Multicultural identities
Challenging the Sense of Belonging

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Preface

“We are living in an age of both harmonization and of dissonance. Never have men had so many things in common – knowledge, points of reference, images, words, instruments and tools of all kinds. But this only increases their desire to assert their differences”.

(Amin Maalouf, On Identity, 1998)

This quote from Amin Maalouf inspired us as we organized on May 5-6th 2017 the IX Annual Conference of SIETAR ITALIA entitled Multicultural Identities: Understanding the Sense of Belonging.

The notion of identity – be it personal, religious, ethnic or national – is important to interculturalists. It is through learning about our own identity and about the identities of other individuals and groups that we come to know what makes us similar and or different. At the core of the intercultural dialogue we are constantly adding new layers to identity and often without giving up our own roots.

The title Multicultural Identities met considerable interest and curiosity. Unexpectedly the IX SIETAR ITALIA Annual Conference attracted more than a hundred participants from Italy and all across the world. It seemed somehow that all the participants carried multicultural imprints. Undeniably, today we have not only the culture we were born into, but we are all influenced by many different cultures. In a global
and multicultural world, individuals have increasingly multiple identities, asserting different identities in different circumstances and moments in their lives, according to the context and the people they are interacting with.

The idea of the Conference was to learn more about the forces shaping the various contexts and modalities which underpin multicultural identities. By bringing together a very diverse set of presentations of practitioners and academics, the conference has been an exceptional opportunity to explore the complex, ambivalent and fluid picture of multiple identities. Yet, given the limitations of less than two conference days, we felt that this was just the beginning. Indeed, we figured out a need to continue the initiated discussion, and at the same time we became well aware of the enormous intellectual complexity involved. With this publication, we’d like to keep the conversation going.

As you will see in the following chapters, it is difficult to distill a red thread of the many different approaches to identity and cultural identity in particular. Some of our authors present not only diverse, but contradictory approaches. Thus, you are invited to use your critical thinking and to come up with your own deductions. By all this complexity – actually we felt that it would even be more appropriate to substitute the subtitle ‘Understanding’ to ‘Challenging the Sense of Belonging’.

With this in mind, our objectives are modest, but necessary: we would like to raise the awareness of the importance of cultural identity, and we would like the reader to appreciate its complexity. This book presents a large variety of stimulating insights of eighteen very diverse authors about how multiculturalism triggers changes in all areas of life, and how identities are in a permanent flux.

Most contributions are written in English, because we wanted to open our SIETAR ITALIA network to the
international community. The non-Italian readers will find English abstracts of all chapters, and of course, everybody is invited to contact the authors directly for further inquiries. Enjoy the reading! Buona lettura!

Maura Di Mauro & Bettina Gehrke
Introduction

“How can we find a way towards the “other”? Instead of striving for a more or less accurate view of the “differences” among cultures we can concentrate on the “variance” among cultural frameworks to better understand the characteristics of our world that can go unnoticed by us just because they are too obvious. This approach to interculture, forwarded by the sinologist Francois Jullien, is consistent with the educational perspective of the “Through Others Eyes” (TOE) movement, which promotes the construction of a global critical history as a tool to contrast the emerging forms of racism and white supremacy.

Colgo l’occasione dell’invito a presentare una lezione di apertura al IX Convegno annuale di SIETAR Italia per condividere con voi, in forma schematica, alcune conclusioni a cui sono arrivato nel mio percorso di ricerca e nelle iniziative formative che ho condotto. La prospettiva interculturale che seguo è alternativa, sul piano teorico e su quello metodologico, alla prospettiva “multiculturale” che incoraggia un ampio ricorso a concetti come “identità” e “appartenenza”. I libri citati in questo testo possono offrire a chi fosse interessato l’opportunità di approfondire le differenze tra la prospettiva
interculturale e quella multiculturale. Mi limiterò qui a presentare alcune riflessioni, rinviando a questi testi più ampi e strutturati per una loro più ampia spiegazione e giustificazione.

Pensare le culture e i loro rapporti in termini di alterità invece che di differenze

L’approccio multiculturale considera le “culture” come vere e proprie realtà a sé stanti che da un lato separano i loro membri da quelli delle altre culture e dall’altro lato li rendono simili tra di loro, li accomunano, cioè costituiscono la base delle loro “comunità”. Questa concezione della cultura come una “cosa” (reificazione) si ritrova ogni volta che “si ritiene che ogni gruppo umano ‘abbia’ un qualche tipo di ‘cultura’ e che le frontiere tra questi gruppi così come i contorni delle loro culture siano ben definiti e relativamente facili da descrivere” (Benhabib, 2002, p. 4). L’approccio interculturale invece non considera la “cultura” come una “cosa”, e tanto meno la considera una realtà monolitica. Seyla Benhabib, che insegna Science Politiche all’Università di Yale, preferisce considerarlà una narrazione polifonica che non rifugge dalle dissonanze: “chi partecipa, di una cultura sperimenta tradizioni, riti, storie, rituali e simboli, strumenti e condizioni materiali di vita attraverso narrazioni condivise, contestate e negoziate” (ibidem). Per questa concezione della cultura è vero che la cultura fa gli esseri umani, ma è vero nello stesso tempo che sono gli uomini, le donne, i giovani, i vecchi, gli immigrati che fanno la cultura attraverso il loro agire quotidiano, la loro azione sociale, un aspetto emergente della quale è il discorso (Mantovani, 2008). Questa centralità dell’attore sociale con la sua “agency” è il punto di partenza del discorso che segue: quando nelle righe che seguono si userà il termine
“cultura” il lettore dovrà tenere presente che la “cultura”, anche quando è citata senza virgolette, non indica una “cosa”, ma apre una problematica collocata in un contesto sociale e continuamente negoziata (Mantovani, 2012).

Il discorso corrente sulle relazioni tra “cultures” gira intorno al concetto di “differenza”: ci si chiede come possano essere intese le differenze culturali, e soprattutto se esse siano da concepire come sostanzialmente quantitative, come suppongono gli studi cross-cultural che confrontano il senso del sé di americani e giapponesi rilevato attraverso questionari (scale di atteggiamento di Likert), o siano invece da considerare qualitative, e quindi in ultima analisi non analizzabili con strumenti standardizzati quali i questionari, il cui uso parte dall’assunzione che le domande e le risposte abbiano lo stesso significato anche se espresse in lingue differenti e proposte in contesto sociali differenti (Mantovani, 2000). Il sinologo François Jullien, dell’Università Paris VII, propone una svolta innovativa: invece di insistere sulle “differenze” proviamo a considerare i rapporti tra “cultures” in termini di “scarti” (nel senso di scostamenti). Nel considerare gli “scarti” tra pensiero cinese e pensiero europeo “non si tratta di ‘comparare’ cercando di identificare delle somiglianze e delle differenze per caratterizzare l’uno e l’altro pensiero (identificazioni vane quanto impossibili) … si tratta piuttosto di permettere un loro reciproco quadrarsi, da cui risulti una riflessione da una parte e dall’altra, simultaneamente” (Jullien, 2016, p. 9). “Lo specifico dello scarto non è di ordinare, in funzione del Sé e dell’Altro – come fa la differenza – ma di dis-ordinare, per poter sondare fino a dove possa giungere; un tale scarto rimetterà dunque in tensione il pensiero a partire dalla distanza che avrà aperto” (ibidem).

Jullien sottolinea il valore “prospettico” di questa operazione: cogliere gli scarti serve per progettare il futuro, liberan-
doci dal guscio costituito dal dare per scontato che il nostro sistema di riferimenti sia universale. Molti sono i punti, tutti molto concreti e rilevanti, su cui Jullien richiama la nostra attenzione nei suoi testi sulla Cina. Limitiamoci a considerare lo scarto che separa il modo cinese di intendere la decisione da quello occidentale. In Occidente prendere la decisione giusta è qualcosa che parte dalla mente del decisore, che per decidere, prima di agire deve costruire un modello adeguato della situazione che ha davanti. Per Platone il grande generale è il geometra che è capace di elaborare il modello “giusto”, che ha bisogno solo di essere calato nella realtà. In Cina invece “lo stratega viene invitato a partire dalla situazione, non da una situazione quale potrebbe essere preliminarmente modellizzata, ma dalla situazione in cui ci si trova e all’interno della quale si tenta di scoprire dove risiede il potenziale e come sfruttarlo” (Jullien, 2006, p. 27).

Un potente strumento per l’educazione interculturale: una storia globale critica

Nessuna esperienza veramente interculturale è possibile se non viene combattuto un presupposto che mina, esplicitamente e tacitamente, il rispetto reciproco nelle relazioni con persone di culture “altri”. L’altro non può essere rispettato se viene considerato membro di una società inferiore sotto il profilo sociale, religioso, morale, come la scuola e le istituzioni dei paesi “occidentali” hanno insegnato ai loro membri. Pensiamo a come le carte geografiche mostrino un mondo che ha al suo centro il “nostro” paese; pensiamo a come la storia viene insegnata nelle scuole come una serie di vicende che hanno al loro centro il “nostro” paese; come il nostro mondo sociale e morale viene costruito intorno a un insieme di valori che sono i “nostri” valori ma sono considerati “universalì” perché costituiscono il punto più alto dello sviluppo delle società umane.

La scala evolutiva delle culture, esplicitamente proposta come giustificazione morale delle imprese coloniali ma tacitamente funzionante ancora oggi, secondo Richard Shweder, antropologo culturale dell’Università di Chicago, sosteneva che: “il gradino su cui le varie culture erano collocate dipendeva da un ristretto numero di indici di progresso, o sviluppo, o evoluzione che si ritenevano oggettivi ed altamente correlati tra loro. La direzione di marcia si pensava che andasse da povero a ricco, da magico a scientifico, da illetterato a capace di leggere e scrivere, da ineducato a educato, da semplice a complesso, da malato a sano, da autoritario a democratico, da poligamico a monogamico, da pagano a cristiano, da oppresso a libero. L’essenziale era che il nostro modo di vivere è il più vero, buono, bello ed efficiente, e che le credenze, i valori, le pratiche degli altri nella misura in cui differiscono
dalle nostre sono false, vergognose, sgradevoli ed irrazionali” (Shweder, 2003, pp. 347-348).

La presunzione etnocentrica, che è in qualche misura presente in tutte le “culture”, è però particolarmente forte nel “nostro” paese per una serie di ragioni, una delle quali è l’eredità del periodo fascista e delle vicende coloniali (Mantovani, 2004). Le vicende di quest'epoca infausta - che ha prodotto le leggi razziali contro gli ebrei, le sanguinosi guerre coloniali in Africa con uso massiccio di gas tossici, la politica razzista nei confronti delle popolazioni africane dei paesi “conquistati” - hanno lasciato una traccia profonda nel costume, nel linguaggio e anche nella visione della storia del nostro paese. Ancora oggi nella scuola dell'obbligo e nei media la conoscenza della storia è centrata sulle vicende che toccano il nostro paese, e soprattutto è reticente sulle pagine nere della nostra storia.

Questa situazione contribuisce a spiegare la frequenza e la gravità di manifestazioni di odio e di disprezzo verso persone di altre culture non solo in situazioni quotidiane, ma persino in discorsi pubblici di personalità politiche. Ricordiamo il caso del vicepresidente del senato Roberto Calderoli che il 13 luglio 2013 in occasione di una manifestazione del suo partito assimilò ad un orangù una donna italiana di origine congolesa, Cecile Kyenge, all’epoca ministro per l’integrazione nel governo nazionale. Il 6 febbraio 2015 la giunta per le immunità del senato della repubblica deliberò a maggioranza che l’espressione non costituiva insulto razzista, ma una manifestazione della libertà di espressione garantita dalla costituzione a tutti i cittadini italiani, e in particolare ai membri del parlamento. Questo episodio – non unico nel suo genere, purtroppo – mostra quanto sia compromesso il contesto sociale, culturale e istituzionale del nostro paese per quanto riguarda il rispetto di persone di altre culture.
Una grande opera educativa è necessaria per bonificare il terreno imbevuto per troppi decenni dei veleni del razzismo, dell’ignoranza e del disprezzo per l’”altro” verso cui, all’inizio di questo scritto, ci proponevamo di dirigerci. Una conoscenza storica molto più robusta di quella che oggi la scuola e i media forniscono è necessaria a questo scopo. Ma di una storia diversa da quella che è stata raccontata per tanti anni nelle scuole e nei media, quella che presentava gli “italiani brava gente” e che lo storico Angelo Del Boca (2005) ha messo in discussione nel suo lungo lavoro di ricerca.

La storia di cui abbiamo bisogno per l’educazione interculturale deve avere due requisiti. Anzitutto deve essere una storia globale: non possiamo capire davvero il nostro passato e il nostro presente se non aprendo la prospettiva all’intero pianeta (Subrahmaniam, 2014). Il Bengala non nasce nel momento in cui viene conquistato dagli inglesi; il Giappone non inizia quando viene “aperto” al commercio dalle cannoniere americane; la Cina viveva anche prima che gli occidentali arrivassero a Shanghai; e l’Africa centrale ospitava potenti imperi prima della tratta degli schiavi.

In secondo luogo deve essere una storia “critica”, cioè aperta ai punti di vista diversi, agli “interessi” delle diverse aree del pianeta. Una storia globale costruita dal punto di vista “occidentale” (quale è quella che troviamo spesso oggi nei media, ad esempio quando si parla del medio oriente), in cui le diverse aree del pianeta sono viste in funzione degli “interessi” occidentali, sarebbe soltanto una prosecuzione della storia coloniale e post-coloniale che ci ha portato al punto in cui siamo. Abbiamo bisogno invece di una storia che si sforzi di vedere le vicende del mondo globale “con gli occhi degli altri”, come propone di fare il movimento” Through Others Eyes” (TOE) che unisce storici di varie parti del mondo.

