematically around the early 1980s. These are studies that come almost twenty years later than the birth and development of the phenomenon itself (with all that the delay entailed) and studies conducted mainly by demographers who have reduced the universe of immigration for a long time to a cold and generic sequence of numbers; when this sequence did not create unnecessary social alarm, it prevented us from grasping the human, cultural and existential dimension of the subjects concerned. The phenomenon became visible to most even when the mass media began to deal with it, focusing more on the deviant aspects than on its normality. This element has caused the migratory phenomenon to be known more for what the media want make known – or believe they know – about it, than for what it really is. There are, in fact, two realities: one regards the media; the other is a scientific one, and it is needless to underline that the former prevails, while the latter remains relegated, unfortunately, to minority circuits, against the excessive information power of the media. This situation has been well highlighted by many surveys, which agree on the fact that the media played a pivotal role in determining the negative imaginary on the immigration phenomenon. Scholars who have observed the attitudes assumed by the press and television towards the phenomenon have grasped a pejorative change since the end of the 1980s: first vaguely presented as a worrying and generic emergency phenomenon, the alleged migratory emergency has slowly grown media maritime metaphors (“tide”, “wave”) and geographic ones (“invasion”). Press and television outline Italy, especially the coasts, as “invaded” by hordes of desperate people. If, on the one hand, we turn our gaze to Europe and the world, we realize that the migratory movement is physiological, typical of all times, especially those – like ours – in which the economic disparities between one part of the planet and the other are jarring. Nothing exceptional, therefore, and nothing particularly new if we think that, for example, the first presences of non-EU citizens in the Salento area have been recorded since 1967, even if the greatest number of them stabilize starting from the early 1980s. Speaking of real reality and media reality, the press of those years totally ignored the phenomenon, to “discover” it a decade later, making it the scapegoat for all social ills.

If we look at the media politics in recent years, we realize that immigrants are a problem in the South, because they take away jobs from the natives, they are a problem in the North because they steal houses, they are a problem in the Center because they cause crime. In truth, these are all problems prior to

the arrival of immigrants and specific to the areas considered. In other words, unemployment is the “atavistic” issue of the South, just as the shortage of housing is for the North and crime for the large metropolitan areas.

According to the latest ISTAT survey, immigrant citizens residing in Lecce and the province are 8,374 (estimated 9,175). About 15% of them belong to the EU, the remaining part comes from non-EU countries. The most represented nationalities are: Albania: 2,611 units, equal to 31.2%; Morocco: 1320 units, equal to 15.8%; China: 485 units, or 5.9%; Senegal: 492 units, equal to 5.9%; Sri Lanka: 327 units, equal to 3.9%; Philippines: 320 units, 3.8%; Macedonia: 307 units, equal to 3.7%. These are the most represented nationalities in the province and in Lecce; however, albeit with definitely smaller numbers, there are 84 and 60 communities respectively. Although these are the most represented nationalities in the province and in Lecce with much smaller numbers, there are 84 communities. An undoubtedly international Salento which poses questions and needs, with respect to which the institutional responses are still completely inadequate.

In fact, beyond the quantitative aspect, the migratory phenomenon is above all a human phenomenon and, as such, subject to constant changes that must be known and studied if we want to think about adequate social policies. Immigrants who came to Italy or to Salento during the early 1980s today express needs that have nothing to do with those of the time. These are the so-called phases of the Boening scale, by virtue of which the immigrant changes expectations, needs and models of adaptation on the immigration territory, over time; sometimes these changes modify the migratory project itself – when, for example, family reunification occurs.

However, a lot also depends on the social policies activated. These were completely inadequate and, paradoxically, further aggravated the phenomenon. An aid to understanding this aspect of the phenomenon comes, once again, from the research, which confirms that the residence time of immigrants has been getting longer and longer: those who had estimated 5/6 years and were reinterviewed in later times<sup>4</sup>, always deferred the deadline and became more and more mythical and virtual – a shift due to concurrent causes, including systematically the meagre savings resulting from low wages and the lack of social citizenship.

4 Longitudinal interview with A.A. conducted as part of the author’s individual research on the sedimentation of the migratory phenomenon and expectations in the period 1993-2018.

## 5.1 Phases and migratory flows in Salento

The settlements in the Salento area have experienced different phases in line with the national trend.

The first phase (1982-1985) was characterized by settlements in the peripheral sectors of the labor market: agriculture, industry and small commerce. It is a period in which immigrants express needs for mere survival. Furthermore, the irregular condition – it will be necessary to wait for the law 943/1986 to have the first amnesty – makes them particularly blackmailable and therefore available for any job and under any conditions.

Already in this phase, the different specificities of the communities involved are outlined, which concern not only the motivations that push migration but also migration patterns. The most present communities are Moroccan, Senegalese, Sri Lankan and Filipino ones. For the first two it is an individual migration, especially male and pertaining to the typology that is defined as “economic” (Perrone, 2005: 20). For the Sri Lankan community, on the other hand, it is a family and political migration; for the Filipino one it is an individual and economic migration but, unlike the Moroccan and Senegalese ones, exclusively female.

As can be understood, these are not irrelevant differences, since political migration is a migration that often requires a long stay in the destination society, while an economic one envisages, at least in intentions, a short or medium-term migration project. Just as the migratory model is not irrelevant, whether it is an individual, male, female or family migration and this very often depends on the community to which one belongs. Already these first clarifications make us understand that we cannot mix everything in the indistinct category of immigrants, since needs differ according to the reason for emigration; nor, on the other hand, can we now ignore the cultural peculiarities that distinguish the different immigrant communities: being Islamic, Hindu or Catholic necessarily entails reference to different value systems, which mark the existence of individuals by orienting their behavior and choices also in the country of immigration. It is no coincidence, for example, that the Filipino community at this stage was made up exclusively of women who occupied the private service sector. The fact that they professed the Catholic religion immediately and more easily inserted them into the circuits of religious volunteering that oriented them towards an activity, that of home help, for which they met the requirements of the local population: to be white and culturally close (Ib.). This element has also inevitably influenced the migratory model of this community: since in Italy there was a need for home help, an activity traditionally carried

out by women, the women left. The absence of the family allows them, at this stage, to better respond to the needs of the natives and, at the same time, to solve the non-secondary problem of housing. We are still in the period in which regular migration is not foreseen, lacking a specific law, and the migratory phenomenon is governed through the T.U. of the Public Safety laws (in particular the Royal Decree of 18 June 1931). We will have to wait until 1986 to have the first regularization and, therefore, to bring out irregularities from immigrant population. This particular aspect has to some extent influenced the subsequent insertion into the labor market, so that over time what has been defined as the “ethnic imprint” of work has occurred: the Filipino community is to be found in the sphere of private services and that of Sri-Lankan in the sphere of catering; Moroccans and Senegalese in trade, which they use as a refuge sector, waiting for regular and more profitable jobs.

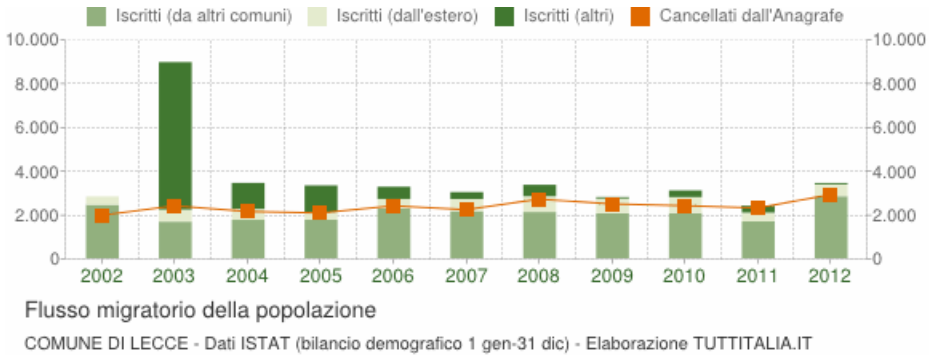
In the second phase (1986/1989) we witness the phenomenon of re-immigration. The regularization, which took place with Law n. 943, partly changes the scenarios. Migrants move within the territory in search of more reliable jobs, so that from our peripheral sectors of the labor market they move to those of the central employment market of the Center-North and find work in medium-small, chemical, iron and steel companies, harmful for their health but secure in terms of wages. Almost exclusively Moroccans and Senegalese move around, who in Salento were engaged in commercial activities that were often unauthorized. The cities involved in this re-immigration process are Milan, Turin, Bolzano, Brescia, Vicenza and Padua for the Senegalese community; Milan and Emilia Romagna for Moroccans. In this phase, after obtaining the residence permit, many Sri Lankans emigrate to Canada, where a strong community has existed for some time; is a phenomenon that we find in all immigrant groups and in all phases of the Salento migration: the tendency to move, as soon as possible, to the places where one's community is most deeply rooted, since this is supposed to facilitate the integration into reception (Ib.: 25). This is what happened with the Kosovars or with the Kurds, who moved mainly to Germany.

The third phase, the most delicate for Salento, coincides with the second regularization (1990-93) and also includes the arrivals of Albanians, Somalis and Rome from former Yugoslavia. Obviously, alongside these new entries, those of the other communities already present in our territory continue regularly. Once again the role of the media was decisive in the inversion of the opinion that the Italians and Salento had of the Albanians. From heroes who escaped the empire of evil or opposite cousins that the communist regime had isolated for 50 years, in a short time press and television have started a smear

campaign that, by hitting the front page monster every day, has oriented and disoriented consciences of the Salento area (Ib.). A single generalization prevailed: Albanian equals criminal. The perception of hatred on the part of the natives towards them was so strong that many Albanian women interviewed during the surveys carried out in those years did not hide that they pretended to be Greek citizens. This is also the phase in which the phenomenon of seasonal work in Salento settles.

The fourth is a phase that we could define as structural since, alongside the flows still inbound (especially Kurds and, from time to time, also citizens subject to forced diaspora) we find the sedimentation of some communities: Albanian, Moroccan, Senegalese, Filipino, Sri-Lankan and, from 1998 onwards, also Chinese. There are therefore characteristics such as the consistent presence of the second generation of immigrants in all levels of school; the phenomenon of family reunification; stabilization on the labor market and employment in very marginal sectors. In fact, the condition of marginality and the satisfaction of strictly economic need has been overcome and questions of full citizenship are being asked – e.g. the right to practice one's cults and to raise children in the awareness of their origins: some communities, like the Moroccan and Sri Lankan schools established, with their own means, schools of Arabic language and culture and Sri-Lankan language and culture. This is the phase in which immigrant citizens ask for visibility and refuse the delegation, that is, they ask to personally manage the services addressed to them or, even to plan initiatives that concern them. It is no coincidence that, at this stage immigrant associations, were born or reconstituted: from Filipinos to Somalis, from Albanians to Moroccans, to Sri Lankans, Senegalese, Pakistanis, all the most represented communities have organized themselves into associations and are beginning to ask for the resources and projects aimed at immigrants to be managed by the immigrants themselves. To date, unfortunately, this has not yet happened. Resources, projects and initiatives, whether they exist, continue to be managed by the natives and always in inadequate form, without professionalism, and almost always in the rough knowledge of the migratory phenomenon and the needs of the subjects to whom it is addressed.

The fifth phase starts in 2002. The regularization that accompanies law 189/02 generates a further change in geographical origins, with a clear prevalence of communities from Eastern Europe (Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Russia, Moldova). A phenomenon basically due to the opening of the EU to the East and a higher distribution of quotas in these countries to the detriment of others.



The last phase of Salento immigration, the current one, is determined by a double track. In the previous table one can see the data relating to the migratory flow in the city of Lecce recorded up to 2012. In the first sphere there is a fluctuating number of temporary presences represented by refugees and asylum seekers, who in recent years have passed through Salento due to numerous reception projects held by the local third sector (Sprar, shelter houses, Cas).

The second sphere includes resident immigrants. In the province of Lecce, resident immigrants represent 7% of the local population (26,646); just over 6 thousand immigrants reside in the capital city, -2.4% on the national average, which is 9.4%. The second sphere includes resident immigrants. In the province of Lecce, resident immigrants represent 7% of the local population (26,646); just over 6 thousand immigrants reside in the capital city, -2.4% on the national average, which is 9.4%. The rest, also due to the processes of gentrification and the expulsion of poverty from the center, has mostly moved to the marinas and to the villages near Lecce (Monteroni, S. Cesario, Leverano, Nardò). Here, moreover, there is a slight prevalence of women (3,371 vs. 3,318 men), while in the province the difference is more pronounced (12,160 women vs. 10,379 men). The prevalence of the female component is more visible as the figure becomes regional (64,554 women vs. 58,168 men) and national (2,644,666 vs. 2,381,487). With regard to foreign minors in 2016 in Italy there were 70,053, 1,542 in Puglia, 232 in the province of Lecce, 78 in Lecce (Istat, 2018).

A particular situation is that of unaccompanied foreign minors, i.e. minors who arrived in Italy without any reference adult: a phenomenon that emerged in the 1990s and is constantly increasing. Data from the Ministry of Social Policies tell us that at 31 December 2015 there were 1,102 MSNA (9.2% of the total number of presences in Italy) in Puglia, where there are 102 reception facilities. Puglia is among the top 5 regions for a greater number of available structures.



Net of the refugee and asylum seeker population, the most relevant community dimension among immigrants permanently resident in the territory is currently represented by citizens from Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, Morocco, Senegal, former Yugoslavia countries. In reference to the long-standing migratory sedimentations, the peculiarity of the Rome communities is particularly relevant. Net of the recent presences caused by the conflicts in the Balkans, the study of the Rome community in Salento offers the opportunity to notice the cultural syncretism that the sedimentations guarantee<sup>5</sup>. Rome have in fact chosen the Salento area since the first half of the twentieth century. In fact, Italian Rome communities are found in many municipalities of Salento but with a sedimentation and an outcome that is anything but on the margins as it happens today: old Rome communities reside, for example, in Cavallino, Acquarica, Sanarica, Maglie, Muro, Scorrano.

In many municipalities of southern Salento, the Rome populations arrive in search of work and despite being of nomadic tradition and speaking a language very different from the territorial dialects, they immediately urbanize, trigger cultural contaminations, and modify and make their own local customs and traditions. They ask for room and board, but in return they offer work and something that does not exist in the territory and is indispensable: the ability to work iron (locally lacking) but above all the recovery and trade of horses, essential for transport but also in tillage of the fields. The Rome populations manage to market an enormous and immediate quantity of animals for culinary use as well. Farriers, horse traders, butchers, the Rome people are distinguished by having borrowed what they can from the settlement communities, transformed their habits by interpreting the commercial needs of the territory and its customs to their advantage, preserving their own identity starting from the oral transmission of the language, the *Romanes*: modification of some religious rituals and some typical dishes of traditional cuisine in Salento; but also traditional music is not exempt from the contamination of Rome identities: during the popular festival in honor of San Rocco in Torre Paduli the Rome dance all night to the frenetic rhythm of tambourines (typical local instrument) and in circle they stage a dancing armed duel (“sword dance” or pinch-fencing).

Another interesting peculiarity of the Rome in Salento in the early twentieth century was that of having borrowed the surnames belonging to the old noble

5 Author’s survey on the adaptation and construction of Rome communities in Salento in the period 1993-2019. The indications about the Rome community in this essay are partly reported in Lotteria K., *I dispositivi del disprezzo: costruzione della segregazione e adattamento dei Rom Khorakhanè nel Salento* – Doctoral Thesis – 2015.

or wealthy families of the area where they worked: a very useful expedient to make them “invisible” and more protected against national policies of repression and expulsion of gypsies mentioned in reference to the policies implemented for the birth of the unitary state<sup>3</sup>. However, despite some episodes of local racism, the skills of the gypsies in the trades and the fundamental role of their congregations in the rites of devotion<sup>4</sup> made them indispensable figures for the maintenance of local economies, becoming a natural component of the social and productive fabric of the territory.

If the province of Lecce is not historically extraneous to the presence of the Rome, the capital city in that historical period was instead strongly perched in its baronial dimension, made static by the landed nobility and little developed commercially. The province therefore welcomes and allows itself to be changed – Lecce, however, does not. When a century later the Rome, this time Montenegrins, arrive in the city, it avails of the device of the exclusion already implemented by other Italian cities, or the fictitious construction of the presence of “nomads” as an “emergency” in front of which to find solution and regulate protection: in fact, precisely starting from a cultural and ethnic prejudice, Lecce associates the Rome with an identity that is necessarily nomadic and turns a small group of extended families from Montenegro into communities and strangers to each other but never nomads. It will build a field that still stands today. Others, of Romanian and Bulgarian ethnicity, will instead settle in the municipalities adjacent to the capital city.

Finally, the reconstruction of the relationship between the different communities residing in the territory is of particular interest. The Salento province had its own specificity for many reasons. The first concerned its geographical position, which made it, together with the “Sicilian border”, one of the first migratory settlements not only for landings but also for the first large reception centers and CPTs introduced by the Bossi-Fini law. The exchange of intangible culture has guaranteed for many years in the territory the strengthening of ties between communities thanks to a strong politicization of the communities and to the aforementioned demand for citizenship which manifested itself with a strong associationism<sup>6</sup>.

6 The results of the surveys conducted by the author are currently being published; they illustrate the differences in participation, inclusion as well as the degree of adaptation in a directly proportional way to the politicization of the interviewees and to national and territorial policies of political inclusion

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## II.

# San Cesario. Gender issues and foreign immigrants: experiences, relationships and representations

*Giuseppe Gaballo*

### 1. Introduction: study aims, survey design and data collection

Intangible heritage is a social construction, the product of interactions between actors who share the same historical, cultural and community or social context (Luckmann & Berger, 1969). This process of construction is the result of selective and contingent actions which involve processes of production of meaning, based on historically and culturally determined emotional behaviors (Schutz, 1960). In these terms, the values over time re-proposed as local artefacts and activities, which characterize a particular culture or society, cannot be limited to a single reading: aspects such as nationality, religion, ethnicity, class, gender or personal history should be read in a cultural perspective because they do not have an intrinsic value, but are dependent from specific a space-time dimension. In the perspective described here, human nature is always constructed out of cultural meanings, social relations and power. That is why the survey design, aimed at detecting the construction of meaning, starts from a reading of the phenomena focusing on the connection between interpersonal relationship and context (Toscano, Gremigni, 2008; Blumer, 1996). In fact, the two themes of interest of the “AdNICH” project – i.e. gender relations and immigrants in a small community – represent symbolic-behavioral dimensions in which cultural elements stratified over time can be identified: concepts, perspectives and stereotypes, rites and rituals are the result of cultural sedimentations historically internalized by the subjects, which make it possible to give life to ideas, social structures and values that are decisive in the construction of interpersonal relationships and self-identity as male-female, immigrant-native, integrated-ghettoized and so forth.

In order to shed light on these aspects, the research has focused on two pil-

lars: first, a lot has been aimed at bringing out facts, anecdotes and reactions relating to the social integration of immigrants and the relationship and gender identity (contents); secondly, we make reference to the methods and techniques suitable for involving the local population – and above all some key players – in the same issues (approach). The latter must allow not only the detection of conceptions, stereotypes and relational styles with the Other, but also the values and the relative emotional-affective coloring which characterizes the strength of the previous cognitive-behavioral components (that is why the sociological analysis was integrated with a psychological one).

The investigation lasted 7 months and was divided into 4 phases<sup>1</sup>. First of all, it was deemed necessary to carry out a context analysis by means of which to frame the two topics of the project: a socio-demographic analysis focusing on the resident men-women and native-foreigners relationship, and a documentary collection, which has provided us with valuable insights into gender issue<sup>2</sup>. An attempt was also made to reconstruct at least the years of the Second World War on the basis of some volumes published locally. In the second phase, two experts on gender and foreign immigration issues in the province of Lecce were interviewed, both of whom working as sociologists at the *University of Salento*. Furthermore, some key subjects of the community as project targets were also contacted, which made it possible to better outline the socio-cultural framework of San Cesario and provided the contacts of important witnesses of changes and of community culture. The 14 interviews on the subject of immigration and gender differences were divided into six categories: university researchers being expert on the two topics, foreign residents, subjects being active in the political life of the municipality, representatives of associations, women and men residing in the municipality<sup>3</sup>.

- 1 1) Desk analysis to frame the community dimension of the target country; 2) in-depth interviews with privileged witnesses and at the same time documentary collection; 3) three focus groups and a collection of graphic representations of school-age children; 4) data analysis.
- 2 The survey, carried out in 2010, was directed by the Chairholder of Methodology and Techniques of Social Research at the University of Salento, prof. Luigi Za, and commissioned by the Equal Opportunities Commission of San Cesario
- 3 Some foreigners decided to be interviewed in pairs.

a) <u>Foreign immigrants:</u>	b) <u>Gender relations:</u>
Stereotypes and cultural differences	Forms of discrimination
First impact on the socio-economic context	Stereotypes
Experience with Italian institutions and indigenous people	Cultural models
Role of women: possible changes	Access to the labor market
Access to housing and work	Political participation
Local integration policies	Perception of one's own freedom
Foreign children in schools	Male chauvinism
Problems with the local language	Forms of violence
Associations committed to promoting integration	Perception of the Self as woman
Relationship with other foreign immigrants	Power asymmetry in the couple relationship
Integration of second-generation immigrants	Emotional addiction

Table 1. Topics addressed during the interviews

In the third phase, 3 focus groups were developed and administered and the drawings of fifth-grade children attending lower secondary schools were collected, accompanied by a short personal explanatory caption (47 drawings, of which 28 on the image of foreign immigrants and relationship with others and 21 on gender and gender relationship). It was possible to carry out 3 focus groups, administered to women of different age groups (aged 20-35 and over 50) and one to men (young people aged 35-45 and over 65, both married with children and single). For the first two focus groups we obtained the owner's permission to use a women-only gym (indicated to us by a privileged witness). Having accepted that women knew each other and constantly frequented the same circles of entertainment and were now administering the focus group, allowed us to have an excellent participation from which rather spontaneous (at times conflicting) contents as well as group dynamics emerged which would otherwise have remained unexpressed. As for the focus group on men – an objective achieved with many difficulties – we had the availability of the manager and her collaborator of the comprehensive school at the Municipality, so we obtained subjects well known for their ability to express their opinion in public

and belonging to various social classes; moreover, most of the participants did not know each other or knew each other only by sight. Finally, we tried several times to administer a focus group to representatives of the small Senegalese community in San Cesario, but the key figure left after the interview so we could not have another point of reference. It was even more difficult to have the availability of other foreign immigrants coming from various nationalities, because they do not know each other and are rather “invisible” in the community.

With regard to the drawings of children aged 10-13 supplemented by a personal description, it was possible to detect cultural traits resulting from primary and secondary socialization and thus also to compare these contents with those coming from adults.

## 2. Socio-historical, economic and demographic picture of San Cesario

San Cesario has always represented a very religious small community (currently about 8,000 inhabitants) (Regione Puglia, 2004; AA.VV., 1981): there are numerous churches (9) and chapels (5) that still exist, many others have disappeared (10), various festivals dedicated to saints and five brotherhoods still operating (and as many extinct).

From the economic-productive side there is the important presence of the distillation industry, which during the 1900s determined wealth, international fame and work: since 1910 there had been four small distilleries and between 1917 and 1920 Vito and Nicola De Giorgi created a real industrial plant. Between 1940 and 1950 three industrialists invested further in their business, by expanding their factories and equipping them with more productive plants: Carmelo Pistilli specializes in the production of alcohol and cognac; Nicola De Giorgi prefers to specialize in the production of raw alcohol, calcium tartrate, liqueurs and even perfumes; Riccardo Pistilli focuses exclusively on the production of alcohol to be sold to Sicilian, Milanese and Campanian companies. The last factory, De Giorgi's, closed in 1999, in 2014 it was turned into a museum thanks to the intervention of the Municipality and the “Rico Semeraro Foundation” (Covino, De Giuseppe, *et al.*, 2003). The production vocation of the liqueur factory has not been completely lost, because San Cesario boasts an important industry, the “Mario and Antonio Cappello Distilleries” (Belli, Capano, Pascariello, 2017), which are also active on the foreign market.

The post-unification demographic events of San Cesario have followed the fate of its industrial economy, because they have been positive since the first



census of 1861: in fact, while in the South, specifically in Puglia and in the province of Lecce, the population has suffered alternations of decrease -growth-decrease (especially in the last twenty years), the municipality has had a constant growth ranging from 4166 in 1861 to 8297 in 2011, gaining almost a thousand inhabitants in this year compared to the previous 10 years<sup>4</sup>. In 2017 it suffered a slight decline, but the municipality always settles above 8 thousand: it is in the two-year period 2013-14 that both the migratory balance and the natural balance are negative (Tuttitalia.it, 2018). In this situation of general demographic decline in San Cesario, the foreign population has grown slowly but steadily since the beginning of 2000 to reach 292 units on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018 (3.6% of the total resident population). Looking at the composition of the foreign population (Demo.istat.it, 2019), we can see the important presence of Albanians (40 men and 38 women), Romanians (30 women and 5 men) and Poles (14 women and 5 men).

The Albanians have been present in the Salento area, including San Cesario, since the fifteenth century due to Turkish raids. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, they will form an integral part of the provincial population. Their integration was facilitated by the different period of the moral history of southern Italy: the Apulian population, in particular, proved to be largely welcoming and in a few years the Albanians became part of southern human geography. This has not happened in recent years with foreigners from Eastern Europe such as the Romanian “caregivers” and especially with African immigrants, who have become lightning rods of national, economic and cultural dynamics completely in contrast with the previous Apulian spirit of hospitality, and Salento’s in particular. Hence, there is a different story for immigrants from Africa, among which the most significant presences are represented by the Senegalese community (58 men and 7 women, while among Moroccans 16 males and 21 females were detected) (Tuttitalia, 2019). The greater number of Senegalese men is the result of a migration made up of young people, who work mainly in the street markets and often choose to live in one of the Lecce hinterland towns for cheaper rents<sup>5</sup>. Some exploit the typically individualistic and familistic Italian attitude, some others do it “publicly” through the associative support and

4 This was also affected by the close proximity to Lecce and the University of Salento, which represents a great opportunity for access to the world of work; in addition, S. Cesario (like Monteroni, Arnesano, Carmiano, etc.) has a more advantageous real estate market compared to its regional Capital.

5 Moroccans, on the other hand, represent a smaller nucleus made up of families with children and live mainly on commercial activities.

the meeting with the institutions, others finally starting from a job that allowed to choose the people to be with – we made an attempt to find out which community foreigners found. The 2018 data show how the population of San Cesario is quite advanced in age: the age group with the highest percentage is represented by 45-49 year olds; the average age has constantly increased, reaching 44.3 in 2018 and the aging index recorded a value of 157.9, lower than the figure on a provincial scale (188.3), almost in line with the regional figure (162.5) and 11 points less than the national situation (168.9) (Tuttitalia, 2019).

With regard to economic characteristics, the 2011 ISTAT (Italian National Statistical Institute) “Industry and Services” census shows how the wholesale and retail trade accounts for 40% of active companies, a trend that can be found both in Lecce and in most of the municipalities in the province; it is followed by the construction sector (16%) and professional, scientific and technical activities (9.2%). Both trade and construction sectors showed a positive trend from 2001 to 2011 (respectively + 14.14% and + 42.62%); the latter is made up of manufacturing activities with 7.9%, not undergoing any change from 2001 to 2011, whereas the sector that recorded a + 47.4% in the same period was the accommodation and catering services one (ISTAT, 2011): the Tourism Observatory of the Puglia Region recorded a total of 310 arrivals and 1329 presences in 2017 out of a total of 80 beds (Regione Puglia, 2017).

The average *per capita* income in 2016 was 10,252. This income value is almost in line with the figure for the Puglia Region which is 10,034 and slightly higher than the provincial figure which is 9,765; however, it appears to be quite detached from the national figure which is 13,896 (Comuni-Italiani, 2016). Finally, from the 15th general census of the population an unemployment rate of 16.8% was recorded at the provincial level, whereas in San Cesario it stood at 12.8%, which is also lower than the one of the capital which is 14.8%. (ProvinciadiLecce, 2011).

### 3. Foreign immigrants: their presence, heterogeneity, experiences, reactions

#### 3.1 Introduction. Historical evolution and theoretical reflections

After the Second World War, international migration grew in proportion to the conditions of need of a large number of materially and morally impoverished populations. In the scenario characterized by the oil crisis of the 1970s, migrants began to be somehow perceived as competitors of the natives in the

labor market; the situation worsened with the international crisis of 2007 with an increase in restrictive policies towards immigration, which made the phenomenon hostile and increasingly invisible to official statistics due to the increase in illegal immigration (Potestio, 2017; for a more accurate historical reflection, see the chapter by Katia Lotterea).

It is interesting to understand how immigrants have developed survival strategies in a state, the Italian one, which is less and less industrialized and more and more suspicious and racist. The economic growth that took place at the end of the twentieth century attracted low-skilled labor, while the increase in education and income fueled the growth of professional expectations and the social rise of Italians, thus making certain types of manual work progressively carried out by foreigners less and less welcome. The wide opportunities of illegal employment have led to a very precarious economic integration of migrant workers without authorization, facilitated by the crisis of the welfare state, on the one hand, and by the aging of the population, on the other. This has also produced a growing market demand in personal and domestic services, as confirmed by one of our interviewees:

Our translation: I got a job right away, because it's easier for women to find ... find ... There was an old lady who needed a person and there was a chance for Kevin, me and him to live in a room with a toilet [Albanian woman]<sup>6</sup>.

In recent years, the term on which more and more political and humanistic disciplines have debated has been that of “integration”, taking the concept and its positive semantic connotation for granted: in fact, it refers almost only to the migrant's work and housing success; other aspects are considered secondary, however, lacking even for many indigenous citizens, such as the relational and institutional, political-associative spheres and the one which is linked to services.

If we adopt an ecological approach and consider the Italian territory in all its socio-cultural and economic dimensions, we can frame the migration phenomenon in a more realistic way as an encounter-clash between what the newcomer represents and the resources / needs of the host; in this way the immigrant becomes an opportunity for the target population to better get to know each

6 From the original version: *“Io ho trovato lavoro subito, perché per le donne è più facile trovare... trovare... C'era una signora anziana che aveva bisogno di una persona e c'era una possibilità di vivere io, lui e Kevin in una stanza con un bagnetto [donna albanese]”*.

other on a relational, institutional, cultural and moral level. Well, when it enters a foreign habitat, an “alien or allochthonous species” – to use an expression borrowed from biology – he has three fundamental alternatives: extinction, adaptation with an insignificant presence, significant adaptation. In the latter case, the outcomes can be two: coexistence with native species in such a way as not to seriously alter the balance between living and non-living elements; competition with one or more native species, to the point that the allochthonous species takes over one or more native species, even leading them to extinction. A decisive advantage for alien species is the absence of predators and parasites, which could otherwise slow their growth. These dynamics become more complex and fluid when it comes to human beings, because it is necessary to take into consideration not only the material aspect of the presence and type of resources on a territory, but also the most important cultural aspect, which presents itself in a double capacity: the skills of the immigrant in knowing how to identify and use resources; the normative-value and therefore ethical-behavioral baggage of the newcomer, which may not coincide with the cultural substratum of the host population. For example, before the introduction of the Euro and the international economic crisis, Italians acquired increasingly higher degrees and required professional positions consistent with the level of education, especially in the public and private services sector. For the Albanians, whose migration wave occurred in the 1990s, this meant the possibility of entering the vast manual labor market, which has become increasingly free. The agricultural sector involved many immigrants from the neighboring African continent and the Far East (Pakistanis, Indians, etc.) and the commercial sector was characterized by North Africans and Senegalese, especially for low-cost products. Especially in the last 15 years, shops and large Chinese stores and small food shops managed by other Eastern ethnic groups have increased, while with the aging of the Italian population and the lack of “family and neighborhood welfare”, the elderly have become a resource in the care market and this has allowed the proliferation of “caregivers” from Eastern Europe.

Our translation: [interviewer: In your opinion, how is it possible that women find a job earlier than men?] [Albanian husband] Because there are carers here, cleaning ... this is easy. Italian girls don't work with these jobs<sup>7</sup>.

7 From the original version: “[intervistatore: Secondo te cosa ci può essere che le donne trovano prima il lavoro rispetto all'uomo?] [marito albanese] Perché ci sono per badanti qua, pulizie... questo è facile. Le ragazze italiane non lavorano con questi lavori”.

These are examples of how some “alien ethnic species” have been able to occupy the Italian territory, by exploiting the opportunities and specializing in some ecological niches. However, it is not enough to refer to the non-use of some resources by native species or to their scarce presence in some economic sectors to ensure that alien species have been able to settle permanently or frequently, even if for short periods. It is necessary to consider other elements, whether connected with material survival or not. Law and morality constitute so many mechanisms of naturalization or, on the contrary, of expulsion of an alien species; in fact, sometimes it is the territory itself that needs non-native species, those that best meet the needs of significant structures present in the host territory. Let us take the case of the production and sale of products related to clothing and footwear or to the agricultural sector: if there were no clandestine counterfeit brands, we would not have a large number of underpaid and exploited immigrants in working hours, much less in the harvesting of watermelons and tomatoes, for which they endured non-existent earnings and inhumane housing and hygiene conditions. This is possible because the host territory has “ecological” characteristics, which allow for a type of integration into the economic and cultural structure of the country of arrival and are configured as illegal and immoral. The same goes for totally illegal phenomena such as the exploitation of prostitution and drug dealing. Also in this case it is correct to speak of integration of the foreign immigrant in the host territory, because the allochthonous species manages to survive and settle permanently in conditions of illegality and immorality, i.e. two elements of the economic and cultural behavior of a significant part of the indigenous population both as an entrepreneur and as a consumer:

Our translation: I found a bricklayer ... for two years I worked for him, then I left. It was very difficult as a job. No, it wasn't for the difficult, he paid me little, then we work two hours more and he didn't pay you; then when I needed it ... I needed contributions, he ... he said that he had paid them ... that he had paid them, but the contributions were not paid and then I left [Albanian man]<sup>8</sup>.

8 From the original version: “Ho trovato con un muratore... per due anni ho lavorato per lui, poi ho lasciato. Era molto difficile come lavoro. No, non era per il difficile, mi pagava poco, poi lavoriamo due ore di più e non ti pagava; poi quando a me mi serviva... mi servivano i contributi, lui... li aveva detto che li aveva pagati... che li aveva pagato, però non erano pagati i contributi e poi ho lasciato [uomo albanese]”.

Hence, when it comes to immigrants, it is good to specify what type of integration we are talking about and for what purposes: significant migratory flows can be the result of other forms of integration, that is, those extraneous to legality and determined by flourishing economic markets governed by deviant and criminal subcultures. As a consequence, if we approach the integration discourse according to an ecological approach, we can better understand how the material and moral resources of a territory, its behavioral and normative, structural, cultural aspects and the relationships between them give the possibility to some alien species to stabilize for long periods, to some for short periods of time, to some others to be immediately expelled (or self-expelled). The more or less stable presence of the foreign immigrant can thus be correctly considered integration, when this is determined by the congruent concatenation of subjective, economic and ethnic elements of the migrant with the socio-cultural and material elements of the host territory. An example in this regard comes from a German couple (interviewed) who rented their house in Hanover: having a good pension, among the many countries visited, the German couple found it advantageous to live in Italy, where the climate is much more favorable for their long bike rides, the residents are friendly and because Salento is a good starting point to reach other touristy interesting places also abroad.

Our translation: Jamaica, Spain, Japan and Italy and we have been looking for a long time for a house that we like and that is also possible to buy ... in Italy, for us even in the north, possible ... but we always started looking for the South and when I was alone in Lecce, I really liked Lecce and we decided that we go to Lecce. But in Lecce it was too expensive to take a house like this and that's why we decided to take San Cesario and we are very happy [german woman]<sup>9</sup>.

This type of immigrants gives rise to a tourist flow that can in turn lead to other immigration: children, grandchildren and friends visit them and spend a few months in Italy. In this way, a contingent migratory flow is created, so-

9 From the original version: "Giamaica, Spagna, Giappone e Italia e abbiamo cercato molto tempo per una casa che piace a noi e che è anche possibile comprare... in Italia, per noi anche del nord, possibile... ma abbiamo iniziato a cercare sempre Sud e quando io sono stato sola a Lecce, mi è piaciuto molto Lecce e abbiamo deciso che andiamo a Lecce. Ma a Lecce era troppo costoso prendere una casa come questa e per questo abbiamo deciso che prendiamo San Cesario e siamo molto contenti [donna tedesca]".

to-speak seasonal, very similar to that of some animal species that transit and always stop in the same territories according to contingent survival needs. Hence, we have those who settle forever in a territory; others prefer to have a fixed residence, which however makes the exploration of other territories possible.

The forms of migration are various because there are many causal concatenations that determine the choice to migrate and remain in a territory. Based on this, a number of consequences must be considered. First of all, what impact do the material and cultural conditions of the host country have on the identity of the immigrant? This is the most difficult question to answer, because it concerns the personal experience, ideas and worldview of the individual. Furthermore, we are aware of the fact that today immigration is no longer a point of no return and the immigrant does not aim at all costs to achieve full integration, as perhaps happened in twentieth-century migrations (Zamagni, 2002): ease of movement and communication with the homeland stimulate a sort of doubling, whereby on the level of practical action one takes on the behavior of the host country, while on the level of values and feelings one remains faithful to the traditions of origin. This outcome has become stronger now with the existential precariousness dependent on job and welfare uncertainties: natives and immigrants are overwhelmed by innumerable uncertainties, so that their roots are strengthened and represented by family, community, tradition and religion.