“Spezzando ogni cuore. Dal Messico di Cortez alla Roma dell’In-
“quisizione” (Mantovani, 2013) è un libro pensato per l’educazione interculturale e sperimentato in alcune scuole superiori. Presenta gli intrecci tra le vicende che accadono in Europa e in Italia (dal sacco di Roma alla scoperta dell’arte antica, dalla nascita dell’inquisizione alla persecuzione dei valdesi di Calabria) e le vicende che si svolgono nel “nuovo mondo” (dalle conquiste del Messico e del Perù al naufragio di Cabeza de Vaca sulle coste della Florida) e nell’India del Gran Moghul Akbar. Il testo è ambientato nel cinquecento perché è allora che il mondo occidentale incontra per la prima volta - nelle Americhe - un “altro” che non era precedentemente noto in alcun modo, un totalmente altro, e imposta con esso una modalità di rapporto che segnerà profondamente il futuro. Ed anche perché è nel cinquecento che in Europa nasce il mondo moderno, con la fioritura del rinascimento e il suo precoce tramonto, con la riforma protestante e la riforma cattolica, con lo splendore delle società italiane e la loro brusca rovina. Un cinquecento in cui riusciamo a vedere i fili che collegano Roma e le Americhe, in un mondo in cui vivono insieme Raffaello, Cortez, il papa Borgia e Carlo V.

Un capitolo del volume che ha incontrato particolare favore tra gli studenti è quello che racconta, sulla base di una precisa documentazione storica, l’incontro avvenuto nella seconda metà del cinquecento tra il sovrano musulmano dell’India, il gran moghul Akbar, ed un gruppo di missionari gesuiti invitati dal gran moghul nella sua capitale per parlare di religione. In questi incontri abbiamo la sorpresa di incontrare un sovrano musulmano che promuove relazioni pacifiche tra le religioni del suo impero. Molti studenti hanno appreso con stupore che un valore a cui oggi gli occidentali dicono di tenere moltissimo, la tolleranza, era presente in India alla fine del cinquecento proprio mentre l’Europa era dilaniata dalle guerre di religione. Un brano di storia globale che contribuisce a ridimensionare le pretese di superiorità morale del “nostro” mondo.
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Ha insegnato psicologia sociale all’università di Milano e poi in quella di Padova. Ha fatto ricerche e interventi sulle nuove tecnologie, le differenze culturali, l’educazione interculturale. Fa ricerche e interventi per la promozione della conoscenza e del rispetto dell’”altro'. Ha pubblicato numerosi volumi sulla psicologia culturale e sull’educazione interculturale in Italia e all’estero.
“How can we open a path to the other?” Speech, narratives, history

Giuseppe Mantovani
Past-Professor of Social Psychology at the Università degli Studi di Padova.

How can we find a path towards the “other”? Instead of striving for a more or less accurate view of the “differences” among cultures we can concentrate on the “variance” among cultural frameworks to better understand the characteristics of our world that can go unnoticed by us because they are so obvious. This approach to interculturalism, forwarded by the sinologist Francois Jullien, is consistent with the educational perspective of the “Through Others Eyes” (TOE) movement, which promotes the construction of a global critical history as a tool to contrast the emerging forms of racism and white supremacy.

I have accepted the invitation to give an opening talk at the IX Annual Conference of SIETAR Italia to share with you, in a schematic way, some conclusions that I have come to through my research and the training initiatives that I have conducted. The intercultural perspective I follow can be considered an alternative, from both a theoretical and methodological point of view, to a “multicultural” perspective that encourages the broad use of concepts such as “identity” and “belonging”. The books cited in this text present an opportunity for those who are interested in deepening their understanding of the differences between the intercultural and the multicultural perspective. Therefore, I will limit myself here to present some reflections, referring to these broader and more structured texts for their wider explanations and justifications.

1 Translated by Maura Di Mauro, and proofread by Lacie Raymond.
Think about cultures and their relationships in terms of alterity rather than difference

The multicultural approach considers “cultures” as separate realities that on one hand separate members from those of other cultures, and on the other hand, make them similar to one another; these shared realities form the basis of the “community”. This conception of culture as a “thing” (reification) is found when “every human group is believed to have some kind of ‘culture’ and that the boundaries between these groups as well as the contours of their cultures are well defined and relatively easy to describe” (Benhabib, 2002, p.4). Instead, the intercultural approach does not consider “culture” as a “thing”, and much less considers it a monolithic reality. Seyla Benhabib, who teaches Political Science at Yale University, prefers to consider culture a polyphonic narrative, that does not shy away from dissonances: “Those who participate in a culture experience traditions, rituals, stories, symbols, tools and material conditions of life through shared narratives, disputed and negotiated “(ibidem). For this conception of culture, it is true that culture makes human beings, but it is also true that men, women, young people, old people, and immigrants make culture through their everyday actions, their social interactions; discourse is an emerging aspect of social interactions (Mantovani, 2008). The centrality of the social actor with his “agency” is the starting point; when the lines that follow use the term “culture”, the reader has to keep in mind that “culture”, even when quoted without quotation marks, does not indicate a “thing”, but rather, presents a problem that is placed in a social context and is constantly negotiated (Mantovani, 2012).

The current discourse on the relationships between “cultures” revolves around the concept of “difference”. One won-
ders how cultural differences can be understood, especially if they can be conceived as substantially quantita-
ve, as the cross-cultural studies that compare the sense of the American and Japanese selves, through questionnaires (Likert’s attitude scales) presume; or if they are qualitative, and therefore not analyzable with standardized tools such as questionnaires, the usage of which begins with the assu-
mption that questions and answers have the same meaning even if expressed in different languages and are proposed in different social contexts (Mantovani, 2000). The sinologist Francois Jullien, of Paris VII University, proposes an innova-
tive turning point: instead of insisting on “differences” we should try to consider the relationship between “cultures” in terms of “scraps” (in the sense of deviations). In considering the “gaps” between Chinese thought and European thought “it is not a matter of ‘comparing’, trying to identify similarities and differences to characterize both thoughts (which is as useless as it is impossible)... but instead, mutually scrutini-
zating them, and enabling a simultaneous reflection on both sides” (Jullien, 2016, p. 9). “The particularity of the “scraps” (or deviations) is not to order them on the basis of the Self and the Other, to create difference – but to disorder, to see where you can arrive; such gaps will then recreate tension in thought, starting from the deviation that you have opened.
Jullien emphasizes the “perspective” value of this operation: collecting the scraps is used to plan the future, releasing us from a shell made up of assumptions that our reference sys-
stem is universal. There are many points, all very concrete and relevant, to which Jullien draws our attention in his tex-
ts on China. Let us limit ourselves to consider the gap that separates the Chinese and the Western way of approaching decision making. In the West, making the right decision is som-
ething that starts from the mind of the decider, who before deciding, must build an appropriate pattern of the situation
he needs to face. For Plato the great general uses geometry and is capable of developing the “right” model, which only needs to be applied to reality. In China, however, “the strategist is invited to begin with the situation, not to a situation that could be modeled beforehand; the situation where he is trying to find out where the potential resides and how to exploit it” (Jullien, 2006, p. 27).

While in the West the emphasis is placed on the Self and more specifically on the individual mind, in China the emphasis is on the relationship with the environment. The great general pays careful attention to the “situation”, the “configuration” and the “ground”. He is attentive to the continual changes that are happening to them, assists them, exploits the “potential” of the situation, and for this reason he wins without fighting. The difference between the two ways of approaching decision making is clear and illuminating, and teaches us a lot about “ourselves” before understanding the Chinese. The “self”, the “I”, the “mind” (at the time of Augustine of Hippo it was the soul, with enlightenment it became reason, today it is the self with its powerful charge of narcissism) which is so obviously central to our “world”, is not central in the same way (at least in “our” understanding) in China, where relationships with the social and natural environment are more important.

**A powerful tool for intercultural education: teaching history with a critical and global approach**

No truly intercultural experience is possible without the hard-fought prerequisite, whether explicit or tacit, of mutual respect when relating to people from “other” cultures. The “other” cannot be respected if he is considered a member of a lesser social, religious or moral society, as schools and in-
stitutions of “Western” countries have taught. For instance, think about how geographic maps show a world that has its “home” in their center; think about how history is taught at schools, as a series of events that have their “home” in the center. Our social and moral world is built around a set of values that are our “values”, but are considered “universal” because they are considered to be the highest point in the development of human societies.

The evolutionary scale of cultures, explicitly proposed as a moral justification for colonialism, is tacitly still functioning today; according to Richard Shweder, cultural anthropologist at the University of Chicago, “the pedestal on which various cultures were placed depended on a small number of indexes of progress, or development, or evolution that were considered objective and highly correlated with each other. The driving direction was thought to be from poor to rich, magical to scientific, illiterate, able to read and write, from uneducated to educated, from simple to complex, from ill to healthy, from authoritarian to democratic, from polygamous to monogamous, from pagan to Christian, from oppressed to free. The essential thing was that our way of life was the most true, good, beautiful, and efficient, and that the beliefs, values, and practices of others, insofar as they are different from ours are false, shameful, unpleasant and irrational” (Shweder, 2003, pp. 347-348).

Ethnocentric presumption, which is to some extent present in all “cultures”, is however particularly strong in our “country” for a number of reasons, one of which is the legacy of the fascist and colonial period (Mantovani, 2004). The vicissitudes of this infamous age - which has produced racist laws against Jews, bloody colonial wars in Africa with the usage of toxic gases, and racist policies against African nations in the “conquered” countries - left a profound trace in costume,
language and even in the history of our country. Still today, in compulsory schools and in the media, the knowledge of history is centered on the events that touch our country, and above all, is reticent about its dark pages of history. This situation helps explain the frequency and severity of hate speech and contempt for people of other cultures not only in everyday situations, but even in public speeches by political personalities. We can recall the case of Senate Vice-President Roberto Calderoli, who at a party event on July 13, 2013, compared an Italian woman of Congolese origin, Cecile Kyenge, at that time Italian Minister for Integration, to an orangutan. On February 6, 2015, the junta for the Immunities of the Second House of Parliament voted, with majority vote, that the expression was not a racist insult, but a manifestation of the freedom of expression guaranteed by the constitution to all Italian citizens, and especially to the members of the parliament. This unfortunate episode shows how compromised the social, cultural and institutional context of our country is in regards to respect for people from other cultures.

A huge educational project is needed in order to reclaim the soil that has been saturated for too many decades in the poisons of racism, ignorance, and the contempt for the “other”, from which at the beginning of the text we proposed to move toward. In order to reach this goal, a more robust historical knowledge than what schools and the media are currently offering is necessary. A more complex story is needed from what has been told to us for many years by these institutions, one that presented Italians as good people, and that the historian Angelo Del Boca (2005) has been questioning in his long research work.

The story we need for intercultural education must have two requirements. First of all, it must be a global story: we can-
not really understand our past and present unless we open the prospect to the whole planet (Subrahmaniam, 2014). Bangladesh was not born when it was conquered by the British; Japan does not begin when it “opened up” to American trading gunners; China already existed before the Westerners arrived in Shanghai; and Central Africa hosted powerful empires before the slave trade.

Secondary, but of no less importance, it needs to be a “critical” story, that is open to different viewpoints, of different “interests” and from different areas on the planet. A global history built from the “Western” point of view (which is what we often find in the media today like when it comes to the Middle East), where different areas of the planet are viewed only as a function of Western “interests”, carries on and reiterates the colonial and post-colonial history that has led us to the point where we are today. Instead, we need a story that seeks to see the affairs of the global world “with the eyes of others” as the “Through Others Eyes” (TOE) movement proposes by uniting historians from various parts of the world.

“Spezzando ogni cuore. Dal Messico di Cortez alla Roma dell’Inquisizione” (Mantovani, 2013), is a book conceived for intercultural education and to be used in high schools. It presents the interweaving of the events happening in Europe and Italy (from the sack of Rome to the discovery of ancient art, from the beginning of the Inquisition to the persecution of the Waldesians in Calabria), and the events taking place in the “new world” (from the conquests of Mexico and Peru after the Cabeza de Vaca shipwreck off the coast of Florida) and India’s Gran Moghul Akbar. The text is set in the sixteenth century because it is at that time that the Western world met for the first time, a previously unknown, completely different “other” in the Americans, and estab-
lished with them a relationship that will deeply mark the future. The fifteenth century is also the time that in Europe that the modern world was born, with the flowering of the Renaissance and its early sunset, with the Protestant and the Catholic reforms, with the splendor of Italian societies and their abrupt ruin. During the years of the 1500, we can see the links that connect Rome and the Americas, in a world where Raffaello, Cortez, Pope Borgia and Charles V all live together.

A chapter of the volume that has been particularly well-received among students is the one that based on precise historical records, tells about the meeting that took place in the second half of the 5th century between the great moghul Akbar, the Muslim sovereign of India, and a group of Jesuit missionaries invited to visit him in his capital to talk about religion. During these encounters we unexpectedly see a Muslim ruler who promotes peaceful relations between the religions of his empire. Many students have learned with amazement that a value that Westerners presume to hold today, tolerance, was present in India at the end of the 5th century just as Europe was torn apart by religious wars. It is a piece of global history that contributes to resizing the demands of moral superiority in our “world”.

References


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PART ONE - Fluid and Multiple Aspects of Identity in a Multicultural World

To set the foundation for this publication we start by exploring the many facets of cultural identity. The seven authors of this part - despite their diverse approaches - all embrace a dynamic vision about cultural identity. They consider identity not as a set of fixed traits, or of stable self-representations; but rather as a fluid concept, that changes over time and contexts.

Given the multicultural context, all authors speak about “boundary spanners”, because effective boundary spanners not only overcome geographic, but also identify-based boundaries.

George Simons (Chapter 1) guides us through a fascinating exploration inside our personal identity boundary by starting with stories about our names and personal biographies. Marco Croci (Chapter 2) reflects on how different generational and cultural meanings connected with time conceptions determine our identity through the different ways that we choose to spend our time. Subsequently, Margherita Sportelli (Chapter 3) illustrates how the identity of Chinese migrants in a small town in Southern Italy develops over time through interactions with the local community.

Gender and multicultural identity in the context of US migration is addressed by Fiona Citkin (Chapter 4). She
presents a series of success factors for women immigrants, and explores how women of migrant origins achieved exceptional professional success in the United States, by consciously valorizing their multicultural identity.

The power of self- and other awareness related to mobility programs for international students is analyzed in more depth in Chapters 5 and 6. In particular, Mattia Baiutti (Chapter 5) describes how secondary school students develop a greater critical understanding of themselves through their contact with otherness and by daring to venture out from their comfort zone. Gabriel Weibl’s study (Chapter 6) reveals international students’ positive connotation of cosmopolitan identity, and how this sustains global citizenship. Both authors recognize that identity awareness is important to the development of intercultural competence. Actually, this finding is explicit or implicitly confirmed by all the authors.

Katharina Maak (Chapter 7) talks about the Saint James’ Pilgrimage as a cultural and spiritual self-reflective experience that can contribute to the intercultural understanding and to the creation of sense of a European identity.

All authors clearly illustrate that any reflection on intercultural interaction in multicultural contexts starts with a good understanding of identity self-awareness and with other-awareness.

At this point, we invite the reader to consider the different levels of analysis. On the individual level of analysis, you will find a series of reflections and recommendations for personal development that also include practical training tools and methodologies. One can note that considerations on group level – be it migrants, tourists or students – emphasize also the relevant role of institutions (territorial, political, educational), in providing services that adequately consider how to stimulate intercultural understanding and interactions.
The Name, Frame, Tame, Blame Game: Identity, a matter of vibrant life and violent death

George F. Simons
Consultant, Trainer and Author

From the construction of our names to the games we play, our identity is planted, grows and shifts in our self-talk generated by the cultural narratives we participate in. This chapter will assist you to explore the trajectory of your own identity, beginning with your name and what it has brought into your life both positively and negatively. It will show how the search for identity can be both a spiritual quest as well as a deadly game. It will explore how language and the social construction of our realities are constantly at work in shaping both individual and group identity discourse, and our social and intergroup perceptions.

Listening Ourselves as we Listen to Ourselves

As a person who makes presentations and lectures, it often looks like I’m the only person talking in the room while everyone else is listening, whether to me, or to what’s going on around them, or surreptitiously to what’s on their iPhone. When trying to introduce a concept of culture, I like to walk up to one of the participants and remark about how it seems that I am the sole speaker. Then I ask the room to imagine what it would be like if the person I’m next to had an imaginary volume button on their arm or on their forehead, so that I could turn it up the gain to hear what she or he is internally “talking” about.

I don’t ask the person to share their inner conversation, but simply to note that all of us in the room, unless we've
fallen asleep – and the somnolent also may be having a dream conversation – are talking to ourselves. In the words of John Lembo, “Every waking moment we talk to ourselves about the things we experience. Our self-talk, the thoughts we communicate to ourselves, in turn control the way we feel and act”\textsuperscript{11}. Some researchers have noted that this self-talk goes on about eight times as fast as we speak to each other.

I’m using the term “inner conversations” as a handy way to describe this phenomenon, though it consists not only of inner word talk with ourselves, but is a multimedia event comprised of images, video clips, and an ongoing flow of feelings, a kind of inner music that our bodies are in fact dancing to, whether or not they result in discernable gestures, movements or actions.

While speaking to a group, I could ask the question, “Are they listening to me?” I really don’t know. However, what I do know is that they are definitely listening, listening to something, whether its stimulus is what I am saying or the growling in their pre-lunch stomachs. In any case, it is a legitimate question to ask: What are they listening to? Perhaps even inquiring further: What are they choosing to listen to?

All too many of us in education and training have subscribed to the fantasy of listening being a process of emptying out our minds in such a fashion that we can hear correctly what another person is saying to us. Would that it were that Zen simple! We do have a raft of useful techniques called “active listening” that seeks to assure the person speaking to us that what we hear bears semblance to what they are saying. In short, we try to trim away from the abundance of inner chatter what is relevant to the correct interpretation of what is being said or going on around us. But how can this happen?

\textsuperscript{1} http://gizmodo.com/5903023/talking-to-yourself-makes-you-smarter
We Listen to the Voice of Culture

It will be helpful to consider the voices we hear. Whose words are they? Where do they come from? Obviously, we are speaking to ourselves, but in fact each of us is an interactive theater audience, at once authors, directors, and actors. If I may be so bold to say, the inner theater could best be identified as “culture speaking”. It is the constantly active and identity-shaping discourse or narrative that speaks us as we speak it, that shapes us and distinguishes us in ourselves and in the human social groups in which we find ourselves. In other words, we might say that we not only “listen to ourselves”, but that we “listen ourselves”, bringing ourselves, our identities into being, fluid as they may be.

We are quite aware of the fact that theater and play – it should not surprise us that what happens in a theater is called “a play” – easily transport us from a world we usually find ourselves in to the world that is being acted out on stage or on the playing field. In other words, play and plays invite us to create and be part of a different world. This brings us close to the realization that perhaps the world we step out of as we enter the auditorium of inner discourse may be just another theater that we have learned to call reality. This may be scary, in the sense that it is make-believe that makes us believe. We’re just not aware of when or how we bought a ticket to the various theaters we live in. Many areas of human activity that we participate in, not just military ones, are called “theaters” precisely because they are realities whose architecture is constructed by an inner and outer shared discourse. At some level, we intuitively know that our realities are socially constructed, stories, often contradictory ones, that we create to survive and succeed in the shifting environments in which we find ourselves.
My favorite description of how culture works as discourse comes from a children’s book Crow and Weasel, by Barry Lopez (1990):

“The stories people tell have a way of taking care of them. If stories come to you, care for them. And, learn to give them away where they are needed. Sometimes a person needs a story more than food to stay alive. That is why we put these stories in each other’s memory. This is how people care for themselves”.

Who’s in a Name?

Though our identities start at the dawn of our existence, it is perhaps the names that we are given or give ourselves that label our identity conversations. I have found that spending some time exploring names is a good starting point for becoming conscious of how our identity narratives develop, for how we think about ourselves and how others think of us. I was called George after my father and he was George after his great uncle. The name set me apart for many years, as I knew no other Georges, until there were three of them in a college Latin class of eight students, where it was impossible to doze as the prof called on a George so repeatedly. I had also to struggling with being a “George Junior”, which felt a bit diminishing.

On the other hand, “Simons” was a consequence of immigrant family history, a name change activated at the time of my birth to free me to be a real American and escape the label of “Simonovich the son of a bitch” which had apparently dogged my father and grandfather. But there is a lot more to
that name story, as it claims descent from a certain “Simon”, a soldier in the army of Napoleon who remained in Eastern Europe either as a wounded veteran, perhaps a pacifist who went AWOL, and settled in a Slavic area of what became the Austro-Hungarian Empire, entitling the next male generation to the patronymic of Simonovich. In any case, it was a name to be embarrassed by and to be deliberately hidden by recently arrived honkies to the Promised Land.

Names come from a variety of sources, prosaic and profound. A recent intern of mine became Heidi, simply because her mother was enjoying a book about a girl so-named. My colleague Kwadwo’s label comes from the fact that he was born on Monday in a tribe where you took your first identity from the day of the week on which you popped out of mother’s womb. If you’re born in the USA in the hippie age, you could have been named after a protest singer, Arlo, Marley, or Zappa or simply been part of nature as Heather, Sequoia, or Sparrow. Were you given a name that intimated the kind of person you should become, Victoria, Attila, Washington, Sophie, or Aphrodite? Though Mohammed may be the most common man’s name in the world, it can get you held up at airport security nowadays. Does your name, comfy at home, like Missy or Bubba, generate stereotypes elsewhere?

Everybody’s name has a frame, connections with its bestowal, experiences of its use, our feelings about it, and the many ways that others may frame it in their encounters with us. What’s in the frames of your name?

Explore this by asking yourself:

- How’d I get my name(s)? What do they mean? What did they mean to those who gave them to me?
- What nicknames have I got, why? Who’s to blame?
- Have I chosen names for myself or changed them? Why?
How? To what effect?
- How did my names position me in my worlds? When was their personal, cultural impact on me painful or enriching?
- What stories do I tell myself about incidents or adventures with my name(s)?

We can also look at how we relate to what we tell ourselves. USians say, “Fake it until you make it!” So, we can look at what we tell ourselves and others about who we are that is more ambition than fact. So, I sometimes ask people look inside and share what they are willing to share of what they listen about themselves, asking themselves, “Is there an identity lie you have been or are living with...?” Does it have to do with:
  - Ethnicity
  - Family
  - Status
  - Education
  - Or...?

We have already mentioned play and this includes sport. Each game is an imaginary world made real by our participation, by the identities we assume in it and carry out of it. You could also share your game experience with a friend or colleague to see how cultural variety affects whether, when, how often and how it is played. Ask each other:
  - What games did you play growing up?
  - What messages about life did they teach you?
  - Their personal, gender, cultural impact on you.

Of course, names and games are not the only sources
of our inner chatter though they are typical growing up experiences shaping our identity narratives. What is real and how we relate to it in our many and vast worlds is not only a mental reflection, but it is ourselves and thus a part of that world itself. As George Lakoff (2004) observes, “Our understanding of the world is part of the world – a physical part of the world. Our conceptual framings exist in the physical neural circuitry in our brains...”. Or as comedian Groucho Marx would put it more succinctly, “Life is a whim of several billion cells to be you for a while” (Kanfer, 2008).

Today it is becoming a tautology to say that we shape culture and culture shapes us, but it is nonetheless true that we are culture’s artifacts and we are culture’s artisans, so our tasks both as responsible humans and professional interculturalists is to both observe the process going on around us and determine our role as individuals and as groups in managing what we are creating that is creating us and how it drives our worlds.

**Framing vs. Bias**

Here I find the concept of frames most interesting and useful is one metaphor for describing our inner functions of knowing (Lakoff, 2004). Our system instantly projects listenings to interpret what we perceive. Frames pop up to tell us what’s happening and what we should do about it, based ultimately on what we have previously learned and digested. Our challenge as artisans is to do our best to verify the accuracy and appropriateness of what we will understand and act upon. The term “unconscious bias” describes this challenge and has birthed an entire industry in diversity thinking and training. Much of this is important and useful though I dislike the use of the word “bias” in English, at least as for
many it carries a tinge of accusation, and is likely to result in defensiveness impeding rather than assisting productive self-management.

Frame management, whatever you name it, is critical for social cohesion, as Amin Maalouf (1998) in his classic study of deadly identities so accurately observed. Without it, “Taking the line of least resistance, we lump the most different people together under the same heading... Taking the line of least resistance, we ascribe to them collective crimes, collective acts and opinions”. Recognizing and managing our frames allows us to move from instinctual fear to productive curiosity, and is at the heart of what we are coming to call cultural competence.

**The Power and Challenge of Social Constructions**

In any case, as culture shapes the identities with which we seek to manage life, it constructs realities, worlds, artifacts that become real for us, as well as interpreting the givens of the physical world we are a part of. This is well illustrated by a cartoon I recently saw which pictures two cigar smoking tycoons in conversation, one of whom declares, “Sure, money is imaginary–but at least it’s got everybody imagining it!”

Besides the individual, specific phenomena which we create with cultural discourse and sometimes give physical reality to within our constructed worlds, there are bigger picture constructions underlying the more tangible constructions such as money. These are often called *Master Narratives*, though, as I first discovered them, I was inclined to cobble together a German neologism and describe them as

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2 Grand narrative or “master narrative” is a term introduced by Jean-François Lyotard in his classic work *The Postmodern Condition*. Manchester University Press, 1984. [https://prezi.com/faujbzzrlnln/master-narratives/](https://prezi.com/faujbzzrlnln/master-narratives/)
Urkulturen. This seemed appropriate to me as they are so basic, so widely accepted and so unexamined that they easily generate derivative constructions that reify, support and perpetuate their validity.

Master Narratives exist at various level, global, national, regional, familial, organizational, etc. A few examples of such Urkulturen besides our current economic systems are such taken-for granted-cultural drivers as growth, development, commodification, nationality. We forget, for example, on the one hand, how recent in human history are the pillars of the current economic system, and the trumpets, anthems and flags of a national identity on the other. We have constructed them so solidly that we can hardly imagine alternatives. The movement toward a new planetary ecology is a good example of the uphill struggle to develop a new narrative in the face of certain master narratives whose consequences appear to be increasingly suicidal.

Three Dynamics of Cultural Discourse

We are up against the dynamics that the role of language and words, cultural discourse creates in us and around us. The first of these is its subtlety, the automatic, usually unconscious accumulation of perceptions. Greek poet Giorgos Seferis, expressed this well when he said, “Don’t ask me who’s influenced me. A lion is made up of the lambs he’s digested, and I’ve been reading all my life”\(^3\). Are worlds but words, short-lived whirlpools of meaning, “tales told by a fool”? So we might also ask ourselves these questions to explore our identity narrative further.

\(^3\) [https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/270004-don-t-ask-me-who-s-influenced-me-a-lion-is-made](https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/270004-don-t-ask-me-who-s-influenced-me-a-lion-is-made)
As a preschooler, what stories were you told? What songs sung?
What do you remember of them?
What did they tell you about who you are & how you should be?

Another of these dynamics is the power of novelty. Though exploited by contemporary marketing, novelty’s influence has long been recognized. As Homer noted in the first book of the Odyssey, “…men praise that song the most, which comes the newest to their ears”. Novelty stimulates curiosity, attention, and thus assimilation of its content.

Finally, and perhaps most critical, we are shaped by the tsunamis of repetition. Nguyen-Phuong-Mai (2017) has summarized this well: “Thoughts that dominate your mind are those that have the shortest distance to cover and the easiest way to travel, a ‘cell assembly’ of neurons that fire together rapidly without much effort. This means repeated thoughts will be experienced more easily each time you have them”. Understanding this dynamic, George Lakoff (2004) has proffered solid advice which seems counterintuitive, namely if we want to influence other, we do best not to use their words, their language in the discussion with them, as this repetition will reinforce their position rather than open their perspectives to ours.

Advertising and propaganda have long been recognized as users and abusers of the power of repetition. John Grierson, the Scottish documentary film maker noted so accurately, years ago, how “The oblique paradox of propaganda is that the lie in the throat becomes, by repetition, the truth in the heart” (Druick and Williams, 2014). Today we might add the phenomenon of “going viral” where, technology with intensity, unimagined and unimaginable only a few years ago, flood our being and our spaces with words, images, scenarios, and feelings.
Are We Trapped by the Worlds We Create?