Finally, the possibilities / methods of integration depend on another fundamental cultural aspect: the use of the term “immigrant” involves the symbolic and legislative legitimacy of the destination society. In this sense, depending on the particular historical moment, the target society observes a phenomenon and defines it, projecting anxieties and insecurities or a sense of solidarity and complicity (Dal Lago, 1999). As a result of this, some scholars have shown the existence of two types of discourse on immigration: the first refers to the selection and classification of the phenomenon, while the second is linked to the justification of the practices of exclusion and rejection. In this perspective, migrants have been labeled in competitive terms and relegated to the role of enemy: a strategy which is useful for preserving a social cohesion subject to an authoritarian rule allowing the exploitation of subordinates. From this point of view, the discourse on immigration is treated in a deceptive way as an invasion, excluding values of solidarity and the right to mobility and hiding their usefulness according to a strategy of domination of the strongest (the host) over the weakest (the guest). In this sense, the rhetoric of the “us-them” biological difference has not completely disappeared in advanced societies: on the

contrary, it has transformed from a bellicose distinction of biological superiority into a more subtle racism, practiced through more complex techniques, which would tend to justify exclusion for economic or cultural reasons from time to time, specifically also religious ones (Palidda, 2010).

Indeed, for years in Italy some have embarked on a cultural crusade to defend the alleged national (or European) Catholic identity against Islamic invaders: the image of migrants as a “problem” or as a “threat” is constructed and communicated by the media through the constant use of striking titles, emotionally-charged keywords, specific stylistic choices and a coherent rhetoric aimed at provoking a certain aversion in the user (Dal Lago, 1999).

This can explain the diversity and contradictory attitude towards the various ethnic groups of immigrants: complicity with foreigners of Northern European origin, adverse against Africans (and Muslims in particular), ambivalent towards – for example – the Chinese.

This ambivalence constitutes a privileged point of observation for understanding the hierarchy of values which is at the basis of the definitions of immigrant and of the justification of certain behaviors towards the foreigner.

In fact, towards the Chinese there are various negative elements that have a different weight in determining the natives’ attitude: distrust of their being detached from social relationships outside the workplace, negative jokes about the goodness of their products and the origin of their money, good-natured attitudes to the eyes and their way of speaking, etc.

Yet the shops are widely frequented, there is no shortage of Italians who work for them and the mass media pay no attention to the impressive economic presence in some key sectors of Italian and Salento economy, in particular. In short, knowing how to manage and assert yourself economically is worth more than any other positive or negative aspect.

Triumph of capitalist logic (Fromm, 1976). The reflection on foreign immigrants according to an “ecological” approach helps to better understand some behavioral dynamics, certain experiences and perceptions relating to the situation of San Cesario, given that the town has a significant number of ethnic groups and nationalities.

As can be seen from Table 2, the Albanians represent the most numerous and stabilized group both in terms of work and relationships. It must be said that the official statistics are not completely realistic: in fact, the number of foreigners is changing both for the significant presence of illegal immigrants and for those who work illegally, come from Eastern European countries and are not resident, and on the contrary for those who still have their residence in Italy, but have gone back home.



By making a quick comparison between the two largest groups of immigrants, the Senegalese were the only ones to successfully create a local association in order to promote internal coordination, integration of new immigrants and a stable engagement with local authorities, involving also other African nationalities and the local community.

Nationality	Men	Of which minors	Women	Of which minors	Total	Tot. %
Albania	40	10	38	8	78	26%
Senegal	58	6	7	3	65	22%
Marocco	16	7	21	4	37	12%
Romania	5	1	30	2	35	12%
Poland	5	2	14	1	19	6%
China	11	5	6	2	17	6%
Gambia	5	-	-	-	5	2%
Rwanda	-	-	5	-	5	2%
Sri Lanka	4	-	1	-	5	2%
India	4	-	-	-	4	1%
Germany	3	-	1	-	4	1%
Brasil	-	-	2	-	2	1%
Pakistan	2	-	-	-	2	1%
Russia	-	-	2	-	2	1%
Tanzania	-	-	2	-	2	1%
Other <sup>10</sup>	-	-		-	15	5%
	158	31	139	20	297	100%

Table 2. Foreign residents in San Cesario by nationality (Istat, 10-01-2019)

As for job opportunities, the Albanians have had the best luck both for the period favorable to the Italian welcoming attitude and because on their arrival the national economic conditions were better. The groups of Poles and Roma-

10 Great Britain, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Cuba, Philippines, France, Japan, Iran, Kenya, Mauritania, Indonesia, Slovenia, Spain, USA, Ukraine.

nians are mainly composed of women who usually do care work. The Chinese have arrived in recent years and are absorbing slices of the commercial market left by the locals, but it is the least socially-integrated group (according to what was reported by the interviewees who carried out political-administrative activities in the Municipality of San Cesario).

Foreign women tend to undergo forms of subordination to men in the family and at work: in the family they have to perform predefined roles and tasks, mainly related to management and assistance; when it comes to working, it is more difficult for women to achieve the same goals as men. Considering the local society, women feel they are not fully recognized by men. The emotions linked to this self-perception are loneliness and anger, which can lead in certain conditions to emotional dependence and self-annihilation. In San Cesario they are freer from cultural constraints, but this depends a lot on their ethnic origins: in fact, there are great differences in terms of autonomy, for example, between those coming from Eastern European countries and those from African countries. More than a few interviewees admitted that the authority of Eastern European women undermines that of men:

Our translation: The woman ... is strong, she is good ... who can do everything ... I think ... of a woman ... even the job of a man. Physical work, let's say, because office work these things are known. But I think a woman can do it. One man's job. Instead, not to be a feminist, however, I think that a man cannot do certain things that women do [Albanian wife]. I said earlier, this [husband]. Yes, yes, otherwise we weren't 25 years together [wife]<sup>11</sup>.

These dynamics clearly emerge from the interviews with experts and privileged witnesses (the latter residing in San Cesario).

11 From the original version: "La donna... è forte, è brava... che può fare tutto... penso... di una donna... anche anche il lavoro di un uomo. Lavoro fisico, diciamo, perché lavoro d'ufficio queste cose si sa. Però penso che una donna riesce a farlo. Lavoro di un uomo. Invece non per essere femminista però penso che un uomo certe cose che fanno le donne non riesce a farlo [moglie albanese]. Ho detto prima, questo [marito]. Sì, sì, sennò non eravamo 25 anni insieme [moglie]".

### 3.2 Beginnings and prejudices. Individual, collective survival and integration strategies

The impact with the “new world” – as some interviewees define it – was obviously not easy, but this is not only due to the problem of building different habits, having access to the job market and finding a home or, finally, meeting the usual prejudices of the natives. Among the attitudes that have displaced those who came from Africa in particular were the personal positive prejudices towards our country: the television contents in fact showed a happy Italy resting on consumption and this led to false hopes. An impression confirmed by the Albanian couple, who followed the Italian television broadcasts and had to prepare their young son for a completely different situation to limit the shock from false representations.

There were different strategies of adaptation and survival. The first consisted in focusing on the support of compatriots: relatives, friends and acquaintances constituted a support to limit the social shock, and represented mentors on how to behave, find a job and have support for eating and sleeping. None of the interviewees mentioned institutions responsible for social integration, which meant for them to grope in the dark and rely on their compatriots’ perspective, which is very limited because it is already full of negative and confusing experiences.

Our translation: My friends really helped me, because here, really, there is solidarity between us ... everyone helps you: they tell you what to do, what you must avoid, where you must go, where it is dangerous, and seeing how they behave you do the same thing; you can live quietly without having problems. And then I had the integration and I also let others have it; I am proud to say it, because when I came, after a few years, I said how I was also doing politics in Senegal [...] we must try to do something else, to serve the country, the city where we live, and I am I went to take the responsibility of meeting the mayor [...]. Because, when you arrive, you already have support, because you have already called someone who has to wait for you at his house and does not have to participate in anything for the first few days. They give you food, they give you clothes, we do whatever you need, if possible; and then for a month, two, he doesn't have to give anything of his own and then they integrate you to learn a job, because we can't always keep supporting you... so the problems aren't too big. The only problem is that when you have documents you can't do anything [...]. The only thing, the only alternative you have is the sale. And the sale, unfortunately, is not going well for now. When everyone starts selling, who buys? [Senegalese political activist].

Through my sister we had found this job [...] and she found this job for me in San Cesario. I didn't even know where San Cesario was, but I found a job [...] and therefore since there was this possibility of living close to me too, because I had to stay for twenty-four hours, I hadn't foreseen it, even though I already knew it from Albania, he had already told me when we left: "Besa, you cannot teach there" [Albanian woman]<sup>12</sup>.

Especially for the Senegalese, three interdependent factors have come into play: the number of members, the small size of the urban community of residence, their personal culture. First of all, the number plays an advantage in terms of perception of security: the number, in fact, implies diversity of solutions to the problems of adaptation to the new environment and also protection against any adverse elements, whether they are of a relational, social or, specifically, institutional nature. Secondly, a small urban community (San Cesario) has a complexity much lower than a city which is 14 times greater (Lecce) both for the number of social mechanisms, which need to be known and to adapt to, and for the dynamism of events and relationships, almost always based on anonymity, individualism and superficiality. Finally, the interviewees highlighted the importance of the culture of origin: one is teacher from a family of

12 From the original version: "Gli amici miei veramente mi hanno aiutato, perché qua, veramente, c'è la solidarietà tra di noi... tutti ti aiutano: ti dicono cosa devi fare, cosa devi evitare, dove devi andare, dove è pericoloso, e vedendo come si comportano si fa la stessa cosa; puoi vivere tranquillamente senza avere problemi. E poi l'integrazione l'ho avuta io e l'ho fatto avere pure ad altri; sono fiero di dirlo, perché quando sono venuto, dopo qualche anno, io ho detto come che facevo pure la politica in Senegal [...] dobbiamo cercare di fare un'altra cosa, a servire il paese, la città dove viviamo noi, e sono andato io a prendere la responsabilità di incontrare il sindaco [...]. Perché, quando, arrivi già hai l'appoggio, perché hai già chiamato qualcuno che ti deve aspettare a casa sua e per i primi giorni non deve partecipare a niente. Ti danno da mangiare, ti danno vestiti, tutto quello che hai bisogno lo facciamo, se è possibile; e poi per un mese, due, non deve dare niente proprio e poi ti integrano a imparare un lavoro, perché non possiamo continuare sempre a mantenerti... quindi i problemi non sono troppo grandi. L'unico problema che quando hai documenti non puoi fare niente [...]. L'unica cosa, l'unica alternativa che hai è la vendita. E la vendita, purtroppo, per adesso, non sta andando bene. Quando tutti si mettono a vendere, chi compra? [seneg. attivista politico].

Tramite mia sorella avevamo trovato questo lavoro [...] e ci ha trovato questo lavoro a me a San Cesario. Io nemmeno sapevo dove era San Cesario, però ho trovato lavoro [...] e quindi siccome c'era questa possibilità di vivere anche loro vicino a me, perché ventiquattro ore dovevo stare, non avevo previsto, anche se lo sapevo già dall'Albania, lui me lo aveva già detto quando siamo partiti: "Besa, senti che lì non puoi insegnare" [donna albanese].

teachers, the other political activist. All of this allowed them to meet, understand each other and understand what to do to achieve an ideologically-oriented integration: first of all, “have an open mind”, says the teacher, which allows them to see realistically and without prejudice. So that personal culture has brought about a turning point in favor of integration (as perceived by them): meeting the institutions of San Cesario.

I talked to the mayor, he put me in touch with the other councilor, we talked and from there the association was born, then we organized New Year’s Eve, Italians with Senegalese. All together we had a nice party, we organized a football match, all together and from there we really felt the possibility and the need to organize ourselves better and we made the association, let’s say, the association of Senegalese in San Cesario and its surroundings [Senegalese political activist]<sup>13</sup>.

The meeting and integration on an institutional basis led to the birth of an association, which allowed the Senegalese to be recognized and accepted by the rest of the country. On the contrary, says the other interviewee – the teacher, they did not find clarity in the information or institutional structures designed to “standardize” the integration of newcomers. Hence, the will and the integration process did not start from the host country. This also happened to an Albanian couple, who had to suffer the legislative and bureaucratic gaps and face a long period of clandestinity:

With the visa we have, let’s say, transgressed ... How do you say? We stopped. But like everyone else, it’s not like we stayed... we applied to the police headquarters for a residence permit. They accepted us because I had found a job and the lady was ready to pay me the contributions with a contract and we did it right away... in 2002 we made the documents. Two years we were not legal, because we were already declared at the police station, until it was time to do the documents [Albanian woman]<sup>14</sup>.

13 From the original version: “Ho parlato con il sindaco, mi ha messo in contatto con l’altro assessore, abbiamo parlato e di là è nata l’associazione, poi abbiamo organizzato Capodanno, italiani con senegalesi. Tutti insieme abbiamo fatto una bella festa, abbiamo organizzato una partita di calcio, tutti insieme e di là abbiamo sentito veramente la possibilità e le necessità di organizzarci meglio e abbiamo fatto l’associazione, diciamo, l’associazione dei senegalesi di San Cesario e dintorni [seneg. attivista politico]”.

14 From the original version: “Con il visto abbiamo, diciamo, trasgredito... Come si dice? Ci

Great difficulties were also encountered by the German couple, when they wanted to renovate the house: the differences compared to Germany were notable due to the difficulties encountered and complained about in San Cesario.

Two other “socially-institutional” forms have allowed someone to be well received: the game of football and an Italian wife. Both of these factors have fluidized the relationship between a Senegalese and the rest of the community, and this has made it possible to complete his stay in Italy by signing a contract as a cultural mediator.

Two elements emerge that are interesting, but negatively: the other ethnic groups are lesser-known in the country and only the past administration was very active in the integration of the Senegalese. Putting these two fragments of community life together, we can understand how integration depended on contingent factors: the will of the Senegalese group to make themselves known and to integrate; the passivity of the community, even at an institutional level, in building standard, albeit minimal, pathways, procedures and mechanisms to facilitate the integration of newcomers. Probably this is also due to the so-called “citizen” lifestyle that reigns in our small villages, which have now lost the characteristics of community life to acquire the individualistic style of large cities (Bauman 2001; Id., 1995; Sennet, 2012). In fact, if the native Italian already has great difficulty in knowing the services available, difficulties for the foreigner become more evident as s/he does not even know the language of the country of arrival.

Our translation: [...] Italians and Europeans themselves have problems of approaching each other. So, because one lives upstairs, lives downstairs, they don't greet each other, they are friends on Facebook, but no one goes to visit the other, right? It is already a problem! If we consider foreigners, too ... everything that is not ours is not good, there is a serious problem! The problem is that when the few times there are demonstrations of any kind, if you as a community are invited, you have to participate. But not that if there are no profits, if there are profits and there is something you go; if it is for the culture or to meet you don't go there, but also the presentation of a book, if you tell it to any foreign commu-

siamo fermati. Però come tutti non è che siamo rimasti... abbiamo fatto richiesta alla questura per il permesso di soggiorno. Ci hanno accettati perché avevo trovato lavoro e la signora era pronta a pagarmi i contributi con contratto e abbiamo fatto subito... nel 2002 abbiamo fatto i documenti. Due anni siamo stati non in regola, perché eravamo già dichiarati alla questura, finché è arrivato il momento di fare i documenti [donna albanese]”.

nity that lives here “no I have other things to do”, this is a block and I have noticed this too [Senegalese cultural mediator]<sup>15</sup>.

We understand that the success of the integration processes depends on the “good will” of the country’s ruling class, both political and associative, and not on standardized legislative-administrative procedures on a constitutional basis.

A fundamental pivot of the integration processes is represented by the school: all the Senegalese who have school-age children take advantage of this opportunity.

Sooner or later – what politicians don’t want – Italy will, whether you want it or not, will become a multi-ethnic country, because [...] our children go to school, attend European school and sooner or later they will graduate and they will work, right? Anyone who is not possible will all take diplomas and from there the real will begin ... [...] there will begin a multi-ethnic Italy, because you will not be able to tell my son “because you are black I do not let you work” [...] All the children of our migrants who arrive now, everyone goes to school [...] so I say “I’m very, very happy” about this [Senegalese cultural mediator]<sup>16</sup>.

In addition to school, some other elements emerge from the interview with the Albanians on the possibilities of integration and solidarity knowledge even among immigrants; when asked if they know other Albanians in San Cesario, the two spouses interviewed answer in the following way:

15 From the original version: “[...] l’italiano e gli europei stessi hanno problemi di approccio fra di loro. Allora, perché uno abita sopra, abita sotto, non si salutano, sono amici su Facebook, però nessuno va a trovare l’altro, no? È già un problema! Se ci mettiamo noi stranieri pure... tutto quello che non è nostro non va bene, c’è un problema serio! Il problema è che quando le poche volte che ci sono manifestazioni di qualsiasi genere, se tu come comunità ti invitano, devi partecipare. Ma non che se non ci sono profitti, se ci sono profitti e c’è qualcosa vai; se è per la cultura o per incontrarsi non ci vai, ma pure presentazione di un libro, se gli dici a qualsiasi comunità straniera che vive qua “no io ho altre cose che devo fare”, questo è un blocco e io ho notato anche questo [seneg. mediatore cult.]”.

16 From the original version: “Prima o poi – quello che non vogliono i politici – arriverà che l’Italia, vuoi o non vuoi, diventerà un paese multi etnico, perché [...] i nostri figli vanno a scuola, frequentano la scuola di europei e prima o poi si diplomeranno e lavoreranno, no? Chi non è possibile prenderanno diplomi tutti quanti e da lì comincerà la vera... [...] lì comincerà un’Italia multietnica, perché non potrai dire a mio figlio “perché sei nero non ti faccio lavorare” [...] Tutti i figli di migranti nostri che arrivano adesso, tutti vanno a scuola [...] quindi io di questo dico “sono molto, molto contento” [seneg. mediatore cult.]”.

Our translation: [wife] I met two or three at Kevin's school, who went to school with him. [interviewer: So you can't tell approximately how many there are in San Cesario?]. No. [husband] How not? There are! [interviewer: But have you never had a chance to meet them? Any event?] [Wife] No... [husband] I had some coffee with someone. [wife] There was the "Scarromeo" center, which welcomed immigrants here in San Cesario, a couple of years I worked there with them, so that they gave things from Albania to people. Then it closed as a center. They did as well ... they taught Italian to immigrant Albanians. [husband] Then we did a... in Lecce, with a group of migrants, we have... [wife] Ah, this later then... an association in Lecce in... six years ago... or more, when we were staying at the old house. [interviewer: An association in Lecce that...?] [wife] Who had created a group, which gathered immigrants from all the... Tunisia, Moroccan, Albanian... and then they organized trips to get to know Puglia... [husband]. Every Sunday we went to different places [interviewer: How long did this experience last?] [Wife] Three months<sup>17</sup>.

As can be seen from the dialogue, welcoming institutions and a territory become powerful social catalysts that trigger virtuous mechanisms of encounter and integration even between immigrants of various ethnic groups and nationalities. However, in the case of highly-institutionalized and rigid spaces, such as schools, it can happen that spontaneous initiatives and processes of social relations are stifled, whereas in the case of associative activities, large margins of free action are created; on the contrary, while the school represents a stable meeting space, the association has the characteristics of fluidity and contin-

17 From the original version: "[moglie] Due o tre li ho conosciuti alla scuola di Kevin, che andavano a scuola con lui. [intervistatore: Perciò non sapete dire approssimativamente quanti siete a San Cesario?]. No. [marito] Come no? Ci sono! [intervistatore: Ma non avete mai avuto occasione di incontrarvi? Grazie a qualche evento?] [moglie] No... [marito] Con qualcuno ho preso qualche caffè. [moglie] C'era il centro "Scarromeo", che accoglieva gli immigrati qua a San Cesario, un paio di anni ho lavorato lì con loro, così che davano cose dell'Albania alle persone. Poi ha chiuso come centro. Facevano pure... insegnavano l'italiano agli Albanesi immigrati. [marito] Poi abbiamo fatto un...a Lecce, con un gruppo di migranti, abbiamo... [moglie] Ah, questo tardi poi... una associazione a Lecce nel... sei anni fa... o di più, quando stavamo alla casa vecchia. [intervistatore: Un'associazione a Lecce che...?] [moglie] Che aveva creato un gruppo, che raccoglieva gli immigrati da tutte le... Tunisia, Marocchini, Albanesi... e quindi hanno organizzato dei viaggietti per conoscere Puglia... [marito]. Ogni domenica siamo andati in diversi posti [intervistatore: Quanto è durata questa esperienza?] [moglie] Tre mesi".



gency, because the associative activities are based on voluntary work and often have a short life.

A slightly different insight into the relationships between natives and immigrants can be seen from the experience of a Northern European immigrant with a high cultural and professional background: English language proficiency, a PhD in Neurobiology, he loves to travel and have friends in the old continent. He is clear from the start:

Our translation: I know English, but if I want to speak English, my mother speaks to me. [...] I have friends around, but I didn't come to Lecce for a social life, I came to feel comfortable and also to see the place, to tour: the culture, the environment, the geography of the South. I like travelling, then I came. I also walked pieces of Puglia. However, San Cesario is completely different, because I was engaged. I came to live, so I found it, there was an association in San Cesario, it's a beautiful thing ... [young Englishman]<sup>18</sup>.

Unlike Senegalese, Tunisians and Moroccans, this “particular foreigner” naturally feels free to choose what to do in the new environment: like a *flâneur* he prefers to enjoy the places rather than live them fully, creating stable social relations. It is no wonder, in fact, when he critically compares Lecce, a city where there is a mixture of foreigners and the habit of seeing them, and San Cesario, where the “villagers” are very attentive to strangers and intrusively seek information about them; the welcome is automatic for someone who has no skin of another color:

Our translation: In San Cesario I went to have my hair cut and – I remember – there was a guy, another client, who asked mind-blowing questions, without knowing me: “When are you going to get married? When are you going to have children?”. I just went to have my hair cut, I arrived in the village, went to the hairdresser where everyone goes and

18 From the original version: “Io conosco l'inglese, ma se voglio parlare inglese, mi parla la mamma. [...] Ho degli amici in giro, ma non sono venuto a Lecce per una vita sociale, sono venuto per stare tranquillo e anche vedere il posto, girare: la cultura, l'ambiente, la geografia del Sud. Mi piace viaggiare, allora sono venuto. Ho camminato anche pezzi di Puglia. Invece, San Cesario è completamente diverso, perché ero fidanzato. Io sono venuto per vivere, allora io ho trovato, c'era un'associazione a San Cesario, è una bella cosa... [giovane inglese]”.

there is a list of questions: “who are you, why are you here, why ...?” [young Englishman]<sup>19</sup>.

Paradoxically, this type of welcome has the opposite effect for the young Englishman, to the point of feeling even more alien, “isolated”, as he himself says; for a Londoner there is a “reverse racism”:

[...] in San Cesario the probability of passing from one side of the city to the other without anyone... a car that rings, because the cousin of someone who ... There is nothing wrong with that! It is how it is perceived by a foreigner from London. They love me, people, I’m spoiled, I’m an Englishman who likes helping, I’m a white man helping. The racism I encounter is positive [...]. It is not easy to treat others in an absolutely neutral way: we are positive or negative. Of course we are naturally racist in that sense, if you are not exactly who I am, you are different, I cannot avoid this, we are like that, hard but so it is [young Englishman]<sup>20</sup>.

As can be seen, he also highlights the existence of prejudices, which emerge when there is an element labeled as “African”, “rural”, etc. The interviewee emphasizes how perspective of judgment changes when there are or two elements that have priority over the others, namely skin color and language of origin:

I am ... scruffy, I go around in a way that makes me look like a poor fellow; it is not a racing bike, there is a plastic drawer, I attached those plastic fruit baskets: it fits perfectly on the luggage rack, because I can throw everything away: it is very comfortable, but it is ugly! It’s not a wooden

19 From the original version: “A San Cesario sono andato a tagliare i capelli e – mi ricordo – c’era un tipo, un altro cliente, che ha fatto delle domande allucinanti, senza conoscermi: “quando vai a sposarti? Quando vai a fare i figli?”. Sono appena andato a tagliarmi i capelli, sono arrivato in paese, vai al parrucchiere dove vanno tutti quanti e c’è un elenco di domande: “chi sei, perché sei qua, come mai...?” [giovane inglese].”

20 From the original version: “[...] a San Cesario la probabilità di passare da un lato della città all’altro senza nessuno che... una macchina che suona, perché il cugino di qualcuno che... Non c’è niente di male con questo! È come è percepito da uno straniero da Londra. Mi vogliono bene, la gente, sono viziato, sono inglese che aiuta, sono bianco che aiuta. Io il razzismo che incontro è positivo [...]. Non è facile trattare l’altro in un modo assolutamente neutro: siamo positivi o negativi. Ovviamente siamo naturalmente razzisti in questo senso, se non sei esattamente come sono io, sei diverso, non posso evitare questo, siamo fatti così, difficile ma è così [giovane inglese].”

box, all painted, no! It's a plastic basket. [...] My brother-in-law teases me: "you are African, you are like Africans". [...] I have an ultra-charged bike, it has that aspect of Asia, of Africa, all on the same bike. This is seen, he is interested by the people born in San Cesario who ... then, when you said scruffy, I repeat, it made me smile, because I play a little deliberately, I am also a little protected, the fact that immediately I open my mouth and... [young Englishman]<sup>21</sup>.

As an Englishman and culturally-equipped to recognize stereotypes, in a small southern community he can play and have fun mocking the attitude of the natives. But he can do it, because the English etiquette allows various degrees of freedom by means of which there is no danger of suffering from "negative racism".

A former councilor interviewed, speaking of the Senegalese, underlines some factors and brings out mechanisms with which racism is triggered and mechanisms with which to remedy it.

Our translation: [...] There was much more distrust right from the start, also because, with greater problems with the language, the Albanians who arrived here knew a little Italian anyway. The Senegalese boys who came directly from Africa, from Senegal, well, those who came after touring from other regions of Italy, knew a little Italian too, and had housing emergency problems, so dozens of them slept in a very small apartment, with difficult hygienic conditions, all this generated a lot of mistrust which, however, quite quickly we managed to completely defeat, also thanks to the fact that some of these Senegalese boys came from medium-high cultural backgrounds, so they were educated people [former male councilor]<sup>22</sup>.

21 From the original version: "Io... trasandato, io vado giro in modo che mi fa sembrare un poveraccio; non è una bici da corsa, c'è un cassetto di plastica, ho attaccato quelle ceste di plastica per la frutta: va benissimo sul portapacchi, perché posso buttare tutto: è comodissimo, ma è brutto! Non è una scatola di legno, tutto dipinto, no! È un cesto di plastica. [...] mio cognato, lui mi prende in giro: "sei africano, sei come africani". [...] io ho una bici ultracarica, ha quell'aspetto dell'Asia, dell'Africa, tutto sulla stessa bici. Questo è visto, è interessato dalle persone nate a San Cesario che... allora, quando hai detto trasandato, ripeto, mi ha fatto sorridere, perché io gioco un po' deliberatamente, anche sono un po' protetto, il fatto subito che apro la bocca e... [giovane inglese]".

22 From the original version: "[...] c'è stata molta più diffidenza da subito, anche perché, maggiori problemi con la lingua, gli albanesi arrivavano qui che comunque un po' l'italiano lo conoscevano. I ragazzi senegalesi che arrivavano direttamente dall'Africa, dal Senegal,

A second councilor interviewed, who was a woman with responsibility for culture, explores a particular aspect of racism on the basis of skin color:

Our translation: Keep in mind that many of them are forced to resort to these, let's say, more dilapidated houses for economic reasons. We are now talking about two particular cases, because they obviously have different economic possibilities. For the others [...] they are satisfied with this accommodation because they could not find anything else and the Italians take advantage of them, by renting them houses that they would never rent to other people and that they do not keep clean, etc.... it is a vicious circle. [the excuse is that] There is also this prejudice, that is, they do not care about housing [former female councilor]<sup>23</sup>.

Compared to the Albanians<sup>24</sup>, white Europeans who already knew the Italian language, Africans were (and are) too different, also because they experience living conditions that are more similar to animals than to men, as is usually said when you want to distance yourself from others.

What emerges during the interview is also the varied phenomenality of foreign immigration in San Cesario: in fact, in the face of the establishment of an association of foreigners, due to the culture and activism of two young Senegalese as we have seen, the rest of the foreigners disappear into individualism, they either have no interest in participating in institutional life or remain closed in their own family clan.

niente, chi veniva avendo fatto un giro da altre regioni d'Italia, veramente molto poco, e avevano problemi di emergenza abitativa, per cui dormivano in decine all'interno di un appartamento molto piccolo, condizioni igieniche difficili, tutto questo ha generato molta diffidenza, diffidenza che però, poi, abbastanza velocemente si è riusciti a sconfiggere del tutto, anche grazie al fatto che alcuni di questi ragazzi senegalesi venivano da contesti culturali medio-alti, per cui era gente scolarizzata [ex assessore uomo]”.

23 From the original version: “Tenga conto che molti di loro sono costretti a ricorrere a queste abitazioni, diciamo, più fatiscenti per motivi economici Noi parliamo adesso di due casi particolari, perché hanno evidentemente possibilità economiche diverse. Per gli altri [...] si accontentano di questa sistemazione perché non potrebbero trovare altro e gli italiani approfittano, affittando loro abitazioni che non affitterebbero mai ad altre persone e che non mantengono eccetera... è un circolo vizioso. [la scusa è che] C'è anche questo pregiudizio, cioè che loro non tengono alle abitazioni [ex assessore donna]”.

24 The Albanian couple has always described the positive attitude of the Italians: [interviewer: *The first contacts with the Italians, however, as soon as you arrived? What feeling did you get?*] [Wife] *Beautiful, kind, very kind, polite ... still, for the Italians ... Of course, there are also people we came across in situations ... but it's normal, so we made it through because I think it is normal.*

Only the Senegalese community has created an association and interacts in a compact way. It involved the Moroccan community [...]; the other communities, as I said before, the Albanian one has totally integrated into the territory [...] it has also lost much of its original identity; the Chinese one has a life of its own, as does the Pakistani one; the others have such low numbers that they do not [...] move in a unitary manner, relating to others... often they do not. For example, we have a rather large presence of Romanian and Polish women who come here to work as caregivers: there is a very frequent shift... they stay two, three, six months maximum, after which they leave; we do not know if they go back home or change place of work; often, then, the person they work for dies or does not feel well, so they do not even have the will, the interest in dealing with institutions, associations or the social context [former male councilor]<sup>25</sup>.

The fluidity of the foreign presence is very perceptible and nourishes that obscure number of presences on the Italian territory; most foreigners would reside less than a year, so they represent ghosts for social integration mechanisms. For those who reside for a long time, the meeting with the natives takes place in the typical places of the small community of San Cesario:

The exchange between citizens of San Cesario and migrants occurs mostly in daily commercial activities: therefore, in the delicatessen, in the bar, in the bakery. Then [...] there are quite frequent moments of meeting which are, in fact, sporting activities: many of them attend sports associations that organize a Sunday football competition, running competitions, rather than other activities. And school is an important

25 From the original version: "Soltanto la comunità senegalese ha creato un'associazione e interagisce in maniera compatta. Ha coinvolto la comunità marocchina [...]; le altre comunità, come dicevo prima, quella albanese si è totalmente inserita nel territorio [...] ha perso anche molto della propria identità originaria; quella cinese fa vita a sé, così come quella pakistana; le altre hanno numeri talmente bassi che non [...] si muovono in maniera unitaria, rapportandosi agli altri... spesso non lo fanno. Per esempio noi abbiamo una presenza piuttosto cospicua di donne rumene e polacche che vengono qua a fare le badanti: c'è una turnazione molto frequente... stanno due, tre, sei mesi massimo, dopodiché vanno via; non sappiamo se tornano in patria o cambiano luogo di lavoro; spesso, poi, la persona presso cui lavorano muore o non si trovano bene, per cui non hanno neanche la volontà, l'interesse di rapportarsi con le istituzioni, con le realtà associative o il contesto sociale [ex assessore uomo]".

meeting point, where they find themselves in contact with other parents [former male councilor]<sup>26</sup>.

Personal culture, places and social spaces, modest community dimensions, associative and political sensitivity were important ingredients for some ethnic groups to be able to fit in and integrate, despite the difficulties in the economic sphere linked to the search for a job.

It certainly cannot be said that other ethnic groups have not integrated or have done so less than Senegalese, Tunisians and Moroccans: if the socio-cultural imprint of our society is “individualistic” (Giddens, 1995; Bauman, 2001) or in some cases there is closure in family or parental circles and distrust of the “white-Italian” neighbor, one should not be surprised if the foreign immigrant lives separated from the rest of the community and does not participate in the institutional life of the town. This argument is even more valid, considering the fact that there are insufficient spaces and social opportunities that allow and institutionalize the encounter between natives and immigrants; there is no shortage of associations, but there are no cultural humus and adequate resources that allow the few existing associations to work consistently to build stable community social relations, suitable for facilitating the adequate integration of newcomers.

#### 4. Perception of the self and the other between lives and gender relations

Before the field survey and analysis, it was well worth having a reference framework on the structural conditions which affect the relationship between men and women in San Cesario di Lecce.

26 From the original version: “Lo scambio tra cittadini di San Cesario e migranti avviene per lo più nelle attività commerciali quotidiane: quindi nella salumeria, nel bar, nella panetteria, nel forno. Poi [...] ci sono dei momenti d’incontro piuttosto frequenti che sono, appunto, le attività sportive: molti di loro frequentano associazioni sportive che fanno la gara domenicale di calcio, di corsa, piuttosto che di altre attività. E la scuola è un momento d’incontro importante, dove loro si trovano a rapportarsi con altri genitori (ex assessore uomo)”.

#### 4.1 Socio-demographic framework and theoretical reflections

The average age of women is slightly higher than that of men and this tends to be natural. There is a decrease in births and therefore fewer women (one in five in 2018) with children under 5. Furthermore, there is a better situation on the labor market than the Apulian average (employment rate: 30.1% vs. 25.8%), although it is below the Italian average. The positive figure is the growth in the female employment rate in San Cesario.

Facing the cultural aspect, from the short historical account as well as more clearly from the interviews, a situation emerges that is not strictly in line with the slow economic emancipation of women.

Even if the Municipality is a few kilometers from an international tourist city (Lecce), it is affected by the influence of the nearby University with residents working at various public institutions even at high levels, it does not seem that the community culture of San Cesario has benefited from it in terms of cultural renewal compared to the traditional way of understanding identity and gender relationship.

Indicator	1991	2001	2011
Male employment rate	46,9	48,9	52,9
Female employment rate	19,6	23,9	30,1
Male/Female Independent Employee Ratio	148,8	166,4	158,4
	<b>S. Cesario</b>	<b>Puglia</b>	<b>Italy</b>
Male employment rate	52,9	50,2	54,8
Female employment rate	30,1	25,8	36,1
Male/Female Independent Employee Ratio	158,4	155,5	161,1

Table 3a. Employment market in San Cesario di Lecce (Istat, 2011)

The beginning of the interview with the expert, a sociologist from the University of Salento, partly backs up what has now been stated and offers a clear picture of the experience of women in our communities:

Our translation: Meanwhile, the Salento family has never changed. When we talk about Salento we say autochthonous. There is a very large family structure. [...] The new couples rely on their parents, they rely

on their brothers and sisters, but also [...] on their uncles, because they are relatively close relatives and often live nearby. Especially this can be seen in small towns. Lecce is a bit different, but it doesn't change that much. Also because the Salento always has this family around, despite the fact that there are also relationships that are a bit frayed if we want, but in fact, we always rely heavily on the extended family [Sociologist]<sup>27</sup>.

In short, the parental circle is the island on which to take refuge in order to combat insecurity, mistrust, fear of foreigners and of society as a whole, represented by the neighbor, the institutions, the colleague or superior at work, etc. Parental closure is also due to issues of practical necessity, which however derives from a post-modern structural situation, i.e. the woman's work commitment:

Our translation: This reliance is dictated by the fact that both components work within the couple and therefore rely on each other for two reasons: the first is linked to the care of the children if any, the other is linked to real economic support. And the structure has never changed for this very reason, because if before it was the young man who cared about the older person and contributed to the heritage and economy of the family of origin, today with the chosen family everything becomes completely different in terms of quality and motivations of the relationship. "It is useful to maintain good relationships because they are useful to me" [Sociologist]<sup>28</sup>.

Within this social framework, the status of women is better understood: family and care, as we will see, are still the issues from which to start, because

27 From the original version: "Intanto la famiglia salentina non è mai cambiata. Quando parliamo di salentina diciamo autoctona. Esiste una struttura familiare molto allargata. [...] le nuove coppie si affidano ai genitori, si affidano ai fratelli e alle sorelle, ma anche [...] agli zii, perché sono parenti abbastanza vicini e spesso vivono nei dintorni. Soprattutto questo si può notare nei piccoli centri. Lecce è un po' differente, ma non cambia poi di molto. Anche perché il salentino ha sempre questa famiglia intorno, nonostante poi ci siano delle relazioni anche un po' sfilacciate se vogliamo, ma di fatto si conta sempre molto sulla famiglia allargata [Sociologa]".

28 From the original version: "Questo affidarsi è dettato dal fatto che all'interno della coppia entrambi i componenti lavorano e quindi ci si affida per due ordini di ragioni: il primo è legato all'accudimento dei figli lì dove sono presenti, l'altro è legato al sostegno economico vero e proprio. E la struttura non è mai cambiata in ragione proprio di questo, perché se prima era il giovane che pensava alla persona più anziana e contribuiva al patrimonio e all'economia della famiglia di origine, oggi con la famiglia di elezione diventa tutto completamente differente in termini di qualità e motivazioni della relazione. "È utile mantenere buoni rapporti perché mi possono servire" [sociologa]".



although the labor market has opened up more to women, the corresponding welfare has remained linked to privilege of the *pater familias*.