The answer may not be less sharing, but more, not less connection but more. Susan Salzbrenner (2015) insists that, “There is a need for us to really share more and to give away our secrets”. This is essential for knowing ourselves, each other, and our diverse shape-shifting worlds, to appreciate them, benefit from them, to repair and reconstruct them, as well as to carefully create new ones. I have frequently chosen, as a metaphor for culture, the concept of flow, seeing it as the waters that descend from ancestral glaciers, a river nourished by tributaries coming from many different directions, refreshed by rainfall and tempests that continues to grow on its way to continually nourishing the sea of our existence. Let me close by summing up our situation and our challenge in these few haiku with which I concluded a longer poem entitled Flow.

Tap it or be trapped
by floodwaters we create,
as discourse rages.

Who are you and I,
when someone declares a we?
What shore to stand on?

Can we step out, rest,
tossed about by torrents
we fear to drown in?

How know and master,
learn inner ecology,
on our way to the sea?
References


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Identity is the ongoing process by which a subject, individual or collective, defines itself in relation to its environment and its history. Identity results from the combination of two opposite and complementary principles, continuity and transformation, whose balance characterizes each specific culture and is based on the meanings attributed to time – present, past and future.

With the exception of pre-school children (digital natives), all Western people are necessarily bicultural, at the moment, because they live the transition between two radically different conceptions of “present”. One is St. Augustine’s: present is solid, structured, ordered, here and now, conscious of past and future. The other conception is currently diffused by social media: present is liquid, filled up with any kind of information, independent of past and future, continuously connected to the present of other people, seemingly limitless, entropic.

Yesterday’s experiences appear too strange and remote to be useful to “verify” the contents of present time. Present cannot be easily “falsified” by a hazy tomorrow fraught with discontinuities. In the time of “post-truth”, the continuity of identities is threatened and weakened, and their transformation becomes casual and fuzzy.

Il Tao dell’identità e i tre tempi del Tempo

L’identità viene solitamente definita come l’insieme delle caratteristiche che rendono un individuo (o un gruppo di individui) unico e inconfondibile. Si tratta di un sentimento molto complesso e profondo, centrale nell’esperienza di ogni essere umano perché risponde a una domanda fondamentale: “Chi sono – Chi siamo?”.

In questo capitolo, l’identità è vista come un insieme di proces-
si cognitivi e relazionali riguardanti la consapevolezza e la vo-
lontà, che contribuiscono in modo determinante a dare forma ai comportamenti individuali e collettivi. Così definita, svolge la
funzione di regolare i rapporti tra l’individuo e l’ambiente, qua-
si fosse un “sistema immunitario” psichico. Mentre ci assiste nel
nostro continuo assorbire dall’ambiente ogni genere di risorse e
di contributi atti a soddisfare i nostri bisogni, allo stesso tempo
ci protegge dal “contaminarci” con regole e valori che siano in-
compatibili con il nostro attuale sistema culturale – o che tali ci
appiaono.

L’identità si basa sostanzialmente sulla combinazione di due
componenti, opposte e complementari: la continuità e la tra-
sformazione. La continuità risponde al bisogno di poterci sve-
gliare ogni giorno e sentire che siamo ancora “noi”. La trasfor-
mazione ci consente di rimetterci costantemente in sintonia con
i cambiamenti che si verificano nell’ambiente intorno a noi. La
combinazione di queste due componenti forma quello che pos-
siamo chiamare il “Tao dell’identità”.

Ogni cultura, individuale o collettiva, ha una sua specifica mo-
dalità di integrazione delle due componenti del Tao dell’identi-
tà. Tra i numerosi fattori che determinano la prevalenza della
continuità sulla trasformazione (o viceversa), uno dei più incisivi
è la concezione del Tempo. Concepire il Tempo come principal-
mente orientato al passato o al presente o al futuro determina
le basi strutturali profonde su cui gli individui e le collettività co-
struiscono la loro identità.

In alcune culture caratterizzate da un forte pragmatismo e da
disinteresse per il soprannaturale, l’orientamento prevalente
è al presente, concepito come elemento di congiunzione tra il
passato e il futuro e quindi come garante della continuità e della
stabilità dell’identità nel tempo, in una visione di lungo termine.
E’ il caso della cultura confuciana.

Altre culture, in cui al libero arbitrio umano viene attribuita
una scarsa (o nulla) capacità di incidere sugli eventi futuri, sono caratterizzate dal continuo richiamo a una identità passata, garanzia di sicurezza e di protezione da illecite trasformazioni. La cultura islamica ha questi tratti distintivi: l’Islam concepisce il Tempo come una sequenza di istanti successivi separati e distinti, ininterrottamente creati direttamente dalla volontà della Divinità, a cui gli esseri umani possono solo sottomettersi (Campanini, 2013, p.56).

In altre culture ancora, la svalutazione del tempo passato è funzionale allo sviluppo di una identità dinamica. L’intento è mettere in moto una trasformazione continua, deliberatamente instabile e costellata di discontinuità, assai promettente in termini di innovazione e successo. La cultura nordamericana ne è un buon esempio. Non è un caso che la religione prevalente in Nord America, il Cristianesimo in una versione Protestante impegnata nel proselitismo, abbia tra i suoi più insistiti riferimenti la visione escatologica che prevede la fine del Tempo e un preciso evento al suo termine: il ritorno del Figlio di Dio.

In questi anni, nelle aree culturali che chiamiamo genericamente “Occidente” (ma gradualmente anche in molte altre parti del Mondo), la concezione del Tempo sta subendo una drastica mutazione. Le cause sono molteplici: il continuo rinnovo delle tecnologie impiegate per comunicare, la smisurata proliferazione degli input informativi, lo sviluppo delle relazioni interpersonali in forma di network aperti, la caduta delle tradizionali barriere spazio-temporali che impedivano la simultaneità tra evento e conoscenza dell’evento. È fondamentale riuscire a comprendere come questa mutazione nella concezione del Tempo stia incidendo sulle principali caratteristiche delle nostre identità individuali e collettive, con particolare attenzione per la continuità e per la trasformazione.
I tre Presenti che coesistono nel presente

Per poter contare su un solido punto di riferimento, è utile confrontarsi con il pensiero di Sant'Agostino, immancabile in qualsunque riflessione sul Tempo. In sintesi, egli afferma che nel presente coesistono tre diversi presenti. Il “Presente del passato” è il ricordo delle nostre trascorse percezioni ed esperienze: si tratta di una presenza concreta, che risiede fisicamente nel nostro corpo, probabilmente sotto forma di molecole proteiche (stando alla moderna biologia). Su sollecitazione della nostra mente, queste molecole ci raccontano il passato – o meglio, ci raccontano il passato che “loro” ricordano, nel senso che magari qualche proteina è andata distrutta o si è modificata col passare degli anni, oppure è presente, ma è stata inibita e freudiana mente rimossa. Si tratta inevitabilmente di un passato selezionato e ristrutturato, ma è pur sempre la principale fonte di cui disponiamo per conoscere la nostra storia personale: è la nostra “scienza della realtà”. Istante dopo istante, la presenza del passato contribuisce in modo determinante alla componente “continuità” del nostro Tao dell’identità, ed è per ognuno una importante fonte di rassicurazione.

Il “Presente del futuro” è l’anticipazione degli eventi futuri: si manifesta sotto forma di immagini mentali, di intenzioni, di speranze, di sentimenti e di emozioni. Non si tratta qui di proteine, ma di neurotrasmettitori e di ormoni, con cui eccitiamo in vari modi il nostro corpo per arrivare a elaborare una immagine virtuale delle nostre possibili trasformazioni, delle relazioni che potremmo avere in futuro con l’ambiente, e di come ci sentiremo se ciò che immaginiamo si realizzerà davvero. Per riuscire a immaginare il futuro bisogna saper sviluppare e coordinare numerose capacità piuttosto sofisticate: iniziativa, pensiero prospettico, flessibilità, gestione dell’incertezza, pensiero strategico, creatività,...
Diversamente dal “Presente del passato” e dal “Presente del futuro”, il “Presente del presente” non ha una consistenza fisica evidente né una precisa durata: è un punto immateriale nel procedere dell’esistenza – “non so come definirlo” ammetteva Sant’Agostino. Ma attenzione: il “Presente del presente” non si riduce alla pura e semplice percezione di ciò che accade nell’ “istante presente”. Si tratta di uno speciale stato d’animo in cui riusciamo ad essere ininterrottamente consapevoli di noi stessi e delle nostre relazioni con l’ambiente. C’è chi ci arriva attraverso la pratica della meditazione – di recente c’è anche chi asserisce che la mindfulness vada altrettanto bene.

Il “Presente del presente” è il potentissimo strumento con cui il nostro corpo-mente elabora il ricordare, l’immaginare e il pensare, e li sintetizza nell’agire, cioè nell’utilizzare consapevolezza e volontà per gestire i singoli istanti della nostra vita. Il “Presente del presente” consiste in un complesso insieme di processi con cui rielaboriamo la nostra storia passata, ne ricaviamo indicazioni per un futuro concretamente realizzabile, decidiamo di realizzarlo e compiamo il primo, indispensabile, gesto: “Anche il viaggio più lungo inizia con il primo passo” (Lao Tzu, Tao te Ching). Fatto il primo passo, le nostre azioni successive modificano progressivamente proprio quel sistema corpo-mente che abbiamo ricevuto in dotazione dal passato e che ci ha consentito di compiere il primo passo, e lo predispongono a interagire con il contesto in continua evoluzione.

Per poter funzionare come strumento di consapevolezza e di azione, la funzione psichica “Presente del presente” si è progressivamente arricchita nei millenni di una struttura cognitiva ed emozionale dotata di modelli di interpretazione della realtà, con cui mettere ordine nel caotico susseguirsi degli eventi quotidiani e dare loro un senso. L’esperienza che ha accumulato e l’apprendimento che ne è derivato hanno dato origine a schemi di funzionamento precisi e piuttosto stabili, che agiscono come “regole di ingaggio” nei confronti della realtà. Il “Presente del
presente” tende ad essere solido e organizzato, grazie anche agli ininterrotti rapporti, intensamente emotivi e intelligentemente affettivi, che intrattiene con il proprio passato e con il proprio futuro.

“Una maggiore quantità di una cosa non è più la stessa cosa”

Ma in base alla nostra esperienza possiamo ancora dire che nel presente coesistono tre diversi presenti, come affermava Sant’Agostino? Quali sono le attuali caratteristiche del presente che stiamo vivendo, e che d’ora in poi sarà qui chiamato “Presente 2.0”? Le caratteristiche del “Presente 2.0” sono determinate e condizionate da un evento che ci ha travolto e stravolto negli ultimi anni, a tal punto che stentiamo a riconoscere l’entità del suo impatto sulle nostre vite e sulle nostre identità, e le sue enormi responsabilità nei confronti di alcuni dei principali cambiamenti culturali in atto – non tutti positivi.

Si tratta della proliferazione dei mezzi di comunicazione di massa, che sono diventati innumerevoli, ridondanti, seduttivamente bidirezionali, generatori ininterrotti di enormi quantità di informazioni e portatori di continue discontinuità. Citandone anche solo una minima parte, ricordiamo che ogni minuto Internet veicola: 20 milioni di messaggi WhatsApp; 700 mila accessi Facebook; 150 milioni di mail; 350 mila tweet; 2,4 milioni di domande a Google; 2,8 milioni di download da YouTube; ecc. ecc. Ogni minuto di ogni giorno di ogni anno. E’ stato nel 2004, anno del lancio di Facebook, che la disponibilità di input informativi ha manifestato una drastica impennata; da allora è in costante, vertiginoso aumento – mentre aumenta anche la frequenza quotidiana di utilizzo di quegli input da parte di ogni singolo essere umano.

Si sta manifestando un interessante fenomeno che Watzlawick
aveva preso in seria considerazione in un suo spiritoso libriccino: “All’origine delle più inaspettate disavventure c’è il fatto che al momento decisivo le cose fanno un salto non solo di quantità, ma anche di qualità: passaggio che per le persone di buon senso giunge sempre inaspettato. (...) Il troppo stroppia. (...) Una maggiore quantità di una cosa non è più la stessa cosa.” (Watzlawick, 1987, p.18 e 19).

La principale conseguenza di questo tsunami informativo è che l’aumento esponenziale della quantità delle informazioni disponibili ha superato il limite di cui parlava Watzlawick, e ha modificato (per sempre?) la qualità delle informazioni. Con un drammatico danno collaterale: i mezzi di comunicazione di massa ci stanno abituando a credere che le informazioni abbiano tutte lo stesso peso, che “una informazione vale uno”. Il principio “uno vale uno” può essere corretto finché lo si applica all’uguaglianza degli esseri umani, come nello spirito della Dichiarazione d’Indipendenza degli Stati Uniti. Ma non è affatto detto che le differenti informazioni siano equi-valenti, e far credere il contrario è una forma grave e pericolosa di disonestà intellettuale.

Ecco un esempio, tra i mille in cui ci imbattiamo quotidianamente. Uno dei principali quotidiani italiani online sceglie di pubblicare non una ma due notizie di apertura, l’una accanto all’altra: “Papa Francesco incontra l’imam Rettore di al-Azhar, la più importante Università teologica del mondo arabo sunnita” e “Maurizio Costanzo rimprovera Belen di essere arrivata cinque minuti in ritardo alla sua trasmissione”. Stessa dimensione dei titoli, stessa dimensione delle fotografie, stessa rilevanza grafica, stessa dignità.

Il punto non è se sta succedendo qualcosa: questo “qualcosa” è già successo. Veniamo indotti ad accettare come ovvio e corretto il principio secondo il quale “una informazione vale quanto qualunque altra”, e a non scandalizzarci più della radicale disonestà di questa affermazione, che tende a scoraggiare l’uso della
ragione critica, che altera le scale di priorità valoriali, che appiattisce le differenze e demolisce i parametri culturali distintivi. Di questo passo, potremmo essere costretti per “par condicio” ad assistere a un dibattito televisivo tra Tolomeo e Galileo se sia la Terra a girare intorno al Sole o viceversa. L’attuale modalità di fare informazione da parte dei mass media (in particolare da parte dei social network) manipola i bisogni informativi dei percettori offrendo di ampliare a dismisura la loro soddisfazione, e ricorda da vicino analoghe modalità che hanno caratterizzato più volte la storia degli ultimi secoli – basti pensare alla propaganda nazista degli anni ‘30.