From the sociologist's analysis a chaotic situation emerges, where on a traditional and traditionalist basis a mixture is created between the modern and the ancient, which is the very essence of late modern society: from globalization, from turbo-capitalism and from rapid socio-political changes a need for community, "intimate" ties, security and a "slow" temporality emerges.

Among the uncertainties we have the family structure of young couples. The "Salento" couple relies heavily on the family of origin in economic and functional terms due to the functional overload following the conciliation between working time, whose income is not enough, and the time of the children.

However, there is a new trend: new couples are generally younger than in the past, they form a couple earlier than a few years ago, because cohabitation is much more widespread and "lawful", and because of an initially very intense emotional involvement. They often prefer to live in the home of the family of origin of one of the two. In fact, we often have cohabitation and in many cases also children.

Our translation: The problem is that it does not turn into a traditional family: it often remains a de facto couple. On the other hand, many young people between the ages of 25 and 27 form a family with a very traditional marriage, immediately followed by a child, the purchase of a house. But there are parents behind them who support them a lot and that is why the children then begin to live together, despite the fact that work is not yet present. However, even if there is no stable job for either of them, if at the beginning the boys were waiting for work – and let's say it was a bit of a deterrent to getting married – today this is completely overcome by this coexistence. People who decide to get married still think of a job which enables them to make ends meet; but those who constitute a de facto family often do not have this thought, because they cling to their families of origin [Sociologist]<sup>29</sup>.

29 From the original version: "Il problema è che non si trasforma in una famiglia tradizionale: spesso rimane una coppia di fatto. Molti giovani invece tra i 25 ed i 27 anni fanno famiglia con tanto di matrimonio molto tradizionale, immediatamente un figlio, l'acquisto della casa. Ma ci sono i genitori alle spalle che sostengono moltissimo ed è per questo che i ragazzi poi iniziano a vivere insieme, nonostante non sia presente ancora il lavoro. Ma anche se non c'è lavoro stabile per entrambi, se all'inizio i ragazzi aspettavano il lavoro – e diciamo che era un po' il deterrente a sposarsi – oggi questo viene completamente superato attraverso

Moreover, the expert adds that girls, even if married, are very attached to their mothers and to a certain male-dominated cultural custom, which is most noticeable when they get divorced or become widows:

Our translation: The single woman relies on her family of origin. There is always this interest, because it is still experienced by women as the search for love. No longer because it is unseemly to be a single mother, it is no longer this, the motivation behind her 'not being single' has changed. And the woman is still looking for love. Especially those who have had a totally unsuccessful first experience. The woman is always looking for great love, always, despite a separated woman having experienced violence, perhaps physical, psychological, a wrong marriage or whatever; despite the fact that she can tell you "I don't want to ... never again... another husband, a person, I am fine alone with my children"; she is always looking for love, always. [...] the young widows no longer think of another man in their family. Not even a relationship. [...] the only goal is perhaps to experience stories outside the family, but never bring another man back into the family. [...] the young widow does not let anyone into the house<sup>30</sup>.

Furthermore, the woman of the South, especially in small towns, is still linked to her role of care: while men, says the expert, are increasingly adapting to house-keeping roles, it is the woman who still feels in fault, if she does not do more than their partners and tries to take away as many domestic commitments as possible. This mainly concerns the care of children, whereas for

questa convivenza. Le persone che decidono di sposarsi, di fare un matrimonio, hanno ancora il pensiero di un lavoro per potersi mantenere; ma chi costituisce una famiglia di fatto spesso non ha questo pensiero, perché si aggrappa alle famiglie di origine [sociologa].

- 30 From the original version: "La donna sola si appoggia alla famiglia di origine. Esiste sempre questo interesse, perché è vissuto dalle donne come ancora la ricerca dell'amore. Non più perché è disdicevole essere una madre sola, non è più questo, è cambiata la motivazione che sottende questo non rimanere soli. E la donna è ancora alla ricerca dell'amore. Soprattutto chi ha avuto una prima esperienza totalmente fallimentare. La donna è sempre alla ricerca del grande amore, sempre, nonostante una donna separata che ha vissuto magari una violenza, se non fisica, psicologica, un matrimonio sbagliato o quant'altro, nonostante ti dica "non voglio più...mai sia...un altro marito, una persona, io da sola con i miei figli sto benissimo"; è sempre alla ricerca dell'amore, sempre. [...] le giovani vedove non pensano più ad un altro uomo all'interno della loro famiglia. Ma neanche ad una relazione. [...] l'unico obiettivo è magari vivere delle storie all'esterno della famiglia, ma mai riportare un altro uomo all'interno della famiglia. [...] la vedova giovane non fa entrare nessuno in casa".

the other tasks we are moving towards the equitable distribution of commitment.

Our translation: The indicators of gender differentiation become clearer when the education of minors is observed: male children are stimulated towards physical and aggressive sports such as football and martial arts; girls have to do those sports that grace the movement and refine the body such as dance, etc .. There is less pressure for housework education, but the difference is noticed when children are involved in these kinds of commitments: in fact, the one who has to take the shopping home and help the parents to take the shopping home is the boy, the one who has to set the table is the girl [Sociologist]<sup>31</sup>.

The male-centered culture also emerges in the relationships among teenagers. Even in the communities of Lecce, girls experience their sexual sphere early and this in two senses: anticipation of menarche at around 10-11 and sexual experience at around 13-14. Girls see themselves precocious, they feel they have to be precocious even sexually, also because they are driven by so many media and social stimuli, as well as by the easy possibility of accessing pornographic sites, as much as boys. The latter exploit this female “availability”, but the relationship is not egalitarian: they are 17-18 year-olds and in addition to having the opportunity to win the hearts of younger girls and, as they say in our country, grow them until they feel like it. However, this relational style-opportunity often has undesirable effects for both partners:

Our translation: The slightly older boy creates an addiction towards the girl [...] she is educated in practices which are also outside the chronological age and out of awareness ... with respect to sexuality, but also with respect to building a more stable relationship. The little girls then at some point realize that they need to have more experience, more life experience in general. If the boy, who is instead older, wants to stabilize the relationship with what was once a girl, then these girls, who have

31 From the original version: “Gli indicatori di differenziazione di genere si fanno più chiari, quando si osserva l’educazione dei minori; i figli maschi vengono stimolati verso sport fisici e aggressivi come il calcio e le arti marziali; le bambine devono fare quegli sport che aggraziano il movimento e raffinano il corpo come la danza, ecc.. C’è meno pressione per l’educazione ai lavori domestici, ma la differenza si nota quando i bambini vengono coinvolti in questo genere di impegni: di fatto chi deve salire la spesa e aiutare i genitori a salire la spesa è il maschietto, chi deve apparecchiare è la femminuccia [sociologa]”.

become a little more women, want to live their own experience. And there is this strong contrast between male and female and a desire for redemption on the part of the girl who strongly wants to get out of this relationship. We are between 18 and 20 years old. Many girls acquire this awareness of wanting to live other experiences and are instead stuck in this relationship. And then the possessiveness arises on the part of the boy. In this sense it is very present, very widespread. Very typical of Salento. You come across it in small towns, in small realities [sociologist]<sup>32</sup>.

Women's emancipation is not found even in politics: certainly there are more women, but they take on administrative roles and the council powers are almost always linked to care (see the Department of Social Services) or to culture. And on the other hand, the etiquette of a woman, who comes forward in politics or at work, is negative, she is seen as "badass", a term with an etymology that clearly refers to the male.

The expert's analysis offered us a general framework, which allows us to better contextualize the gender issue. A starting point is to avoid the theories of the classics – as the scholars of the subject and the activists of the feminist movement claim – full of male-dominated preconceptions, to address instead the sociological theories of contemporary society, in which there is already a critical awareness of the studies on identity and gender relations and also for the fact that physiologically place this reflection in that of today's society. The various leading scholars of current modernity – Bauman, Beck, Bourdieu, Giddens, Maffesoli and Touraine – have highlighted a relationship of mutual influence between the cultural and structural identity of contemporaneity and the active and argued self-awareness of the feminist intellectual and political

32 From the original version: "Il ragazzo un po' più grande crea una dipendenza nei confronti della ragazzina [...] la si educa a pratiche che sono fuori anche dall'età anagrafica e fuori dalla consapevolezza... rispetto alla sessualità, ma poi anche rispetto alla costruzione di una relazione più stabile. Le ragazzine poi ad un certo punto si rendono conto che hanno bisogno di fare più esperienze, più esperienze di vita in generale. Lì dove il ragazzo, che è invece più grande, vuole stabilizzare la relazione con quella che è stata una ragazzina, di fatto poi queste ragazzine, diventate un po' più donnette, vogliono vivere l'esperienza. E lì c'è questo forte contrasto tra maschio e femmina e una voglia di riscatto da parte della ragazza che con forza vuole uscire da questa relazione. Siamo tra i 18 e i 20 anni. Molte ragazze acquisiscono questa consapevolezza di voler vivere altre esperienze e sono invece chiuse in questa relazione. E lì scatta una possessività da parte del ragazzo. In questo senso è molto presente, molto diffusa. Del Salento è molto tipico. Lo vivi nei piccoli paesi, nelle piccole realtà [sociologa]".

movement. Beck, Giddens and Touraine include the transformations of sexuality, relationships and gender identity within the processes of increasing individualization of contemporary society; the rise and the overwhelming affirmation of female subjectivity marks the radicalization of the logic of modernity, first of all the individualization of the social actor. Specifically, Beck (1998) highlights the centrality of female subjectivity in various fields, starting from the economic one of the labor market and ending with family and intimate relationships. Giddens (1993) states that female subjectivity, which emerged in the 1960s, and the consequent changes in relational and sexual experiences are nothing more than a clear manifestation of the powerful process of reflexivity in the social actor, which is typical of “radical” modernity. Touraine (2006) makes women protagonists within the framework of the crisis of modernity: the feminist movement brings to the fore the universality of the right to “personal, sexual, gender” difference, thus opposing the logic of the global domination of the capitalist male-chauvinist thought. Bauman (2003) places female subjectivity as the protagonist of a tragic vision of social relations in contemporary society: if in earlier modernity, the solid one, we speak of the relationship between woman and “man without qualities”, in current modernity, the liquid one, the same relationships are unstable, because the social actors are highly individualized in the continuous search for enjoyment and personal satisfaction and for an increasingly impossible achievement of emotional security. As a consequence, sexuality, identity and gender relations are epiphenomena of the new human condition: loneliness.

Maffesoli (1990) feels the same way, because he places the dissolution of modernity at the center of his reflection: starting from the 1960s, the struggle between “archaic” and technology has subverted the forms of everyday life and consequently the fabric still persistent in modern society. After the long hegemony of Promethean forces (rational, energetic, and linked to production and individual utilitarianism), the manifestations of the Dionysian (the obscure, the transgressive, the passionate and orgiastic wanderings) emerge overwhelmingly; in the face of a linear and progressive time and history (marked by the morality of having to be), the ethical immoralism of obscenity and libertinism, therefore of the eternal return, is opposed. Against the anguish of death and loneliness, orgasm opposes the union of bodies, of erotic communism. In all this we are witnessing the explosion of tribal sexuality and not the centrality of woman, but of the archetypal manifestation of the feminine, which at this point is observable in all subjects, as individually and collectively taken: the return of the cult of the Magna Mater, of the Earth, of Life, whose tribal cults preceded the universalism of a single God and his avatar, the intellect. The dis-

course on women is to be included, following Maffesoli, within a society in which there is a tendency towards “Tribalism”, through which the individual reacts to the alienation and loneliness (as a global citizen) of a rationally-organized world, rediscovering the community: the affective prevails over the cognitive, the imaginary over calculation, the relational over the rational, the group over the individual, the local over the global. And in this we find the considerations of the interviewed expert, when she affirmed the importance of the family group with respect to the couple relationship. Man is also overwhelmed by all this, whose masculine characteristics even less contribute to the advantage of archetypal feminine manifestations and needs (Zolla, 1997; Bolen, 1989; Id, 1984). This does not seem to be favorable to the woman herself, who if once had the possibility of constructing her self-image and roles “by contrast” or “in complementarity” to being “male”, today – as the French author states – witnesses the chaotic coincidence of male and female, of rational and emotional, of concealment of the intimate and theatricality of sentiment, etc.

For Bourdieu (1998) the demands of modernity are still strong, which through its social structures, especially the class distinction, permeates all daily practices including the construction and affirmation of the self. The West is still strongly characterized by a predominantly male and patriarchal system represented by financial capitalism: it is one-sided, based above all on rationality and scarcely willing to accept the more inner and emotional aspect, which is typically female. There is no openness to the other and the conflict between differences, even between male and female, is harsh. The same male / female dichotomy is only one of the false forms of naturalization of the social order, which all conceal the power relations within society: the cultural and legal construction of being a woman is only an example of symbolic violence, a subjugating manipulation through which the victims internalize and consider their subordination to power of a masculine nature normal and in some cases (we will see it in some interviews), in a more profound way, they value the masculine, identifying with it and suffocating every element of femininity.

Sociology itself was configured as a strongly masculine discipline; in fact, the cultural period in which it arose was positivism, which has always celebrated the triumph of the rational, of the overbearing affirmation of oneself and of scientific and technological culture over nature, of the ‘having-to-be’ over the aesthetics of vital enjoyment. However, the prerequisites for a different perspective were there: Mary Wollstonecraft (1997), an attentive observer of English and French everyday life, elaborated an analytical and even forecasting thought on the dynamics of power in the man-woman relationship, developing a pedagogy of gender differences. Especially in the middle of the last century,

the history of sociological thought would be reviewed in women, for example, with Hannah Arendt and Simone de Beauvoir. According to Arendt, acting defines the human being as “being-with-others” and human identity is constituted in the intimacy of the subjective conscience and not in society understood as a sphere of needs, work and reproduction (Arendt, 1958); in all this the importance of differences and the enhancement of diversity of thought and existential return once again. With Simone de Beauvoir responsibility-taking of what one is, of what one wants or must be is accentuated; she starts from the distinction between existence (coming into the world without choice) and essence (what can be changed through free will). We can face the facts of existence (part of the world in which we were born, family, economic and cultural capital) in two ways: by accepting the world as it is or by designing and modifying it. In this way, everyone’s life is a consequence of their personal way of dealing with what we consider as given once and for all. This reflection is the basis of her best-known work “*Le Deuxième Sexe*” (1949), in which she highlights the cultural and manipulative violence that has made women a subject perpetually subordinate to men.

Little considered until the 1970s, Virginia Woolf wrote two important works, the former (*A room of One’s Own*, 1984) focuses on the need for women to have free access to the cultural world and to a comprehensive education, while the attempt to deconstruct the patriarchal language is revolutionary; in the latter (*Three Guineas*, 1995) she points to the areas in which action must be taken to achieve substantial equality between men and women: work, education, education for intimate roles, relationships.

The theories of contemporary society, to which reference has been made, do not have studies and reflections centered on gender; its forms are framed as manifestations of current global social processes. However, this choice is useful for having different general theoretical frameworks within which to deepen the specific aspects of gender identity and relevant relationships.

## 4.2 Analysis of the interviews

From the interview with the sociologist of the University of Salento and from the reflection of contemporary theorists, a certain consistency emerged in the indicators that make it possible to clarify the condition of women in the Salento communities. These indicators are backed up by interviews with privileged witnesses. Among the interviewees, a former female councilor reported the existence of an Equal Opportunities Commission, committed to education and

cultural awareness of the gender relationship. She boasts the achievement of equality among municipal employees, social campaigns in the various municipalities on the issues of violence against women and the general relationship between men and women, pointing to socialization and gender stereotypes even in children; in the latter case, schools and some psychologists were also involved. Former politics admits the fact that the male cultural heritage is hard to disappear:

Our translation: So many [...] legacies are still present in the generations of mothers. My mom still thinks, even if she doesn't say it, that "it is unseemly for him to iron his own shirts", but that I should do it. [...] But the tragedy is that even the daughters, therefore my peers, still think this. Maybe they don't think so, but they still feel they have to take care of family and home as well as parents and I fear that the new generations ... what we were thinking about ... is that the struggle for feminism has stopped, but also the discussion around these issues, in a certain sense, in the new generations [...] Twenty and eighteen year olds do not continue this path, and what is worse, I fear that we are returning to what was the female mentality of the past like. I see girls, my pupils, who still have a kind of... I don't mean they feel inferior to boys, but I don't know if they feel equal. Obviously not all of them. The perception that some things I have seen and heard about my pupils... they don't have... they don't decide, they make you decide. For example, decisions are made by the opposite sex, or they even tell them how they should dress. I've heard cases of jealousy, so she doesn't want me to wear a miniskirt; consequently, also in boys, I believe that there is this type of mentality [former female councilor and teacher]<sup>33</sup>.

33 From the original version: "Retaggi tanti [...] questi retaggi sono ancora presenti nelle generazioni delle mamme. Mia mamma pensa ancora, anche se non lo dice, che "è sconveniente che si stiri le camicie", ma che debba farlo io. [...] ma il dramma è che anche le figlie, quindi mie coetanee, pensino ancora questo. Magari non lo pensano, però sentono ancora di dover prendere loro in carico la cura familiare e della casa oltre che dei genitori e temo che le nuove generazioni... quello di cui riflettevamo... è che la lotta per il femminismo si è fermata, ma anche la discussione attorno a questi temi, in un certo senso, nelle nuove generazioni non c'è. [...] Le ventenni, le diciottenni non continuano questo percorso, e quel che è peggio temo che si stia ritornando a quella che era la mentalità femminile del passato. Io vedo ragazze, mie alunne, che hanno ancora nei confronti del ragazzo hanno ancora una specie di... non voglio dire che si sentano inferiori, però non so se si sentano pari. Ovviamente non tutte. La percezione che alcune cose che ho visto e sentito di mie alunne... non hanno... non decidono, fanno decidere. Per esempio, le decisioni le fanno prendere all'altro sesso, oppure, addirittura dicono ancora come si devono vestire. Ho sen-



The awe of the girl towards her boyfriend translates as adults into relationships in which the husband becomes almost a moral authority on the behavior to be held. This is reflected, the interviewee wants to specify, even in politics, where the element that most distinguishes the male appetite, i.e. power, and the woman is put on the sidelines, at most giving her a role that confirms her inferior social status:

Our translation: Politics tends to belittle women, to relegate them to roles and spheres of lesser impact, to belittle them with various methods, subtle, that's it. This is my experience and unfortunately the consequence is in self-esteem, in the sense that the woman never feels ready to make the leap in quality. In San Cesario there has never been a female mayor, group leader. The woman is also seen in politics as a rarity and also as someone to be kept under control because she does not let herself be governed [former female councilor and teacher]<sup>34</sup>.

Women in politics are few also due to the internalization-justification of the values that place them in a status of subordination.

Our translation: Many women don't apply because they don't have time. They have to take care of the house, etc. [...] the woman is afraid of not being able to carry out any political activity, she is afraid of not being able, she is afraid of not being elected, she is afraid of competing with other women and this is to our detriment. Our fault, because there is still rivalry, [...] there is much more rivalry between women and women do not vote for women, unfortunately; I have seen it on my skin and this is still a male chauvinist mentality in all contexts: work, politics, home, daily life, in relationships with spouses [former female councilor and teacher]<sup>35</sup>.

tito casi di gelosia, per cui non vuole che metta la minigonna; di conseguenza anche nei ragazzi, credo che ci sia questo tipo di mentalità [ex assessore e insegnante, donna]”.

34 From the original version: “La politica tende a sminuire la donna, relegarla in ruoli e ambiti di minore incidenza, sminuire con vari metodi, subdoli, ecco. Questa è la mia esperienza e purtroppo la conseguenza è nell'autostima, nel senso che poi la donna non si sente mai pronta per fare il salto di qualità. A San Cesario non c'è stata mai una donna sindaco, capogruppo. La donna è vista anche in politica come una rarità e anche come da tenere sotto controllo perché non si fa governare [ex assessore e insegnante, donna]”.

35 From the original version: “Molte donne non si candidano perché non hanno tempo. Devono prendersi cura della casa, ecc. [...] la donna teme di non riuscire a svolgere l'attività politica, teme di non essere capace, teme di non essere eletta, teme di competere con le altre

In this excerpt of the interview, many elements belonging to the cultural universe of gender discrimination emerge: overload of roles (therefore functional), low self-esteem, not competing, frustrating rivalry (physiological for the man), lack of complicity between women. In this the picture drawn by Bourdieu emerges fully; it is found even more in the proud words of another female interviewee who seems to incorporate the male ideal of contemporary capitalist society. She has chosen to give value to femininity and to women, excluding men from a typically-masculine place, as a space devoted to physical strength and often a place of “sexual hunting”, i.e. the gym:

Our translation: [...] the woman, being in an environment of women and children, feels calmer, safer, more protected, less “spied on”. For the reasons I told you earlier, the gym environment is often associated with meeting people, perhaps approaching, finding a girlfriend, a boyfriend, an alternative situation. It happens as in all other environments. Being an environment of leisure, of freedom, perhaps this aspect is a little more accentuated. Here it is not at all [gym owner]<sup>36</sup>.

As can be seen (and will be noticed later), the woman assumes a typically male protective role towards the others: she takes away from them any annoying or dangerous incursion by men. She specifies that the age group that feels calmer and less exposed to male gaze is the one of married women, therefore generally aged 40 and over. Also because, the interviewee says, women in their country generally depend a lot on the male gaze, on his judgment, influencing many daily activities and those little freedoms that make life lighter, e.g. going to a bar alone:

donne e questo va a nostro discapito. Una colpa nostra, perché c'è ancora rivalità, [...] c'è molta più rivalità tra le donne e le donne non votano le donne, purtroppo; l'ho visto sulla mia pelle e questa è ancora una mentalità maschilista presente un po' in tutti gli ambiti: lavorativo, politico, della casa, della vita quotidiana, nei rapporti con i coniugi (ex assessore e insegnante, donna)”.

36 From the original version: “[...] la donna, stando in un ambiente di donne e bambini, si sente più tranquilla, più sicura, più protetta, meno “spiata”. Per il discorso che ti dicevo prima, l'ambiente palestra spesso viene associato al conoscere persone, magari abbordare, trovare la ragazza, il ragazzo, la situazione alternativa. Avviene come in tutti gli altri ambienti. Essendo ambiente di svago, di libertà, forse questo aspetto è un pochino più accentuato. Qui non lo è per niente (proprietaria palestra)”.

Our translation: There is a very narrow mentality. Even the fact of going to the bar, having a coffee, they look at you [...]. They have assimilated this behavior. And so for them, going to the bar automatically means putting themselves in a bad light. The other day I met a friend at the cashier and paid for the coffee, simply for pleasure as usual. If you meet someone you haven't seen for a long time, you greet them and offer them coffee. It is an attitude that women may expect from men. It is not so. And it's in the female mentality [gym owner]<sup>37</sup>.

This is confirmed by a German immigrant interviewee who admits:

Our translation: There is a difference between men and women here. The women are at home, the others are out or going out and this is also a difference, it seems to me; which were a surprise to others that we also do the cleaning work together. I think young people are different ... There is a big difference, it seems to me so, young Italian people are less religious, they are more open, they are more like us [laughs] [German woman]<sup>38</sup>.

Dependence on men, as the interviewee accuses, can also be found in the choice of what to do in life, limiting one's personality to the sole role of wife/mother:

Our translation: The thing that makes me laugh is when they say "but when do you settle down?". What does it mean? In the meantime, you have to explain to me what 'settle down' means. Then I am settled from my point of view. For them, it's not normal that a woman who lives alone and is with her partner does not live together with him. Or that she doesn't

37 From the original version: "C'è una mentalità molto ristretta. Anche il discorso di andare al bar, prendere il caffè, ti guardano [...]. Hanno assimilato questo comportamento. E quindi in automatico per loro andare nel bar è mettersi in cattiva luce. Io l'altro giorno ho incontrato un amico alla cassa e ho pagato il caffè, come si usa fare per piacere. Se tu incontri una persona che non vedi da tanto, la saluti e le offri il caffè. È un atteggiamento che magari la donna si aspetta dall'uomo. Non è così. Ed è nella mentalità femminile (proprietaria palestra)".

38 From the original version: "C'è una differenza tra uomini e donne qui. Le donne sono a casa, gli altri sono fuori o vanno fuori e questo è anche una differenza, mi sembra; che erano una sorpresa per altre che anche noi facciamo insieme il lavoro di pulizia insieme. Io penso le persone giovane sono differente... C'è una differenza grande, mi sembra così, le persone italiane giovane sono meno religioso, sono più aperto, sono più come noi [ride] [donna tedesca]".

get married. So he says ‘when do you settle down?’. ‘Look, I’m very well settled down’. But there is this mentality. And it is the woman who carries on this mentality. I hear this from women, not men! The other day a girl said to me “eh when are you getting married?”, I say “Why?”, “No so let’s have a party”. So they still have this mentality [gym owner]<sup>39</sup>.

In this discourse there is all the revenge of those who want to fight typically-modern individualism, the dependence of women on men, in favor of her being there “despite” her status of single, her value for what she really is and not for what she depends on and for the person she lives with. The conflict against this way of thinking about women, that is, valued if married, takes on the traits of a religious conflict because, as the interviewee continues, much in the country depends on a Catholic culture. In this case that subjectivity emerges overwhelmingly, and is the result of the radicalization of post-modern individualism tackled by Giddens, Beck and Touraine.

Our translation: The church is still deeply rooted, the believing. I cannot freely express my thoughts. Consider that here I speak in a work environment, so I also have to be a little careful about how I express myself so as not to offend the sensitivity of someone who may not renew my subscription tomorrow, because s/he thinks for example that I am an atheist and s/he is not coming here because maybe I can be an atheist. So, here I control myself, even if sometimes I can’t. There is also the religious factor, it is very strong, rooted in the country [...] [during the] Christmas period here the attendance is halved, even for children, because they go to choirs. I am shocked. Or they tell me: ‘Manuela I am suspending my subscription because my son has to receive communion’. So what? And maybe they don’t come for 15 days because in 15 days the child will have his/her first communion or confirmation [gym owner]<sup>40</sup>.

39 From the original version: “La cosa che a me fa ridere è quando mi dicono “ma quando ti sistemi?”. Cosa vuol dire? Intanto mi devi spiegare cosa vuol dire ‘ti sistemi’. Poi io sono sistemata dal mio punto di vista. Per loro una donna che vive da sola ed è con il compagno non è normale che non conviva. O che non si sposi. Quindi dice ‘quando ti sistemi?’. ‘Guarda io sono sistemattissima’. Però c’è questa mentalità. Ed è la donna che porta avanti questa mentalità. Io dalle donne mi sento dire questo, non dagli uomini! L’altro giorno una ragazza mi fa “eh quando ti sposi?”, dico “Perché?”, “No così facciamo una festa”. Quindi hanno ancora radicata questa mentalità [proprietaria palestra]”.

40 From the original version: “È molto radicata ancora la chiesa, il credere. Io non posso liberamente esprimere i miei pensieri. Considera che io qui parlo in un ambiente lavorativo, quindi devo anche stare un pochino attenta a come mi esprimo per non urtare la sensibilità

The woman's words also reveal the discomfort of those who have become aware that in today's society the social value of a person depends exclusively on their ability to be economically autonomous. If once the woman was worth within the family, now – like men – she wants to assert herself as a leader in an economic system based on production and consumption:

Our translation: On the other hand, you establish yourself within society based on the job you have. You acquire significant value within society based on the job you have and the culture you have. If you are a housewife, unfortunately on a social level you will not have a value, a weight. That is, you can have it within your family environment, but you stay there, in your square meter. I really know people who have never left San Cesario [gym owner]<sup>41</sup>.

From these considerations, the unique perspective of capitalism emerges even more, and is well internalized by the interviewee – especially when, on the basis of the principle “work first”, it denies a woman the possibility of having the desire and the possibility of giving birth to a child without the risk of losing her job. And this denial, which has nothing to do with feminism, escapes our combative feminist:

Our translation: If I have to take a girl to work and I know that in the short term she has a marriage plan and in any case that she is going to have children, I ask myself the question. If today I take a girl, I do an hourly schedule, I entrust her with 50% of the hours, then we talk about fitness, then movement ... and this one here in two weeks tells me “I'm

di una persona che domani magari non mi rinnova un abbonamento, perché pensa per esempio che io sia atea e lei non viene qua perché magari io posso essere atea. Quindi, qui io mi controllo, anche se a volte non ci riesco. C'è il condizionamento anche della religione, è fortissimo, radicato nel paese [...] [nel] periodo natalizio qui si dimezzano le presenze, anche dei bambini, perché vanno ai cori. Io rimango scioccata. Oppure mi dicono: 'Manuela sospendo l'abbonamento perché mio figlio deve fare la comunione'. Quindi? E non vengono magari per 15 giorni perché il bambino tra 15 giorni avrà la comunione o la cre-sima [proprietaria palestra]”.

41 From the original version: “D'altronde, tu ti affermi nella società in base al lavoro che svolgi. Tu acquisti un valore di rilievo nella società in base al lavoro che svolgi e alla cultura che hai. Se tu sei una casalinga, purtroppo a livello sociale non avrai un valore, un peso. Cioè lo puoi avere all'interno della tua famiglia, però lì rimani, nel tuo metro quadrato. Io veramente conosco persone che non sono mai uscite da San Cesario [proprietaria palestra]”.

expecting a baby”, how do I carry out my work? It is not malice, it is not chauvinism, it is an entrepreneur doing the maths. So, if I leave today and she leaves me in two weeks, how can I deal with it? I am no longer covered, it is a working problem, really a practical one. So, when I started up my business, I also tried to understand, because I have a married lady, with a 2 year-old girl, she wants to have other children, I tried to understand “Are you abandoning me? Are you there? Shall we carry on the year? “, But not out of male chauvinism, precisely out of practicality [owner of the gym]<sup>42</sup>.

In short, this consideration – like many others – is the historical outcome of a culture of the “few”, the Bourgeois gentilhommes, which over the centuries becomes a structure, permeating all macro and micro social institutions, defining models of thought for all and of action suited to the former (Strazzeri, 2011). On the other hand, the acquisition of the symbolic capitalist universe still emerges, when the interviewee enhances a life devoted almost exclusively to work, frustrating the other spheres of everyday life, including health, leisure, even intimate relationships, etc.

Our translation: How many women are willing to wake up at 6 in the morning and go home at 11 in the evening and be filled with physical pain? The work I carry out is not easy. I open here at 9. Yesterday I did 6 hours of fitness... powerful fitness... plus the rest of the day in contact with people. When they leave at 9 I close and do the cleaning. I get home at 10 am I have a bad backache. Then a man may be able to have the strength to keep the pains and go on, because he has to support a family. How many women? That is, they say to me “But do you realize what you do from morning to night?”. How many people would be willing to do this? It's not easy. They cry ... today a girl has sent me a message: “I'm not

42 From the original version: “Se io devo prendere una ragazza a lavorare e so che lei nel breve termine ha un progetto matrimoniale e comunque di avere dei bambini, io la domanda me la faccio. Se io oggi prendo una ragazza, faccio un palinsesto orario, le affido il 50% delle ore, poi parliamo di fitness, quindi movimento...e questa qui tra due settimane mi dice “aspetto un bambino”, io il lavoro come lo porto avanti? Non è cattiveria, non è maschilismo, è da imprenditore farsi due conti. Allora, se io oggi parto e lei tra due settimane mi abbandona, io come faccio? Rimango scoperta, è un problema lavorativo, proprio pratico. Quindi, io quando ho aperto, ho cercato anche di capire, perché ho una ragazza sposata, con una bambina di 2 anni, ha voglia di avere altri figli, ho cercato di capire “Mi abbandoni? Ci sei? L'anno lo portiamo avanti?”, ma non per un maschilismo, proprio per una praticità lavorativa [proprietaria palestra]”.

coming, I have my period”; the world collapses on me and I say: “how? Hurry up, change and come to train “,” My stomach hurts “,” So what? Your stomachache passes”. They rock on certain aspects. If I didn’t have to work every time I have my period, I would never have opened. If I didn’t have to work every time my shoulder hurts or my back hurts, I wouldn’t open any day of the year. Every day with pain, with thoughts, with worries, with tiredness: you come, work, smile ... and then you collapse. As a man does. Do you know how much pain a bricklayer has? And yet he goes to work from morning to night. If I have a person who supports me and I am weak, I like to be supported and I justify myself with the fact that in the meantime I am raising my children<sup>43</sup>.

For the interviewee, there are no alternative ways, but a binary opposition between traditional, bigoted-Catholic life and a capitalist (consumerist-productive) concept: in the former case, home and family for women; in the latter, equality with man on the basis of an economic totalitarianism, which is however similar to the working conditions in the countries of the former Soviet bloc (Ili, 2001); as Lenin himself said: “I piccoli lavori domestici schiaffeggiano, strangolano, sgonfiano e degradano [la donna], le catene della cucina e del vivaio la sprecano in una barbarie improduttiva, con pettegolezzi, nervosismo e schiacciamento sociale” (Engel, 1987: 787)<sup>44</sup>.

43 From the original version: “Quante donne sono disposte a svegliarsi alle 6 del mattino e andare a casa alle 11 di sera e riempirsi di dolori fisici? Il lavoro che io faccio non è semplice. Io apro qua alle 9. Ieri mi sono fatta 6 ore di fitness...fitness potente...più tutto il resto della giornata a contatto con le persone. Quando vanno via alle 9 io chiudo e faccio le pulizie. Arrivo a casa alle 10 che ho mal di schiena. Allora un uomo magari riesce ad avere la forza di tenersi i dolori e andare avanti, perché deve mantenere una famiglia. Quante donne? Cioè a me lo dicono “Ma tu ti rendi conto di quello che fai dalla mattina alla sera?”. Quante persone sarebbero disposte a farlo? Non è facile. Si piangono...oggi una ragazza mi manda un messaggio: “Non vengo, ho il ciclo; mi crolla il mondo addosso e dico: “come? Sbrigati, cambiati e vieni ad allenarti”, “Mi fa male la pancia”, “E quindi? Ti passa il mal di pancia”. Si cullano su determinati aspetti. Se io non dovessi lavorare tutte le volte che ho il ciclo, non avrei mai aperto. Se io non dovessi lavorare tutte le volte che mi fa male la spalla o che mi fa male la schiena, non aprirei nessun giorno dell’anno. Tutti i giorni con i dolori, con i pensieri, con le preoccupazioni, con la stanchezza: si viene, si lavora, si sorride...e poi si crolla. Come fa l’uomo. Un uomo muratore sai quanti dolori ha? E va a lavorare dalla mattina alla sera. Se io ho una persona che mi mantiene e sono debole, mi piace farmi mantenere e mi giustifico che intanto sto crescendo i miei figli”.

44 From the original version: “Our translation: “Small domestic duties slap, strangle, deflate and degrade [the woman], the chains of the kitchen and nursery waste her in unproductive barbarism, with gossip, nervousness and social crushing”.

We could include the interviewee's case as one of the cases – typical in psychoanalysis – of identification with the aggressor, a defense mechanism that often leads the victims to introject its characteristics: as the only possibility of survival the victim abdicates, renounces his/her own person, handing him/herself over to the aggressor and identifying him/herself exactly with what s/he expects: in our case, the aggressor is capitalism – a clear expression of that will to male and male-chauvinist power, which is overbearing and invasive (Ferenczi, 1988; Freud, 2012; Smith, 1999). It is a profound mechanism, since it concerns the structuring of the personality through the assumption of thought models, values and norms of the strongest, which does not allow other perspectives than its own: either to be crushed by religious bigotry or to soar in the individualistic flight of productive-consumerist capitalism, which is what Marx himself feared.

All this in San Cesario must also deal with the Old Catholic culture, according to which the woman must be wife and mother, otherwise she would have no value. The interviewee recalls some interventions to the focus of women-only group, underlining an attitude which is also very evident among the very young ones:

Our translation: [...] like that girl who said “I chose to be a mother”. It is normal, she will be one less element in society. Ok, you give birth to a child, you stop for the necessary time, let's call it technical time to be able to do this, but then go on. I always tell them. We were born women, we were not born mothers and we were not born wives. Then you forget that you are a woman in the first place and you only remember that you are mothers or wives. Indeed, wives first and then forget that too and think only of being mothers. This is not the case, women were born, and the woman must do everything, she must also choose whether to have children or not. Because the fact that I am a woman does not necessarily mean that I have to give birth to children. Another shocking thing that happened to me a couple of years ago at a race. I went to a race and there were friends with me. There was a girl who was watching me, but heavily. I felt uncomfortable, at one point I said to her: “are you okay? Did I do anything wrong?”. This is the sister-in-law of a very dear friend of mine. The day after we wrote to each other, we commented on the race, I say: “you know by the way, is everything OK with your sister-in-law? Because I felt observed”. He says, “Yes, indeed, you are right. He asked me later: ‘How old is he?’, ‘37 years’, ‘wow he doesn't look like that ... but when is he going to have children and get married?’. I said: “Answer your sister-in-law that if the human race were to die out, it cer-



tainly won't be because I didn't procreate"; so much is she thinking about it, as she is much younger than me, she already has 3 children. That is, they are shocked, because they label you, you are a woman therefore mother, wife, home. Not really so, I am a woman, I have a brain, I choose what I want to do. And I carry on my way, making sure that my way is the one where everything revolves around that way. If I chose this job, everything revolves around this job. So I have to have the time to keep up-to-date, leave, train, work, to do nothing on Saturday, to sleep on Sunday ... if this does not include a child, I currently do not want a child, and I'm not ashamed to say it. It is often not understood. Young eh... very young... [gym owner]<sup>45</sup>.