Connessione continua e dopamina

Mentre l’attuale offerta di informazioni ha raggiunto le dimensioni devastanti di uno tsunami, il sintomo più appariscente di come vanno le cose dal punto di vista della domanda di informazioni è che gli utenti degli strumenti di comunicazione di massa amano essere sempre (più) connessi. Percentuali di persone di anno in anno più alte (in strada, in metropolitana, in treno, a casa, a scuola, sul posto di lavoro) si dedicano a navigare in Internet con il loro smartphone, vivendo esperienze virtuali collaterali alla loro tradizionale esistenza fisica. Una interessante ipotesi per spiegare questo fenomeno è che l’uso degli strumenti di comunicazione di massa possa stimolare il rilascio di dopamina.

La dopamina è un neurotrasmettitore, cioè una sostanza chimica utilizzata da alcuni tipi di neuroni per inviare segnali e comandi ad altri neuroni. La dopamina svolge un ruolo centrale nel funzionamento del cosiddetto “sistema di ricompensa”, che (in estrema sintesi) è un gruppo di strutture cerebrali che garantisce sensazioni di soddisfazione e di piacere come “ricompensa” quando il soggetto adotta determinati comportamenti.
Che cosa c’è di così “altamente ricompensante” negli smartphone, al punto che essi riescono a rinforzare l’azione della dopamina e a indurre nei loro possessori comportamenti compulsivi prossimi alla tossicodipendenza? (videoclip “Of mice and men”1). I meccanismi gratificanti disponibili in uno smartphone sono molteplici: c’è chi trova gratificazione nell’avere successo in un videogioco, chi nell’attivare contatti con i tanti “amici” collezionati in un social network, chi nel riscuotere like di approvazione per le foto o le frasi poste, e simili. Il livello di diffusione della tossicodipendenza da dopamina indotta dagli smartphone è molto elevato e in crescita allarmante, soprattutto considerando che l’esposizione e l’assuefazione agli stimoli dopaminergici inizia ormai fin dai primi anni di vita. Ciò che è preoccupante è che non ne siamo sinceramente e profondamente preoccupati.

Il “Presente 2.0”

Cerchiamo ora di identificare le caratteristiche di questo nuovo “Presente 2.0”, così diverso dal “Presente del presente” di agostiniana memoria. Il “Presente 2.0” è saturo, ipertrofico, denso, gonfio di informazioni e sempre sul punto di scoppiare, come la rana della favola di Fedro che voleva superare il bue in grandezza. Le sue ansie bulimiche vengono soddisfatte e continuamente stimolate dal profluvio di informazioni disponibili, e ulteriormente esasperate dagli sviluppi della tecnologia, che immette sul mercato un numero costantemente crescente di App(licazioni) di ogni tipo.

Pur di assecondare la propria fame insaziabile, il “Presente 2.0” si alimenta di ogni genere di contenuti informativi, non importa se utili o superflui, corroboranti o tossici, belli o volgari, veri o fake. Questo ci rende pressoché indifesi nei confronti delle

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1 “Of mice and men”, Broken Generation, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Dht-Mdz1XnQ
manipolazioni ideologiche e dei “virus cognitivi ed emozionali”, cioè di quelle regole e di quei valori che possono risultare disfunzionali se inseriti nel tessuto del nostro sistema culturale. E’ paradossale che proprio il “Presente 2.0”, che è un componente essenziale del sistema immunitario della nostra identità, stia diventando vulnerabile e finisca così col venir meno alla sua funzione di garante del bilanciamento tra continuità e trasformazione nel Tao dell’identità.

La saturazione e la bulimia che caratterizzano l’attuale “Presente 2.0” ci distraggono dalla necessità di dotarci di modelli mentali snelli e affidabili, indispensabili per affrontare il complesso succedersi degli eventi quotidiani. Gli “strumenti di informazione di massa” diventano così a tutti gli effetti “strumenti di distrazione di massa”: per molte ore ogni giorno la mente abita in territori virtuali dove il corpo non la può raggiungere. Di certo Bauman (Bauman, 2008) definirebbe “liquido” questo “Presente 2.0”, a causa del movimento frenetico e caotico delle particelle di esperienza che lo compongono.

Continuamente connesso via Internet con il “Presente 2.0” di innumerevoli altri enti e individui, il “Presente 2.0” di ognuno di noi non è più uno strumento: è diventato un contenitore. Si comporta come un recipiente colmo fino alla sua massima capienza di informazioni disordinate e non strutturate, che incessantemente è indotto a ricevere nuovi contenuti e altrettanti ne deve abbandonare. L’esorbitante quantità di input riduce drasticamente l’efficacia dei processi di confronto, controllo e validazione delle informazioni. Il risultato è il progressivo indebolimento del più importante degli strumenti che “risiedono” in ogni singolo istante del Tempo: il libero arbitrio, il cui esercizio efficace esige criteri di giudizio solidi, strutturati e relativamente stabili.
Passato, futuro e verità nel “Presente 2.0”

Se il “Presente del presente” sta perdendo la sua essenziale funzione di strumento di consapevolezza e di azione, e si riduce a essere “Presente 2.0”, cioè un semplice contenitore di informazioni, a maggior ragione non c’è più posto in esso per le altre due componenti “agostiniane” del Tempo.

La presenza del passato nel Tempo presente viene percepita come ingombrante, insignificante e inutile: sembra che le esperienze abbiano valore solo se istantanee e volatili, che le competenze professionali faticosamente acquisite non servano più, che la scienza si possa ignorare, che la storia non abbia nulla da insegnare. Anche la presenza del futuro nel Tempo presente non è particolarmente gradita, e viene percepita come incerta e minacciosa: sembra che l’immaginazione produca solo fantasie irrealizzabili, che l’iniziativa non possa avere speranza di successo in questo periodo di crisi, che le caste politiche e sociali siano inamovibili.

Essendo “liquido”, il “Presente 2.0” è convinto di bastare da solo a rappresentare tutte e tre le componenti dello “scorrere del Tempo”. Come suggerisce il dilagare dei selfie (videoclip “L’esercito dei selfie”2), la bulimia del “Presente 2.0” lo rende un potente terreno di coltura per lo sviluppo dell’individualismo narcisistico degli esseri umani, con allarmanti sconfinamenti in comportamenti autistici.

Senza il costante contatto con il passato e con il futuro, e senza il loro contributo attivo, l’agostiniano “Presente del presente” incorre nell’ignoranza e nell’errore, smette di funzionare, non ha più ragion d’essere. Un paio di esempi, tra i tanti possibili. Durante una conferenza stampa tenuta l’11 aprile 2017, il portavoce della Casa Bianca Sean Spicer ha affermato che Bashar

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2 “L’esercito dei selfie”, Takagi & Ketra: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F-QkaH5ppFek
al-Assad ha usato i gas tossici come nessuno mai nella storia ha osato fare, ignorando (o rimuovendo freudianamente) ciò che è accaduto durante le due Guerre Mondiali della prima metà del XX Secolo, nelle trincee della Prima e nei campi di sterminio della Seconda. Questo indica che è diventato possibile tagliare impunemente i ponti tra il proprio ipertrofico “Presente 2.0” e il passato che contiene la Storia, e che dovrebbe conservarla per nostro ammaestramento. Il secondo esempio mostra che la rimozione può estendersi persino alle acquisizioni scientifiche: è il caso dei vaccini, il cui ruolo nel rendere le nostre vite più sane e protette da gravi malattie è in questo periodo disinvoltamente dimenticato, nonostante sia provato dalla Scienza e convalidato dalla Storia – due discipline che condividono il difetto di avere le radici nel passato.

Queste riflessioni ci portano a chiederci quali sono gli effetti del “Presente 2.0” sulla verità, ovvero a cercar di capire che cosa è la cosiddetta “post-verità”. Vediamone la definizione in Wikipedia: “Il termine post-verità, derivante dall’inglese post-truth, indica quella condizione secondo cui, in una discussione relativa a un fatto o una notizia, la verità viene considerata una questione di secondaria importanza, (...) senza alcuna analisi effettiva sulla veridicità o meno dei fatti reali.” Ma la verità può davvero perdere importanza e diventare addirittura indimostrabile? Non è così difficile: è sufficiente che il nostro presente perda contatto con il nostro passato e con il nostro futuro. Vediamo come.

Per dimostrare una verità possiamo attingere alle esperienze fatte in passato, che hanno consentito di scartare ipotesi errate – ma di questi tempi le esperienze di ieri appaiono troppo aliene e lontane per poter essere utilizzate per “veri-ficare” ciò che sta accadendo oggi. Oppure possiamo affidarci alle esperienze che condurremo in futuro, per mettere alla prova differenti ipotesi e identificare quella corretta – ma nel “Presente 2.0” le aspettative rivolte al domani appaiono troppo incerte per poter essere
utilizzate per “falsificare” ciò che sta accadendo oggi. Se la natura “liquida” del “Presente 2.0” ostacola l’accesso al passato e al futuro, o addirittura lo inibisce, la verità di un fatto o di una notizia non può più essere né verificata, ricorrendo alle informazioni custodite nel passato, né falsificata o ampliata e corretta grazie alle esperienze future.

L’“Identità 2.0”

Possiamo ora tornare al tema enunciato all’inizio di questo documento: “Identità e concezione del Tempo”. La domanda a cui cercheremo di rispondere è: “Come influenza sulla nostra identità (individuale e collettiva) l’attuale concezione occidentale del Tempo, che abbiamo visto essere caratterizzata e condizionata dalla forma “2.0” assunta dal presente?”. Per semplicità, chiameremo “Identità 2.0” la forma che l’identità assume quando è sotto l’influsso del “Presente 2.0”.

Viste le premesse, non c’è da stupirsi se la forma “2.0” dell’identità ha perso una parte della sua capacità immunitaria. Appare carente di strutture valoriali e di criteri di verità che consentano di non restare preda di fake news o di post-truth. Non riesce a far convivere e a integrare efficacemente i due opposti componenti del Tao dell’identità: la continuità e la trasformazione. La componente continuità è fortemente indebolita dalla scarsa considerazione che il narcisistico “Presente 2.0” mostra nei confronti sia del passato che del futuro. La componente trasformazione è alla mercé di flussi informativi “liquidi” ed etero-diretti, che la rendono disordinata e destrutturata, entropica.

Una prima conseguenza è che in molti individui vanno declinando il senso di responsabilità e lo spirito di iniziativa, soffocati dall’inflazione delle informazioni: ciò accentua la componente esterna del “locus of control” a scapito della componente interna,
a tutto vantaggio di chi per mestiere e per interesse crea questi tsunami informativi. (da Wikipedia: “Nelle scienze psicologiche, il termine locus of control [luogo di controllo] indica la modalità con cui un individuo ritiene che gli eventi della sua vita siano prodotti da suoi comportamenti o azioni [locus interno], oppure da cause esterne indipendenti dalla sua volontà [locus esterno]”).


I Mutanti

Sembrerebbe tutto perduto, ma per fortuna ci sono i Mutanti.
Sono i bambini e le bambine in età pre-scolare, che mostrano sintomi evidenti di mutazioni culturali adattative. Forse saranno loro a salvarci, indicandoci il sentiero da imboccare per imparare a sopravvivere in un contesto saturo e in continua trasformazione – o forse no, forse falliranno, chi può dirlo ora? Esaminiamo tre di queste mutazioni culturali, fra le più evidenti.

Prima mutazione. Fin dalle prime interazioni con gli oggetti che trovano in casa, i Mutanti apprendono l’uso del Padre Smartphone insieme all’uso della Madre Lingua. Sui seggioloni, accanto alle pappe, trova posto il primo tablet. Bambini di meno di due anni, se gli viene presentato un vecchio Nokia, strisciano il dito sul piccolo schermo e lo restituiscono con sdegno dicendo “E’ rotto”. Ci mostrano che d’ora in poi l’apprendimento non potrà che essere continuo, a qualunque età.

Seconda mutazione. I Mutanti nascono e crescono in un contesto che è già “liquido”, non conoscono contesti alternativi e non hanno bisogno di spendere energie per adeguarsi all’esistente. Sono addestrati fin da piccoli più alla rapidità che alla riflessione, più all’ampiezza che alla profondità, più all’imitazione che all’iniziativa. Adottano con disinvoltura comportamenti multitasking. A differenza delle generazioni precedenti, non leggono i manuali di istruzione degli strumenti e delle apparecchiature che utilizzano: ci mostrano i vantaggi di saper essere plug and play.

Terza mutazione. Per alleviare l’ipertrofia del loro “Presen-te 2.0” e riprendere il controllo del Tempo presente, i Mutanti stanno elaborando la versione contemporanea di una delle più antiche e significative capacità della specie umana: creare metodi e strumenti per esternalizzare le proprie funzioni fisiche e mentali – e così potenziarle. Un esempio storico è la funzione visiva: se gli occhi non sono sufficienti si inventano dapprima le lenti di ingrandimento, poi gli occhiali, i cannocchiali, i telescopi, i microscopi, i microscopi elettronici ... Ora i Mutanti trasferi-
scono programmi software e informazioni negli smartphone, nei personal computer, nel cloud, nei robot, nei droni, nell’ “internet delle cose”. Ci mostrano un modo per recuperare spazi mentali in cui coltivare nuovi strumenti di consapevolezza e di azione, per un possibile Rinascimento del “Presente del presente”.

Conclusione

Shakespeare fa pronunciare a Prospero, nel IV atto de “La tempesta”, una frase giustamente famosa: “Siamo fatti della stessa sostanza di cui sono fatti i sogni, e la nostra breve vita è avvolta nel sonno.” All’inizio del XXI secolo, viste le mutate condizioni culturali, è opportuno diventare consapevoli che “Siamo fatti della stessa sostanza di cui è fatto il presente, e la nostra breve vita è avvolta in un oceano di informazioni”.

C’è l’intero universo nei rettangoli di lucido magnetico cristallo
dove si trova qualunque informazione per coltivare discorsi qualunque con chiunque a qualunque indirizzo;
a ognuno il suo rettangolo acceso lungo la lunga banchina affollata
di stanchezze in attesa di una metro. Tra tanti schermi una sola persona esile e leggera e un po’ lentigginosa; sembra incantata dal libro che aperto lei tiene e sfoglia con dita delicate: le frasi che legge le soffiano sul viso un alito fresco che accarezza le labbra, la fanno oscillare lenta su punte e talloni, la immergono intera nel flusso del racconto,
trasformano ogni parola in emozioni, e lei sorride.

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Le comunità cinesi in Puglia, Italia: Tempo e Identità nel superamento del fattore hanxu. Una prospettiva morfogenetica

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In this case study of a Chinese Community in Apulia (Italy) questionnaires have been administered to approximately ten extended families for a total of about 100 Chinese citizens in the Municipality of Monopoli. The results show the emergence of a desire for real interdependence between the territory that receives immigration and immigrant Chinese citizens. Expressing the result of the research into the lexicon of Chinese culture, it was found that it takes about ten years that the Chinese migrant exceeds and goes beyond the «hanxu 含蓄 factor», that of the proverbial Chinese reservation, often misconceived as «closure» or «distrust».

Introduzione

Una delle caratteristiche che vengono ascritte alle comunità cinesi nel mondo è quella di essere “chiuse” e “diffidenti” o nel migliore dei casi poco inclini o poco interessate alla piena inclusione sociale nelle comunità di arrivo. Un tempo a questa aggettivazione si aggiungeva quella di “comunità invisibili”, oggi non più attribuibile in considerazione dell’incredibile espansione della presenza cinese nelle nostre città, anche piccole, e dell’intensificarsi del processo migratorio cinese, che è andato “esplorando” e ha creato insediamenti, ormai sempre più visibili,
in sempre nuovi territori europei e italiani.
La Puglia non si è sottratta a questo fenomeno, anzi per la sua tradizione tessile e manifatturiera ha rappresentato un bacino di lavoro conto terzi utilizzato e valorizzato dalla migrazione cinese.
Nonostante ciò, il processo migratorio verso la Puglia non può ancora considerarsi maturo perché le seconde generazioni appaiono solo da qualche anno all’orizzonte.
Si è inteso perciò inserire questa ricerca sulla costruzione di un’identità cinese “inclusa”, o tesa alla integrazione con il territorio di accoglienza, nella cornice teorica della sociologia morfogenetica, che ci appare di particolare interesse per la nostra analisi, in quanto valorizza il fattore del tempo nella morfogenesi della identità sociale, ciò che bene può applicarsi a un insediamento nascente o non ancora stabilizzato (Goudsbolm 1987; Prandini 1998).

**La prospettiva morfogenetica nella analisi del fenomeno migratorio cinese**

L’interdipendenza fra soggetti è infatti condizione immanente alla realtà umana (Mongardini, 1991; Gribaudi, 1996): come questa interdipendenza di necessità si organizza allora in seno e in relazione alle comunità nelle quali alcuni gruppi cinesi, e
in particolare quelli che hanno scelto di approdare nel territo-rio pugliese, si insediano? E come ciò avviene all’inizio dell’in-sediamento in un territorio da parte di un gruppo di migranti? Attraverso quali modelli organizzativi le diverse forme di inter-dipendenza generano o hanno generato dinamiche evolutive strutturate e direzionate?


Nella prospettiva morfogenetica emergono inoltre percorsi non pianificati e non intenzionali di evoluzione sociale, una sorta di evoluzione spontanea a volte inconsapevole e non pianificata che si configura in nuove potenzialità morfologiche (Bartolini, Donati, 1999). Dall’analisi dei questionari somministrati nella ricerca dai Volontari emerge che a questo processo evolutivo spontaneista, al di là del progetto migratorio intrapreso pragmaticamente e razionalmente, paiono non sottrarsi anche le comunità cinesi nascenti in Puglia. E in più, in prospettiva comparativista, vi leggiamo un’assonanza interna con la categoria del pensiero cinese dello spontaneismo daoista (ziran 自然).

Nella prospettiva sociologica morfogenetica, non sussistono quindi proprietà sostanziali che spieghino la struttura di un sistema, ma la genesi morfologica dell’organizzazione delle relazioni sociali si configura quale processo organizzativo, con il focus sulla dimensione processuale e temporale del fenomeno (Nowotny, 1991; Roversi, 1990, Tabboni, 1985).

Anche per la comunità cinese insediata a Monopoli (Bari) le dinamiche evolutive dello strutturarsi dell’identità nella relazione con la comunità di accoglienza, seppur lontane dal porsi come modelli organizzativi maturi, indicano tuttavia già una direzione di processo, strettamente dipendente dalla profondità temporale della esperienza migratoria.
Il fattore *hanxu* nell’identità cinese e la sua evoluzione nell’esperienza migratoria

*Hanxu* 含蓄 è lemma pressoché intraducibile fuori dai codici linguistici cinesi, cui ci si riferisce per indicare estensivamente lo stile della comunicazione implicita, la inespressività dei cinesi, la loro presunta illeggibilità, con una sfumatura di velatura e occultamento, oltre che delle emozioni anche degli intenti (Bond 1996; Gao Ge, Ting Toomey e Gudykunst 1996). Esso si confonde quindi con *ambiguità*, trovando nei dizionari i sinonimi di *implicito, velato, sottinteso*. E’ necessario qui brevemente specificare che la lingua cinese non possiede categorie univoche di sostantivi, verbi o aggettivi, e che una stessa parola può svolgere una pluralità di funzioni grammaticali, dipendenti dal contesto sintattico.

Lo stile *hanxu* dei cinesi, che è una dimensione di rilevante differenza culturale, contribuisce pertanto in modo determinante a rendere difficoltosa o a ostacolare la comunicazione con le comunità di accoglienza, alle quali i cinesi sembrano disinteressati a entrare in relazione, perché non ne esprimono il bisogno in modo chiaro e diretto, aperto e schietto (Bond, 1996; Kilminster, 1993). Ma vediamo davvero come, semanticamente, la parola *hanxu* si componga.

*Han* 含 significa *tenere, contenere* e infatti per estensione può riferirsi al *contenimento* (delle emozioni, delle parole); *xu* 蓄 significa *risparmiare, mettere da parte, serbare e custodire*, quindi *mantenere in serbo*, dal quale possiamo far discendere il significato di *mantenere il riserbo*.

E’ chiaro allora che la lettera di questo lemma cinese ci indica con chiarezza la via di una comunicazione *riservata e contenuta*. Ci pare corretto affermare che sia la riservatezza, piuttosto che la chiusura, il vero codice di interpretazione della genetica
identitaria dei cinesi. Essere *hanxu* è una regola sociale divenuta prassi nel corso di secoli, che definisce il comportamento appropriato nel contesto relazionale, teso a non esplicitare potenziali conflitti, a sottintendere i significati, a contenere le manifestazioni emotive.

Ciò impedisce *tout court* ai cinesi di esprimere i propri bisogni nella struttura di accoglienza? O in arco temporale questi nuovi concittadini manifestano un processo di evoluzione identitaria, non certo omologandosi allo stile delle comunità di accoglienza, ma organizzando comunque in seno a queste una nuova modalità d’essere?

**Il caso di ricerca del Servizio Civile Nazionale del Comune di Monopoli**

In questa sede ci limiteremo ad esplorare i risultati dei ques- 
nari somministrati dai Volontari, in lingua italiana e cinese, ai cit-
tadini cinesi, per rilevarne i principali bisogni e i desiderata.

I dati ufficiali registrano nel 2014 a Monopoli 51 cinesi adulti,  
29 dei quali maschi e 22 femmine; e 12 minori, 8 dei quali fino  
a cinque anni, 2 tra i sei e i quattordici anni, 3 dai quattordici  
anni alla maggiore età. Tuttavia, la popolazione cinese presente  
in città ma non residente appare di numero maggiore, in quanto  
titolare di esercizi commerciali che, pur operando sul territorio  
monopolitano, non hanno registrazione giuridica in Monopoli.

Si può in sintesi affermare quindi che i questionari siano stati  
amministrati a circa dieci famiglie allargate, coincidendo per  
etnia cinese la famiglia con l’impresa, per un totale di circa 100  
cittadini presenti, anche se non tutti residenti, su un territorio di  
circa 49.300 abitanti e 158 chilometri quadrati.

Dalle attività sul campo dei Volontari emergono alcune eviden-
ze, delle quali descriveremo quelle rilevanti.

Compilano il questionario solo i cittadini residenti in Monopoli o  
nell’area metropolitana da oltre dieci anni, mentre gli altri grup-
pi familiari mostrano generalmente di non desiderare un’esposi-
zione alla relazione istituzionale con i Volontari, anche quando  
accennino una disponibilità alla relazione umana, accettando  
l’interlocuzione verbale.

**Lo strumento della ricerca: il questionario e la raccolta dei dati**

Il questionario viene compilato dai cittadini cinesi autonoma-
mente e ritirato in fase successiva dai Volontari presso i loro  
esercizi commerciali, o compilato alla presenza e con l’ausilio  
dei Volontari stessi. Si riportano qui di seguito le voci del que-
stionario, quale strumento di ricerca quali-quantitativo, per il  
rilevamento dei bisogni degli immigrati cinesi.
QUESTIONARIO
调查问卷
Barrare una o più caselle
请勾选一个或多个方框

QUALI SONO I VOSTRI BISOGNI NELLA VITA A MONOPOLI
您在MONOPOLI市的需求有哪些？

Vorreste degli spazi in città per praticare la vostra religione?
您需要在市内拥有宗教活动场所吗？
□ Sì 是
□ No 不

Quale è la vostra religione?
您信仰什么宗教？
□ Buddhismo 佛教
□ Cristianesimo 基督教
□ Islam 伊斯兰教
□ Altro 其他（请填写）

Vorreste dei corsi di lingua cinese nelle scuole della città?
您想在学校开中文课吗？
□ Sì, sarebbero utili 是，中文课很有用
□ Se sì, perché 如果是，为什么？
□ No, sarebbero inutili 不，中文课没有用
□ Se no, perché 如果不，为什么？
□ Per gli adulti 成人中文课
□ Per i vostri figli 让子女学习中文
Per tutti 成人和孩子都要学习中文

Vorreste seguire dei corsi di lingua italiana? 您想学习意大利语吗？
- Sì, sarebbero utili 是，意大利语课很有用
- Se sì, perché 如果是，为什么？
- No, sarebbero inutili 不，意大利语课没有用
- Se no, perché 如果不，为什么？
- Per gli adulti 成人意大利语课
- Per i vostri figli 让子女学习意大利语
- Per tutti 成人和孩子都要学习意大利语

Vorreste che i vostri figli fossero affiancati da un mediatore linguistico e culturale all’inizio della frequenza della Scuola in Italia / a Monopoli? 您需要您的子女在意大利 Monopoli 市学校开始学习时，拥有一个语言和文化辅导员吗？
- Sì, sarebbe utile 是，很有用
- Se sì, perché 如果是，为什么？
- No, sarebbe inutile 不，没有用
- Se no, perché 如果不是，为什么？

Conoscete qualcuno che sappia parlare bene l’italiano e il cinese? 您认识意大利语和汉语说得都比较好的朋友吗？
- Sì 是
- No 不
Sapete se sarebbe disponibile a fare da interprete e mediatore linguistico e culturale, per facilitare la relazione tra cinesi e italiani?

您知道他/她愿意为方便中国人和意大利人交流，而从事语言和文化的翻译或沟通工作吗？

□ Sarebbe disponibile 愿意
□ Non sarebbe disponibile 不愿意
□ Non so 不知道

Vorreste organizzare a Monopoli un Capodanno cinese?

您想在Monopoli市安排中国春节活动吗？

□ Sì, sarebbe bello 想，一定很有意思
□ No, non mi interessa 不，不感兴趣

Di cosa avreste bisogno per realizzarlo?

您需要什么样的支持？

□ Spazio 空间
□ Materiale 材料
□ Altro 其他

A quale attività preferireste partecipare?