This way of reasoning on the part of many girls and young women in San Cesario changes with age, as the interviewee states – a privileged observer because she collects the confidences of her users: experiences, feelings of frustration for a past, consummated very often to their own detriment, etc.:

45 From the original version: “[...] come quella ragazza che diceva “io ho scelto di fare la mamma”. È normale, lei sarà un elemento in meno nella società. Ok, metti al mondo un bambino, ti fermi il tempo necessario, chiamiamolo tempo tecnico per poter far questo, però poi vai avanti. Io glielo dico sempre a loro. Noi nasciamo donne, non nasciamo madri e non nasciamo mogli. Poi voi vi dimenticate di essere donne in primis e vi ricordate solo di essere madri o mogli. Anzi, prima mogli e poi dimenticano anche quello e pensano soltanto ad essere madri. Non è così, si nasce donne, e la donna deve fare tutto, deve anche scegliere se avere dei figli o no. Perché non è detto che il fatto che io sia donna debba per forza mettere al mondo dei figli. Un'altra cosa sconvolgente che mi capitò un paio di anni fa ad una gara. Andati ad una gara e c'erano degli amici con me. C'era una ragazza che mi osservava, ma pesantemente. Io mi sentivo a disagio, a un certo punto le ho detto: “ma tutto bene? Ti ho fatto qualcosa?”. Questa è cognata di una mia carissima amica. Il giorno dopo ci scrivevamo, commentavamo la gara, dico: “ma sai a proposito, ma con tua cognata tutto bene? Perché io mi sentivo osservata”. Dice: “Sì, in effetti, hai ragione. Mi ha chiesto dopo: ‘ma quanti anni ha?’, ‘37 anni’, ‘caspita non li dimostra... ma quando fa dei figli e si sposa?’. Io ho detto: “Rispondi a tua cognata che, se si dovesse estinguere la razza umana, di certo non sarà perché io non ho procreato”; tanto c'è lei che ci sta pensando, in quanto molto più giovane di me, ha già 3 figli. Cioè, rimangono sconvolte, perché ti etichettano, sei donna quindi madre, moglie, casa. Non è così, io sono donna, ho un cervello, scelgo quello che voglio fare. E porto avanti la mia strada, facendo in modo che la mia strada sia quella per cui tutto ruota intorno a quella strada. Se io ho scelto questo lavoro, tutto ruota intorno a questo lavoro. Quindi io devo avere il tempo per aggiornarmi, partire, allenarmi, lavorare, per non fare niente il sabato, per dormire la domenica... se ciò non prevede un figlio, io un figlio attualmente non lo voglio, e non mi vergogno a dirlo. Spesso non viene capito. Giovani eh... giovanissime... (proprietaria palestra)”.

Our translation: So, having understood all they have lost... they got married very young, they had two or three children, they reached 50-55 years... now they have raised children and they look over their shoulder. All the workouts they have not done, the outings with friends, the trips, the coffee at the bar: they are going to make up for that time. The young woman thinks she can do all this and is calm, but she is still trapped in that mechanism. In fact, there were many separated people, those who have children outside and feel like a twenty-year-old, but you are no longer twenty years old...<sup>46</sup>.

This vision is also shared by other women who are particularly active in society in the political and associative sphere. Also the focus groups depict a woman from San Cesario who is generally identified in traditional female roles, one who is clearly subordinated to men due to their attitude of economic dependence she assumes; this dependence is above all cognitive and behavioral, which even brings out the very ancient Judeo-Romanesque conception of the man-woman relationship.

This is a concept that can be found above all in some groups of foreign immigrants, of Islamic religion, coming from Africa. As another interviewee notes, it has been and still is difficult to involve the women of some immigrants, even when it comes to school activities and initiatives:

Our translation: There is another difficulty which is that of involving women. This was not the case with everyone: at the beginning, the ladies who came from Albania worked immediately; therefore, through work, then, as always happens, many of these problems are resolved, including many difficulties of prejudice. As for the Senegalese community, the first women to arrive were the wives of migrants who had found a slightly more stable job and at that point they had them come here to San Cesario [...] with the children. The first ones arrived five or six years ago, maybe, seven years ago and they didn't have any kind of social life, it was difficult to make them participate, even on New Year's Eve, a con-

46 From the original version: "Quindi, avendo capito tutto ciò che hanno perso... si sono sposate giovanissime, hanno avuto due o tre figli, sono arrivate a 50-55 anni... adesso hanno i figli grandi e si guardano alle spalle. Tutti gli allenamenti che non hanno fatto, le uscite con le amiche, i viaggi, il caffè al bar: stanno tornando a recuperare quel tempo. La giovane pensa di poter fare tutto questo ed è tranquilla, ma è ingabbiata ancora in quel meccanismo. Infatti c'erano molte persone separate, chi c'ha i figli fuori e si sente una ventenne, ma non sei più ormai una ventenne..."

vivial moment, right? There was a rather intense work, even hard work, because, let's say, machism, regardless of the culture of origin, is something that we have never tried to accept and we have felt a little bit in the attitude of some of them.. They began to participate more, when their children started school, with kindergarten, elementary school: they were forced in some way to relate to the teachers, the head teacher, the other mothers; they started to do some work, and this thing broke this locking mechanism a bit. As for the Moroccan community, there are still some difficulties. There is a Moroccan friend who never lets his wife come and always makes an excuse [...] makes it a bit difficult for women to participate in all the initiatives that are carried out during the year [former councilor]<sup>47</sup>.

The inclusion of immigrant women in the labor market has allowed at least an opening towards integration into the community fabric of San Cesario, as the interviewee says; however, this process concerned Albanian women. For the Senegalese more than a few factors have come into play: first of all, the awareness by the educated Senegalese youth of the Italian female situation and their desire to integrate into the social fabric of San Cesario; secondly, the establishment of mixed Italian-Senegalese couples, with the latter having taken on an alternative point of reference for their compatriots; the willingness of these to get more involved in the initiatives of the country, thus becoming aware of a different model of women. The condition of women among immigrants could act as a mirror

47 From the original version: "C'è un'altra difficoltà che è quella del coinvolgimento delle donne. Questo non c'è stato con tutti: all'inizio, le signore che venivano dall'Albania hanno lavorato da subito; quindi, attraverso il lavoro, poi, come sempre succede, si risolvono molti di questi problemi, anche molte difficoltà di pregiudizio. Per quanto riguarda la comunità senegalese, le prime donne ad arrivare sono state le mogli dei migranti che avevano trovato un lavoro un po' più stabile e a quel punto hanno fatto venire qui a San Cesario [...] con i bambini. Sono arrivate cinque o sei anni fa le prime, forse, sette anni fa e non facevano vita sociale di nessun tipo, si faceva difficoltà a farle partecipare, addirittura al Capodanno, un momento conviviale, no? Lì c'è stato un lavoro piuttosto intenso, anche duro, perché, diciamo, il maschilismo, indipendentemente dalla cultura di provenienza, è una cosa che abbiamo tentato di non accettare mai e un pochino l'abbiamo sentito nell'atteggiamento di alcuni di loro. Hanno iniziato a partecipare di più, quando i figli hanno iniziato le scuole, con la scuola dell'infanzia, la scuola elementare: sono state obbligate in qualche maniera a rapportarsi con le insegnanti, il dirigente scolastico, le altre madri; hanno iniziato a fare dei lavori, e questa cosa ha rotto un po' questo meccanismo di chiusura. Per quanto riguarda la comunità marocchina, ancora c'è qualche difficoltà. C'è un amico marocchino che non fa venire mai sua moglie e accampa sempre una scusa [...]ci fa un po' di difficoltà a far partecipare le donne a tutte le iniziative che vengono realizzate durante l'anno [ex assessore]".

for indigenous women, who could see their situation reflected in that of immigrants, thus creating virtuous circles of reflection-action with consequences for themselves as well as for the entire community.

The condition of women in the small community of San Cesario is clearly evident from the experience of one of the most important personalities in the country: a woman, an architect, one of the founders of the Equal Opportunities Commission, who participated in the feminist movement of the 1970s. Her struggle began, as can be seen from her story, when her father opposed the advancement of her education: she would have been obliged only to obtain a middle school qualification. Instead, she wanted to continue until she spent eight years in an important city in central-northern Italy (Florence); there she obtained a degree in Architecture, a discipline which used to be a prerogative of men, and a personal maturity that she would never have acquired by living in her parents' home. She admits that her father's change in attitude was due to the libertarian influences that reached the South from the other side of Italy. On the other hand, she feels lucky to have frequented certain circles, where she became aware of the need for change in favor of women. Her first reflection concerns the issue of being supporting actors among women:

Our translation: And this, according to my point of view, depends on the education that one has from an early age, not only in the family, because the family is important, but in such a composite and complex society as it is today, as we are used to living, it doesn't only depend on the family, but also on the institutions and above all on the school. If in the school, starting from primary class, even earlier from kindergartens, there are still teachers who educate children about the difference "you are male and you can play certain games, you are female and you can do certain things, you are female so you must not interrupt the male who is saying something or you must be patient" or else, which then falls into the stereotype of fifty years ago, there cannot be an evolution of society and an awareness on the part of girls and women [woman, architect, Equal Opportunities Commission]<sup>48</sup>.

48 From the original version: "E questo secondo il mio punto di vista dipende dall'educazione che si ha fin da piccoli, non solo in famiglia, perché la famiglia è importante, ma in una società così composita e complessa come è oggi, come ci siamo abituati a vivere, non dipende solo dalla famiglia, ma dipende anche dalle istituzioni e dipende dalla scuola soprattutto. Se nella scuola, ad iniziare dalle classi primarie, anche prima dagli asili, ci sono ancora delle insegnanti che educano i bambini alla differenza "tu sei maschio e puoi fare determinati giochi, tu sei femmina e puoi fare determinate cose, tu sei femmina per cui non devi interrompere

What this subordination to man consists of in the community of St. Cesario is quickly explained:

Our translation: In the course of the day, however, they are free to do what they want, but also within the family context, we found people who work and people who do not work, people who like to stay at home and look after the house. The world is varied, but those who have a partner or a husband always have this sacred terror in the sense of having to ask for consent or have consent for anything, while declaring themselves free to do what they want [woman, architect, Equal Opportunities Commission]<sup>49</sup>.

What does not allow for an evolution in the man-woman relationship? She is sure to answer on the basis of her experience with the activities of the Equal Opportunities Commission: it is very difficult to influence the mentality when most citizens have a low cultural level and this also concerns educational institutions, which do not have the right guidelines from the Ministry on this front. The results of this backwardness are also seen in young couples, confirming what was already stated by the other interviewee, the owner of the fitness center: the boy is the reference point for the girl's way of dressing and going out. And also with her that female adaptation re-emerges according to the internalization mechanism of traits of the executioner (in this case the male):

Our translation: Going to the construction site, I realized that it's all about how you approach people in order to be respected or not. [...] and I realized that there were giggles ... that is, they saw you as a corollary figure, not an important figure, despite having an important role: if there was a colleague next to me, I had a value; if you were alone, you had another one. So to be able to face a typically-male world a woman must be ten times better, have determination and ferocity, sometimes much more

il maschio che sta dicendo una cosa oppure devi essere paziente” o altro, che poi rientra nello stereotipo di cinquant'anni fa, non può esserci un'evoluzione della società e una presa di coscienza da parte delle bambine e delle donne [donna, architetto, Comm. Pari Opp.]”.

- 49 From the original version: “Nello svolgimento della giornata comunque sono libere di fare ciò che vogliono, ma anche nell'ambito della casa, abbiamo trovato gente che lavora e gente che non lavora, gente a cui piace stare a casa e accudisce la casa. Il mondo è variegato, però chi ha un compagno o un marito, ha sempre questo terrore sacro nel senso di dover comunque chiedere il consenso o avere il consenso per una qualunque cosa, pur dichiarandosi libere di fare ciò che vogliono [donna, architetto, Comm. Pari Opp.]”.

than men, therefore be aggressive and know how to do things, unlike a man who may not even know how to do them [woman, architect, Equal Opportunities Commission]<sup>50</sup>.

As if to say: “You have to be like men to be respected in your role”. During the interview, she becomes aware of this *defaillance* and points out:

Our translation: Yes, one must, however, in a certain sense attack, at least at first to make people understand what the roles are. The moment you have made it clear what the role is, then she can go back to being kinder, sweeter; however, at first you have to face them on equal terms; therefore, with a masculine attitude. This is my experience! [woman, architect, Equal Opportunities Commission]<sup>51</sup>.

Obviously this is a cultural defeat, which is especially noticeable when the men you work with (“those on the construction site”) have the prejudice that the female architect is wrong because she is incompetent, whereas a male architect is simply correct, based on the assumption that we could define as “the fish out of water”.

Hence the story of the woman turned towards the union between work and family commitments; her friends and former high school classmates had to make different choices: some, most of them, gave up any job ambition, whereas others had to struggle by facing family commitments alone while having a job. We do not notice in them any recrimination on the equality of matrimonial duties: the man is only for work and at most he supports his wife “whenever he can”. Some are aware of the fact that women in general do not know much about these cultural defects, which are strengthened in the attitude of renounc-

50 From the original version: “Andando sul cantiere, mi sono accorta che è tutto come ti poni nei confronti delle persone per poter essere rispettata o meno. [...] e mi sono accorta che c'erano i risolini... cioè ti vedevano come una figura corollario, non una figura importante, pur avendo un ruolo importante: se c'era il collega uomo accanto, avevo una valenza; se poi eri da sola, ne avevi un'altra. Quindi per poter affrontare un mondo tipicamente maschile una donna deve essere brava dieci volte di più, avere una determinazione e una ferocia a volte molto più degli uomini, quindi essere aggressiva e deve saperle fare le cose, a differenza di un uomo che può anche non saperle fare [(donna, architetto, Comm. Pari Opp.)”.

51 From the original version: “Sì sì, deve però in un certo senso aggredire, almeno in un primo momento per far comprendere quali sono i ruoli. Nel momento in cui hai fatto comprendere quale è il ruolo, allora può tornare ad essere più gentile, più dolce; però in un primo momento devi affrontarli ad armi pari; quindi, con un atteggiamento maschile. Questa è la mia esperienza! [donna, architetto, Comm. Pari Opp.]”.

ing to value themselves. On the contrary, the interviewee noted that younger women do not know how to play any female role, at most they find a job, they offer themselves as an aesthetic model for their daughters, but they do not go any further.

Our translation: [...] recent generations for me have neither the family attitude nor the sense [...] because many see the family as the center, but then within this family, women do not know how to play a role, it's a role... I'm talking about the younger generations I'm talking about 30/35/40 year-old women. In my opinion many of these women, even if they have the family as their center, then in fact their role in the family is not like that of our mothers who educated us to be wives, mothers and so on, in accompanying the man, but they don't educate at all, so they can't even – apart from an aesthetic taste given to the daughters – they can't give anything else. Yes, the roles between mother and daughter are confused, in the sense that the mother very often feels like a daughter ... still a daughter, still young and therefore not yet mature, not mature for parental responsibility [woman, architect, Equal Opportunities Commission]<sup>52</sup>.

Once again, albeit on an aspect that has not emerged before, we can see the engulfment of the female element in a society which, in its being less and less attentive to the family and therefore to the roles that follow from it, absorbs the woman in the sexist and consumerist role of the male-capitalist imaginary: a) attentive to aesthetics to please the other, b) lost in the values of consumerism, which makes subjects less and less mature, more and more “adul-tescent” (Ammaniti, 2018). All this prevents us from being centered on the Self, because they are committed to satisfying what culture imposes (construction of a socially “relevant” image), slammed as they are among the imperatives

52 From the original version: “[...] le ultime generazioni per me non hanno né il senso della famiglia e non hanno nessun senso ancora [...] perché molte vedono la famiglia come centro, ma poi all'interno di questa famiglia non sanno svolgere un ruolo le donne, che sia un ruolo... parlo delle generazioni più giovani parlo sui 30/35/40 anni. Secondo me molte di queste donne, anche se hanno come centro la famiglia, poi in effetti il loro ruolo nella famiglia non è come quello delle nostre madri che ci educavano ad essere mogli, madri e via dicendo, nell'accompagnare l'uomo, ma non educano proprio, quindi non riescono neanche – a parte un gusto estetico dato alle figlie – non riescono a dare altro Sì, confusi i ruoli tra madre e figlia, nel senso che la madre molto spesso si sente figlia... ancora figlia, ancora giovane e quindi ancora non matura, cioè non matura per la responsabilità genitoriale [donna, architetto, Comm. Pari Opp.]”.

of a social environment that is not interested in old values of personal existence construction, but in “subject-stem cells”, capable like the homonymous cells of assuming any form and function according to the needs of the current cultural and structural order.

Another member of the Municipality’s Equal Opportunities Commission is a pedagogist who directs a center for children. She emphasizes the daily struggle and the training of the little ones:

Our translation: In my opinion the change must be made starting from the small things. Because it is on a cultural level that you have to work in people’s heads. If, as I said before, as a woman I continue to say “my husband helps me”, it means that I have not understood what the real problem is, that things are done together; but I always see it as something lowered from above: “I have to do that thing, but I’m lucky if I have a partner or a husband who helps me”. [...] also within the commission. If you had to organize something that took a lot of time to work or family activities, there were many people who rightly for their organization: “no, it’s not good for me, I can’t do it, I have a child, I have to fix, my husband cannot leave”; therefore, it is always the woman who takes care of finding the solution to the various problems. So yes I work, the woman works, she can do it, but she always has to find the time in her time to do everything else. [...] in most situations I see it works like this. The woman works, she can work and she has to work because in any case economically we have to go forward [woman, architect, Equal Opportunities Commission]<sup>53</sup>.

53 From the original version: “Secondo me il cambiamento va fatto partendo dalle piccole cose. Perché è a livello proprio culturale che si deve lavorare nella testa delle persone. Se, come ho detto prima, io donna continuo ad affermare “mio marito mi aiuta”, vuol dire che non ho capito quale è il problema reale, che si fanno assieme le cose; ma lo vedo sempre come una cosa calata dall’alto: “mi tocca fare quella cosa, però sono fortunata se ho un compagno o un marito che mi aiuta”. [...] anche all’interno della commissione. Se si doveva organizzare qualcosa che portava molto tempo alle attività lavorative o della famiglia, c’erano molte persone che giustamente per la loro organizzazione: “no per me non va bene, non la posso fare, ho la bambina, devo sistemare, mio marito non può lasciare”; quindi è sempre la donna che si fa carico di trovare la soluzione alle varie problematiche. Quindi sì io lavoro, la donna lavora, può farlo, però deve sempre trovare il tempo nel suo tempo per fare tutto il resto. [...] nella maggior parte delle situazioni vedo che funziona così. La donna lavora, può lavorare e deve lavorare perché comunque economicamente bisogna andare avanti [donna, pedagogista, Comm. Pari Opp.]”.



From this excerpt a rather clear experience emerges, i.e. the masculine concession: it is so deep a culture that women who struggle, even institutionally and publicly against the male-dominated heritage, do not themselves realize the fact that in a daily *hic et nunc* they reproduce those cultural and behavioral memes. The interviewee, however, begins to glimpse in S. Cesario parents whom she defines as “interchangeable” in the care of children and the home; but for many it is a great effort, because work takes a lot of time and for those who cannot manage to pay for private services, it is possible to delegate these tasks to female relatives (grandmother, aunt, sister, etc.). Care is female even in the professional sphere: services aimed at children, above all, and the elderly are held almost exclusively by women.

A young woman also emerges from the interview with the pedagogist, who begins to claim her space beyond the roles of wife-mother, but this often goes in the direction of delegation and even de-responsibility:

Our translation: Even if there is a strong drive to free oneself – which is then sometimes exaggerated – to free oneself from these constraints of care and which, however, ends up leaving perhaps or letting others do too much: for example, too much burden on grandparents. Because perhaps you never manage to find the right means, the middle way to reconcile; perhaps the desire to do things to achieve one’s expectations and then one loses a bit of sight that when there are children ... [...]. then you lose sight of the fact that if you give birth to a child you have to take care of him/her. There are some things you can do a little less, let’s say priorities [woman, architect, Equal Opportunities Commission]<sup>54</sup>.

In short, one becomes aware of the large number of adults increasingly overwhelmed by the induced need for consumerist and hedonistic care of the Self, which leads to neglect their family duties.

However, even from this interview, only one woman emerges: in the care, except in cases of help from her spouse or some relative; in struggling in the

54 From the original version: “Anche se c’è una forte spinta a liberarsi – che poi si eccede a volte – a liberarsi da questi vincoli dell’accudimento e che però finisce poi per demandare forse o lasciar fare troppo agli altri: ad esempio, un carico troppo sui nonni. Perché forse non si riesce mai a trovare il giusto mezzo, la via di mezzo per conciliarsi; forse troppo il desiderio di fare le cose per realizzare le proprie aspettative e poi si perde un po’ di vista che quando ci sono dei bambini... [...]. si perde poi di vista che se metti al mondo un figlio te ne devi prendere cura. Ci sono delle cose che puoi fare un po’ meno, delle priorità diciamo ecco [donna, pedagoga, Comm. Pari Opp.]”.

labor market; in building spaces of freedom that end in individualistic and consumerist enjoyment; also in politics, the space they should take care of most to change culture and social structure. The pedagogist too sees a continuous retreat from the women of the village, because they do not have, according to her, the courage to come forward, they do not have the support of other women – above all due to competition, and they not even have the trust on the part of some men. The risk of not getting out of this female impasse remains, most of all because around the corner there is the historical error of imitating the male:

Our translation: [...] in many cases we wanted a little to ape the man; however, it is not certain that everything man does is fine. For me it is not good and I think it is a considerable effort, because if one tries to imitate another, when he is not feeling good, surely he cannot be good. It is not certain that everything man does is positive and vice versa or, because man does it, I have to do it and show that I can do it. There are many things that it would be good for men not to do, so it is useless for someone to imitate him [woman, pedagogist, Equal Opportunities Commission]<sup>55</sup>.

This concluding remark makes us go back to the previously mentioned theorists of contemporary society: female subjectivity as a cause and effect of the processes of radicalization of individuality or an evanescent form of a modernity that homologates everything and everyone according to a new world cultural and social order?

## 5. Ego and Alter in S. Cesario: between modern and closed individualism, diffident traditionalism

From the above, two opposing views clearly emerge of considering life and the relationship with each other. Two opposite survival strategies belong to these

55 From the original version: “[...] in molti casi abbiamo voluto un poco scimmiettare l’uomo; però non è detto che tutto quello che fa l’uomo vada bene. Per me non va bene e credo sia uno sforzo notevole, perché se uno cerca di imitare un altro, quando non è nelle sue corde, sicuramente non può stare bene. Non è detto che tutto quello che fa l’uomo è positivo e viceversa o, perché lo fa l’uomo, io lo devo fare e dimostrare che io riesco a farlo. Ci sono tante cose che sarebbe bene che l’uomo non facesse, quindi è inutile che uno sta ad imitare [donna, pedagogista, Comm. Pari Opp.]”.

two visions, which depend on personal social status and family of origin: typically-modern individualism, which does without good neighborly relations, is based on the opportunism of instrumental and on the values of work, earnings and leisure activities linked to free time; traditionalism, especially among women, characterized by values and social norms that tend to be Catholic, which imply the dependence of women on men and on religious rituals and celebrations. In both cases, however, a strong and southern attachment to the family is not disdained, which in fact remains the pivot of social and mental life and from whose observation point opportunities, external ties, foreigners, politics, etc. are evaluated.

There is no lack of opportunities to meet the villager, who can also be the foreign immigrant, in those typically traditional community places and social spaces: the shop, the small market, the bar, the squares. Even the caregivers, for work needs, focus their life on the family (obviously not their own) and with the exception of some young Africans, who, although they do not have a family in San Cesario, work hoping to reunite with family members and partners and make them reach Italy.

In all this discourse there is often a lack of institutions, which limit themselves to administering the existing, but then – stimulated by civil society – to fielding goodwill and the idea of community for the benefit of initiatives that enhance participation. Regarding this, the schools of the municipality, in the first place, and many associations have been decisive in making citizens acquire the taste and the need to participate in initiatives that strengthen the sense of community, because they are also able to reconnect with the past in terms of experiences, stories, rites, rituals and traditions. Even in a small southern town on the Italian outskirts like San Cesario di Lecce, all this precious “repertoire” is disappearing, swallowed up by the aggressive voracity of a homologating society exalting the cult of the individual, of its personal, contingent, solipsistic satisfaction, and in the last decade squeezed between the need to survive and to enjoy the few moments of a consumerist life.

This imposed lifestyle makes social relations based on opportunism and in the overwhelming vortex of “everything and now” there is no possibility of “building together”, preventing the possibility of understanding each other. The latter thus dresses the mask of opportunity or of the enemy, depending on personal circumstances and needs.

The lack of adequate welfare forces families to an unprecedented functional overload both of an educational and health-care type; finally, the last social safety nets will be increasingly lacking, represented today – but only for a short time – by pensioners.

In short, further on, the Italian woman may no longer have problems building her own place in society by claiming mutual rights and duties to man: because in the light of existential and value homologation produced by capitalist production, men, women and – dare I say – robots will have equal “dignity”.

In all this, Italianness, as known so far, seems to disappear, because we have had a very low birth rate for some time, reaching the most negative record since 1861. In fact, compared to 2008, 2018 witnessed the birth of 120 thousand fewer children, therefore a net collapse of 21% in conjunction with the international economic crisis and recessive policies (Fonti, 2019). Why has the demographic trend been evidently pejorative since the end of the 1990s? For two reasons: a cultural and a structural one. In the first case, more and more women have demanded and obtained a greater presence in education and work and this has meant less time for their family, in the absence of gender equality, and an increasingly adult age of sonship with what follows also in biological terms for the difficulties in having children (and healthy children) at an “advanced” age. In the second case, the Italian economic situation and a pejorative male welfare did not allow couples to be able to count on the public for support in the birth rate and childcare, having to look for it in the parental circle, which is also failing for two reasons: the dissolution of the family bond (by emigration and individualization of experiences) and the demographic decline itself.

In this context, which integration can be achieved with regard to immigrants? Among other things, the latest law on immigration (with Salvini as Minister of the Interior) has only made things worse, because it has eliminated a large part of the reception-integration system so that immigrants are forced to live in clandestinity and at the mercy of individuals, including indigenous ones, ready to illegally take advantage of the situation in terms of exploitation and insertion in illicit markets of organized crime.

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### III.

## Focus group analysis.

# Lives, relationships and gender representations

*Valerio Preite*

*“The smaller the circle which forms our environment and the more limited the relationships which have the possibility of transcending the boundaries, the more anxiously the narrow community watches over the deeds, the conducts of life and the attitudes of the individual and the more will a quantitative and qualitative individuality tend to pass beyond the boundaries of such a community”*

(Georg Simmel)

## 1. Introduction

In many European countries, the post-war period has been characterized by an economic and social expansion of the welfare state, of dependent work and its guarantees, aimed at protecting the individual in periods of unemployment and old age and to support its status and salary progression. This expansion, however, took place within specific gender and family models: the male worker was safeguarded as the head of the family, the so-called “Fordist”, under the assumption of full employment, of the relative labor market and marriage stability and the continued availability of domestic and care work by women, who were mostly inactive in the labor market. However, from the mid-70s onwards the scenario changes: uncertainty increases in the labor market, in the protection of new social risks, in the duration and frequency of marriages (Blossfeld *et al.*, 2005; Del Boca, Rosina, 2009). Gender vicissitudes have also changed: more and more women study, enter the job market and remain there even after marriage and motherhood; more and more men and women do not marry or decide to have no children (Cavalli, Galland, 1996; Corijn, Klijzing, 2001;

Shanahan, 2000). Values focus rather on personal autonomy, self-fulfillment, consumption, reversibility of choices, freedom from family and social constraints (Lestaeghe, 1995; Liefbroer, Fokkema, 2008; Van de Kaa, 1994; Sobotka, 2008).

In the “post-Fordist” period, the youth life of both men and women come closer: study and work also increasingly characterize the female experience and for all of them working becomes more uncertain in terms of duration, income and future prospects. Also due to this uncertainty, men and women tend to postpone their choice to leave home and create a family. (Blossfel, *cit.*; Schizzerotto, Lucchini, 2002). However, in European countries, especially Latin countries, women (especially those with lower levels of education) continue to be trapped in unstable and disqualified jobs, which they often abandon once they become mothers.

There is no doubt that even in Italy there has been a progressive reduction of gender asymmetries, especially in the context of training and participation in the labor market. In the training sector, the presence of women is continually growing and with the passing of generations there has been a progressive reduction of the gap with men, up to overtaking both in terms of quantity and school performance. For some years now, among the new entrants to the Italian university system we have mostly found women: the rate of transition from high school to university is higher for women (68%, compared to 57.5% of male peers); moreover, the proportion of girls among students enrolled in Italian universities is equal to 57%, 58% among graduates, and 52% among doctoral graduates. The presence of women has also increased in the world of work: currently, in most cases, at the time of marriage the two partners both have a job: for example, in 2010 69% of celebrated marriages were contracted by men and women who were both employed (55% in the South and 79% in the Center-North; source: <http://demo.istat.it/altridati/matrimoni/>).

The emancipation processes of women, which are visible on the regulatory and social roles, coexist with persistent discriminatory mechanisms undermining the individual and social dignity of women, up to the manifestation of various forms of violence.

Starting from this reflection, the research aim was to bring out the cultural and behavioral substratum of the contradictions and conflicts between emancipation and tradition in gender differences in a small town in southern Italy, by focusing on the way in which women and men participate in the construction and definition of gender, from which arise asymmetric relational structures of power. This paper will illustrate the results of an analysis of three focus groups.



## 2. Why the focus group?

The focus group is «a detection technique for social research based on the discussion between a small group of people in the presence of one or more moderators, focusing on a topic that one wants to investigate» (Corrao, 2000: 25, *our translation*)<sup>1</sup>. The stimuli to the discussion can be either verbal (direct questions, sentences, definitions, associations) or visual (photographs, drawings, cartoons, videos). Their main feature, which is also the most appreciated aspect relating to the focus group, lies precisely in the interaction between the participants – an interaction capable of producing ideas to a greater extent than the single interview, both in quantity and in quality. A focus has an average duration of about two hours, but social researcher can end up having very long or shorter focuses. These two borderline situations should not happen: a good sampling and a skilled moderator allow the researcher to have adequate participants with whom to establish, as an indication, a minimum and a maximum duration. In our case, the average duration of the focus groups was one and a half hours and the three groups of available subjects were as follows: only 20-35 year-old women, only women over 50, only men between 35-45 years and over 65, both married with children and single.

A relevant problem may be represented by recruitment: while for the two focuses aimed at women recruitment was facilitated through a women-only gym instructor and there were no defections, during the men's focus group we had two important absences, because out of a total of ten invited participants, five did not show up, so this category has turned out to be the predominant one compared to that of young adult workers.

With regard to focus groups management, a series of reference thematic stimuli was used from which the researchers could bounce between general and more specific field-related questions (Bovina, 1998: 42).

## 3. Content analysis

All three focuses could be recorded in audio-video mode and this allowed an ethnographic analysis of their content. The analysis focuses on the following

1 From the original Italian version: «una tecnica di rilevazione per la ricerca sociale basata sulla discussione tra un piccolo gruppo di persone, alla presenza di uno o più moderatori, focalizzata su un argomento che si vuole indagare in profondità» (Corrao, 2000: 25).

key issues: forms of discrimination, stereotypes, cultural models, access to the labor market, perception of one's freedom, male chauvinism and relationship with the opposite sex, violence, perception of the self as a woman, asymmetry of power in the relationship couple, forms of dependence.

### 3.1 Life in the home environment

What does it mean to be a woman in 2019? The answers allowed us to shed light on gender roles and specifically on the family context.

[...] Basically I think very little has changed between the condition of yesterday's woman and today's. That is, the stereotype of the woman, who must be a mother and everything else, always praises the man's mind in my opinion. Beyond the fact that two family wages help a lot. And sometimes they put their values aside and maybe go ahead out of necessity. Even from what we learn from the media...from all the testimonials...the woman, however, in my opinion is the mentally strong sex, but is physically weak and still experiences male abuse [d.g.3 FG women 20-40, our translation]<sup>2</sup>.

The fact of self-defining as the "strong sex" means putting oneself face to face with the man playing on the same field, that is, the typically male-dominated language. However, the sense is transliterated from physical strength to character strength, which allows one to complete the huge amount of daily tasks. Furthermore, the surrender to male chauvinism is most evident in the expression "putting aside one's values", which refers to having put aside a possible job after university studies for the care of children:

I am... a full-time mother by choice, I studied pedagogy and...yes, I dedicate myself to my daughters, I prefer to do this as I am a very appre-

- 2 From the original version: "[...] secondo me fondamentalemente l'essere donna di ieri, con l'essere donna di oggi, è cambiato relativamente. Cioè, lo stereotipo della donna, che deve essere mamma e tutto il resto, nella mente dell'uomo secondo me inneggia sempre. Al di là del fatto che due stipendi in famiglia aiutano tantissimo. E alle volte si mettono da parte i propri valori e magari si va avanti per necessità. Anche da ciò che apprendiamo dai media...da tutte le testimonianze...la donna comunque secondo me è il sesso forte mentalmente, ma debole fisicamente e vive ancora dei soprusi maschili [d.g.3 FG donne 20-40].

hensive mother ... and I can do it anyway (d.g.3 FG women 20-40, our translation)<sup>3</sup>.

The three focuses above all highlight the need for both members of the couple to work to cope with the growing expenses that each household faces today, without however really challenging the ancestral gender disparity. The economic aspect at the moment retains only a push to change the couple's arrangements:

You really can't go on today unless both the man and the woman work! If you don't work in tandem, you can't do anything! [u.a.3 FG men]. While before it was enough for the husband to work, the idea of a family was that ... the husband, the man works, the woman is at home and takes care of the house. But now the needs are different. Why can't a woman work? I can tell you that in my office 80% of the employees are women [...] [d.o.5 FG women over 50, our translation]<sup>4</sup>.

The only difference from the past lies in the fact that the woman, among her many domestic and care commitments, has added paid work away from home. A possible solution to her burden of duties is represented by the use of family network:

[...] we leave home at half past six, and come back at half past seven because we have to, as we have to sort our grandchildren. Their parents work, our grandchildren cannot... and here we are, we'll be there for them [u.a.7 FG men 35-45 over 70].

So, the desire of us grandparents would be that the children must leave us some space. We work from morning till night... with the children. As grandparents we are penalized. 'Ca tutti dicimu cu piacere, d'accordu, d'accordu... [we grandparents tell each other that it's a pleasure for us... okay okay] but if I want to go fishing, I can't do it, because I'm tied up,

3 From the original version: "Io sono... mamma a tempo pieno per scelta, ho degli studi di pedagogia alle spalle e...niente mi dedico alle bambine, preferisco fare questo, essendo una madre molto apprensiva...e potendolo comunque fare" [d.g.3 FG donne 20-40].

4 From the original version: "Se oggi non si lavora in due, non si va avanti! O se non si lavora in tandem non si fa niente!" [u.a.3 FG uomini]. "Mentre prima era sufficiente che lavorasse il marito, l'idea di famiglia era quella... il marito, l'uomo lavora, la donna è in casa e cura la casa. Adesso invece le esigenze sono diverse. Perché io donna non posso lavorare? E perché tant'è vero che ho una prova, in ufficio dove sono io, l'80% sono tutte donne [...]" [d.o.5 FG donne over 50].

because I have to take the little girl to school ... this is what being grandfather is like today. We do it with great pleasure... [u.a.3 FG men 35-45 over 70, our translation]<sup>5</sup>.

From this narrative one it is possible to perceive a change in San Cesario, which makes it similar to the modern life typical of cities: the “emancipated” woman and the couple who has two salaries can take advantage of an almost solid family welfare especially for the care of children; this, of course, takes place in the absence of economically advantageous services (schools, playrooms, babysitters).

In defining the image of the woman in her family environment, an 84-year-old man refers to childhood memories to make it clear that there are still significant and verifiable traces of the past:

Well that woman's value ... well, compared to what was her most visible function [...] as a woman's figure function, we have always underestimated it. I haven't, because I know what it was like for my mother, like my mother and many other people ... my grandmother, my grandmother! She raised eight children with the salary of a person cycling to work at five o'clock in the morning ... the 'diggers'! How the heck did they do it?! They all lived (...) then, can we remember the role of woman in that period? The importance she had? Compared to a woman who now has ... she has an ... an important function in society ... and oh well, there is more visibility, etc... however, the value, how she managed to raise a family, especially a healthy one, often they used to be healthy families ... I think that one should not underestimate this fact and take it into consideration [u.a. 6 FG men 35-45 over 70, our translation]<sup>6</sup>.

- 5 From the original version: “[...] noi alle sei e mezzo usciamo da casa, sino alle sette e mezzo perché alle sette e mezzo siamo costretti a tornare per forza, perché abbiamo da sistemare i nipoti. Avendo i figli che lavorano, i nipoti non riescono a... e lì ci stiamo noi, ci stiamo” [u.a.7 FG uomini 35-45 over 70]. “Allora, il desiderio di noi nonni sarebbe che i figli ci devono lasciare un po' di spazio. Noi collaboriamo dalla mattina alla sera... con i figli. Noi nonni siamo penalizzati. ‘Ca tutti dicimu cu piacere, daccordu, daccordu... [che tutti noi nonni ci diciamo che facciamo questo con piacere... d'accordo] però se io voglio andare a pesca, io non posso andare, perché sono legato, perché devo prendere la bambina a scuola... questo è oggi il nonno. Lo facciamo ben volentieri...” [u.a.3 FG uomini 35-45 over 70].
- 6 From the original version: “Allora quel valore della donna... allora, rispetto a quella che era la sua funzione più visibile [...] però come funzione figura della donna, abbiamo sempre sottovalutato noi. Io no, perché so di mia madre, come mia madre e tante altre persone... mia nonna, mia nonna! Che ha cresciuto otto figli con uno stipendio di uno che andava la

The narrative by the old man does not offer any alternatives to women's role; on the contrary, the apology of past woman emerges as human being able to successfully grow, educate and feed with few resources a higher number of children compared to the current average that a couple decides to have; in this sense the expression "Compared to a woman who now has ..." is quite clear. This attitude emerges, albeit attenuated, in younger men, in those who created a family in the past ten years; it is possible to notice a paradigm shift which is not complete concerning the subdivision of family duties, which is not based on the axiological level of equity:

I live with my wife, a soldier too: we are both soldiers, we do the same job, we leave in the morning and come back home in the evening. We carry out 50 percent of the housework ... sometimes she does a little bit more, I tell the truth ... but, well ... indeed, perhaps it is more difficult for them today to work and raise a family ... also because if we want to have a free weekend, you have to help at home because otherwise you would spend the weekend helping your children to study, arranging your home, making full load washing machines, preparing food, arranging things for the coming week... so if you don't help each other ... [u.g.5 F.G. men 35-45 over 70, our translation]<sup>7</sup>.