您更愿意参加什么活动？

□ Gastronomica: cucina italiana e cucina cinese a confronto 美食：意大利餐和中餐比较
□ Musicale: musica cinese e musica italiana a confronto 音乐：中国音乐和意大利音乐比较
□ Laboratorio di lettura: leggere una storia in italiano e in cinese 阅读活动：阅读一个意文故事和中文故事
Sportivo: per esempio una partita di calcio tra squadre miste italo-cinesi
运动：比如，组建一支由中国球员和意大利球员构成的足球队

INFORMAZIONI UTILI
有用信息
Eta’ 年龄
Sesso 性别
Nazionalità 国籍:
- □ Cinese 中国
- □ Italiana 意大利

Modalità di immigrazione
移居方式
- □ una sola persona 一个人
- □ gruppo familiare 家庭
- □ numero dei componenti familiari？家庭成员人数

Figli 子女
- □ nati in Italia 在意大利出生
- □ nati in Cina 在中国出生

Da quanto tempo vive in Italia
您在意大利居住了多久？
- □ Meno di 1 anno 不足一年
- □ Da 1 a 5 anni 1-5年
□ Da 5 a 10 anni        5-10年
□ Più di 10 anni       10年以上

Da quando è arrivato in Italia, ha sempre vissuto a Monopoli?
来意大利以后，您一直居住在Monopoli市吗？
□ Si 是
□ No 不

Se no, dove viveva prima?
如果不是，您以前居住在哪里？

Perché ha scelto Monopoli?
您为什么选择居住Monopoli市？

Le capita di tornare nel suo Paese di origine?
您什么时候 / 多常回中国？
□ Spesso 常常
□ Qualche volta 有时候
□ Quasi mai 差不多不回
□ Mai 没回过

Le piacerebbe tornare a vivere nel suo Paese?
您想回到中国居住吗？
□ Si 是
□ No 不
□ Non so 不知道

Cosa ricorda della Cina, della sua provincia, della sua città?
您记得中国您老家的什么？

- [ ] Le persone 人
- [ ] Luoghi e paesaggio 地方和风景
- [ ] Il cibo 食品
- [ ] Le tradizioni e le feste 传统和节日
- [ ] Altro 其他

Conosce la lingua cinese Putonghua？
您的普通话怎么样？

- [ ] Bene 很好
- [ ] Abbastanza bene 还可以
- [ ] Poco 不太好

Conosce la lingua italiana？
您的意大利语 怎么样？

- [ ] Bene 很好
- [ ] Abbastanza bene 还可以
- [ ] Poco 不太好

Frequenta o ha frequentato corsi specializzati？
您在参与或参与过一些专业培训 吗？

- [ ] Sì, corsi professionali 是，参与专业培训
  Quali？什么培训？

- [ ] No 没有参与专业培训

- [ ] Sì, corsi di lingua 是，意大利语学习
  - [ ] LIVELLO A1 A1水平
Quale scuola ha frequentato in Cina?
您在中国上过什么学？
☐ Nessuna 没有上过
☐ Elementare 小学
☐ Media 中学
☐ Superiore 高中
☐ Università 大学

Quale scuola ha frequentato in Italia?
您在意大利上过什么学？
☐ Nessuna 没有上过
☐ Elementare 小学
☐ Media 中学
☐ Superiore 高中
☐ Università 大学

Oltre alla vostra lingua ufficiale普通话 quale lingua parla?
除了普通话，您还说什么语言？
☐ lingua Wu 北部吴语 (苏州话、上海话、宁波话、杭州话)
☐ lingua Yue 粤语
☐ lingua Min 闽语
☐ lingua Ou 瓯语（乐清话、柳市话、温州话、瑞安话等）
□ altro 其他

Motivo del soggiorno in Italia
您来意大利是为了
□ Lavoro 工作
□ Famiglia 家庭
□ Studio 学业
□ Altro 其他

Che cosa è più importante per lei?
对您来说, 什么更重要？
□ Lavoro 工作
□ Famiglia 家庭
□ Scuola 学校
□ Amici 朋友
□ Altro 其他

In quale settore lavora?
您从事什么行业的工作？
□ Agricoltura 农业
□ Industria 工业
□ Commercio 商业
□ Turismo 旅游
□ Scuola, educazione 学校，教育
□ Arte (conservatorio, accademia di belle arti, design) 艺术（学院，美术馆，设计）

La casa nella quale abita è
La sintesi dei risultati del questionario

I questionari rilevano le informazioni che seguono e mostrano alcuni orientamenti preferenziali. Trattandosi di ricerca e analisi quali-quantitativa, riportiamo sinteticamente quelli che ci appaiono, oltre che più ricorrenti, più rilevanti:

- I cittadini cinesi non rilevano particolari bisogni di spazi di pratica religiosa, sia quando dichiarano di aderire alla religione buddhista sia quando dichiarano di aderire alla religione cristiana (evangelica);
- Esprimono il desiderio che siano organizzati corsi di alfabetizzazione di lingua cinese nelle scuole della città, in particolare dedicati ai loro figli (non per gli adulti, non per tutti);
- Per se stessi, per gli adulti invece esprimono la necessità di alfabetizzazione in lingua italiana;
- Dichiarano l’utilità di un mediatore linguistico-culturale che
affianchi i figli nell’inserimento nella scuola italiana;

- Manifestano l’interesse e la disponibilità a organizzare un Capodanno cinese in Città e l’attività laboratoriale verso la quale esprimono la propria preferenza è quella dedicata alla gastronomia, con le cucine italiana e cinese a confronto.

- Dalle informazioni richieste emerge che l’arrivo in Puglia è preceduto solitamente da soggiorni a Milano o Roma e che l’attività principale è quella commerciale, sebbene vi siano anche un numero proporzionalmente rilevante di residenti musicisti o cantanti che studiano nel conservatorio della Città.

- Alla domanda sulle motivazioni di scelta della destinazione pugliese le risposte sono vaghe, quali per esempio: non mi ricordo, oppure Monopoli è bella, tranquilla e le persone sono buone;

- Alla domanda: le capita di tornare nel paese di origine? la risposta unanime è qualche volta;

- Alla domanda: le piacerebbe tornare a vivere nel suo Paese, la risposta quasi unanime è: non lo so;

- Alla domanda: che cosa ricorda e le manca della Cina (tra le opzioni: le persone, i luoghi, il paesaggio, il cibo, le tradizioni, le feste), parte dei rispondenti barra tutte le opzioni, parte rievoca la nostalgia dei luoghi e del paesaggio.

- In relazione al livello di istruzione, a parte gli studenti del Conservatorio, tutti dichiarano il possesso di un diploma di scuola media inferiore in Cina e di non aver seguito alcun corso di specializzazione professionale né in Italia, né in Cina.

- In relazione ai valori, tutti dichiarano l’importanza della famiglia, che scelgono quale bene e valore primario senza nessuna voce dissonante tra le opzioni di lavoro, scuola o amicizie.

- La casa in cui abitano può essere di proprietà o in affitto, mentre il locale commerciale nel quale esercitano l’attività è generalmente
Dalla lettura dei dati del questionario nel contesto della esperienza territoriale rileviamo complessivamente che l’emergere di relazioni strutturate di interdipendenza o del bisogno consapevole di queste tra comunità accogliente (il territorio) e comunità di insediamento (i cinesi) si manifesta come un processo che necessita della durata di almeno dieci anni di residenza italiana, anche se non tutti spesi nello stessa regione o nello stesso territorio metropolitano.

I cinesi che hanno eletto la Puglia e la città metropolitana di Bari come loro domicilio manifestano la necessità di un arco temporale di questa profondità per sviluppare un modello strutturato di organizzazione che presenta queste successive fasi:

1) Stabilizzazione della attività commerciale;
2) Acquisto di un’abitazione con l’accensione di un mutuo bancario;
3) Progettualità di un futuro “italiano” e pugliese in particolare per i propri figli (la seconda generazione) che frequentano la scuola media superiore, spesso un istituto alberghiero o un istituto tecnico commerciale, con l’obiettivo di rendere professionale l’attività economica della famiglia e di accedere attraverso le seconde generazioni a quella specializzazione (zhuanyehua 专业化) nel proprio settore, al quale la famiglia si è dedicata senza specifiche professionalità della prima generazione di arrivo;
4) Volontà di entrare in relazione strutturata, sociale ed istituzionale con il territorio di accoglienza attraverso la disponibilità a compilare il questionario, fornire informazioni, rispondere alle interviste e partecipare ai laboratori urbani.
E’ interessante notare che l’emergere di questo fenomeno si manifesti contemporaneamente e in forma simmetrica per entrambi gli attori della relazione, sia per i residenti cinesi presenti sul territorio da oltre un decennio, sia nell’ambito della comunità di insediamento, che attraverso attività istituzionali e di volontariato manifesta la necessità, prima inespressa, di un’auspicabile interazione sociale attiva con gli immigrati di origine cinese, con la realizzazione del Progetto del Servizio Civile Nazionale.

Al contrario, i cittadini cinesi neo-arrivati, i nuclei di più recente insediamento, piuttosto che esprimere il bisogno di una maggiore interdipendenza con il territorio a fronte della minore informazione di prassi e norme che regolano la società di arrivo, tendono a chiudersi nell’alveo protetto della famiglia o del gruppo, non solo perché in attesa di regolarizzazione del proprio stato nel processo migratorio, ma soprattutto in virtù di un processo non ancora morfogeneticamente compiutosi.

Sacche recenti di migranti di seconda ondata (permanenza di 1-3 anni) appaiono come gruppi/comunità relativamente “chiusi”, con difficoltà ad interfacciarsi e a comunicare con il tessuto sociale di accoglienza.

**Conclusioni**

*Non esistono individui caratterizzati da identità isolate e da confini chiusi verso l’esterno,*

*ma soggetti policentrici caratterizzati da un processo di individualità aperta.*

*La formazione dell’individualità è un processo di sintesi tra tendenze all’unità e tendenze alla differenziazione,*

*che emergono come effetti*
delle specifiche forme della relazione che intrecciano ogni individuo agli altri
(Simmel, 1890)

Se pensiamo ai modelli organizzativi con l’attitudine metodologica già suggerita da Simmel all’affacciarsi del Novecento, di pensare attraverso relazioni e contemporaneamente di pensare le relazioni, possiamo avanzare l’ipotesi che esse diventino soggetto sociale e quindi identità sociale quando dalla rete di relazioni endogene della prima fase dell’esperienza migratoria esse si muovano progressivamente, in profondità temporale e di processo, verso la costruzione di una rete di relazioni esogene, tali che il nuovo soggetto sociale si struttura come soggetto di interdipendenza e le nuove identità come identità in relazione estesa oltre il gruppo di appartenenza (Featherstone, 1991; Simmel, 1998).

Perché ciò avvenga, quindi perché questa morfogenesi si compia, è importante la sussistenza di un riconoscimento di reciprocità / identità tra tessuto esterno e comunità accolta, tra popolazioni locali e nuovi cittadini.

La specularità del processo, per il quale alla disponibilità maturata dai soggetti innestati corrisponda il riconoscimento della nuova interdipendenza del tessuto che innesta, è condicio sine qua non del costruirsi di una nuova morfologia sociale, inclusiva di entrambe le parti e della loro relazione.

Inoltre, le esperienze di condivisione di musica, gastronomia o tradizioni demologiche (come i festeggiamenti del Capodanno) rappresentano un’occasione di riconoscimento del patrimonio immateriale come motore di diversità, occasioni per riconoscere nella crudezza dei flussi migratori patrimoni in movimento, risorsa per il futuro, miniera di saperi per il futuro (Dal Pozzolo, 2017).
In conclusione e in sintesi, per esprimere i risultati di questa ricerca esplorativa, dieci anni sono il tempo che il migrante cinese chiede al territorio ove approda per superare il fattore *hanxu* della sua cultura, ovvero la proverbiale riservatezza cinese, da tutti riguardata come *chiusura* o diffidenza, o per includere questa variabile culturale in una identità più complessa e plurale che intanto si genera in lui come nella comunità di accoglienza. E tutto ciò perché è inevitabile guardare a un futuro condiviso con coloro che non hanno condiviso il nostro passato e dare a questo futuro forme inedite, ricche del patrimonio immateriale veicolato dalle diverse culture.

**Bibliografia**


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Ha insegnato lingua e cultura cinese presso le Università di Trento, di Verona, l’Università del Salento e il Politecnico di Bari. Ha risieduto in Cina per un progetto di cooperazione per lo sviluppo. E’ esperta di comunicazione, negoziazione e Intercultural Management e svolge consulenze organizzative, progetta e conduce percorsi formativi per imprese multinazionali.
Key Domains of Developing Multicultural Identity

Fiona Citkin
Ph.D., Consultant & Author

This chapter adopts a gendered approach to multicultural identity rooted in the well-established fact that women are extremely vulnerable under the stresses of changing the cultural contexts. We suggest five key domains of developing multicultural identity as a focus of our study. They all appear to be in a flux, evolving during immigrants’ adaptation and integration. Our field study shows how multicultural women make a progress in their new land. These five key domains have important implications to coaching, mentoring, and training, before or after migrant’s relocation or immigration.

Introduction

Global migration is on the rise, despite growing nationalism and push-backs in some countries. In addition, tourism and doing business globally accelerate no matter what. This leads to more people getting a taste of or immersing in the cultures different from their own—which naturally results in the growing number of individuals assuming non-conventional identities, multi- or bicultural. The following field observations come from interviewing 100
prominent American women immigrants for a upcoming book series which will paint a group portrait of the immigrant role models and outline the blueprints of these women’s success in the US, a very competitive country. The book subjects have been selected from diverse backgrounds, nationalities, and walks of life - those who made great contributions to America’s well-being and culture.

Changing cultural contexts clearly reveals different sides of individuals’ identities, with person's perception of self shifting. And immigrants, the people who willingly placed themselves in constant culture-collision situations, can present the best examples of identities in a flux. Our observations show that multicultural identities in a flux become the *new normal* for immigrants.

The gendered approach to multicultural identity in this chapter has been rooted in the well-researched facts that the fair sex is very vulnerable under considerable stresses of jumping the cultures (Garcia and Franchim, 2013), continents, and countries—so any identity fluctuations may show sharper while the perceptiveness and insights of women with respect to cultural influences may be more revealing than those of men.

This article focuses specifically on very prominent immigrant women, not the majority but the outliers who made it big in America, for the following reason. The author’s upcoming book, this chapter, as well as other publications (Citkin, 2013) show the real-life role models whose example can motivate others to go through thick and thin of the immigration travails and domains of socio-cultural integration—and come out as winners. The subjects of my study know from their own experiences how much more vulnerable than men women are—and how crucial it is to help other immigrant women. An immigrant myself, the author found incredible
mutual understanding with my study subjects, based on our common points of reference which opened the gates to deep trust. We delved into ourselves to identify what it takes a woman-immigrant to make it in America and how we evolve and reinvent selves on the way.

The goal here is to share my observations of identities in a flux: how they evolved while integrating into the mainstream US-American culture – and how their bicultural vision of the world established them as the leaders and role models in their country of choice.

The Project

Many immigrant women are struggling to survive and thrive - which was thoroughly analyzed in the book Immigration and Women, Understanding the American Experience (Pearce, Clifford, and Tandon, 2011). Only a small but essential subset of them achieves considerable success—and we focus specifically on this subset.

How They Started

Fine-tuning their behaviors and cultural make-up to the mainstream culture starts from the very first days and, many immigrants say, it feels much like “walking the tightrope without a safety net.” Complains are out of the question: immigration was their own choice—except for refugees—and success is their own responsibility.

Generally, the phases of immigrant behavior and gradual modification fit into a scheme of expatriate adaptation (Berry, 2005): from denial to adaptation to integration. As part of our 55-question written questionnaire and 15-question interview (both focused on socio-cultural
specifics of adaptation and integration), we can see in Table 1 the typical answers regarding behavioral modifications in the new country.