The essentiality of this reflection lies in the awareness of some "facts": a couple who shares the same job (soldiers), therefore the same timetables available for the family, for which the man says he is aware (identification) of the fact that his wife experiences the discomfort of having to face domestic duties, de-

mattina alle cinque con la bicicletta... 'cava monti'! Come caspita facevano?! Vivevano tutti quanti [...] allora, noi abbiamo mai tenuto presente la figura della donna in quel periodo? L'importanza che ha avuto? Rispetto a una donna che adesso ha... è una... una funzione importante nella società... e vabbè, c'è più visibilità, eccetera, eccetera... però, il valore, quello che è riuscito ad ottenere una famiglia, specialmente poi se erano le famiglie sane, spesso allora erano famiglie sane... io penso che non bisogna sottovalutare e tenere in considerazione" [u.a.6 FG uomini 35-45 over 70].

- 7 From the original version: "Io vivo con mia moglie, militare anche lei: siamo tutti e due militari, facciamo lo stesso lavoro, partiamo la mattina e torniamo la sera. Il 50 per cento dei lavori in casa li facciamo... a volte li fa un pochino anche di più lei, dico la verità... però, cioè... anzi, forse è più difficile oggi per loro lavorare e portare avanti la famiglia... anche perché se vogliamo avere un fine settimana libero, comunque devi aiutare in casa perché se non tu il fine settimana lo passi a far studiare i figli, a sistemare casa, fare lavatrici, preparare da mangiare, sistemare per la settimana entrante... quindi, se non si dà una mano uno con l'altro..." [u.g.5 F.G. uomini 35-45 over 70].

spite the tiredness of the working day. However, what does this alleged identification consist of? In a clear rational calculation, it is instrumental in order to enjoy the weekend. In recent years various studies have tried to shed light on the factors that can make couple's life satisfactory, including carrying out activities together outside of work and family commitments (Kalmijn, Bemasco, 2001). The scenario was different in the past, when men almost always spent his free time with friends and acquaintances in town:

There also used to be the figure of the man coming home from work, who got changed and went to the square, right?! ... "sta bessu bau alla chiazza!" (I am going to the square!) [...] The woman stayed home and prepared dinner ... [d.o.1 FG women over 50, our translation]<sup>8</sup>.

One of the many reasons that acts as a "braking effect" of the fulfillment of equality is the lack of awareness of having to comply with rules that force one and the other in the same way, without the former putting himself in an attitude of "solidarity help" towards the latter, as emerges from this excerpt:

As far as I'm concerned ... I help out for the things I can do. My wife has other duties. That is, we balance: what she does best and what I do best and we get along very well [u.a.7 FG men 35-45 over 70, our translation]<sup>9</sup>.

However, a change between generations is visible: the only thing is that for the elderly some household tasks, such as ironing, are still considered purely female and therefore discarded from the male domestic commitment, as suggested by the following lines from the men's focus group:

Once again, for example, I do not iron! No ironing for me! But if I have to clean, wash the dishes [u.g.1 FG men 35-45 over 70, our translation]<sup>10</sup>.

- 8 From the original version: "C'era pure la figura dell'uomo che tornava dal lavoro, si cambiava e andava in piazza, no?!... "sta bessu bau alla chiazza!" (sto uscendo per andare in piazza!). [...] La donna rimaneva a casa a preparare la cena..." [d.o.1 FG donne over 50].
- 9 From the original version: "Per quanto riguarda io... dò un aiuto per le cose che so fare io. Mia moglie ha altri compiti. Cioè, ci uniamo: quello che sa fare meglio lei e quello che so fare meglio io e andiamo d'accordo benissimo" [u.a.7 FG uomini 35-45 over 70].
- 10 From the original version: "Ripeto, per esempio, io a stirare no! A stirare no! Però se devo scopare a terra, lavare i piatti" [u.g.1 FG uomini 35-45 over 70].

The fact that someone has to do something before they are asked, except that ... I can't even iron, huh! So I don't do it [u.a. 2 FG men 35-45 over 70, our translation]<sup>11</sup>.

Among the younger ones, a trend reversal emerges which, also from the tone in which the concept is elicited, shows an actual change in the direction of equality:

at home I get up in the morning ... as she takes care of the children I make our bed, I prepare breakfast, while she is doing other things, like ... then the following morning, while she is making the bed, I take care of the children, like, she prepares the food and then it's my turn to do it ... Whoever can washes the dishes or loads the dishwasher, if there is ironing, there is ironing! There's no escaping it! [u.g.5 FG men 35-45 over 70, our translation]<sup>12</sup>.

The young husband stresses that his way of living family commitments is completely "spontaneous" and "natural" and it is not a matter of joint support for his wife. The male-female relationship emerges more forcefully when women talk about their perception of gender stereotypes:

... In my opinion it depends not only on the context, because even if I live in this context, having both a male and a female daughter, if my daughter folds her pajamas my son has to fold it too, it's not as if I have to fold it for him. If we have to clear the table, we all clear, I clear, my husband clears, but they also clear. Because in a family in which everyone works, everyone has commitments. Since I have to dedicate myself to them in the afternoon, everyone does the things s/he has to do. But it depends on how you educate them. The problem is, as you say: those who do not do it, society has changed ... the problem is in the family. Because if you say "leave it I'll do it" you can't expect that tomorrow you will have a child who is able to be autonomous, because

11 From the original version: *Che uno deve fare una cosa prima che gli viene chiesta, tranne che... nemmeno io so stirare, eh! Quindi non lo faccio* [u.a. 2 FG uomini 35-45 over 70].

12 From the original version: *"[...] a casa mi alzo la mattina... mentre lei sistema i figli io ri-faccio il letto, preparo la colazione, mentre lei fa altre cose, cioè... poi la mattina dopo, mentre lei fa il letto, io sistemo i bambini, cioè, la sera una volta fa da mangiare lei, un'altra volta lo faccio io... Chi si trova lava i piatti oppure la lavastoviglie, se c'è da stirare, c'è da stirare! Chi uno o chi l'altro, sa da fare!"* [u.g.5 FG uomini 35-45 over 70].

it is you who have not taught him [d.g.1 FG women 20-40, our translation]<sup>13</sup>.

Most participants in this focus group agree that gender equality education occurs mainly in the family and must involve both adults and children. All of this will also be reflected in the world of work:

... in my opinion the kids who leave their home and live on their own know what it means to clean, cook, eat, they have to do things by themselves. When they start up their family they will surely know what it means to have a woman who works, because now women all want their own financial resources to be able to do what they want. And so at the same time in my opinion they will end up communicating and agreeing on saying 'I go to work, you go to work, but we manage the house together as well as education'. In my opinion this aspect will soon improve... [d.g.5 FG women 20-40, our translation]<sup>14</sup>.

In this new scenario of gender relations, it is not strange to meet young women whose naturalness in their division of housework seems atypical; it is no wonder that in this era the term “mammo” emerges to define a man who knows how to cook, iron, make beds, etc. as if he were to dismantle the “widely assumed” conception of man – i.e. manly, worker, free to decide on domestic commitments:

13 From the original version: “...secondo me dipende non solo dal contesto, perché anche se io vivo in questo contesto, avendo sia un figlio maschio che una figlia femmina, se il pigiama se lo piega mia figlia se lo deve piegare anche mio figlio, non è che a mio figlio glielo piego io. Se dobbiamo sparecchiare, sparecchiamo tutti, sparecchio io, sparecchia mio marito, ma sparecchiano anche loro. Perché in una famiglia che tutti lavorano, tutti hanno impegni. Siccome il pomeriggio io mi devo dedicare anche a loro, ognuno fa le cose che deve fare. Però dipende da come tu li educi. Il problema è che come dici tu: chi non lo fa è, non è che la società non è cambiata...il problema è in famiglia. Perché su tu dici 'lascia stare te lo faccio io' non puoi pretendere che tu domani avrai un figlio che è in grado di essere autonomo, perché sei tu che non glielo hai insegnato” [d.g.1 FG donne 20-40].

14 From the original version: “...secondo me i ragazzi che vanno a vivere fuori sanno che cosa significa pulire, cucinare, mangiare, cioè devono farsi le cose da soli. Quando andranno a costruirsi una famiglia sicuramente sapranno cosa significa avere una donna che lavora, perché adesso le ragazze vogliono tutte la disponibilità economica propria per poter fare quello che vogliono. E quindi allo stesso tempo si troveranno, secondo me, a comunicare e a mettersi d'accordo nel dire 'io vado a lavorare, tu vai a lavorare, però la casa la gestiamo insieme così come l'educazione' Secondo me si andrà a migliorare...” [d.g.5 FG donne 20-40].



Forgive me ... here there is no “fommy”, it doesn’t exist. I won’t talk to you about my family environment, I won’t talk to you about that. I find myself talking, listening ... fommies don’t exist. For a woman having a husband who is a “fommy” could be a pleasure, why not. Making it clear what is behind being a mother, being a woman [d.g.3 FG women 20-40, our translation]<sup>15</sup>.

This response to the enhancement of the man “who works as a mum” aims to combat the sense of guilt that derives from being helped by her male partner in some domestic tasks; this was a rather persistent feeling in women of a previous generation, but not older ones:

1. I mean, for example, there are clothes for hanging out, then my husband does not hesitate: he goes and stretches them out, even when I am lying on the sofa and watching television. On the contrary, if there is heavy work to be done ...
5. Excuse me can I stop you? To me if he does such a thing in these situations I feel guilty. [...] I had to do it and he is doing it instead ...
4. Why should the woman do it and not the man!
3. Who said this thing? who said it?
7. The atavistic laws then ...
3. [...] because all in all we know ... it is the result of the education we had, because we are over 50, so they educated us that we should do all these things ... here are the feelings of guilt, of which we are still victims, we still have them ... [d.o.1, 3, 4, 5, 7 FG women over 50, our translation]<sup>16</sup>.

15 From the original version: “Perdonami...qui non esiste avere i ‘mammi’, non esiste. Non ti parlo del mio ambito familiare, non ti parlo di quello. Mi trovo a parlare, a sentire...i mammi non esistono. Ma non esistono non per la donna avere un marito ‘mammo’, che potrebbe anche far piacere, perché no. Far capire quanto c’è dietro all’essere mamma, all’essere donna” [d.g.3 FG donne 20-40].

16 From the original version: “1 – Dico per esempio, ci sono dei panni da stendere, allora mio marito non batte ciglio: va e li stende, anche se io in quel momento sono stesa sul divano e sto guardando la televisione. D’altro canto, se c’è un lavoro pesante da fare... 5 – Scusami ti posso interrompere? A me se succede che lui fa una cosa del genere in queste situazioni io mi sento in colpa. [...] Dovevo farlo io e invece lo sta facendo lui... 4 – Perché dovrebbe essere la donna a farlo e non l’uomo! 3 – Chi l’ha stabilita questa cosa? chi l’ha stabilita? 7 – Le leggi ataviche quindi... 3 – [...] perché tutto sommato sappiamo... è esito di un’educazione che abbiamo avuto, perché noi siamo over 50, per cui ci hanno educato che tutte queste cose le dovremmo fare noi... ecco i sensi di colpa, di cui ancora siamo comunque vittime, ce le abbiamo ancora...” [d.o.1,3,4,5,7 FG donne over 50].

And the conflict between women in the field of male chauvinism reoccurs:

2. I like it when ... since my husband is lazier, he doesn't like doing activities, he does nothing at all ... he works, then he doesn't care about the activity ... I like it a lot and so he patiently waits for me at home ...
3. That 'patiently' is not good, that is, we must always find the excuse "yes, but he let me do it" (d.o.2,3 FG women over 50, our translation)<sup>17</sup>.

The new generations seem to have assumed in large part not simply a new awareness in gender relations, but also a different way of constructing relationship dynamics with their partner in their own imagination, thus dismantling all the corollary that was part of an old way of being educated to the couple's relationship, internalized by who passed their fifties instead.

From the comparison between the focus groups composed of women, a handover between generations emerges: those who have passed their fifties have shown themselves to be a bridge of knowledge, giving their children an education aimed at overcoming the male-female relationship schemes, which they themselves had immediately experienced in the relationship with their father and then with their husband.

### 3.2 Life in the working context

Also on the issue of gender in the working context, divergent points of view emerge among the women in San Cesario participating in the focus group.

From the focus group of young women, the perception of a clear disparity compared to men emerges, although many of them fail to provide a specific motivation and often have focused more on talking about the rivalry among women in the workplace:

[...] However, the man is seen as the most available person ... he works overtime, he doesn't have to run away if anybody calls from school, be-

17 From the original version: "2 – A me fa piacere quando... siccome mio marito è più pigro, non gli piace fare attività, niente... lui lavora, poi l'attività non gli interessa... a me piace tanto e quindi lui pazientemente mi aspetta a casa...3 – È il pazientemente che non va bene, cioè noi dobbiamo sempre trovare la scusante 'sì, ma lui me lo concede'" [d.o.2,3 FG donne over 50].

cause they call mom, if her son has broken his nose. It's all about the man's temporal availability – we tend to think, in my opinion, that it is greater than what the woman can give you. Forget that maybe there is a man who works overtime and is 3 hours on the cell phone in the corridor, the woman who does part-time and does in 6 hours what the man does in three days, staying for many hours more. This is a theme, the perception of the time that man can dedicate to the company, which is seen as affection of the employee for the company, in my opinion. The more time I dedicate to it, the more I believe and work well. This is the main thing, because for the rest, in terms of skills and abilities I don't think there is any discrimination, like, man-woman doesn't make any difference, it is really a matter of time. I spend more time and this is seen as "I care more about the company". In my personal experience that's the way it goes. (d.g.2 FG 20-40, our translation)<sup>18</sup>.

Gender differences in the family thus affect the workplace and, more precisely, the choices of employers, who still prefer men because they "know" that family affairs would not interfere with company commitments. This awareness generates feelings of revenge in women, bringing out an overwhelming confrontation in favor of the fairer sex: men spend many hours at work but produce less than a woman, who takes half their time.

This awareness also partially emerges among the men participating in the focus:

In the mind of a woman ... perhaps the man is missing some concepts of the house, but in the mind of a woman, in addition to doing her job, at the same time, the worry that a phone call from kindergarten might

18 From the original version: "[...] Comunque l'uomo è visto come quella persona che è più disponibile... a fare lo straordinario, a non dover scappare a casa se chiamano da scuola, perché chiamano la mamma, se il figlio si è rotto il naso. Questa è la questione della disponibilità temporale dell'uomo che si tende a pensare, a mio parere, che sia maggiore rispetto a quello che può darti la donna. Lascia perdere poi che magari c'è l'uomo che fa lo straordinario e sta 3 ore al cellulare in corridoio, la donna che fa il part-time e fa in 6 ore quello che l'uomo fa in tre giorni, stando tante ore in più. Questo è un tema, la percezione del tempo che l'uomo potrà dedicare all'azienda, che viene visto come affezione del dipendente all'azienda, secondo me. Più tempo sto, più credo e lavoro bene. Questa è la cosa principale, perché per il resto, a livello di competenze e capacità non credo che ci sia discriminazione, cioè uomo-donna non cambia, è proprio una questione di tempo. Io sto tanto tempo e questo viene visto come "ci tengo di più all'azienda". Per la mia personale esperienza è così" [d.g.2 FG 20-40].

come, because maybe the little one is throwing up. [u.a2 FG uomini 35-45 over 70, our translation]<sup>19</sup>.

According to the sociological literature this type of problem often appears: many organizations prefer to invest less in female professionals than in male ones, taking into account the disparity in family tasks (Poggio, 2002; Gaballo, 2013). Sometimes the mere suspicion that a woman may decide to get married is enough to reduce her chances of promotion, a situation that is witnessed by a young participant in the focus group:

[...] But when you go for a job interview - it happened to me personally, I was 30 - a question that they asked me was: 'do you want to have children?' ... if you men want these children someone has to have them, right? I laugh, though: what question is it? I would be hypocritical to answer, as a 30-year-old man, "no, I don't want any". It is normal for a 30-year-old woman, that is, it is quite normal. Then it is clear there are some respectable exceptions, but it is a fairly normal thing. But the fact that the question is asked and that even the intention to have it can be determining is absurd to me ... [d.g.2 FG women 20-40, our translation].<sup>20</sup>

The participant described this experience to define her concept of male-oriented society: to be asked a question during a job interview considered as a clear discriminatory element, because it juxtaposes two reasons for life, two important values: being a mother and working.

19 From the original version: "An capu alla fimmina... u' masculu, forse, qualche concetto della casa gli sfugge, ma na fimmina oltre a fare lu lavoru sou, contemporaneamente nne sta vene ncapu lu pinsieri ca ne rriba na telefonata ta scola materna, ca u' piccinu sta rovescia. Allora, in questo caso subentra l'essere una donna, no? [Nella mente di una donna... forse all'uomo qualche concetto della casa sfugge, ma nella mente di una donna, oltre a fare il suo lavoro, allo stesso tempo, le viene in mente la preoccupazione che possa arrivare una telefonata dalla scuola materna, perché magari il piccolo sta vomitando, Nda]" [u.a2 FG uomini 35-45 over 70].

20 From the original version: "[...] Però quando vai a fare un colloquio di lavoro – a me è capitato personalmente, avevo 30 anni – una domanda che mi è stata rivolta è stata: 'vuoi avere dei figli?'...se voi uomini questi figli li volete qualcuno li deve pur fare, no? Mi viene da ridere, però: che domanda è? Sarei ipocrita a rispondere a 30 anni "no, io non li voglio". È normale che una ragazza a 30 anni, cioè è abbastanza normale. Poi è chiaro ci sono delle eccezioni rispettabilissime, però è una cosa abbastanza normale. Ma il fatto che venga posta quella domanda e che possa essere determinate anche solo l'intenzione di averne è assurdo..." [d.g.2 FG donne 20-40].

Among men, one of the participants recognizes the enormous difficulty for women also in the local job market:

Not much, because she has children and no entrepreneur wants to hire her, because she has children. [...] I also know of someone ... in San Cesario I know someone who has done this type of work, but the fact is that hiring a woman ... not everyone accepts it because they are always asking: “are you married / aren’t you married, how long have you been married, do you have any children, how many children do you have, she will have to stay home because her son is sick, and if she becomes pregnant, I will have to pay for her maternity leave... (u.g.5 FG men 35-45 over 70, our translation)<sup>21</sup>.

However, according to the testimony of one of the participants, San Cesario experienced a golden age not only for economic wealth, but also for opportunities for women in the workplace: it was the period of women tobacconists and workers in the old De Giorgi distillery or the employees of the old printers developing the photos. According to the elderly, these were “excellent” and “brilliant” women who worked and, he adds, raised children.

This is a speech that still transmits and confirms the inevitability of female destiny in the Italian labor market and in particular in the south of the peninsula. This attitude is preparatory, if well internalized and socialized, to a rapid return to the acceptance of a world that must be above all male-centred, at least for certain sectors. In fact, there is still the prejudice of the presumed difference in physical performance between men and women in some sectors:

Personally speaking, I was 5 years in the army, so let’s say almost surrounded by men. In some fields we women were much smarter than men, in some things we were much more self-assured. However, despite everything, they tended to automatically prefer the male colleague without evaluating, and perhaps tended to use the girl for representation, office work, for lighter things. Even the driver’s stupidity: 99% were male because they took it for granted that women could not drive ... former

21 From the original version: “Poco, perché fa i figli e nessun imprenditore la vuole assumere, perché fa i figli. [...] So anche di chi... conosco a San Cesario qualcuno che ha fatto questo tipo di lavoro, però sta di fatto che assumere una donna... non tutti l’accettano perché cominciano a dire: “sei sposata non sei sposata, da quanto sei sposata, se hai figli, quanti figli hai e però mo’ questa mi rimane a casa perché il figlio sta male, e se rimane in cinta le devo pagare io la maternità...” (u.g.5 FG uomini 35-45 over 70).

female colleagues drove trucks better than men ... but my husband himself, my husband is in the army, is a driver, he drives all types of vehicles ... and he avoids all types of women because he automatically says “no they can’t drive”. Most of the jobs that they let us do were representative or lighter, because they took it for granted that perhaps both in terms of strength and others things they preferred men, without perhaps re-considering their views. As for me and my colleagues, I can say that we were much more clever [d.g.6 Focus group, women 20-40, our translation]<sup>22</sup>.

Regardless of the veracity of the specific case, it is still necessary to keep in mind how this discourse emerges forcefully in such a context as the Italian and the southern one, where there is an internal struggle against a reality that still does not see a positive end or epilogue, namely full and physiological gender equality, as in many other European contexts, where welfare protects not so much the head of the family, but the individual and therefore also includes rights aimed at the triadic relationship worker / mother-offspring-worker / father. The awareness of discrimination at work in some young women becomes head-on collision, revenge against men, believing that the former is better and sufficient to carry out all the work necessary for society. In short, this is a representation based on the impossibility of overcoming gender distinctions and looking instead at the individual as such: it is the typical attitude of psychological and cultural defense of minorities.

The difficulty in internalizing the fact that a job may not be predominantly male or female emerges from men, asserting that they are not “capable” or “suitable” for some tasks; even if they themselves claim to be aware of the fact that there are women who work in public and private transport on heavy vehicles,

22 From the original version: “Se devo parlare come esempio personale, io sono stata 5 anni nell’esercito, quindi diciamo quasi maggiormente maschile. In alcuni campi noi ragazze eravamo molto più in gamba degli uomini, su alcune cose eravamo molto più spigliate. Però, nonostante tutto tendevano a preferire in automatico il collega a prescindere, senza valutare, e a usare magari la ragazza come rappresentanza, lavoro d’ufficio, cose un po’ più leggere. Anche la stupidaggine dell’autista: al 99% erano maschi perché davano per scontato che le donne non sapessero guidare... ex colleghe donne guidavano mezzi pesanti meglio degli uomini... ma lo stesso mio marito, mio marito sta nell’esercito, è un conduttore, quindi guida tutti i tipi di mezzi... e lui evita tutti i tipi di donne perché in automatico dice “no non sanno guidare”. La maggior parte dei lavori che ci facevano fare erano di rappresentanza o quelli più leggeri, perché davano per scontato che magari sia a livello di forza che in altri preferivano gli uomini, senza magari valutare. Quando poi io o magari altre colleghe rispetto ad altri colleghi, posso dire che eravamo molto più in gamba” [d.g.6 Focus group donne 20-40].

in construction works, in road maintenance or in the assembly line of cars, adding that they are also very good at it. This clash becomes visible after reading the words by one of the men involved:

I said that for some types of jobs the woman ... she has now been in the military field in general for twenty years... there are some types of ... activity of roles ... I see the woman and ... she has taken over, it's real, we can't hide it! Here, I don't think she is suitable in some contexts... in some things. If she joins the armed forces, in general, today she has taken over ... the commands, lots of them. Maybe not ... but more than the man in some roles I don't think women are suitable ... office activities, of ... not in the middle of the street working on the street, right? So many women on the street, I don't think they are suitable, because ... not all of them, some are male chauvinists, just some, eh! They do more than man, but some, however, eh! We must admit ... but the vast majority I think they are suitable for ... yes, office activities ... Other tasks! But external activity in contact with the underworld, no, because I see all kinds of it, the woman is.... It is the woman! The thug takes little to offend and insult her [u.g. 4 FG men 35-45 over 70, our translation]<sup>23</sup>.

The assembly line, for example – I don't think the woman is suitable for that. I think men are. Instead you see them... assembly lines everywhere [u.g. 4 FG men 35-45 over 70, our translation]<sup>24</sup>.

From both the policeman with 30 years of working experience and the worker emerges a stereotype of gender distinction in the world of work, based on physical prowess and on the psychological ability to cope with various sit-

23 From the original version: “Ho detto che per alcuni tipi di lavoro la donna... ormai nel campo militare in genere è vent'anni che c'è... alcuni tipi di... attività di ruoli... la vedo la donna e... ha preso il sopravvento, è realtà, non possiamo nasconderla! Ecco, non la vedo su alcuni tipi... su alcune cose. Se entra a far parte delle forze armate, in genere, oggi hanno preso il sopravvento al comand... i comandi, molte. Forse non...però, più dell'uomo in alcuni ruoli io non le vedo le donne... attività di ufficio, di... non in mezzo la strada che lavorano in strada, no? Per cui molte donne in strada, non le vedo, perché... non tutte, alcune sono maschiliste, (mascoline) alcune, eh! Che fanno più dell'uomo, ma alcune però eh! Bisogna ammettere... però la stragrande maggioranza le vedo... sì, attività di ufficio... Altri compiti! Ma attività esterna a contatto con la malavita che io sto, no, perché io ne vedo di tutti i tipi, la donna è... è la donna! Il mal vivente ci mette poco a offenderla, insultarla e oltraggiarla” [u.g. 4 FG uomini 35-45 over 70].

24 From the original version: “La catena di montaggio, per esempio, la donna non riesco a vederla. Vedo più l'uomo sulla catena di montaggio. Invece le vedi.... catene di montaggio da tutte le parti” [u.g.1 FG uomini 35-45 over 70].

uations, especially dangerous ones. We are faced with the classic relationship between variables, specifically between belonging to a historically male working sector and the most archaic male chauvinist stereotype, since it is based on physicality and the character's ability to attack events.

However, continuing from the debate between women a different reflection also emerges; there is a perception that something is changing within the couple and probably this change could also result in a change in the workplace.

So starting from this thing, the greater balance that exists in the relationship of a couple, that man and that woman will then bring their experiences of greater understanding to work, because now we are understanding that ... the thing that is emerging is that we say it is in the professional sphere that this thing becomes evident... one of the areas ... therefore the fact that maybe families are moving towards different balances will then cause them to come out and be more understanding... [d.g.2 FG women 20-40, our translation]<sup>25</sup>.

The latter reflection is based on a hope that we could define as an “intimate solution”: the solution to gender inequality starts from the intimate relationship of a couple and precisely resides in the ability of the two partners to manage their daily routine and manage themselves. If most couples manage to change in this direction, the cascade change will affect other areas of social life, including public life. This change is present in more recent generations: in fact, in the men's focus group, the only outsider, who took an opposite stance with respect to the gender relationship, is the youngest: “I have colleagues who work as pilots and go on a mission abroad ... For me, I mean, women can do everything for me” (original script: *Io ho colleghe pilote che vanno in missione all'estero... Per me, cioè, per me possono fare tutto le donne* (u.g.5 FG men 35-45 over 70)); he is the only one, among other things, who has repeatedly said that he perfectly shares family commitments with his wife.

25 From the original version: “Quindi partendo da questa cosa, l'equilibrio maggiore che c'è nel rapporto di coppia, quell'uomo e quella donna porteranno poi le loro esperienze di comprensione maggiore sul lavoro, perché adesso stiamo capendo che... la cosa che sta emergendo è che diciamo è nell'ambito professionale che maggiormente si manifesta questa cosa... uno degli ambiti... quindi il fatto che magari nelle famiglie si stia sempre andando maggiormente verso degli equilibri diversi, porterà poi a tendere ad uscire fuori e a essere più comprensivi o più in ascolto...” [d.g.2 FG donne 20-40].



### 3.3 Degrees of action conditioning in everyday life

Very often male chauvinist culture is so profoundly widespread with its often subtle representations of reality, norms, values and relational mechanisms, that we cannot see “chains” of any kind that constrain a woman’s choices with respect to trivial daily gestures, e.g. ‘having a coffee with a friend’, ‘going out in the evening with some friends and having a pizza’ or ‘being free to leave dirty dishes in order to be able to exercise’. However, when opportunities for confrontation arise, women manage to bring out some dark sides of their life linked to the male chauvinist culture:

2. [...] when you find your balance ... for example, to go and eat a pizza with your friend once in a while it is also nice isn't it? ... I did it!
3. Something's not right here! That is, saying “I did it” as an achievement. In reality it shouldn't be a conquest, it should be a natural thing that I arrange something with my friends that day ...
2. It is not a conquest, of course ...
3. That is why I repeat: as long as we don't change our language and inside us it's like a concession “let me do it” ... the problem is that if your husband said “and I don't like this thing” you would do it once and then you wouldn't do it anymore [d.o 2,3 FG women over 50, our translation]<sup>26</sup>.

Two women over 50 almost peers interact. In the interaction we clearly notice different perspectives, in which the action of going out in the evening with friends is outlined as an exceptional event which is brought to fruition as a small conquest “I did it!”. On the other hand, we note instead a different awareness, which sees the way of describing a personal experience as if it were a concession of one's partner, a fact that brings out the power asymmetry characterizing the couple's relationship (Gherardi & Poggio, 2003): in fact, the criticism suggests the possibility that the “concession” is no longer given, caus-

26 From the original version: “2 – [...] quando trovi l'equilibrio... per dire andare a mangiare una pizza con l'amica una volta ogni tanto è anche bello no? ... Io l'ho fatto! 3 – È questo che non torna secondo me! Cioè il dire 'l'ho fatto' come una conquista. In realtà non dovrebbe essere una conquista, dovrebbe essere una cosa naturale che comunque quel giorno io mi organizzo con le amiche... 2 – Non è una conquista, in modo naturale... 3 – Per questo torno a ribadire: fintanto non modifichiamo il linguaggio e dentro di noi è come una concessione ‘me lo lascia fare’ ... il problema è che se tuo marito dicesse “e però a me questa cosa non piace” la fai una volta e poi non la fai più” [d.o 2,3 FG donne over 50].

ing the balance of the couple to disappear and above all the self-esteem of the woman herself. The “weight” of a possible disapproval would be perceived immediately and could generate a lack of serenity during the evening with friends and subsequently the will to never repeat such an experience:

I don't feel conditioned! That is, I am because there is so much a state of conditioning, so if my husband goes out for coffee, he doesn't even say it ... I find myself saying “ah you know? I'm going there, there, there, there ...” and I mention my to-do list: “so bla bla bla bla ...”. For me, it is not asking for something ... that is, a permit. In reality, it's like asking “will you let me go?”, it's a concession even if we don't want to admit it to ourselves and we try to be bold and independent [d.o.3 FG women over 50, our translation]<sup>27</sup>.

If one reads the woman's reasoning between the lines, a relational asymmetry comes to light, albeit with difficulty: you perceive a conditioning that is independent of any form of verbal imposition by the husband, but resides in the fact that the woman must justify her own movements. As she admits, it is a model which she inherits from her family of origin and does not allow her to “enjoy any experiences of freedom” before getting married. This awareness starts from the comparison with her daughters, who instead have the opportunity to experience an independent life already from the age of 18 for their studies or work and whom she considers more fortunate than them.

[...] the fundamental experience, which I believe none of us has ever had, is that we have moved from the family, from our family, to the other family that we have created, so we have not even tasted freedom, truly life alone and never made decisions for ourselves! So before we dealt with the parents, with the more or less severe father and the mother, etc. then we left a family and immediately entered another one, so we always had to relate to another person who gave us more or less an equal relationship, something ... [d.o.3 FG women over 50, our translation]<sup>28</sup>.

27 From the original version: “Io non mi sento condizionata! Cioè, lo sono perché tanto uno stato di condizionamento c'è, per cui, se mio marito esce e va a prendersi il caffè, non lo dice neanche... io mi trovo a dire ‘ah sai? Sto andando lì, lì, lì, lì...’ e gli faccio tutta la lista dei programmi: “alla talora bla bla bla bla...”. Per me non è un chiedere un... cioè un permesso. In realtà sotto sotto è come chiedere ‘mi fai andare?’, una concessione anche se non lo vogliamo ammettere a noi stesse e cerchiamo di fare le baldanzose e le indipendenti” [d.o.3 FG donne over 50].

28 From the original version: “[...] l'esperienza fondamentale, che poi credo nessuna di noi

The male chauvinist destiny of the woman fully emerges, whose existence is functional to the family, so we move from that of origin that must “protect” and educate her, to the built one, where she must put into practice values and norms learned by parents. A “buffer phase” would have allowed the woman to be able to experience relational dynamics of gender clearly different from those observed by her parents, to be able to compare different cultural models of the male world and to confront women with a varied lifestyle. In addition, this would also allow to consolidate a certain “self-management” of life and therefore a space of autonomy, above all mental, which would most likely have led to a different outcome in the future relationship as a couple. However, in the countries of southern Italy the freedom of a single woman to a young woman was not suitable, because culture tends to denigrate her according to a well-known label, a “spinster”, accompanied by an even stronger “you’re alone and so they will say that nobody wants you”. Hence, the value of a woman appears to depend on her being in possession of the man, possibly only one man, because otherwise the label would be even worse than “bad guy”. This is how the “woman-of-value-if-woman-of-family” model has always been handed down.

This same model is clearly visible outside the family context, in the reactions of the villagers as they observe-and-judge women’s behavior in public:

[...] because they ask themselves, in such a small country ... “but where is he going, who is he going with, what are you doing?”. However, even if they see you alone in Lecce, “but why are you going ...”, that is, like, these are the questions people still ask. They are busybodies [d.g.5 FG women 20-40, our translation]<sup>29</sup>.

[...] I do believe this exists. I acknowledge the fact that this is being observed. However, if a man and a woman, a married woman, a woman with children has a coffee with a “friend” who is not her husband or with

abbia fatto, è che noi siamo passate dalla famiglia, dalla nostra famiglia, all’altra famiglia che ci siamo create noi, per cui non abbiamo neanche assaporato la libertà, veramente vivere da sole e decidere per noi stesse! Per cui prima abbiamo fatto i conti con i genitori, con il padre più o meno severo e la madre, eccetera; poi siamo uscite da una famiglia e siamo entrate subito in un’altra famiglia, per cui lo stesso ci siamo sempre dovute riportare ad un’altra persona che ci ha concesso più o meno un rapporto paritario, qualcosa...” [d.o.3 FG donne over 50].

29 From the original version: “[...] perché si domandano, in un paese così piccolo... “ma dove sta andando, con chi sta andando, che cosa stai facendo?”. Ma anche se ti vedono da sola a Lecce, “ma perché stai andando...”, cioè nel senso le domande se le fanno le persone ancora. Sono molto curiose” [d.g.5 FG donne 20-40].

unusual friends, then this is something to be observed with curiosity [dg2 FG women 20-40, our translation]<sup>30</sup>.

[...] because if we talk about San Cesario which is such a small town and we all know one another, in my opinion a small part still suffers from this prejudice of going to have a coffee with a friend ... [dg2 FG women 20-40, our translation]<sup>31</sup>.

To use a military term, the story describes a woman practically surrounded by looks, judgments, observations; as well as the effects that follow: feelings of guilt and feeling at fault, if one thinks or acts as a man would normally do.

The men involved in the focus group declared they do not share the persistent chauvinist culture in their municipality, underlining their existence in most people:

Well, since we are here ... and then I won't go on, otherwise I would go down ... he says: "naa, guarda! Ma quiddha la mujere de lu Vittorio ete? E sa se pija lu caffè cu lu professore? ". [But is that Vittorio's wife? And is she having coffee with the professor?] Ma finchè ete lu professore... ma quando... [...] Siamo pettegoli qua! Allora comincia il punto interrogativo: 'e percè? E percè? Percè alle trete e nno l'ha pigghiatu alle tieci de la matina, quannu vannu tutti?' [Why at three o'clock and not at ten in the morning instead, when the bar is busier?] And she chose precisely three in the afternoon, when there is not a soul!? [FG men 35-45 over 70, our translation]<sup>32</sup>.

30 From the original version: "[...] considero che questa cosa esista. Riconosco il fatto che viene osservata questa cosa. Che comunque se un uomo e una donna, una donna sposata, una donna con i figli va a prendere il caffè con un "amico x" che non è il marito o con gli amici di sempre, è una cosa che viene osservata con curiosità" [d.g.2 FG donne 20-40].

31 From the original version: "[...] perché se parliamo di San Cesario che è un paese così piccolo e ci conosciamo tutti quanti, secondo me una piccola parte ne soffre ancora di questo pregiudizio di andarsi a prendere un caffè con un amico..." [d.g.2 FG donne 20-40].

32 From the original version: "Niente, siccome qui siamo... e poi non vado avanti sennò scenderei... dice: "naa, guarda! Ma quiddha la mujere de lu Vittorio ete? E sa se pija lu caffè cu lu professore? ". [Ma quella è la moglie di Vittorio? E sta prendendo il caffè con il professore?] Ma finchè ete lu professore... ma quando... [...] Siamo pettegoli qua! Allora comincia il punto interrogativo: 'e percè? E percè? Percè alle trete e nno l'ha pigghiatu alle tieci de la matina, quannu vannu tutti?' [Perché alle tre e non ha preso il caffè alle dieci di mattina quando il bar è frequentato?] E si è scelto proprio le tre de pomeriggio, quando non c'è n'anima!?" [FG uomini 35-45 over 70].

From the story some interesting rules emerge theatrically, which indicate which is the boundary that a woman must not cross in order to still be defined a “good woman”: going out alone, possibly not; if a woman goes out without a husband, she needs to know how to choose; it is also necessary for her to calculate the right time and place. Otherwise, an inquisitive process is activated with an almost obvious condemnation:

But I don't know if he is a colleague of hers, I see a person, I asked if it is the professor I know or my brother-in-law, 'o qualchedunu quai' [or someone else] I know... [...] they know each other, they are fellow villagers... No lu pijare stu caffè alle trete! [Don't have a coffee at three!] [FG men 35-45 over 70, our translation]<sup>33</sup>.

In this last excerpt we add details on the precautions that a “good woman” should respect, in addition to those mentioned above and relating to the appearance of the person met without her husband: age, aesthetics, proxemics, etc... Of course, we cannot know how widespread and profound this custom is in San Cesario, but the fact that it is told with such vividness, and the speech is accepted by all, speaks volumes about the town's ancestral male chauvinism.

The rest of the men participating in the focus showed an opposite view; some of them claimed that there was nothing wrong, that it all depended on a woman's “aptitude”:

I believe that ... from a technical point of view, nothing happens if the woman is reliable. If the husband knows her as a reliable person, there are no problems; but if she is already buggy from the start ... [u.a.7 FG men 35-45 over 70, our translation]<sup>34</sup>.

As if to say: the woman is always judged on the basis of typically male prospects of convenience. In fact, often the man going out with a woman who is not his wife is seen as “OK”, but a wife is instead “buggy”.

Almost everyone agrees that the reputation of a woman does not depend so

33 From the original version: “Ma io non so se è un collega di lavoro, vedo una persona, ho detto se è lu professore che lo conosco o mio cognato, 'o qualchedunu quai' [O qualcuno qui] che conosco pure, no... [...] si conoscono, sono paesani... No lu pijare stu caffè alle trete! [Non lo prendere questo caffè alle tre!]” [FG uomini 35-45 over 70].

34 From the original version: “Io credo che... da un punto di vista tecnico proprio, se la donna è seria non succede niente. Se il marito la conosce come persona seria, può stare tranquilla, se invece è già bacata in partenza...” [u.a.7 FG uomini 35-45 over 70].

much on her good intentions but on the success of the social control of a small community. The story of a young participant in the focus talking about the public situation in San Cesario is clear:

[...] a cousin from Pompeii came to visit me and he was here in San Cesario with us for a week. My husband works in Bari. We went to the bar here in San Cesario and had a coffee, but you know that my husband's phone call came, he was in Bari, I was in San Cesario having a coffee, my husband said 'yes, it's our cousin'? You know what I mean ... so maybe I continued to do it, even with other friends, but it bothers you, doesn't it? [d.g.6 FG women 20-40, our translation]<sup>35</sup>.

It happened to me that some people only saw my car near a bar and said... to my ex that I was in the bar! I was at the municipality getting meal vouchers for my daughter [d.o.4 FG women over 50, our translation]<sup>36</sup>.

In the two stories a clear form of "social control" emerges, which brings to mind the typical attitudes of Durkheim's mechanical solidarity (1997), as well as Simmel's (1969: 54) reflection on the consequences of numerosity and the level of heterogeneity of an individual's social circles:

The small-town life ... set up barriers against individual independence and differentiation within the individual self. These barriers were such that under them modern man could not have breathed. Even today a metropolitan man who is placed in a small town feels a restriction similar, at least, in kind. The smaller the circle which forms our milieu is, and the more restricted those relations to others are which dissolve the boundaries of the individual, and the more readily a quantitative and qualitative specialization would break up the framework of the whole city circle (Simmel, 1969: 54).

35 From the original version: "[...] mi venne a trovare un cugino da Pompei ed è stato qui a San Cesario con noi una settimana. Mio marito lavora a Bari. Siamo andati al bar qui a San Cesario a prenderci il caffè, ma tu lo sai che è arrivata la telefonata a mio marito, lui stava a Bari, io stavo a San Cesario a prendere un caffè, mio marito ha detto 'sì, è il cugino'? Quindi per dirti, no... quindi magari io l'ho continuato a fare, anche con altri amici, però ti dà fastidio, no?" [d.g.6 FG donne 20-40].

36 From the original version: "A me è capitato che hanno visto soltanto la mia macchina vicino ad un bar e sono andati a dire... giusto una parentesi... al mio ex che io ero nel bar! Io ero al comune a prendere i buoni pasto per mia figlia" [d.o.4 FG donne over 50].

At a low level of social complexity there is a reduced cultural complexity as well as the impossibility that the “different” can coexist freely, under penalty of sanctioning actions that strongly call for respect for values and norms.

This strong sense of “social control” perceived and socialized by other women – at least those aware of the limits imposed in a small community – has probably generated a more unexpected phenomenon: when a social category is weak, becomes aware but does not accept any power asymmetry of which it is a victim, it has different solutions, including a sort of self-ghettoization due to the impossibility of publicly manifesting its dissent, its vision of reality. Self-ghettoization is not permanent but functional, and limited to specific spaces and times, albeit exclusive. In the context of San Cesario it is the case of a gym for women only, a sort of free zone in which no form of male conditioning can occur.

- 3: Excuse me ... I heard that when I entered this gym, and Manuela can confirm it, and I also signed up for this, ‘a gym for women only’.
- 2: yes ...
- 3: That is, this speaks volumes! If you analyze this phrase - and it doesn't only come from contexts of people aged 60-70, it also comes from us young people, who in a certain way have seen society in a different way, we have not always been dominated by men, we have had the opportunity to express ourselves – it makes you think!
- 2: Yes, this is true, because let's say you eliminate the competition, you enter a place where you already know there is ...
- 1: No get rid of the shame, girls come on, what competition?
- 2: Yes, that aspect too.
- 1: But someone who is ashamed to go to a gym where there are also men ... but if you feel observed, I assume that you either observe or go to the gym, and you don't care. Or if anyone is afraid of going to a gym where there may also be men...
- 2: but it's not a matter of fear...
- 3: it is not fear ...
- 1: ... of shame ...
- 3: ... feeling free from those looks. Sometimes it's that... [d.g.1,2,3 FG women 20-40, our translation]<sup>37</sup>.

37 From the original version: “3: Scusami...io ho sentito entrando qui in questa palestra, e lo può confermare anche Manuela, e mi sono iscritta anche per questo, ‘ah, finalmente una palestra di sole donne’. 2: quello sì...3: Cioè, questo te la dice lunga! Se tu analizzi questa frase – e viene da non solo contesti di persone di 60-70 anni, viene anche da noi giovani,

In this conversation, it emerges that male glances can also be perceived as a limitation to one's freedom to do any activity, without feeling the weight of some glances that generate a feeling of "shame", as one of the women complains. Such a space therefore seems to be a "defense mechanism" useful for detaching oneself for a short time from a social context, which seems to generate a condition of latent stress and thus find refreshment even just for the useful time of a workout. It would be interesting to know the continuation of this very short-lived social self-marginalization action and if this space-time sharing exclusively for women could one day give life to something more public, e.g. an organized action that aims to change the cultural situation and relationship between man and woman in San Cesario.

#### 4. Conclusions

In the light of what has emerged we cannot but agree with the studies on gender representation which place their emphasis on cultural transformations, on the greater investment in education and on the individualization process placing greater emphasis on personal autonomy and self-fulfillment, also for women, pushing towards reversible choices and medium-term projects. Through the stories of the experiences we have found in greater detail a type of couple that is characterized by a significant commitment in the management of the family and which, in consideration of the life cycle phase and female participation in the labor market, would require a more active participation of man in domestic routines in order to lighten the excessive female burden. The results indicate that in couples where women work, male commitment is growing, but slowly: the gaps are still wide and the specialization of men and women in different tasks is still marked, so much that, at current rates, it appears it will still take

che in un certo modo abbiamo visto la società in un modo diverso, non siamo state sempre succubi degli uomini, abbiamo avuto la possibilità di esprimerci – ti fa pensare! 2: Sì, questa cosa è vera, perché comunque diciamo, elimini la competizione, entri in un posto dove sai già c'è... 1: No elimini la vergogna, ragazze dai, ma che competizione? 2: Anche quello, anche quello. 1: Ma una che si vergogna ad andare in una palestra dove esistono anche degli uomini...ma se tu ti senti osservata, io parto dal presupposto che o osservi anche tu, ma sennò vai in palestra, fai l'ora tua e te ne fregghi. Oppure se una ha timore di andare in una palestra dove ci possono essere anche degli uomini... 2: ma non è questione di timore... 3: non è timore... 1: ...di vergogna...3: ...sentirsi libera da quegli sguardi. Alle volte è anche quello..." [d.g.1,2,3 FG donne 20-40].



many years before reaching a real sharing of domestic responsibilities between the partners. Today, men appear only slightly more active in the family than in previous years and progress is mainly due to the lower female involvement and not a significant increase in the male one. There is no doubt that the achievement of a more balanced gender system must be supported by measures capable of promoting and enhancing a couple model with shared and non-complementary roles, in which the home management and care functions are not determined by gender, but implemented through balanced negotiations between the partners. However, a couple does not live in contexts isolated from others: in fact, if in a community - as emerged from the focus - forms of control and interference in the life of couples are repeated to the detriment of female freedoms, the times of a cultural transformation could be much longer or would even neutralize efforts towards achieving gender equality.

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## IV.

# The third dimension as meeting point with diversity

*Simone Rollo*

*The only true voyage of discovery, the only fountain  
of Eternal Youth, would be not to visit strange lands  
but to possess other eyes, to behold the universe  
through the eyes of another, of a hundred others,  
to behold the hundred universes that each of them  
beholds, that each of them is.*  
(Marcel Proust)

## 1. Introduction

Otherness is a concept that can be linked to that of identity, when it refers to the relationship with the Other who is “different”: man vs. woman, teenagers vs. adults, autochthonous vs. foreigners and so forth. The Other as a stranger confronts us with the unknown and with “who we are” (Carli & Paniccia, 2004; Salvatore et al., 2018). The present paper investigates the image of the foreigner and the representation of women as a pretext for analyzing dynamics of confrontation with Otherness, two identities that meet in a shared place, i.e. the relationship, here understood as a third dimension.

## 2. The other as foreigner

All the people coming from “across the border” suggest the existence of a pluriverse (Telfener, 2010), which casts doubt on the uniqueness of collective representations and value systems, thus making identity certainties weak.

Many studies have analyzed the relationship between social capital in the host community and attitude towards immigrants. A high social capital can be traced in societies with relational and coexistence resources that lead to benefits in general both socially and individually; on the contrary, a low share capital configures a society based on isolation. Putnam (2007) argues that societies characterized by a multitude of ethnic groups tend to display a high level of social isolation and therefore low social capital. Low social capital is associated with low levels of trust and civic engagement (Sturgis, Smith, 2010; Stolle, Soroka, Johnston, 2008). Furthermore, confidence in the government by the natives along with high levels of social well-being (e.g. low degree of poverty) are variables that influence immigrant's welcoming attitude (Delhey, Newton, 2005). Some studies do not find these relationships between social capital and the attitude towards immigrants (Gesthuizen, Van der Meer & Scheepers, 2009).

The solution to this knowledge gap is to be found in the culture of belonging (Hooghe *et al.*, 2009; Sturgis, Smith, 2010). In fact, universalism – i.e. a complex of values that relate to understanding, tolerance, protection, benevolence, acceptance and recognition – has a positive impact on the level of acceptance of immigrants; on the contrary, conservation values (e.g. personal and social security) are linked to an attitude of closure. In this regard, Schwartz's study (2007) showed how opposition to immigrants reflects issues concerning personal protection, social security, the maintenance of norms as well as the need to preserve traditions. Vecchione and his colleagues (2012) highlight the fact that symbolic values moderate personality traits that come into play in relationships with the other: a personality characterized by openness / friendliness predicts positive attitudes towards immigrants (Hodson, Hogg, MacInnis, 2009) and negatively correlates with prejudice (Ekehammar *et al.*, 2004; Hodson, Hogg, MacInnis, 2009).

Besides the role of social capital, personal values and personality traits, other dimensions examined in the studies on the relationship with the other are personal characteristics (e.g., gender) (Ritsner *et al.*, 2001) and psychosocial disorders (Fazel, Wheeler, Danesh, 2005; Silove *et al.*, 1998; Zilber *et al.*, 2001) related to refugees, who may have about ten times the probability of having a post-traumatic stress disorder compared to the rest of the population, as well as psychiatric co-morbidity phenomena (major depression and anxiety disorders).

### 3. The other as woman

Women found effective access to society and work between the 1980s and 1990s after long political and social discussions already present in previous years: it is the so-called “second wave” of feminism, which began in Italy in 1968 and characterized the 1970s. It is referred to as “Second wave” because the attention is no longer placed on the request of women to be equal and assimilated to the male world as in the first nineteenth-century feminist movements, but precisely on differences. In fact, the goal is to build a society that recognizes female peculiarities while guaranteeing equal rights (Bertilotti, Scatigno, 2005).

The literature has deepened the analysis of gender discrimination, as well as the improvement of working quality brought by women (Pena-Boquete, Stefanis, Fernandez-Grela, 2010).

Gender difference calls for psycho-social dimensions that have an impact on the well-being of the discriminated person, for example, on self-esteem or onset of psychological distress. Only recently has empirical research drawn its attention to the discriminated victim and the specific psychological correlates of the stress condition as a product of discrimination (Corning, 2002). The distinction between objective discrimination and perceived discrimination has been suggested (Paradies, 2006). Compared to perceived discrimination, Crosby (1984) shows how a woman reports being discriminated when she thinks of herself as “being a woman” even if she has never been personally discriminated against: the woman would perceive the female gender as subject to discrimination without reporting an objective discrimination experienced on her own skin (as if being a woman carried more group image than personal experience).

Discrimination affects self-esteem which in turn leads to psychological distress (Frone, 2000), often depressive (Schulz *et al.*, 2006), anxious (Fischer, Holz, 2007) as well as somatic symptoms (Klonoff, Landrine, Campbell, 2000). A key role is played by social support that acts as a protective / risk factor in discrimination processes (Ajrouch *et al.*, 2010): this means that the perception of a network to refer to and identify with, is a protective factor against discrimination and its effects.

## 4. Rationale

This study aims to explore the representation of women and immigrants as pretexts for investigating the relationship with the Other and, specifically, with diversity. The work is part of a theoretical-semiotic frame that recognizes the meaning behind individual thoughts and actions (Valsiner, 2007). The action of people is defined by the culture of belonging, or by the set of meanings generated in relational and discursive practices; in this sense, culture is understood as a semiotic and dynamic dimension (Salvatore, 2018). In this perspective, social phenomena are characterized by dynamics of meaning construction (Smedslund, 2013; Salvatore, Venuleo, 2013) and therefore, in this particular case, a specific representation of woman or immigrant is the product of a wider way of looking at reality resulting from the discourses that actors generate to make sense of their own and others' experience.

For the purposes of this study, the image of women and immigrants was explored through the collection of two main types of "texts": 1) narratives through focus groups with adults and 2) drawings produced by elementary and middle school children. The generated texts (minutes in the focus groups and graphs in the drawings) are intended as the product of meanings that the participants use to give meaning to the phenomena with which they interface (Carli, Panniccia, 2004). The narration of the woman and the immigrant becomes the narration of the Other. All data were collected in San Cesario, a town in the province of Lecce (Puglia – Italy), which represented the target of the AdNICH project (see also the chapter written by Gaballo).

## 5. Focus group: the image of the woman

Twenty people were recruited to participate – voluntarily and anonymously – in the focus groups; they were chosen on the basis of gender and age: 8 men and 7 women aged 40-60 and 5 women aged 20-40. Hence, there was the possibility of conducting three focus groups: with 8 men aged 35 and 60+, with 7 women aged 40-60 and with 5 women aged 20-40.

With the consent of the participants each focus group was video recorded and then transcribed. Each meeting opened with the following stimulus question "What does it mean to be a woman today?"

The texts were analyzed through the T-LAB software tool. Each transcription, as a narrative text, has been merged into a single textual corpus, keeping track of the participants' gender, age as well as their belonging to the first, sec-

ond or third focus. Correspondence Analysis (CA) was applied to the corpus in order to extract the factorial dimensions – here understood as dimensions of meaning – that feed and give meaning to the narratives produced and explain their similarities and differences. The positioning of the three focus groups on the first two factorial / sense dimensions identified was then analyzed.

Each factorial dimension is made up of two opposing polarities.

The first factor extracted from the AC sees two distinct *representations of women*: on the negative polarity (left) a static image of the woman, whereas on the positive polarity (right) a dynamic image of the same.

(-) Static image of the woman. On this polarity there are lemmas that recall a description of the woman in terms of predefined roles within the family context. The idea of stillness emerges with reference to both the dimensions of a family structure (e.g. *moglie, casalinga, nipote, figlio, marito*; in English respectively: *wife, housewife, granddaughter, son, husband*) and roles / actions (e.g. *stirare, portare avanti, sistemare, lavatrice, lavare, casa, letto, piatto*; in English respectively: *ironing, carrying out activities, arranging things, washing machine, washing, home, bed, dish*).

There are lemmas that refer to family relationships (e.g. *aiuto, superare, valorizzare, sottovalutare, valore, visibilità, stipendio, mantenere*; in English: *help, overcome, enhance, underestimate, value, visibility, salary, maintain*).

(+) Dynamic image of the woman. There are lemmas that refer to their own identity construction, albeit limited to family roles (e.g. *mamma, papà*; in English: *mom, dad*). *Realizzarsi, esprimersi, scegliere, spaventarsi* and *vivere* (in English respectively: *realize, express oneself, choose, be afraid, and live*) are all terms that refer to the waiting or the becoming. In this sense, polarity is configured as a dynamic image of women.

Table 1 shows the terms describing both polarities.

<i>Static image</i>		<i>Dynamic image</i>	
LEMMA	TEST VALUE	LEMMA	TEST VALUE
Funzione	-4,2679	Tempo	3,1375
Aiuto	-3,8168	Vivere	3,1249
Stirare	-3,8168	Scegliere	3,0907
Superare	-3,8168	Mamma	2,7929
Valorizzare	-3,8168	Papà	2,7919
Portare avanti	-3,5449	Dipendere	2,6850
Sistemare	-3,5449	Realizzarsi	2,6109
Riuscire	-3,3944	Ambito	2,1040
Decisione	-3,3051	Esprimersi	2,0214
Mantenere	-3,3051	Spaventarsi	2,0214
Sottovalutare	-3,3051	-	-
Moglie	-3,0250	-	-
Nipote	-3,0086	-	-
Figlio	-2,7419	-	-
Costringere	-2,6983	-	-
Lavatrice	-2,6983	-	-
Marito	-2,6983	-	-
Valore	-2,6983	-	-
Visibilità	-2,6983	-	-
Collaborare	-2,4998	-	-
Settimana	-2,4501	-	-
Lavare	-2,3223	-	-
Lavoro	-2,3223	-	-
Casa	-2,3223	-	-
Stipendio	-2,2003	-	-
Letto	-2,0988	-	-
Piatto	-2,0354	-	-

Tab. 1 – The representation of women (First factor)

The second factor contrasts two polarities, each of which being characterized by a different focus. On the negative polarity (below) we find lemmas that refer to the women's socially-attributed role; on the opposite polarity (top) we find terms that reflect more narratives centered on the roles of couples.

The second factor can be interpreted as the *representation of women's role*.

Table 2 shows the terms describing both polarities.



<i>Social role</i>		<i>The role of the couple</i>	
LEMMA	TEST VALUE	LEMMA	TEST VALUE
Libertà	-4,8554	Donna	3,8389
Equilibrio	-4,6392	Collaborare	2,4795
Casa	-3,7185	Funzione	2,4253
Ruolo	-3,2124	Uomo	2,3292
Sacrificio	-3,2124	Figlio	2,1859
Uscire	-3,1893	Aiuto	2,1690
Marito	-2,9690	Stirare	2,1690
Abbraccio	-2,8729	Valorizzare	2,1690
Discussione	-2,8729	Diverso	2,0505
Educazione	-2,7168	Società	2,0444
Collaborazione	-2,6303	-	-
Gelosia	-2,4877	-	-
Ripartizione	-2,4877	-	-
Rompere	-2,4877	-	-
Tempo libero	-2,4877	-	-
Stare zitti	-2,4877	-	-
Sentire	-2,3395	-	-
Piazza	-2,3333	-	-
Rapporto	-2,3200	-	-
Discutere	-2,0848	-	-
Aggiustare	-2,0309	-	-
Assicurare	-2,0309	-	-
Condizionare	-2,0309	-	-
Cura	-2,0309	-	-
Dialogo	-2,0309	-	-
Esigenza	-2,0309	-	-
Giustificare	-2,0309	-	-
Posizione	-2,0309	-	-
Ritagliarsi	-2,0309	-	-

Tab. 2 – Representation of the women's role (Second factor)

(-) Social role. Lemmas that refer to desirable values or principles (*libertà*, *collaborazione*; in English respectively: freedom, collaboration) co-occur with lemmas recalling a subordinate positioning of the woman with respect to a partner / interlocutor (e.g. *ritagliarsi*, *restare*, *giustificare*, *rompere*, *sacrificio*, *gelosia*, *stare zitti*...; in English respectively: find time for something, stay, justify, break, sacrifice, jealousy, keep quiet...) in the family and within the social context (*casa*, *marito*, *tempo libero*, *piazza*; in English: home, husband, free time, square).

(+) Role in the couple. Words that refer to functions and activities mainly carried out in the family context (*funzione, collaborare, stirare, aiuto, figlio*; in English: function, collaborate, do the ironing, help, child) co-occur with the terms *uomo, donna, diverso and società* (in English: man, woman, different and society) suggesting the different social representation of the role linked to gender.

The two dimensions of meaning – *representation of women* (first factor) and *representation of the roles of women* (second factor) – are the semiotic repertoires through which the participants’ narratives within the focus groups have described the woman. Graph 1 highlights the different positioning of the three focus groups on the factorial level.

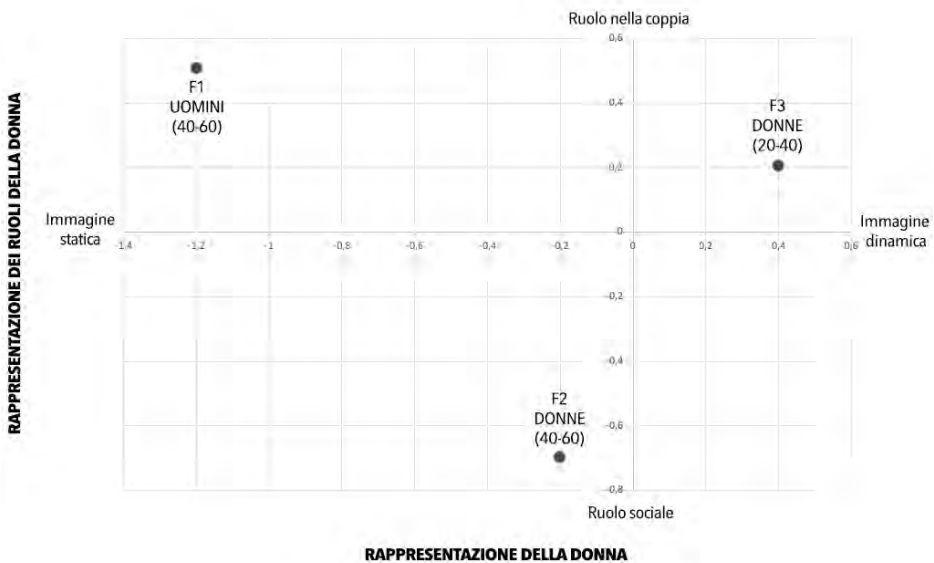


Figure 1. Positioning of groups on a factorial level

The comparison between women and men aged 40 and over 60 highlights a difference with respect to the representation of women’s roles: the group of women speaks in terms of woman subordinated to the other, whereas the group of men speaks of woman in the couple and in equal relationship to the Other.

The group of women expresses the woman’s bond to relational dynamics where it is necessary to provide a justification, where it is difficult to find some free time because the woman is in a position that must guarantee care. The only solution of coexistence is seen in the couple’s balance; this balance is at-

tributed to generational education. The group of men speaks of the woman in her relationship with the man: they speak in terms of collaboration, where man and woman have the same function, so much so that both of them are potentially fulfilling the same tasks.

Both groups are positioned on the negative polarity of the first factor (static image of the woman): they both refer to the woman in the family context and therefore in an environment where roles and tasks are pre-established.

The group of young women takes a distinctly different position. Their dialogues refer to a dynamic image of the woman: the idea of realization and expression emerges, along with the possibility of choosing one's roles also with respect to family definitions (e.g. being a mother and being a father). With respect to the representation of women's roles, the group expresses itself by talking about the woman in relation to her partner and more generally to the couple.

However, both groups of women are positioned on the negative polarity of the first factor (static image of the woman): this turns out to be a non-discriminatory dimension between the two narratives, as they both refer to the woman (and in relation to the man) in the family context and therefore in an environment where roles and tasks are pre-established. The possibility of alternative forms of gender roles is absent.

## 6. Drawings

19 drawings were produced on the image of the woman, 28 of which relating to immigration. The drawings were produced by children aged 10-13 attending elementary and middle school, responding to the task "Disegna, nel modo che ritieni più opportuno, cosa vuol dire per te essere donna/essere straniero. Inoltre, in una didascalia, scrivi cosa rappresenta il tuo disegno" ("Draw, in the way you think is most appropriate, what it means for you to be a woman / to be a foreigner. Also, in a caption, write down what your drawing represents", *our translation*).

The Content Analysis was carried out for each drawing: the most recurring thematic elements in each graphic representation were described (Lüscher, 1976; Poggiolini, 2012).

## 6.1 The image of women

With respect to the recurring themes, Figure 1<sup>1</sup> portrays the woman at work at the time of payment, where there is a difference between the remuneration of the woman and that of the man, who is paid much more; Figure 2 shows a woman and a man on the shoulder facing a sun that sets over the sea: in this case both the man and the woman share a moment of life together, the two are united by a red heart in the center of the sheet; Figures 3, 4, 5 and 6 depict moments of encounter between man and woman contextualized respectively in front of a building, a sunset, on a lawn and in a park, where – in the latter case – they play with a ball.

The other drawings are presented as images without a specific context, which mainly express a thought on the theme, that is, they are the graphic representation of what is expressed in words in the comment attached to the drawing; the themes include different representations:

- man and woman drawn in a heart (Figures 7 and 8) that seem to convey the idea that the relationship between genders is based on love and support;
- a white space where attention falls on black colored brains to represent the concept that gender difference is an evil way of thinking about people (Figure 9);
- a portrait showing an embrace (Figures 10 and 11) or holding hands (Figures 12 and 13), drawings which specifically depict the woman embraced by the man and accompanied by comments in which the idea that the woman must be protected, held tight as a “gift par excellence” or even a woman – which in comparison with the man – is free from stereotypes such as strong man vs. weak woman, woman who can get excited vs. man who must conceal emotion;
- a space for comparison such as a scale (Figures 14, 15 and 16) or a parallelism of colors (Figure 17), where specifically an equal weight is left to men and women without one being higher than the other just to indicate gender equality;
- Figure 18 recalls the character of Mulan to describe the male roles dressed by a woman within a clearly male context such as war and in the comment to the latter drawing we read the reference to the story of Mulan who wears

1 See appendix at the end of this chapter.

- her father's clothes to be able to go to war and fight in her place without the other male warriors recognizing her as a woman;
- Figure 19 represents two trees, one of which is drawn only with branches and the other with a green crown and red fruits, almost metaphorically indicating the biological diversity between man and woman: the latter, which in the drawing could be precisely represented by the tree with fruits, represents the woman who generates life.

As already mentioned, a caption was attached to each drawing in which each child could add a comment or thought concerning the content of the drawing itself. The most recurring thoughts refer to an image of man and woman in a relationship dominated by inequality, where the strong man and the weak woman often emerge: the desire is expressed to reduce the difference between man and woman – defined as socially constructed – mentioning a complementarity between genders. Men and women are two entities that together are complementary and therefore by integrating in their diversity they tend to complement each other: this relationship becomes almost a dimension to be preserved (in other words, a resource). In some drawings, gender difference is recognized in different socially-accepted gender roles (for example, men must be strong and women dependent). Freedom is recognized for women only by the way they are able to express their feelings.

All in all, in these graphic representations the image of women as a gender difference is dominated by dimensions of diversity that are expressed in different terms.

(a) Accessibility. The example of Mulan's drawing (Figure 18) highlights a content that is still culturally considered "man-specific": in order to be accepted the woman must assume male attitudes and in the drawing such attitudes are understood metaphorically as the clothes to wear to go to war and not being recognized. In the comment to this drawing we read "[...] voleva aiutare suo padre, andando in guerra al suo posto, ma le donne non potevano, per cui lei si vestì da maschio e combatté [...]" ("[...] she wanted to help her father by going to war in his place, but women could not do it, so she dressed as a male and fought [...]", *our translation*). It is evident in this claim that war is for men and women cannot fight. Furthermore, the woman has a different recognition than the man: she is paid differently (Figure 1) – which highlights a poor recognition of the woman at work as she is paid less, as can be seen from the comparison of the briefcase full of banknotes for the man and the few coins for the woman.

(b) Complementarity and integration, where men and women can meet in diversity in such a way as to complete each other. Man and woman are positioned on opposite sides on the weighing pan enough to counterbalance and balance each other: this indicates that if the weighing pan is aligned, man and woman have equal weight. In the caption in drawing 3 we read that men and women “[...] sono fatti della stessa pasta” (“[...] they are two of a kind”, *our translation*). At the same time, positioning on two different weighing pan presupposes a comparison and therefore a differentiation between men and women. This differentiation also involves complementarity, as metaphorically it refers to the image of a locked chest where “[...] l’uno ha la chiave dell’altro” (“[...] one has the key to the other”, *our translation*) (Figure 16). In Figure 17 we see the representation of a world that divides the sheet into two parts, where one is completely colored in blue with the pink symbol of femininity in the middle and the other is pink with the blue symbol of masculinity in the middle; in addition, the symbol of equality is drawn on the world. In a further drawing two different trees are depicted (Figure 19). The tree metaphorically represents the human being: here it could be the man and the woman who touch each other with a branch where one of the two bears fruit (like the woman who allows the birth of children), whereas the other does not. The concept of difference and complementarity appears to be well represented by the man and the woman holding hands (Figure 12), who are placed with their gaze in opposite directions: this refers to the idea that man and woman have two different visions but can still hold hands and therefore have – in a moment of integration – an overall look that takes into account both directions. In this regard, also look at the drawing depicting two faces that have two opposite looks and which are at the same time kept together within a heart (Figure 8). Metaphorically, even shared play is a moment of integration and at the same time complementarity (boy and girl playing with a ball, Figure 6).

(c) Stereotypes and prejudices as descriptions of gender imbalances are provided. Man is the strong gender unlike the woman who must be protected: a man and a woman embrace each other (Figure 10) and the child writes that the man “[...] deve proteggere la donna da qualunque persona o pensiero che la preoccupa [...]” (“[...] [the man] must protect the woman from any person or thought that worries her [...]”, *our translation*). The man is strong in the social image and for this reason he is stuck in this representation, since he is forced to adapt to all expectations related to strength: in the drawing that portrays the woman embracing a man (Figure 11) we read “[...] L’uomo è imprigionato nello stereotipo di colui che deve mostrarsi forte, poco coinvolto,

attento a non farsi trapelare la sua emotività, la sua fragilità, i suoi sentimenti [...]” (“[...] Man is imprisoned in the stereotype of the one who must be strong, not very involved, careful not to let his emotions, his fragility, his feelings leak out [...]”, *our translation*). This is a fundamental step, because whoever expresses this thought recognizes a resource in the weakness of the woman: stating that the woman embraces the man, because she is dependent on this (that is to say, “[...] La donna è colei che si protende verso l’uomo con un atteggiamento di dipendenza [...]”) (“[...] The woman is the one who reaches out to the man with an attitude of dependence [...]”, *our translation*), at the same time, unlike the latter, she is free to express herself on the basis of her own feelings and emotions (i.e. “[...] le concede di esprimere le proprie emozioni e il suo amore. Forse in questo risiede, paradossalmente, la libertà della donna, nel suo poter esprimere senza vergogna i propri sentimenti”; “he allows her to express her emotions and love. Perhaps this is, paradoxically, the freedom of the woman, which resides in her being able to express her feelings shamelessly”, *our translation*). Hence, the difference between man and woman is not inherent in nature but in the relationship between man and woman in a socio-cultural context of belonging. In this regard, Figure 9 shows the brains drawn in black on a white background, as if they were the damaged lungs of a smoker; the representation suggests a damaged brain, where the image of the brain recalls the mind and therefore people’s thoughts and cognitions. In the caption to the drawing we read “Ugual-mente. Le differenze di genere non sono innate! [...]” (“Equal brains. Gender differences are not innate! [...]”, *our translation*), where there is a clear reference to the way of thinking about people.

## 6.2 The image of the migrant: findings

Among the themes that emerged from the drawings, the main ones can be summarized in four points.

- (a) *Foreigner as a measure of equality, integration and socio-cultural enrichment.* The sense of equality is expressed by representing many people around the world (Figure 20) as if they wanted to share the same space (the world becomes the shared object). In the caption to this drawing we read “Siamo tutti uguali, non ci sono differenze tra di noi” (“We are all the same, there are no differences between us”, *our translation*). Regarding inclusion, we read “[...] non dobbiamo lasciarli ma accoglierli [...]” (“[...] we must not leave them but welcome them [...]”, *our translation*) (Figure 21): in this

drawing, reference is made to a sports context where the foreigner and the Italians are shown on opposite sides of the sheet, separated in the center by the representation of a tree and a soccer goal. Metaphorically this refers to a reality that expresses itself in terms of difference but ideally this difference must be eliminated: this passage centered on the ideal reality seems to be expressed by the autochthonous child in the section of the sheet where the foreigner is represented. Regarding equality we read “Secondo me siamo tutti uguali e per questo con gli stranieri e soprattutto con i miei compagni stranieri sto molto bene” (“In my opinion we are all the same and for this reason I feel at ease with foreigners and especially with my foreign companions”, *our translation*) (Figure 23): in this drawing three people of different origins are represented as if to indicate the possibility of living with diversity. Albeit different, we are the same precisely because we are human beings. Graphically this concept is represented by a human figure perfectly divided into two equal parts where one has been colored white and the other black (Figure 27). In the caption of the drawing we read “[...] anche essendo stranieri, diversi, pensarla in un modo diverso non cambia niente, siamo tutti bambini e soprattutto tutti esseri umani!” (“[...] even being foreigners, different, thinking in a different way does not change anything, we are all children but above all human beings, *our translation*). The value of equality and inclusion is well expressed by Drawing 25 where two hands – of different colors – hold each other in a radiant light. In the caption to this drawing we read that “[...] siamo tutti uguali, non bisogna mai escludere nessuno, dobbiamo essere tutti amici!” (“[...] we are all the same, we must never exclude anyone, we must all be friends!”, *our translation*). The same theme, with a similar graphic representation, is presented in Drawing 28. The formula for diversity in terms of enrichment is well explained by the following words in the caption “Due bambini: un italiano e una straniera si scambiano le conoscenze della loro cultura” (“Two children: an Italian and a foreigner exchange knowledge of their culture”, *our translation*) (Figure 29). It is a drawing that presents two children talking on a background while depicting a playground: the other has a different culture that can be shared. A dimension of recognition and exchange with the Other emerges, or it is acknowledged that the “different” is the bearer of values different from one’s own and in the idea of sharing a dimension of communication emerges (exchanging “the knowledge of their culture” means relating intimately with the Other).



- (b) *Foreigner as different due to different physical traits.* Diversity is traced back to purely tangible characters: the spoken language, the color of the skin or – more generally – the country of origin. “Per me non c’è differenza tra me e gli altri, o della mia lingua o di altre, tutti quanti saranno comunque miei amici” (“For me there is no difference between me and the others, or my language or others, everyone will still be my friend”, *our translation*) (Figure 24): in this drawing three people are represented holding hands as if to indicate the possible sharing of the same context, despite tangible differences. The idea of friendship also emerges along with the sharing a deep feeling metaphorically represented by the heart that acts as a background. The theme of the heart that encompasses several people from different countries is presented in drawing 26: here a world is depicted with people from the different continents and the whole drawing has a heart in the background. Regarding the perception of a different color we read “[...] ho provato a far capire che pur essendo di colore diverso siamo tutti uguali [...]” (“[...] I tried to make it clear that despite the different color we are all the same [...]”, *our translation*) (Figure 25). This color diversity is well represented in Drawing 30: a simple white background presents two people, one colored and the other all in green, who point their hand against each other highlighting the significant difference in color. In the caption to this drawing we read “Voglio far capire che il colore della pelle è solo una differenza fisica: e non una differenza a livello sociale” (“I want to make it clear that the color of the skin is only a physical difference: and not a social difference”, *our translation*). Further drawings that bring back the alien’s diversity in terms of physical appearance are Drawings 28 and 31 which, by depicting relationship dimensions (the meeting in a park in the former and the handshake in the latter), clarify the idea of a diversity which is tangible in color, but passable.
- (c) *Different as an enemy: attitudes and dimensions of prejudice.* The idea of enemy derives from the depiction of a war scenario (Figure 32): from what is reported in the caption, the alien is the one who brings war “Gli stranieri non possono fare le guerre, ma devono avere l’amore!” (“Foreigners cannot make wars, but must have love!”, *our translation*). In the representation of this concept, an indigenous war veteran is depicted in the center of the sheet. The depiction of the enemy, from which to be on alert, is also represented in Drawing 39 where a row of foreigners is greeted by a native who hides a knife behind him. In the caption we read “[...] nonostante le numerose propagande di sensibilizzazione, si finge di accettare il diverso

per poi realmente discriminarlo ed emarginarlo dalla società. [...] Il razzismo per me oggi è ancora molto diffuso [...]” (“[...] Despite the numerous awareness propagandas, we pretend to accept the different and then really discriminate and marginalize it from society. [...] Racism for me today is still widespread [...]”, *our translation*). The idea that the foreigner – as an enemy – is the cause of war as well as the one to be wary of is connected to a whole series of drawings that report assessments regarding stereotypes and prejudices. Drawing 38 depicts four different situations around a single theme: prejudice. The sheet, divided into four equal sections, shows homosexuality in the first box at the top left; in the second box at the top right, prostitution; in the third box at the bottom right, immigration and finally, in the last box at the bottom left, people who do not meet accepted standards (in the drawing represented by overweight people). In the caption we read “I bulli mettono le loro vittime in un altro mondo, come un palloncino, che si può scoppiare solo con l’amore” (“Bullies put their victims into another world, like a balloon, which can only burst with love”, *our translation*). The prejudice that creates an attitude of estrangement and distrust is represented by a wall that separates the whole world from immigrants (Figure 40): the drawing accentuates the difference with the foreigner through the representation of a wall between the world and an agglomeration of dots black in color that could represent immigrants. There is a depiction of racism, or an extreme distant positioning of the autochthonous by the foreigner so much so that in the caption we read “[...] Molto spesso assistiamo a fatti che mettono in luce il profondo razzismo che esiste in Italia, dove anche chi viene con le migliori intenzioni è guardato con diffidenza. [...] vedo spesso prendere in giro le persone di colore. [...]” (“[...] Very often we see facts that highlight the profound racism existing in Italy, where even those coming with the best of intentions are viewed with distrust. [...] I often see black people being made fun of. [...]”). In the drawings attached to this dimension there is also a desire to reduce these attitudes and prejudices: the depictions show how what is being described is the consideration of what is seen in everyday life, but at the same time in the caption the desire to break down these thoughts and conceptualizations is made explicit. One of the drawings that portrays the stranger as different and at the same time links this dimension to the next, that is, that of a stranger as a person who needs help, is the representation of the arms extending from the inside of a cage towards the mainland (Figure 42): a national situation recalls Italy where an obstacle that blocks immigration and increases differences is represented (you can see

an iron gate closed by a padlock). Here, a need for help emerges as if it were a real “cry for help”. Only the arms of migrants are represented on a black background, which would metaphorically recall the migrant’s image: the arm as a sign of asking for help without a body that identifies them. This is an image that homogenizes the immigrant as a person – with a negligible identity – who only asks for help.

- (d) *Foreigner as a disabled person who needs help.* In representing the foreigner as different, the Other was depicted as a disabled person who needs help. In particular, there are two people who point their finger at a third person in a wheelchair (Figure 33). The same theme is proposed by Drawing 34 where the disability is accentuated in the representation of one person climbing the stairs and the other being in a wheelchair. The foreigner is depicted as in need of help. In the caption in Drawing 35 we read “[...] una bambina italiana insegna a tagliare la carta allo straniero” (“[...] an Italian girl teaches the stranger how to cut paper”): it seems as if the stranger did not know how to do the simplest things (in the drawing, the action of cutting the paper) so much so that the autochthonous must teach him how to do it by bringing out a dimension of incompetence / incapacity. The help dimension is also represented by the image of a silhouette that reaches out from the mainland to bring down silhouettes of a person from a dinghy (Figure 37) or also by the representation of two shaking hands, one of which is brown in color to a boat with people on top and the other one of pink color hooked to the world (Figure 36). Compared to these two drawings, the caption reads “Aiuto : Loro = Noi : Aiuto” (“Help: Them = We: Help”) (Figure 37) and “Istruzione e lavoro sono tutto ciò di cui l’uomo ha bisogno per vivere con dignità! Aiutiamoli a vivere nelle loro terre!” (“Education and work are all that man needs to live with dignity! Let’s help them live in their lands!”, *our translation*) (Figure 36).

## 7. Concluding remarks

The study explored the image of women and immigrants within the frame of the relationship with diversity, through narrations in the form of dialogue for the focus groups and graphic narratives for the drawings.

The results highlighted how the discourses on women are organized on two main dimensions of meaning: the representation of the woman and the representation of the woman’s roles. On the one hand, the woman is defined through

anchoring to predefined roles limited to the family context. The prevailing cultural mandate seems to recognize her in her role as wife and mother: a further definition is not possible (e.g. working woman, female friend...). Every time the woman defines herself and proposes parameters that do not respect the cultural mandate, a dimension of guilt emerges, for having to justify herself for a deviation from the socially foreseen model, which amplifies her experience of feeling out of place. The image is that of a woman as a weak gender which must be protected and through which man can show his strength and superiority. A key to reading these results could be I-strong vs. other-weak. On the other, there are recognizable discourses that refer to an under-construction identity which is oriented towards its own realization and its own expression and choice of life not necessarily linked to traditional roles: the cultural reference model would have wide margins within which women are conceivable alternative identities (to those of wife and mother) without any sense of guilt.

As the woman represents what is inferior and weak, so it is for the immigrant: the foreigner is the one who asks for help, the weak identity that must be helped. The results show the idea of a foreigner as a disabled person. If, on the one hand, the immigrant is described as a different person only in terms of physical characteristics and origin, on the other s/he is represented as the different person to defend against, to be wary of because s/he is a possible threat to one's territory. In the latter case, the foreigner is the enemy: the image of war, which is described in the data, recalls the idea of a foreigner as a destructive dimension that arouses fear. The foreigner, understood as a stranger, generates fear because s/he questions his/her certainties: the foreigner brings about a re-evaluation of the element given (for example, his/her own identity: who are we?).

These results have a common matrix: talking about oneself through the Other. The relationship and encounter with the Other, with the unknown interlocutor, allows for an intermediate space between the concepts of "I-we" and "you-you" which is characterized as a meeting place: in other words, a third dimension renamed as "I-you" or also "we-you". The encounter with the Other is possible only if the unknown, the un-given is accepted, by recognizing a boundary within which one can meet and talk. Man and woman, as well as the autochthonous and the foreigner, are relationships that allow you to deal with your own identity. The encounter in the relationship with the Other would represent the third dimension, the meeting and exchange point between diversities.

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# Appendix



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9

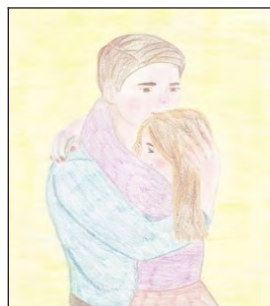


Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13

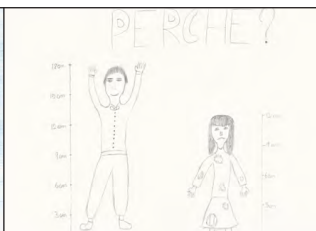


Figure 14

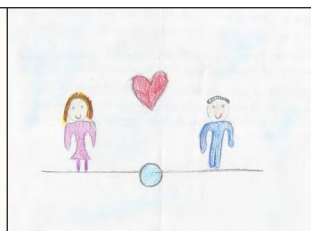


Figure 15

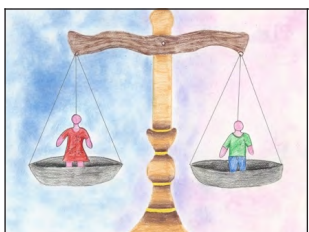


Figure 16



Figure 17

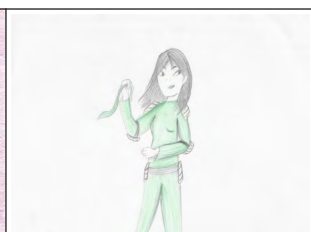


Figure 18



Figure 19



Figure 20



Figure 21



Figure 22



Figure 23



Figure 24





Figure 25



Figure 26



Figure 27



Figure 28



Figure 29



Figure 30



Figure 31



Figure 32

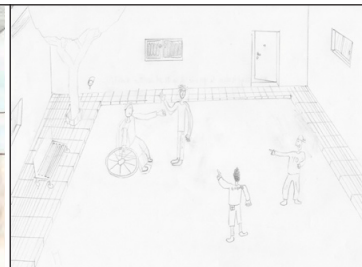


Figure 33



Figure 34



Figure 35



Figure 36



Figure 37



Figure 38



Figure 39

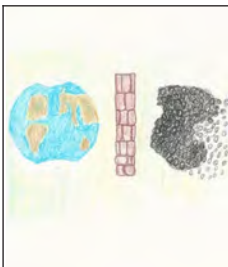


Figure 40



Figure 41



Figure 42



Figure 43



Figure 44



Figure 45



Figure 46



Figure 47

V.

# Women's magic. Socio-psycho-anthropological studies on female identity in the Salento area. Magic, disease and its cure

*Maria Grazia De Donatis*

*If fundamental questions are more or less universal,  
the way we answer them can only be individual and local.<sup>1</sup>*  
(Hugues De Varine)

## 1. Introduction

The aim of this work is to identify resistance and self-affirmation mechanisms enacted by women in traditional contexts. The hypothesis is that in traditional culture – especially in rural contexts – female knowledge is handed down informally, unlike institutionalized (predominantly male) culture. These processes have to do with magic, which takes on a double value: on the one hand, it is a spell which in peasant cultures is represented by the so-called evil eye; on the other, it is a cure through the use of traditional remedies reflecting women's cultural background and operational practice.

The present paper aims to highlight mechanisms and practices concerning traditional cultures – especially Mediterranean ones – in different ways and through diverse forms. On the one side, on a global scale modernization processes have produced mechanisms of cultural conformity based upon a rationality model that could be defined as instrumental, in line with Max Weber's thought.

On the other, residues of necessary irrationality are still visible, which are

1 Our translation, as for all citations provided throughout the paper for which no official translation could be retrieved.

forms of world re-enchantment and often make reference to women in their dual role of both charmers and curators. Within the framework of the AD-NICH project, which makes women and their diversity a relevant element, the desk analysis intends to re-evaluate traditional culture not in order to re-propose models which are now part of an unrepeatable past, but as awareness form of women's traditional role and re-acquisition of diversity as a value.

The project is characterized by an interdisciplinary approach which draws on anthropology and sociology, within a framework of reference characterized by the contribution of psychoanalysis.

## 2. Genius loci as identity in the Salento area

Salento is an ever-changing land which is difficult to describe; as soon as one tries to grasp its essence, it has already become something else, it has already transformed itself and its culture into something new.

In particular, the last few decades have witnessed a strengthening of its territorial identity, which has now been recognized both nationally and internationally as an autonomous entity – if not a sub-region within Puglia itself. However, this process of local identity differentiation and definition has had both its pros and cons.

Identity is a process and never a definitive acquisition. It involves both the recovery of memory and the definition of a set of practices and knowledge in which individuals recognize themselves; notwithstanding this, at the same time it can entail a radicalization of the self as opposed to other identity affirmations (Remotti, 1996).

In any case, the conditions for building a local identity are rooted, so to speak, in the geographical conformation and history of the area. With over 250 kilometers of coastline, a myriad of inhabited centers and very active craftsmanship, Salento is a land where culture has stratified. Messapian and Roman remains coexist with the prehistoric monuments scattered everywhere and characterize the rural landscape of Salento. In the province of Lecce, a prehistoric *menhir* overlooks an underground Byzantine crypt which is still used today for religious rituals. The coast north of Gallipoli is characterized by an Arabized atmosphere perfectly expressed in local art and architecture, whereas in some other countries (e.g. the so-called *Grecia salentina*) an archaic form of Greek is still spoken. The heavily populated hinterland has a series of urban centers known for their landscape and architectural value; to name but a few: Lecce, for instance, is the guardian of baroque churches designed by Zimbalo and

Cino, the historical center of Gallipoli with its island bridge, Otranto and its visible remains from the Middle Ages, Galatina and the frescoes of Santa Caterina, Oria and its Federician castle.

This architectural, linguistic as well as cultural stratification constitutes the premise for the recovery of the local identity described above. Thanks to its peculiarities Salento has increasingly distinguished itself from the rest of the region to which it belongs (Puglia) through a process of self- and hetero-recognition: the *salentino* adjective has become synonymous with shared identity – in recent decades often in relation to the tourist and economic exploitation of its territory. If, on the one hand, this process allows for the recovery of local (material and immaterial) culture, on the other it entails a significant reduction of its complexity: being reduced to a tourist attraction, traditional culture is remodeled, loses its meaning and becomes an event. Perhaps the most emblematic example is the recovery of tarantism, a phenomenon which was studied in depth by Italian anthropology and ethnology in the post-World War II period and which has now become the object of tourist and cultural speculation. However, the exploitation of a peasant tradition for the purpose of *loisir* is a phenomenon which is also linked to women's subordinate condition - which originated from another ancient phenomenon:

Strictly speaking, the Terra del Rimorso represents Puglia as the chosen area of tarantism, i.e. a historical-religious phenomenon born in the Middle Ages which lasted until the 1700s and beyond, up to the current wrecks still observable across the Salento Peninsula. In this area women were said to be pinched by a spider, namely the taranta; they used to go to Galatina on Saint Paul's day – more precisely the night between 28 and 29 June – and visit the church dedicated to the saint, where they were shook with real convulsions, wiggling, screaming and then collapsed to the ground, taking physical forms close to those psychomotor crises that medicine compared to attacks of madness. These women believed they had been 'pinched' by a spider – which was an opinion shared within the local social context. Once they were pinched by the tarantula while they were working in the fields, they asked the saint to heal them from a real form of possession put into effect by the spirit of the spider which was responsible for their convulsions (De Martino, 1961: 13, our translation).

Tarantism, which is one of the most unique neuroses, was traditionally considered as the product of the bite by *Tarentula Apuliae*. The consequent neurosis is characterized by an irresistible need to dance, accompanied by music that

manifests itself with a disturbance of intelligence and an altered state of consciousness. De Martino highlights how the bite by the *taranta* is actually a defense as well as an outburst mechanism. In a rural world in which women are marginalized and segregated, the liberating dance of the *taranta* has a cathartic function, it is an instrument of liberation, transitory and release of otherwise repressed impulses.

Notwithstanding this, the Salento woman, as in all parts of southern Italy, played a fundamental role at all social, psychic and anthropological levels for centuries: not only was she a marginalized figure, but also a mother to whom magic was entrusted in its dual meaning of damage and care. The woman from Salento, as in many southern parts of the world, was not only a mother, but “The Mother”: the mother who takes upon herself the task of fulfilling all her admirable prerogatives; the paradigmatic mother; the mother who brings out the effects of affects thanks to her unconditioned availability, the mother of perfect efficiency or, in short, of omnipotence.

This traditional role of women in Salento has been perpetrated until recent years: the woman was the one who could utter incantations, cast evil eye and, at the same time, the one who could chase them away. Women were able to “heal” you (homeopathic women) with the same poison with which they poisoned you.

### 3. The *macàre* and popular magic

According to the popular tradition of Salento and beyond, still today on the night of San Giovanni, on June 24th, wonders and magic take place. From the 1607 *Archivio Arcivescovile di Otranto* we find out that on the day of the feast celebrating San Giovanni Battista in Galatina some women used to visit some churches or “suburban places” where they used to dance “many times with tambourines” in front of “indevote and otiose young people” who threatened the “the sexual morality of many women” (*Archivio Arcivescovile di Otranto*, 1636-37). Sources indicate that these meetings did not use to take place in Galatina on the day of San Paolo as tourists are often told today, but on the night of San Giovanni, the day of the summer solstice, when pagan rites were mixed with the advent of Christianity. It is known that on the eve of the feast the Salento *macàre* (a term translatable as witches or sorcerers) collected the rue, i.e. an herb considered to be the most influential within the magical world, then mint, thyme, chamomile and St. John’s wort. Herbs were believed to have been baptized by the dew of the night and to have been hung in the house to

ensure protection throughout the year. However, with them the *macàre* used to make *macàrie*, i.e. spells: they used to steal the holy oil from the church, make a concoction and create a sort of syrup used to dissolve incantations. The Council of Trent prohibited and condemned these customs and considered them as “superstitious magic”, i.e. popular magic made by the people for the people.

The article entitled *Macàre e tarante* (Santoro, 1988, pp. 71-82) highlights how until the second half of the twentieth century *macàre* played the role of managers within the crisis of tarantism, trying to be mediators of the symbolic universe of taranta.

In any case, it is necessary to understand the meaning of magic: it is the presumed ability to dominate the forces of nature through the use of occult arts of an evil nature, e.g. black, beneficial and healing magic, if it is white. The word *magic* derives from the Greek *mageia*, which is the doctrine of fourteenth-century Persian magi. As Freud points out:

We are therefore not astonished to learn that something else went in hand with the animistic system, namely the elaboration of directions for making oneself master of animals and things, as well as of their spirits. S. Reinach wants to call these directions, which are known under the names of ‘sorcery and magic’, the strategy of animism; [...] Then sorcery is essentially the art of influencing spirits by treating them like people under the same circumstances, that is to say by appeasing them, reconciling them, making them more favourably dispose to one, by intimidating them, by depriving them of their power and by making them subject to one’s will; all that is accomplished through the same methods that have been found effective with living people. [...] Magic must serve the most varied purposes. It must subject the processes of nature to the will of man, protect the individual against enemies and dangers, and give him the power to injure his enemies (Freud, 1919, p. 180).

For historical and anthropological reasons, Salento lent itself to experiencing magic as a daily fact; the pagan rites of ancient Greece, which were then poured into the territories of the *Grecia salentina*, are a clear testimony along with the ethnic and cultural stratification and the significant presence of the Jewish and Albanian ethnic groups. This context strengthened the permanence of these forms of daily living.

Until the fourteenth century the economy of Salento had mainly been based on the production of wine and oil; towards the end of the nineteenth century the Salento area also became famous for the cultivation of tobacco. It was a

primarily rural economy dominated by a feudal system that lasted until the Bourbon era and, despite a very lively intellectual class, the whole south of Puglia was unable to renew its socio-economic reality due to resistant conservative forces. The combination of a strong, highly archaic rural culture accompanied by its economic and social backwardness allowed pagan forms to combine with the Christian religion until the twentieth century. The peasant class, which mirrored a large portion of the population, was poorly conditioned by the emergent bourgeois culture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. People used to resort to soothsayers and *macàre*, who were capable not only of predicting the future but also of giving a symbolic explanation for any misfortune, illness and death and other related events in their everyday life, such as crops. In fact, anthropologists have linked magical thinking to the need for security of individuals in moments of crisis: a form of cognitive reassurance against the practical unpredictability of our daily choices (Malinowski, 1976; De Martino, 1971). This also applies to other parts of Italy; Ernesto de Martino confirms this in his studies on the Lucanian *maciàre*, where the ethnologist adds another element of interest, almost a sort of gender division of the magical roles: a popular magic belonging to women and a learned magic attributed to men (Sammartino, 2004).

#### 4. Is there any gender difference in magic?

In the peasant reality gender difference is determined by the fact that women were not allowed to attend school of any order and grade. On the basis of psycho-anthropological considerations, men predominantly approached logical-rational thinking and philosophical studies; on the contrary, through her intuitive thinking and deep contact with the events of nature, women lent themselves to oral tradition and to handing down magical practices from mother to daughter, including knowledge of healing herbs. Hence, there was a cultured magic that was typically masculine. We find a very interesting example in the *Grecìa salentina* with Matteo Tafuri: he was an astrologist as well as an alchemist who was keen on medical science; he used his knowledge, which was made up of prohibited books competing with the Christian religion, to offer an alternative cosmology. Matteo Tafuri was known for his alchemical arts throughout Europe, he was professor at the University of Salamanca in Spain, and towards the end of his years he decided to go back to Soletto and teach alchemical art, thus gaining proselytes among a large number of young alchemists eager to know the secrets of his “magical arts”. His contributions



were in-depth studies in astronomy, astrology, alchemy, sciences unknown to the public and therefore defined as magical; he also taught Latin, Greek, Physics, Medicine (Bernari, 2009). In a personal interview from May 2018 with prof. Luigi Manni dealing with *Tafuri e le macàre soletane*, I learned of the Santo Stefano church in Soletto: besides being portrayed with a grandiose *Giudizio Universale*, “many are called, but few are chosen”, the religious building makes reference to the punitive criterion of retaliation, represented with a high relief depicting a macrofallic devil:

Thanks to their science and by virtue of their own philosophy, cultured magicians as well as magician philosophers like Tafuri were able to fully understand the secrets of nature and break the spells of evil. The opinion that philosophical knowledge was able to free men from the sorceries of life was widely shared by 16th-century intellectuals. The magic learned for its potentially subversive and “heretical” character was the most dreaded of all by the church. It is no coincidence that Matteo Tafuri was brought to Rome and tried by the Holy Inquisition (Manni, 2004, our translation).

Popular magic was an “exquisitely” feminine phenomenon, it had no books, no texts and no philosophical system of reference. It was an extra-canonical practice but, in trying to resolve the crises, it worked to complement rather than oppose the role of the church at that time. The reference culture of the *macàre* was mainly oral, female and attributable to rural classes. In the case of Soletto there seems to have been no interactions between the elite culture of the learned magician and the low culture of the sorcerers. Thanks to his extensive medical and astrological knowledge, Matteo Tafuri distanced himself from solitary *macàre* and considered the *macària* to be chattering, especially when the *macàre* proposed talismans and magic stones or when they claimed to cure the plague.

## 5. The Salento *macàre* before modernity

The Salento *macàre* in the pre-modern era acted in a historical context characterized by misery and precariousness. In all the stories we find common factors: on full moon nights the *macàre* turned into frightening witches dressed in black rags, or cats (strictly black too); in groups they went to the sea or under a centuries-old walnut tree and indulged in endless Dionysian dances. This image

is inspired by various beliefs spreading across Europe in past centuries: the Sabbath. The Sabbath was said to be a conference of witches in the presence of the devil, during which magical practices, diabolical orgies and blasphemous rites were performed (Levack, 2008). The *macàre* therefore instilled fear and respect at the same time, in relation to the extraordinary powers to which they often resorted to solve the most intricate problems; in fact, these women were able to “cast” or release the evil eye and were extraordinarily skilled in preparing filters, magic potions, ointments, spells and incantations, called *macariè*, to spark love in a boyfriend, in a husband, in a lover or to make them die – they could even cause death or kidnap babies and, finally, drive away the spiteful elves infesting the houses (*scazzamurieddhri*).

The *striàre*, synonymous with *macàre* in the *Greccia salentina*, were the living proof of the Manichean dualism that has always characterized human beings: on the fine line between peasant wisdom and the most obtuse and blind superstition, they fought between good and evil; if during the day they were attentive mothers and wives devoted to family and home, at night they changed “skin”, smeared their bodies with a formidable ointment whose formula was known only to them and, after reciting a ritual phrase, they let loose in unrestrained dances all night long.

Salento witches learned the magic arts and spell formulas from their mothers on Good Friday night and loved, among other things, to cure or pro-cure the evil eye. This curse actually became like a bad disease, the symptomatology of which consisted of a series of unexplained ailments or disastrous events that occurred one after the other. Once the evil eye or “fascination” was contracted, the affected person experienced severe headaches, fever and vomiting. It is important to note that today, as then, the causes of the evil eye are always to be found in the feelings of envy, hate and resentment. This is a fundamental theme of the low Lucan ceremonial magic.

By this term we mean a psychic condition of impediment and inhibition, as well as a sense of domination, the condition of being acted by an equally occult powerful force which leaves a person’s autonomy and his/her capacity for decision and choice without margin. Headache, drowsiness, exhaustion, relaxation, hypochondria often accompany fascination: however, the experience of an indomitable and fatal force remains its predominant feature. Fascination involves a fascinating agent (the *macàra*) and a victim, it is considered as an evil eye, i.e. a malignant influence that proceeds from an envious gaze, with various nuances ranging from more or less involuntary influence to deliberately hatched fas-

cinations, with defined rituals and which can be defined as 'death fascination'. The subject will no longer simply be a fascinate, but a spirited, i.e. a possessed or an obsessed person to be exorcised. The treatment of a fascination or evil eye, envy, workmanship, is based upon the execution of a particular ceremonial by specialized magical operators (De Martino, 1971, p. 13, our translation).

To avoid death, if the incantation was spotted on time, then a *macàra* was called, who could put into practice what the mother had taught her, that is: she poured a little water and a little cup of oil into a basin; she then carefully approached the cup to the bowl, dipped the index finger in the cup and, by overlying the large container three times with a finger, slid three drops of oil into it. Afterwards, the witch waited and, depending on the compound behavior, she knew whether or not an evil eye had been cast on the person: if the oil was completely dispersed in the water, then there had not been any incantation; if, on the contrary, the three drops of oil were concentrated, mixing perfectly in the center of the bowl and creating a "big eye", then there was no doubt that evil had been accomplished. Note how symbolism is reflected in the magical act: the "big eye" belongs to the one infusing the fascination.

## 6. How did Salento people protect themselves from macare?

The dual role of threat and protection typical of *macàre* can be identified in the way in which in popular culture attempts were made to identify and self-protect from the influence of magical arts. According to the Salento popular tradition, these women were forced to walk straight upright and could not bend; for this reason the entrance doors of the *pajare* (the trulli used as temporary shelters by peasants) and of the *suppinne* (the peasants' country houses) were built at a lower height than normal, just to not allow these *mal'umbre* (malombre) to enter at night. Other ways to self-protect from these witches had been passed down from generation to generation. For example, one was to insert on the entrance thresholds of the houses (or under the shirt) one of the many herbs for chasing witches, e.g. a sprig of hypericum, better known as "St. John's wort" or "devil chasers", olive tree, rosemary, bay leaf, juniper or a whole walnut with husk; again, a horseshoe, open scissors or a scythe on the front door or around the cradles of children. Knowing that the powers of the witches only have an effect at night, one could leave a jar containing coarse salt or a broom of wisdom upside down in front of the door of the house: in

this way the *macàre* would have to stop to count the grains of salt or the threads of the broom wasting all nights. Even *lu furnaru*, i.e. the sieve used for the flour, represented a challenge for the *macàra* in the counting of the holes, just like the baskets *de li conzi* or the fishermen's *calome* with lots of lines and hooks to untangle – these were such laborious operations that required the whole night in order for everyone to be safe. We now know that the *macàre* were real witches, capable of a power that even science could not possess: it was the power of suggestion, but also that of cure.

## 7. Macàre and macarie in today's society

Ordinary people no longer speak so easily about *macàre* stories, it is difficult to carry out interviews on the topic by now. The advent of modernity, the institutionalization of the magical / thaumaturgical power of the church first, of the school afterwards, of the mass media and social media has caused witches to no longer exist in the forms assumed in traditional society.

If therefore today we question people about *macàre*, they could feel judged if they answered that they still believe in the existence of witches who turn into nocturnal animals and have the power to curse and sometimes kill.

This does not mean that there are not many people who believe in the existence of the evil eye and in someone who has the power to cast it and remove it to avoid falling ill and dying. A valid testimony on this aspect can be found in the interview with psychiatrist Dr. De Vitis, who worked at the Tricase ASL administered by Carlo Codacci Pisanelli:

To broaden the views on the witchcraft system currently existing in Salento, I visited the ASL Mental Health Department in Tricase. There I had a meeting with psychiatrist Dr. De Vitis and I asked him whether he had ever found clinical cases whose symptoms were related to the patient's original culture. The psychiatrist replied that tarantolism and the "evil of San Donato" are in decline and that there are no longer cases of individuals who "slam"; however, macarias are on the rise, along with those who believe in the macarias as a product of the environment and society. He himself experiences difficulties when some patients ask him about their malaise, whether it can be a matter of macarias, and says that he cannot support this belief, this cultural hypothesis they propose, because it would be counterproductive for the therapeutic activity, also because patients would find any other solutions if the approach by the psychiatrist, the magician and the *macàra* did not work. Many people

come to him after being financially bled by magicians to whom they sometimes give everything; his service, which would also be free, is chosen almost as a last resort. People attach great importance to money and to paying wizards: the more you pay, the more you are supposed to be valid (this also generally happens with doctors). However, magicians often manage to solve problems (Codacci Pisanelli, 2016: 118, our translation).

While doctors always exclude that it is incantation, he prefers to agree to this belief, since these are well-rooted convictions in popular culture. He also states:

‘Of course if a person is only able to receive signals from a specific antenna, then we will have to communicate through the same channel’. A patient who was doing family therapy managed to recover thanks to her meetings with a *macàra*. According to the psychiatrist, the very fact that the woman thought she had been helped had contributed to her recovering (ibidem, our translation).

In October 2018 I myself interviewed psychiatrist Dr. Giampaolo Mastropasqua, ASL former Medical Director in Gallipoli; he backed up the hypothesis supported by Dr. De Vitis underlining the extent to which the Gallipoli area is full of these beliefs and how the population has in some ways maintained a split psychic system using psychiatry only in a final stage of analysis. Very few people describe how these beliefs generate suffering, pain, alienation and isolation, but above all paranoia combined with persecutory manias and anxieties of various kinds, first and foremost that of death:

As an existential road, psychoanalysis analyzes the interaction with the context by dialectically dialoguing with both the individual and collective unconscious. As a psychoanalyst I never had the presumption that psychoanalysis could be the only way, but in Europe it is certainly a preferential path that reconstructs the individual's system of relationships with him/herself while maintaining, or rather, rediscovering his/her own authenticity in relation to the external world (int. Ps.AsI/Gall.).

Psychoanalysis takes the lid off: people who approach it want to know and understand themselves and the context around them, because this does not take anything away from being, but changes malaise into well-being. A community renewed by good interpersonal relationships does not need anything,

as it is the community itself that helps the individual to grow. Unfortunately, individualism together with new forms of “autism” is growing, with the consequent loss of identity bonds.

## 8. Female Power

In the light of what has been dealt with in the previous sections, it is evident that in Salento culture women have the ability to determine the ‘fate’ of things. This would roughly suggest that woman is both powerful and dangerous. In part she is, but because as a person she has great power over reality, she is capable of creating, nurturing a strong intuition in contact with nature, she is capable of welcoming but also of destroying. The evil eye is a powerful illusion: the illusion that “looking sideways” (namely, the evil eye) a person affects mood; the illusion that deep moods can be undermined with malicious intentions.

This is a predominantly female world, as the energetic aspect of unspoken communication belongs to women. It is the world of intuition, of unspoken intelligence, the world that appropriates the phallic function and builds it through a magical act, it is the “phallicity” of affective influence. It is here that female power appears as a hidden power which needs stratagems (magic, for example) to reveal itself. Male power is public. In traditional cultures female power is hidden and presents itself in the dual value of cure and curse. Magic, as medical science reminds us, has the function of generating a physical and emotional effect. Usually they wish misfortunes and disgrace to happy people. The ointment, the poison, the potion are all female symbols used to make one’s will of domination felt over men. The woman leaves her mark with the effect of the incantation, which becomes a symbol of hidden control (therefore hidden, partially removed) on the other. In this way the woman acquires an influence that otherwise she would not have, she seems to modify the events and the nature of things, penetrating at a distance, in psychoanalytic terms we could say in a phallic way, seducing by means of a malevolent seductiveness.

## 9. In reality, does the evil eye produce any effects?

Going back to the spell, one must ask what is actually true, since it has survived for centuries and not in fairy tales – indeed, fairy tales are its symbolic representation. Are incantations just fantasies remaining in a world of dreams and intentions? Is the intention already an action or is it evanescent and harmless?

If the era of witches is over, why do we still talk about it? Do incantations affect those affected, that is, “infected”?

Of course, in order for all of this to become effective, at least two people must agree, even if there are usually three people involved in the evil eye: the attacker acts on the victim as s/he believes that the victim has stolen something or someone from him/her. It becomes necessary to agree in order for the curse intention to strike. The curse becomes effective if the victim is already suggestible, weak, unable to defend him/herself, if s/he fits well with the aggressor's personality. The evil eye is cast on the weakest, it is always circular; the roles can be interchanged over time, putting into play a sadomasochistic reality that is equivalent and alternates.

The curse ceases to exist only when the victim of the curse “dissolves” identification with the aggressor; usually two women live this joint, i.e. symbolically an old woman (the witch) and a young and beautiful one. Guilt and suffering are exalted around the elderly woman who controls and dominates over the whole female, therefore also over the man. This identification is dissolved only when the victim leaves the generational hierarchy. That is the real scam, not the evil eye: it is never the maternal power that gives or takes away: it is the nature that decides.

As a psychological process, the strength of the curse does not lie in the curse itself, but in the willingness of the victim to consider it effective. All these interferences strike only if they create effects on affects, on feelings. There are sick affects that generate disease, such as depression, the evil of living that has its origins in not feeling loved, wanted. The revenge of the unloved, sometimes, has the effect of threat, disease; in need, the subject carries out successful sabotage: he feels bad and wants to make people feel bad.

## **10. Back to the ADNICH project. The feminine between power and removal**

The picture drawn so far is an anthropological, historical and psychoanalytic sketch. It indicates the relevance of the feminine in archaic and rural cultures, which is both relevance and repression. The role of women has evolved in modernity, it has acquired new functions and tasks. However, the healing function still characterizes the woman and her work in the world psycho-analytically. In this regard, Neumann states:

As spirit mother, she is not, like the Great Mother of the lower phase, interested primarily in the infant, the child, and the immature man, who cling to her in these stages. She is rather a goddess of the Whole, who governs the transformation from the elementary to the spiritual level (Neumann, 2015: 331).

Being a woman is a complex reality which always sways between full and empty, between light and dark, between the mother earth and the daughter moon. Being a woman is empty and full in one body, it is a viaduct of life, eternal becoming, it is love and death, welcome and rejection, Mary and Magdalene.

It is the woman's job to merge these opposites and create her own creative harmony; here follow some reflections made in 2006 by prof. Emanuele Chimenti on the female principle:

As the source of being, the female principle is also motherhood, of which the biological dimension is one of the many possible aspects. The woman is therefore a mother because she is a woman (that is to say, the bearer of the feminine principle); she is not a woman because she is a mother. She is generative because the feminine principle itself is generosity. If the woman has introjected her feminine principle, she can be a mother in many ways; on the contrary, if she is a biological mother but does not have a healthy feminine principle within herself, she will be neither a good mother nor an accomplished woman: the world is full of these non-female mothers.

In modernity, the functionalization of the role of women has led to the removal of this fact, which coincides with its creative function, which instead traditional culture tended to emphasize. Recovering this important element, within an anthropological and psychological framework, is a necessary process. In this sense, the reference to the female role, to its duplicity in peasant society is not to be understood as a praise of past times, but as the reacquisition of a necessary awareness.

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— SECOND PART —

The “blood vengeance” in Albania



# I.

## A Brief Historical view of blood vengeance

### 1. Kanun as the legal framework

*Kanun* is an Ottoman Turkish term that means legal code. It is a word Ottomans themselves borrowed, via the Arabic, from the Greek of *κανών*, and that is a Greek word that has provided its equivalents to most western languages: *the canon, le canon, il canone, der Canon*. To the Ottomans, *Kanun* was the set of central government laws called to regulate administrative disputes.

But in remote and inaccessible corners of the Ottoman realm – which, from the 1400s until it was dismantled in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, comprised the Balkans, Anatolia and the Eastern Mediterranean – *Kanun* often came to denote the community regulations of territories that were tolerated some degree of self-administration.

For many Albanians, it meant a set of rules that were passed orally, employed to govern the relationship of individuals, families, clans, villages and whole regions. In the north of those Balkan areas where Albanians lived, the legal code in use was the *Kanun* of the Highlands, the Mountain Law. At times, it was also called the *Kanun* of Lekë Dukagjini, after a 15<sup>th</sup>-century ruler of those mountains to whom legend attributed its existence. The Highlands *Kanun* was the legal framework for a most of those mountain clans, or to use the local term, *bayraks*.

As a result, the Highlands *Kanun* may have not been written but it was not in the least unheeded. For a time, it was widespread and all-powerful, and has even influenced the way Albanians came to be seen by themselves and by the others, as a community behavior that resisted the modernization of the society. In one of his most acclaimed novels, Albania's prominent writer, Ismail Kadare,

had faced the modern couple's demands to those of a man hiding from the blood vengeance guarded by the *Kanun*.

Ultimately, put to paper the *Kanun* was, assembled, synthesized and codified, in the 1910s, by Shtjefën Gjeçovi, a Franciscan friar. A publishing arm of the local Catholic clergy published it in book form as late as 1933, a few years after Gjeçovi's death, its influence already somewhat on the wane. Gjeçovi had said he had gleaned its pieces like grains of wheat in a harvest disaster season, but the *Kanun* had been the very life of the highlander's generation after generation.

## 2. The blood vengeance

Gjergj Fishta, another Franciscan of the period who is regarded by some as Albania's national poet, sang what he saw as its virtues in his octosyllabic epic, *The Highland Lute*. For Fishta, what made this *Kanun* different to others used in the Albanian territories was its ferocious application of a specific honor code. To those governed by the Highlands *Kanun*, he said, "one who lives disgraced is as good as dead." Violating it meant tempting a blood bath. A man's life, and to that extent, a family's and community's life, revolved around that good reputation.

Some man could already lose it if he liked moving around unarmed. Every man should carry a gun to take his matters in his own hands. A man whose women were shamed carried that shame in the community. But nothing could be more humiliating than the failure to avenge the murder of a man in the family—one's father, brother, or son or close relative. Retributive vendetta, which highlanders called *gjakmarrje*, 'exchange, or payback in blood', was the main instrument to safeguard that good name. An eye for an eye; if you kill, you shall be killed. Your blood is the currency of your life.

The person who had to avenge the injustice to him in blood vengeance was under tremendous community pressure until he would settle the score. He would have to make do with humiliating seats by the children or women in community events, in weddings or funerals. He would be assigned undignified chores by the clan, such as carrying firewood or accompanying beasts of burden. No father sane in his mind would accept to give him a daughter in marriage.

The oral tradition in the Albanian north, its folk poetry, has songs of praise to the act of revenge, of settling justice, in a blood feud. Such score-settling was indeed central to the *Kanun*. It was a ritual that governed the life of the

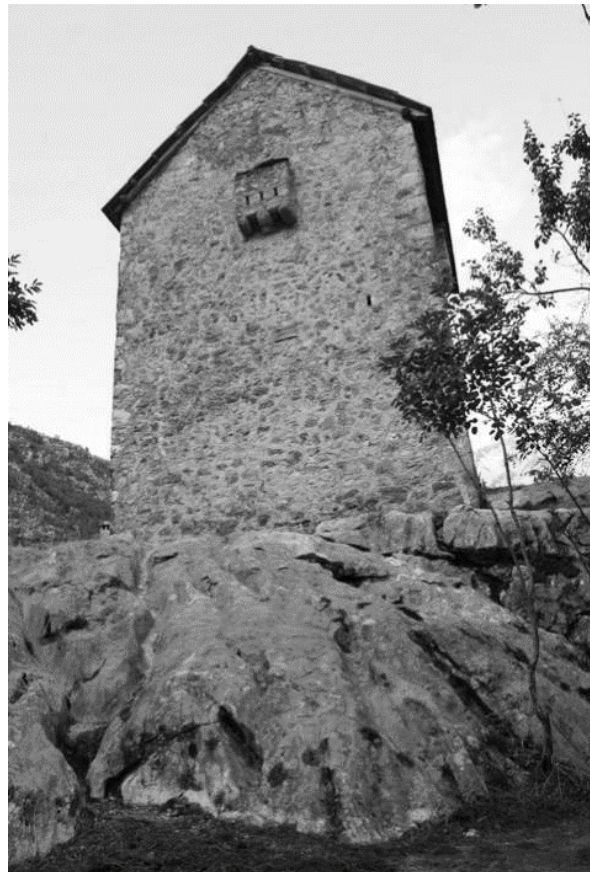
highlander from birth to death. This blood, 'lost' or 'spent' or 'taken away,' was considered a debt that could not be neglected, only owed. It was a debt that had to be paid back in kind. It had to be compensated for by the family of the victim, only then could it be 'washed away' from the feud's score.

Not everybody could become its target. As a law of a highly patriarchal society, where the roles were ascribed and frozen, the *Kanun* had strict rules. Women would never be target of blood feud, though their worth in a conflict was also way lower (a third) of that of a man. The perpetrator should not hide his act of murder for blood vengeance. And teenagers, males under the age of 15, should never be killed for retribution.

If someone had murdered and was not, in return, killed on the spot by the avenging family, he had the right to a 72-hour truce in which to regulate his life after the act, when the family of the victim would weigh in and announce to the Council of Elders whether they would pursue blood vengeance. If they did so, he would be the object of a blood revenge by the family of the victim, he would be 'in blood,' and would have to hide. In fact, this prolonged stasis of being 'in blood' was often worse than outright death. It meant a life sentence.

In most cases, that's what the highlander chose. He would lock himself in some *kulla ngujimi* – community-built turrets where he would live in self-isolation until a measure of justice was considered served. Even this was regulated by strict rules. Food could be brought in once a day by a female family member.

The *kullas* could not be attacked – the perpetrator would have to be killed only when being outside one, ensuring perpetual ambush and perpetual tempta-





tion to go out. The feud was considered settled if death came by firearm, knives or other weapons were considered undignified and perfidious. But justice would be finally considered served by the perpetrator's murder – natural death would not count –; or by reconciliation where 'blood was pardoned' with the community as a guarantee; or by some other settlement agreed by the community's council of elders.

Self-confinement turrets existed in many areas in the Catholic Highlands. In the village of Upper Curraj in Tropoja, each of the four village wards had its own *kulla*, the last one long abandoned but finally ruined by a harsh winter in 2012. But what re-

mains to this day is the *kulla* in the village of Theth, to the northwest of Upper Curraj. This one has the privilege of being the only one with an early extant picture.

In the 1920s, Rose Wilder Lane, the adventure-seeking daughter of American children's writer Laura Ingalls Wilder, had placed one for her book of north Albanian travel. And now it serves as a popular tourist attraction.

*Kullas* were important because at times several men from one family would be locked inside them, while in the regular house life continued.

As a deterrent and penal instrument, blood vengeance was all-pervasive. It could well have been the most important element of life in North Albania, everything was subordinate to it, according to Edith Durham, the influential English traveler of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, for those writers of the Albanian National Awakening of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, blood vengeance safeguarded the social relations as the Ottoman Empire dismantled.

Often blood feuds were carried for generations. Blood bequeathed more



blood. What remained of life after 'blood was washed out', when the score was settled, was connected with death and the revenge cycle in a way that one bore the other.

### 3. The blood vengeance in the XX century

When the fledgling Albanian state became functional in the aftermath of the Ottoman Empire and the First World War, efforts were made to put an end to blood feuds and their paralyzing consequence, the massive self-confinements.

The first serious attempts at curbing it was by Ahmed Zog, a highland chieftain who proclaimed himself king of Albania all of the eleven years running up to the country's invasion by Fascist Italy in 1939.

He passed a general disarmament law. And in his royal constitution, Zog proposed pecuniary compensation to the blood charge. Both measures turned into options that decreased somewhat the numbers of blood feuds during the inter-war period.

But the *Kanun* would really lose its primacy with the Second World War. Its enforcers, tribal leaders in the Albanian north, and their followers engaged in a fierce civil war with the country's Communist authorities, a conflict they ultimately lost and paid a heavy price for.

The world conflict's aftermath signed many a disintegration of the traditional way of life, especially in what was to become Eastern Europe.

In Albania, the Stalinist dictatorship's effort to dismantle traditional structures was ferocious and inescapable. It tore into the tribal structures with controlled smaller housing that allowed for only nuclear families.

Its coerced women, which the traditional society had confined into family roles, into the national workforce. Arranged marriages, another pillar of tradition, were highly discouraged and even banned. Private property was abolished, and those farmers and shepherds now worked for collective enterprises, agricultural cooperatives or state farms. Religious practice was outright banned within two decades after World War Two, and if such practice would ever persist, it would do so in deep secrecy.

The highlander, like every other Albanian, was now trapped in this new paradigm. There was no traditional code of honor to guide him: it was considered an act of rebellion that would bring prison or forced exile of whole families into unfamiliar areas, it could even bring death by execution by the state.

His house was not "the house of God and of the guest," as that incipit in the book-form Canon had it. That house had to make do with being a cell unit

serving the Party. The Party could decide whether you could have your father or brother as guest. You could not if they were declared enemies.

By 1968, only a handful of murders came from blood score settling. But blood feuds would come back once more, and when they came, they did with a vengeance.

#### 4. The blood vengeance after the '90s

Something must have been hiding deep in the subliminal in North Albania that found the opportunity to spring up when dictatorship fell and personal liberties took to the fore again in 1990, as the former Soviet bloc collapsed. To many a highlander, that meant return to the traditional Abrahamic faith. It also meant taking justice in their own hands.

The Highlands *Kanun* and its blood feuds were recalled, but they were morphing into disparate, personalized implementations, and in doing so, they lacked consistency and depth. There was no elder's council that allot justice, or decide on legal precedents for solving conflicts, blood feuds included.

That highly codified ritual of justice has frequently turned into unbridled thirst for revenge. Revenge was not part of the customary tradition. Nobody enters into a blood vengeance for personal revenge. And while the difference between revenge and blood vengeance might appear trifle to the untrained eye, it is in fact essential.

“An act of revenge cannot always be murder, even as it is always a crime,” wrote Fatos Baxhaku, a prominent Albanian social commentator. “In revenge, you may get fired, you can be insulted in retaliation.

Revenge can be taken for failing a debt, for committing a fraud, for cheating. And yes, revenge is as old as humanity. Its effect, depending on circumstance or motivation, can vary from a summary beating to murder. Revenge is a crime with no rules, it is often anonymous.

“Blood vengeance is strictly regulated.”

But this is not what happens with feuds in northern Albania now.

Failure to avenge the death of a family member is met with the same community pressure and Hamletian subconscious unquiet, but what happens now would be a sacrilege in the *Kanun*.

Blood feud victims have come to include children and women; at times, three people are killed to the price of one.

Now, whole families are forced into confinement in fear of retribution –

not only men, but also women, children, the elderly – in fear for their lives. Men who avenge often flee out of the country.

Oftentimes, no pre-confinement truce in good faith is respected, oftentimes, no moment of revenge is deemed appropriate enough. And blood feuds are not a privilege of the mountainous north, but have spread in other parts of the country: you would find self-confined families even in central Albania, in places like Tirana, Lushnja, or Fier.

Hundreds of families have confined themselves this way, the government statistics show, and they include children too. These children would enter adulthood knowing less of a life and society than that within four walls of a run-down house.



## II.

# Blood Vengeance in Six Albanian Districts

### 1. The Albanian Districts examined

The effect of the blood feud is powerful and has repercussions in all the life of the country, but it is especially pervasive in the remote mountain areas to the north, where tradition and custom are given importance beyond any common sense, so large as to adjudicate over the right to life and death.

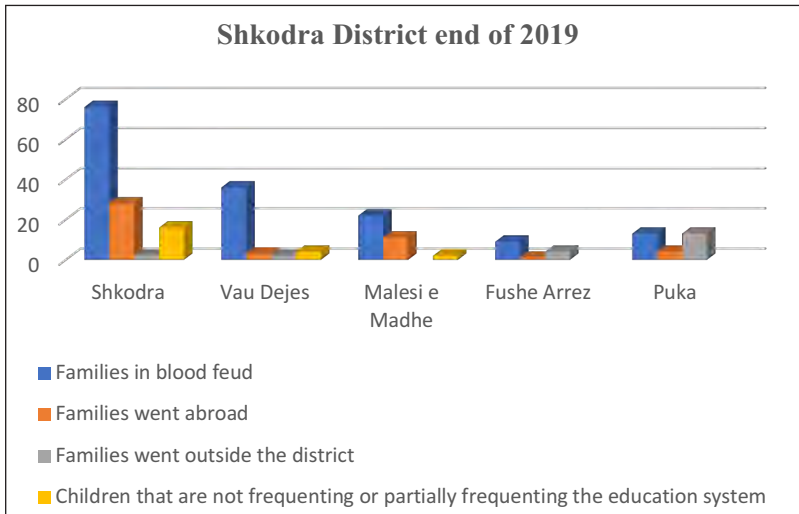
This phenomenon is mostly concentrated in Shkodra and the outlying area, where the Kanun is the manner of living and action. As we can see in the table below, the phenomenon can also be traced, although in less important numbers, in other parts of the country: mostly in the northern regions of Dibra, Kukës, Lezha, though one can find blood feuds even further south in Durrës, and Tirana, and elsewhere.

Accuracy is only a target in data collection of families in self-confinement as a target of a blood vendetta, dictated by the nature itself of the vendetta. Families that have confined themselves to escape retribution avoid the exposure: they shy away from the public eye, and remain out of the radar of governmental, community, or religious authorities.

They change domicile frequently and do not register with local authorities or school district boards. For that very reason, the statistics extracted from government and non-government sources are not completely reliable, and the figures may be further distorted from the proclivities of such agencies.

## 2. Shkodra's District Data

District	Families in blood feud	Families went abroad	Families went outside the district	Children that are not frequenting or partially frequenting the education system
Shkodra	76	28	2	16
Vau Dejës	36	3	2	4
Malësi e Madhe	22	11		2
Fushe Arrëz	9	1	4	
Puka	13	4	13	
<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>



The National Commission for Blood Feud Reconciliation has placed the number of children caught in the blood feuds in the late 1990s at 6000 nationwide, a figure the UNICEF has quoted.

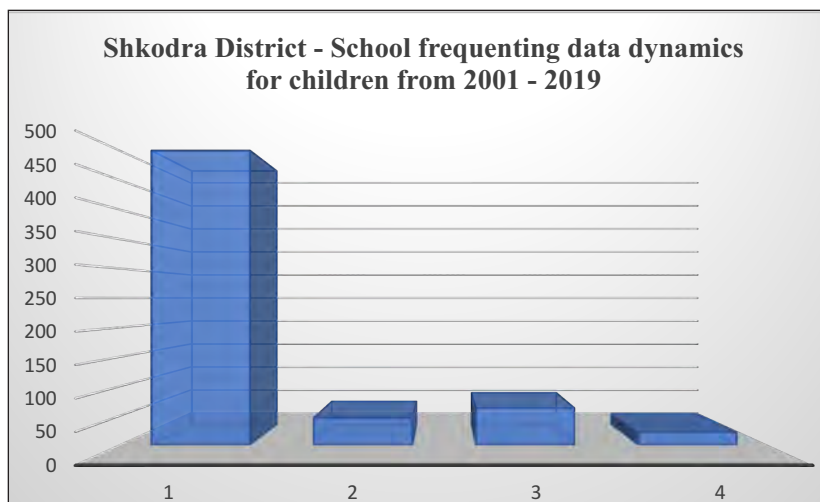
Such numbers may contain inaccuracies because many families do not declare the shelter they live in self-isolation, and meantime some children were not attending school, or who were homeschooling.

“The blood feud cuts deep into the Albanian *fis*,” wrote journalist Agron Bala in 2001 for *Kanun*, a human rights journal. “There were 2750 families

that continue to live in self-imposed isolation, and 900 children cannot go to school and cannot even cross the threshold of their house. Five hundred in [the region of] Shkodra alone”.

The Regional Education Department in Shkodra said that the number of children not being able to go to school because of being caught up in a vendetta was 46 for the academic year of 2003-2004, the number going up to 63 five years later, during the academic year 2008-2009.

School Year	Numbers of children not frequenting the school -Shkodra District
2001	500
2003-2004	46
2008-2009	63
2019- 2020	22



By 2005, 1376 families were caught in cycles of blood retribution, “locked, in tiny Albania, in 746 villages, in 17 urban centres, the Ministry of Interior of Albania has reported.

There were 429 minors between 11 and 18 living in those families, and 282 were younger than 11 years of age, from the total of 711. Less than half of the

families, 652, had some degree of freedom of circulation that was permitted by the avenging families, but 724 were still in high danger and hiding.

And the number of families locked in was 460, the number of children unable to “even leave the house in fear of being targets of the bullet of the avenger” was 108. Shkodra was the most affected area of blood feuds. The Interior Ministry said that the number of families refusing government or legal solutions to conflicts and resorting to customary retributions was as high as 15000.

The murder rate for the following triennial reached 45, according to the police department in Shkodra: 11 for 2006, 13 for 2007, and 21 for 2008. Eight such murders were atypically committed by women, mostly reactions to physical abuse against them.

Albania’s main TV station, Top Channel, has reported that blood feud deaths reached 5% of the total murders in the country by 2011, 7 out of 134, the highest number for the period of 8 years leading up to it. “*The phenomenon is as aggressive as ever,*” Mentor Kikia, Top Channel’s news editor, who was involved in awareness campaigns on the size of the phenomenon, told Radio Free Europe in January 2014.

“Even by 2013, when we looked into the situation in the Shkodra district again and we’d see the official numbers fall. Families that had been living ‘for ages’ in self-imposed isolation were continuing to do so, even if the customary tradition would have allowed them relief from the menace of retribution. There is a whole generation of young people born and raised in isolation.”

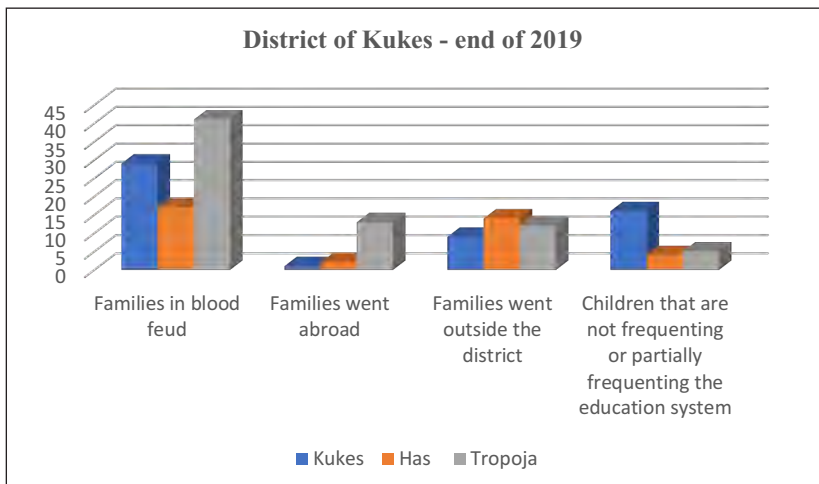
Current numbers for the District of Shkodra are far from the total numbers in 2001 or 2003-2004, or 2008-2009, but still, the phenomenon is present with 156 families caught in blood feuds and 22 children not frequenting the school or not frequenting it regularly.

### 3. Kukës’ District Data

Kukës’ District is composed by Kukës, Has and Tropoja. The table below shows all the data gathered and the chart visualize those data in a graphic way.



District	Families in blood feud	Families went abroad	Families went outside the district	Children that are not frequenting or partially frequenting the education system
Kukës	29	1	9	16
Has	17	2	14	4
Tropoja	41	13	12	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>25</b>

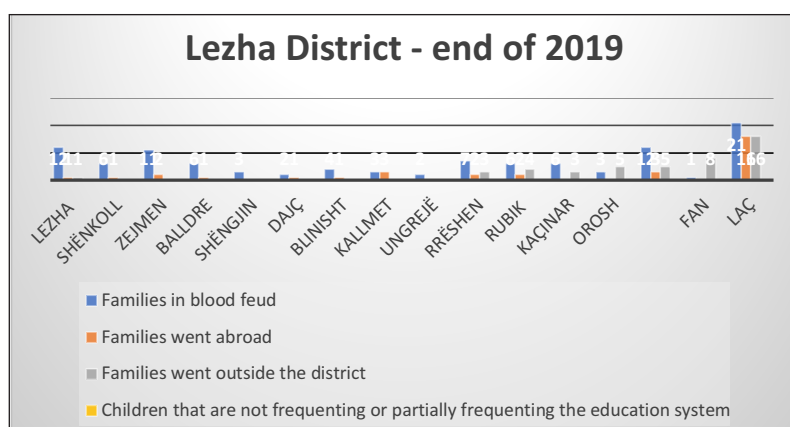


#### 4. Lezha’s District Data

Lezha’s District is composed by 16 units including the city of Lezha, Shëngjin, Rrëshen, Rubik and Laç, and a series of villages. Those are Shënkoll, Zejmen, Balldre, Dajç, Blinisht, Kallmet, Ungrejë, Kaçinar, Orosh, Kthjellë-Selitë dhe Fan.

## Blood Vengeance in Six Albanian Districts

District	Families in blood feud	Families went abroad	Families went outside the district	Children that are not frequenting or partially frequenting the education system
Lezha	12	1	1	
Shënkoll	6	1		
Zejmen	11	2		
Balldre	6	1	2	4
Shëngjin	3			
Dajç	2	1		
Blinisht	4	1		
Kallmet	3	3		
Ungrejë	2			
Rrëshen	7	2	3	
Rubik	6	2	4	
Kaçinar	6		3	
Orosh	3		5	
Kthjellë-Selitë	12	3	5	
Fan	1		8	
Laç	21	16	16	
Total	105	33	47	4

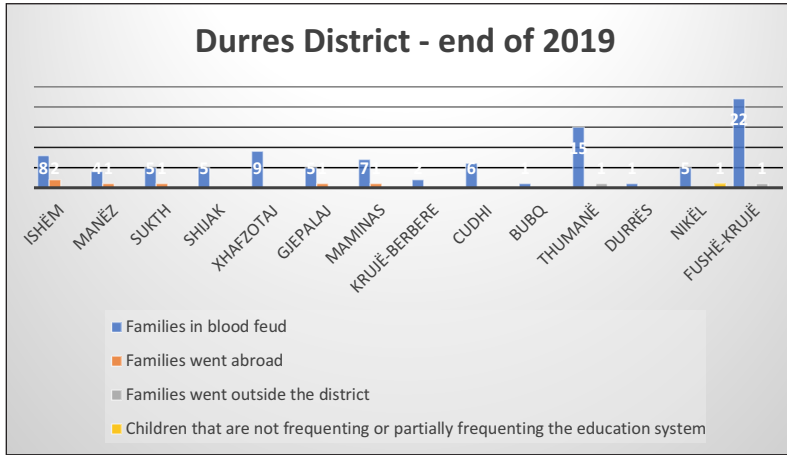


The problems of blood feuds in the District of Lezha have to consider the numbers of heterogenous population accumulated from the chaotic demographic movements after the '90 from the peripheral mountain and rural areas, bringing into the Lezha's district their problems arisen in the past, following the vindicative tradition of the blood feuds in a new geographical context.

## 5. Durrës' District Data

Another District that has attracted families with the blood feuds problematics is Durrës, which is composed by 14 units. Those families have arrived from the northern or northern east part of Albania.

Durrës District Units	Families in blood feud	Families went abroad	Families went outside the district	Children that are not frequenting or partially frequenting the education system
Ishëm	8	2		
Manëz	4	1		
Sukth	5	1		
Shijak	4			
Xhafzotaj	9			
Gjepalaj	5	1		
Maminas	7	1		
Krujë-Berbere	2			
Cudhi	6			
Bubq	1			
Thumanë	15		1	
Durrës	1			
Nikël	5			1
Fushë-Krujë	22		1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>



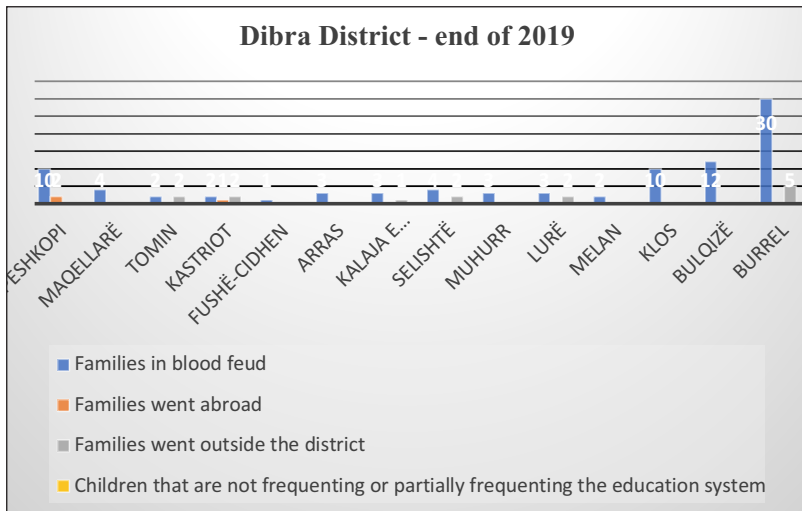
## 6. Dibra’s District Data

The data gathered in the District of Dibra, show that the blood feud problems have still a negative impact on 106 families; 14 families have moved to other districts and 3 families have left Albania, going abroad.

In Dibra’s district, we do not find the problem of children not frequenting the school system. The data described in the table below are showing the graphics and the numbers for each unit of the district.

District Dibrë	Families in blood feud	Families went abroad	Families went outside the district	Children that are not frequenting or partially frequenting the education system
Peshkopi	10	2		
Maqellarë	4			
Tomin	2		2	
Kastriot	2	1	2	
Fushë-Ci-dhen	1			
Arras	3			
Kalaja e Dodës	3		1	
Selishtë	4		2	
Muhurr	3			

Lurë	3		2	
Melan	2			
Klos	10			
Bulqizë	12			
Burrel	30		5	
<b>Total</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>



## 7. Tirana's District Data

Tirana is the capital of Albania and, and after the '90s there have been chaotic demographic movements toward Tirana that caused an increased number of people living in, counting something like 1/3 of the total Albanian population. These movements have created a new component of Tirana's population.

Meantime, these movements brought to Tirana cases of the blood feud. We may find such problems in some peripheral areas of the city centre.

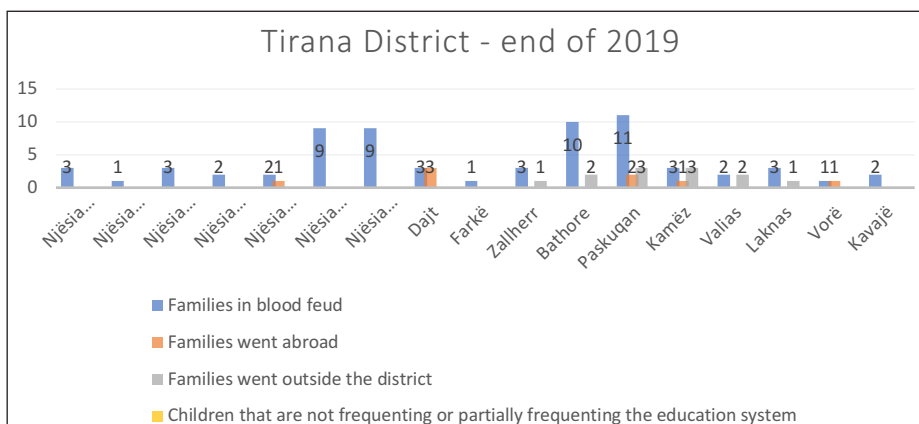
From our research, the findings show that some of the municipal units have no blood feud issues in their community.

This is the reason they are not included in the table and graphic below.

However, the number of families with blood feud problems is 88, where 12 have moved from the district of Tirana, and the rest of 8 families left Albania.

## Blood Vengeance in Six Albanian Districts

District Tiranë	Families in blood feud	Families went abroad	Families went outside the district	Children that are not frequenting or partially frequenting the education system
Njësia bashkiake 2	3			
Njësia bashkiake 3	1			
Njësia bashkiake 4	3			
Njësia bashkiake 7	2			
Njësia bashkiake 8	2	1		
Njësia bashkiake 9	9			
Njësia bashkiake 11	9			
Dajt	3	3		
Farkë	1			
Zallherr	3		1	
Bathore	10		2	
Paskuqan	11	2	3	
Kamëz	3	1	3	
Valias	2		2	
Laknas	3		1	
Vorë	1	1		
Kavajë	2			
Total	68	8	12	0



### III.

## The Situation of the Locked-in Families

From a crossed check of the factual findings and the field visits data and results analysis, this research is contributing to better focus on the following aspects of the social life of the locked-in families. Our observations would underline the fundamental human rights, women conditions, social and psychological situation of locked-in families and children in particular, economic situation and conditions of their shelters.

### 1. The fundamental human rights

The protection of man from murder, in general, and from vendetta in particular present an important historical, politico-social, legal and practical importance. Murders are grave crimes that violate on its core the right to live, a fundamental human right prescribed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations with its Resolution 217 A (III) of December 10, 1948, the European Convention on Human Rights of 1950, and the Article 21 of the Constitution of the Republic of Albania, where it is said that “the life of the person is protected by law.”

Families fearing the blood retribution are denied fundamental human rights.

First of all, the right to life and a life in security. The dynamics of blood feud threatens the survival of individuals, especially that of men living under the threat of vindication by murder, violating the right that were granted in the Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

It is in that article that it is said that “every individual has the right to life,

freedom and personal security Article 59 of the Constitution of the Republic of Albania says that, among other things, the citizen should, be provided their health, educational and social conditions.

Families in self-imposed isolation live in desperate conditions, with privations that are sanitary, educational, economic and social.

After considering the fundamental right to life, the self-imposed isolation families face the biggest challenge, the economic one. The unemployment causes difficult internal situations within those families. Their psychological condition, the fear, the dragging of the conflict, the pending violence, are another level of challenges for all of them borne from exclusion and isolation. There are also reported cases for manifestations of depression and alcoholic addiction.

The houses they find shelter in are small and humid. Furniture is sparse, a small yard used as a vegetable garden. Health problems are multifarious, ways to treat them occluded. Males have to stay away from hospitals. To be caught in a blood feud cycle is failure incarnated.

Revenue often consists of a state welfare check of 5000 Leks, a lump sum, no matter what size the family, of whether the family has any special needs to be taken care of. In case the family has land or livestock, it is the women that plough the land or rear the livestock.

To Albanian writer Rrahim Billa, the downward trajectory that the blood feud brings is twofold, with it, two types of death come to fruition.

There is the physical murder, the complete elimination that brings the physical death," he wrote in his 2010 book entitled *Përse duhet të heshtim?* (Why do we have to keep silent?). "But what kills the locked-in families psychologically and socially, and does it with no less lethality, is that open grave, that pervasive atmosphere of what is hovering over you: the fear, the guilt, the solitude, the torpor, the self-doubt, the lack of self-esteem, the back and forth of blame that smothers any will to life... From the moment the murder occurs, the family members of the murderer, both in the narrow and the wider sense, are locked in in fear of the retribution that the blood feud requires... Life turns into living hell for the people living in isolation... after many and many years engaged in a shackled struggle for survival, one of them would have to finally be murdered.



## 2. The women – true victims of the blood feuds

Among the family members, it is the women who are the true victims of the blood feuds.

In 1995, social scientist Zamira Çavo - brought forth the case of Marta, the bride in a family that locked itself in a one-store shack with a small yard to defend itself from retributions of a blood feud.

“Marta woke up every morning at dawn,” she wrote in her resulting book *Gratë e të ngjuarve*, (Wives to those locked in). “She worked all day. She had to carry the burden of providing for the family. She had to herd the livestock, to plough the land, to cook, to keep the house clean, and to nurse her youngest daughter Bora.”

All this shows the highly patriarchal and oppressive traits of the traditional Albanian society, an instrument of which the blood retribution had been since early, according to scholars.

Giuseppe Castelletti, in the mid-1930s, in his studies published by “Studi Albanesi” (Albanian studies) observed in his study of the *Kanun* and of the northern Albanian society: “*The woman is held at a much lower regard than a man*,”. “*The standard of her morals is held at a much higher bar*”. “*The woman is in a double bind in the mountain society because of the specifics of that society*,” he continued, “*and because of the specific roster of her duties in the overall activity of the family*.”

When choosing to stay on the side of their husbands and children as wives and mothers, they give up any right to their lives, sign on to a self-denial and a denial of their desires, to a subjugation to the will of the men. Any social skills, any own thought, has been grafted from them. The *Kanun* does not kill them, the murder of a woman for retribution is proscribed, but they remain an oppressed and abused part of the family. Their challenge is heroic, having to manage emergencies and chores alike in absence of men who are forced to stay locked or take to the mountains.

The tone of the head seemed resigned when reporting from the Albanian social psychologist Menada Petro. The very fact of providing for home-schooling for children who are locked in with their families meant to her that “we have signed off on the legitimacy of blood feuds, and to the kids’ confinement, to them abandoning school,” Petro quoted her as saying in her 2013 book “*Civilizimi përballë një brezi të ngjuar*” (*Civilization in front of a generation that is locked in*).

“*Such children can peep into Albania only through a loophole. A boy in such a society is under tremendous pressure. Instead of playing with other children, they*

*find themselves in a domestic prison. They cannot venture out, engage with children their age, run the normal course of life. There is a psychotic pressure on them to defend their family, defend the honor of the family, to kill or be killed in revenge".* Petro writes that two of the 334 deaths from vendettas in the region of Shkodra were young boys, as were three of the murderers.

But young girls have also been involved in the violence. *"In June 2012, the conflict on a water stream in the mountains of the Dukagjin tribes cost the lives of three people, a girl of 17 years among them,"* writes Petro. *"The perpetrators took revenge by killing the daughter and her grandfather, because two years earlier, the brother and the nephew of the two victims had killed the brother and father of the murderer on a conflict for who was to use the water stream."* That is why girls, fearing physical assault, cannot go out unchaperoned.

### 3. Social and psychological consequences for locked-in children

As mentioned above, when talking of "blood justice", one talks of individuals who are completely deprived of the right to live. When we talk of children caught in a blood feud, innocent victims to it, and the social and psychological consequences, the pervasiveness of suffering is so large that one cannot be but mystified.

What is being done? to stop a juggernaut that crushes human lives and forces hundreds of children into home detention.

There is a sense that the earlier world regulated by the Kanun was an ordered one, while now taking justice in one's own hands is a chaotic, treacherous scene. The Kanun proscribes the targeting of children, but currently, according to the National Association Besa, it is considered that the avenger intends to strike where it hurts most, regardless of the target's culpability, regardless of the right any child has to live like their peers.

And when the children are made to settle scores in a blood feud, they fall prey to an adult logic (from the mother, the relatives, or others) that nobody can suspect that a fourteen-year-old would assassinate his age-mate, or somebody else for that matter, in a different family. But the impulse of "being paid the debt in blood" to someone is a motivation so strong that it breeds only hatred and rage until, as the Kanun says, 'blood' stops the 'blood.'

One such case was in 2011, when A., age 16, killed 14-year-old Gj., a teenager who lived with his family in self-isolation to escape a blood feud retribution. Gj. had had enough of his isolation and decided to venture

out and meet friends. He was murdered by A. over the course of Gj.'s day out, and therefore 'set his family honour straight,' that is, remedied the dishonour Gj.'s family had produced to his by having killed someone in his family. That was the oath that A. carried out, by doing so depriving of life a fellow human, someone his age.

A child living in self-isolation with their families is like any child, but that is also a child deprived of the basic right of a security life. They are deprived of affection. They are deprived of the right to education, fearing for their life if they have to go to a public space like a school. They are cannot engage with the children their age, they cannot go out and play... their life is in danger!

Children living in self-imposed isolation show some common behavioral characteristics: acute panic attacks, symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (as was the case of a fifth-grade child whose father was killed while holding him in the lap), a general state of anxiety, symptoms of depression, feeling of guilt, among other things – reports Mariglina Gjoni, at her PHD thesis.

Life in isolation also hampers a full, harmonic and balanced development of personality for children, although Article 54, 3 of the Constitution of the Republic of Albania says that

Every child has the right to be protected from violence, ill treatment, exploitation and from performing any work, especially under the minimum age for child labor, which could damage his health and morals or endanger his life or normal development.

Therefore, repercussions from a blood feud are not finding a way out, finding a solution. The self-imposed isolation is instead an axis around which many problems rotate: problems of physical state and health, education, and psychological. The children are those who experience the gravest consequences.

Repercussions from the experience of blood-feud are indelible and do not fade away: they reverberate through life with such vengeance. Social isolation and reclusion effects intellectual, emotional, communication and social skills. Their integration in society is difficult because of deficiencies communicating with and approaching other people.

#### 4. Education among children living in self-imposed isolation

Because of blood feuds, hundreds of children are obliged to stay at home or seek refuge with their families in safe places, and that impedes upon their ability to go to school. School is, undoubtedly, the best place where an individual develops not only the intellect, the skills and competences, and their personality, but where one learns best the rules of socialization.

Many are the children caught in blood feud conflict who are barred from having the right to education. How can they be able to be schooled?

Home schooling is necessary for minors living in such conditions, with education departments engaging teachers for that purpose,” writes M. Petro. “But it is impossible to assist all the affected children one by one, partially due to discrepancies between statistics served by non-state organizations dealing with the matter and those of the government.

The inability to attend school and get a decent basic education worsens the consequences of the blood feud. Ignorance begets hate, and hatred begets death and a repetition of the cycle of vengeance. In most cases, a conflict is described as an unpredictable event. “Falling into a blood-feud” means ending all social contacts, and this includes contacts from school. The inability to go to school is experienced as a real trauma.

I too had many friends, I went to school and studied well,” said a girl living in a family that has locked in. “How much would I have liked to be able to go back to school, to study, to play with my friends, to have my previous life back. All my world is now sealed inside this house.

Another group of children born to families already in blood feud had never been able to attend school, to be able to sit in a bench. In such a situation, children grow up uneducated, uncouth, raw.

BBC also carried the story of eleven-year-old *N.* whose family had been caught up in a 30-year-old conflict. *N.* said he dreamt of being able to attend school one day. “*I imagine school as this beautiful place, full of books, of chairs, the blackboard*”.

A twelve-year-old child say: “*I dream of being able to be free, of being able to go to school, that I was been able to just cross that doorsill... I want to be able to spend one night in a meadow full of flowers...*”

Others dare to conquer their fear, to challenge the social pressure that stigmatizes them as ‘children of blood-feuds’, even when they feel refused and sidelined by the children their age.

Of course, I am afraid when I go to school,” said P, who is trying to catch up and graduate in a short time. “I have no friends there. My classmates are stiff, they try and avoid me.



## Conclusion

Both observations and the interviews show that a major part of why the families caught into the cycle of vengeance live in difficult living conditions, even extreme poverty, is structural. Those are traditional family nuclei where adult males are the ones allowed to be the breadwinners, and women do not have outside jobs but are employed domestically.

Women were confined to rearing their children, maintenance of the house and the small yard. That means an upending of the life, when the families isolate themselves. Men cannot work and bring revenue or provide for the family. They may have even been imprisoned, have fled or have ultimately lost their lives.

The dire situation is compounded by the conditions at home, the houses generally in disrepair, unable to provide decent living standards. In some cases, some ill people need to be taken care of, but who cannot to seek medical treatment.

In a few odd cases, people who are targeted in a blood feud are not completely locked in, but can move outside under the pledge of protection by someone, accompanied by a woman, or a child. But that would not, nevertheless, grant them the possibility to earn a living and to live freely.

There are several reasons such virulent conflicts can begin. There may be grudges from the past, or consequences of taking justice in one's own hands.

The mediators in blood feuds are well-informed of the families who are involved in such conflicts. Their work is laudable in mitigating the effects of this bleeding wound of the society, and their results are reasonably satisfactory, but unfortunately, that is not enough.

A major problem is that the children, even if the most innocent party to

the conflict, are direct victims. There are cases of children who have abandoned school, others who were born while their families isolated themselves. An initial test of general knowledge showed that even when they had received a passing grade in the obligatory school system, their knowledge was very weak. This is a consequence of irregular school frequentation due to the precariousness of their situation.



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