**Table 1 Immigrant Behavior Modifications (sample: 100 women immigrants)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>YES</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 I became more assertive at home and at work</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 I learned to shake off some taboos of my culture</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 I adapted to less privacy, which was frustrating at first</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 I adapted to more stress</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 I feel more freedom in expressing my opinion</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 I put more pressure on myself to achieve my goals</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
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</table>

These adjustments to life in America were just the beginning of a long road to integration. What motivated our interviewees to persevere? The answer is: they liked America. Why? Here are some sample answers:

- **Nadia Comaneci** (from Romania): “First and foremost, it’s a strong work ethic. Also, the strong family ties that all Romanians cherish have also helped me achieve here in the US”.

- **Alfa Demmellash** (from Ethiopia): “Freedom of expression and rule of law are remarkable. Many US-Americans bring more openness in conversations – and a ready willingness to admit what they don’t know – than in most other cultures”.

- **Edwina Sandys** (from UK): “I like friendliness and enthusiasm; the

1 All quotations from our subjects of study come from author-designed questionnaire and interviews.
way you can get things done quickly...the Americans are the can-do people, as opposed to “can’t”.

- **Irmgard Lafrentz** (from Germany): “I like the positive attitude to life; failure doesn’t mean disaster; taking risks; generosity; the liberal attitude here in California; plus, Thanksgiving: it amazes me that everyone celebrates this holiday in such huge way”.

Immigrants cherish what they were lacking in their own countries. Successfully integrated women whom we observed in this study have many common traits of their multicultural identities: they are driven and charismatic; educated, intelligent, possessing presence; creative and entrepreneurial; philanthropical; carrying strong values; leveraging their native cultures for moral support. But there is no excruciating nostalgia, although identity issues are always present. So, let us discuss multicultural identities.

It is also my observation that these identity invariants rest on the similar circumstances: they all strived to get up in life; had to endure discrimination, humiliation, and myriads of small daily setbacks which had an impact on molding their new, American identities. Immigration taught them lesson after lesson strengthening their natural propensity to empathize, sacrifice, and persevere making the best under the circumstances. They used their brains, education, ambition, and evolving leadership capabilities to the max. Most importantly, they learned by their own experiences that to make it in America, it’s necessary to integrate substantially—so they persisted and evolved.

**How They Evolved**

We suggest 5 key domains of evolving multicultural identity:

1. Cultural integration
2. Language mastery
3. Enhanced creativity
4. Sense of belonging
5. Reinventing self.

Although today we do not have consistent methodology for measuring these key domains (or, shall we call them “challenges”?) — apart from informal-intuitive “more” or “less,” some adequate tools will certainly be developed in future studies, as this field gains more attention from society, academia and practicing interculturalists. We need both research and new tools. In this study, we used inductive qualitative research method to observe the key domains most important to immigrants’ success. Let us address the domains we have introduced one by one.

Cultural Integration

Cultural changes are irreversible – like a river of no return – and immigrants need not only keep their heads above the new, unknown waters, but also maintain their sense of direction, goals, and speed. Meanwhile, their identities are evolving slowly but surely. Among numerous aspects of cultural integration - within the limits of this article - we can take on two: one more apparent (A) and one more hidden (B).

A. Taking a closer look at my pool of women interviewees, we noticed how their cultural DNA affects their attitude toward — and ability of — “letting go” of the work stresses and obsessions, and “letting in” the joys of relaxation and well-being. It really depends on a cultural DNA, “a bio-psycho-social-spiritual code that underlies every aspect of our lifestyle and culture and
holds it together,” as a psychologist Rosemary Wilke (2014) put it.

Really, in some countries/cultures, a “work-to-live” principle dominates: people generally work from nine to five, and then comes their quality time — for family, friends, and fun. In other countries, including the United States, a “live-to-work” principle is king, trumping everything else. For better or for worse, research (American Work Ethic, 2013) shows that the latter attitude has saturated the American psyche since the simple settlers/pioneers, whose very survival depended on their demanding work, and passion for success. Handed down for generations, this hard-work mentality may have morphed — with many individuals — into pragmatism, materialism and money-plus-power pursuits. Anyway, since cultural information can be genetically encoded (Luke McKinney, 2009), it became part of American cultural DNA.

All our interviewees, even those of German descent known for their collective work-conscious mentality, noted that the American work ethic is stellar. People who immigrate and succeed are workaholics by design anyway, regardless of culture, so they fit in on that dimension. And in America, their cultural identity shifts to the live-to-work ethic even more.

B. In our experience interviewing outstanding women-immigrants, fine-tuning one’s identity to absorb more US-culture traits to up success in the US includes, most importantly, the abundance mentality. Abundance mentality (Covey, 2013) does not come from having a lot of stuff. Its antonym, scarcity mentality, means thinking there is not enough pie/fruit/pizzas to
go around. Many people are deeply scripted in it and see life as having only so much, as though there were only one pie/fruit/pizza out there. The *abundance mentality*, believing there is plenty for everyone, is a building block of a win-win attitude and future success - as everyone can get a fair market share, and peaceful co-existence of Starbucks and numerous small coffee shops is its living proof. The abundance mentality features: optimism about opportunities; sharing, philanthropy; inclusion of people different from self; independence; and appreciating the community.

Abundance mentality is not something we are born into. It’s something we tune into. The US cannot be called a 100% abundance-mentality culture. But it is certainly a rich country with high material abundance, which makes it easier for people to cultivate abundance mentality in the US climate. If we imagine scarcity vs. abundance mentalities on a graph, the average US-American is closer to the abundance-mentality point than those who grew up among poverty and chronic lack of opportunity.

Prominent immigrant women I had interviewed over the years are very conscious of this cultural transition and its absolute necessity. Take, for example, Ani Palacios McBride from Peru

**Question:** “What are the limitations of your own cultural heritage that negatively impacted and/or delayed your success in America?”

**Answer:** “Latinos have (or had) a scarcity mentality. Realizing and learning to keep an abundance mentality was hard.”
Question: “What of your cultural luggage/traditional values faded away in the process of integrating into the all-American culture?”

Answer: “The scarcity mentality. The negativity towards anything government.”

How does transitioning from scarcity to abundance mentality happen? The case of Hilda Ochoa-Brillembourg, who was born and raised in Venezuela, enhanced her abundance-mentality orientation, engaged in the competitive uphill battle, and became an outstanding financier in the US – is outlined in (Citkin, 2017).

**Language Mastery**

Language mastery is an essential component of one’s multicultural identity. Mastery includes the near-native ability to speak and write, plus certain sophistication on pronunciation/accent levels.

But there's an inevitable caveat to language mastery: just as a leopard cannot change its spots, an adult immigrant can’t get rid of his/her accent, even speaking fluently. When living in Europe, I taught English for a living at University and by European standards, my English won frequent compliments. In the U.S., however, people kept asking me where I came from. I never took it personally; research shows (Moyer, 2015) that after puberty new language acquisition usually comes with an accent.

Importantly, as shown by Rosina Lippe-Green (Lippe-Green, 2011) accents support social structures with unequal power relations where employers discriminate based on accent and the judicial system protects the status quo and
reinforces language subordination. The book ignited an in-depth discussion of American attitudes toward language. A language-culture ceiling exists, invisible but palpable, for instance, it’s extremely rare for a foreign-born American with an accent (except British) to host a talk show on a major TV network. It’s unfortunate because such host would appeal to over 60 million Americans who speak a language other than English at home. Two notable foreign-born hosts are the men: Fareed Zakaria (from India) hosting GPS on CNN and Trevor Noah (from South Africa) hosting The Daily Show on Comedy Central. But, and this is a big “but” - they are both native speakers of English. It is much more difficult for a woman with an accent to break through the triple gender-language-culture ceiling.

The good news is that immigrant women who did manage to break a glass ceiling in their areas of professional competence stop feeling bad about their accents; on the contrary, they wear it with pride although at earlier stages of immigration accent diminished their sense of self, making them retreat into their cocoon. Furthermore, many new Americans feel a need to share their experiences in books—and in my sample of prominent immigrant women about 60% authored their own books. Writing in their second language, English, they add a new perspective to how immigrant identity develops over time. There is wealth of invaluable information in the books by Ginny Gong from China (From Laundry Board to Corporate Board); Elena Gorokhova from Russia (Russian Tattoo); Nadia Comaneci from Romania (Letters to a Young Gymnast); Loida Nicolas Lewis from the Philippines (How to Get a Green Card); Ani Palacios McBride from Peru (Living in a Double World), and others we interviewed.

From the immigrant-authored books, it becomes clear that language-culture ceiling certainly blocks many talented
immigrants from getting what they professionally deserve, and, worse, it affects their confidence, diminishes sense of self-worth, and damages their sense of identity overall. The American linguists Edward Sapir (2008) and especially Benjamin Lee Whorf and John B. Carroll (1964) showed that people who speak different languages perceive the world differently — which spurred theories linking languages and cultures. With respect to multicultural identity and integration, a recent study (Martin, Weller, Lederach, Yoder, Price, 2012) discussed the practical implications of language-culture-immigration interconnection, fueled by the need to address this in courts. Indeed, it is not enough to learn English: reciprocal ties among language, thought and culture matter more than language alone. Why? Because different language-culture tandems have their own preferred ways of organizing behaviors — with distinctive styles of decision-making and communication, diverse ways of presenting thoughts, different meanings for talk and silence — even different values. Nonverbal behaviors, such as expressions of respect, understanding, and strong emotions can also be badly misinterpreted. Thus, we need to include culture studies in the whole host of immigrant issues, finding a place for this in the immigration reform discourse — and legislation.

To put this whole host of issues into practice, we need more in-depth studies of multicultural identity developments—because dealing with people should, ideally, be as delicate as treading on eggs.

Enhanced Creativity
I see enhanced creativity as a product – and centerpiece - of multicultural identity, and here’s why.
First, solid research on creativity explains why some people
are more creative than others: they can see the world from multiple perspectives (Barber, 2013) or “live in two worlds.” Immigrants naturally bring bicultural vision into their creative pursuits.

Second, Nigel Barber (Barber, 2010) noted that being an immigrant is one of the three most frequent causes of this “otherness”\(^2\).

Making the case for immigrant creativity (Citkin, 2013) we describe its roots as:

- Possessing double perspective/vision divergent from mainstream, due to diverse cultural upbringing;
- Having double-culture-bound richness of associations and connecting images that seem dissimilar to locals;
- Having backgrounds of differing education systems: the total of knowledge, plus logic and thinking process;
- Typical for many cultures are preferences for “relationship before task” (unlike in the US);
- Trials and tribulations of assimilating in a new culture;

and its results as:

- Perceiving things differently from the locals;
- Dredging up many unusual mental links increasing productivity and wide-ranging results;
- Different thinking and decision-making styles: holistic, analytical, or emotive-synthetic vs. US pragmatic;

\(^2\) The other two are being androgynous or gay, or being seriously challenged or sick as children.
- Personality-based relationship building skills allow immigrants to quickly connect with like-minded people, thus enhancing their mutual creativity;

- Habitual perseverance leads to persisting with “crazy” creative ideas, bringing them to fruition.

One of the role models for this case is a serial entrepreneur Kerry Bannigan from UK. She noticed that talented beginner-designers could not get a place at fashion-week shows in New York or elsewhere, recognized this as her niche in fashion business - and founded a super-successful NOLCHA company. In fact, Kerry was appealing to the sense of equal opportunity in the fashion world, and later translated her services and skills to serve other organizations, UN and even the government.

Sense of Belonging

My interviewees and myself are social twins who went along the same road of initial confusion/denial, then moved on to adaptation/integration, and on the way, our behaviors cultural identities had modified. It appears that our sense of belonging has been SHIFTING. I asked them, “Do you feel that your cultural make-up modified, or even dissolved in the all-American culture?” Their answers illuminated how sense of belonging may shift:

Deborah Levine (Bermuda): “Modified, adapted but not dissolved. The result is an eccentric American.”

Irene Natividad (Philippines): “In the US it’s possible to reinvest oneself and be a success, unlike in Europe, for example, or Latin
America. I am totally US-American: in my style, in what I do, in values and energy, in efficiency. People overseas often say, “You are so American.” I don’t question that, but in fact, both Asia and America own me: I am a woman of color, and because of my name, Natividad, Hispanics also accept me, as are the Asians accepting me as a Filipino woman. I felt integrated when in college, because of attending American schools abroad; I lived in different countries as my family moved from country to country—the one constant was American schooling; e.g., I lived for six years in Iran, then in Okinawa, in Athens, Greece – so coming to America was like coming home.”

Ani Palacios McBride (Peru): “Immigrants end up being hybrids with two hearts, two loves, two languages and two cultures... We are both. We are PLUS.”

Akila El-Shamy (Egypt): “I will always preserve my [core] identity... I am proud to be Egyptian. I grew up there. It is a part of who I am and who I will always be. Living in the US has helped me develop a strong sense of identity. ... Not totally [integrated], but a lot more and very quickly when I started my job. I love the people I work with and for. My work is my second home. ...[but] I feel I mentally belong here [in America] more.” Akila’s thoughts reveal two flavors of the sense of belonging: emotional and mental: emotionally she belongs to Egypt but is more American mentally. Both belongings are real. Both add clarity to discussion of multicultural identities.

Reinventing Self
Living in America for a while impacts immigrant individuals’ identity in many ways and on multiple levels. A prerequisite for reinventing self professionally and personally is
reinventing one’s mindset. This concept was discovered by a world-renown Stanford University psychologist Carol Dweck (Dweck, 2007). Here’s a simple explanation of it:

- People with the **fixed mindset** (Zolfagharifard, 2015) believe their intelligence and talent are the given, fixed traits that are bound to bring success. Counting on such entitlements alone is wrong: disappointments are inevitable because the world in not fair enough to award us for our talent without our struggle.

- People with the **growth mindset** (Zolfagharifard, 2015) believe that brains/talents are dealt to us just for starters, while the most precious abilities can and should be **developed** through learning, challenging work, and perseverance: they are can-do people. Our subset of successful multicultural women all developed/reinforced their growth mindsets.

Immigrants with multicultural identities in a flux are well prepared to take risks and work harder towards their goals; such preparedness puts them closer to the growth mindset point. Adopting a more optimistic growth mindset is an enabler for success—and immigrant achievers are persevering and moving towards this end.

Apart from fixed vs. growth mindsets, there are other professional and personal aspects of reinventing self. These aspects have been partly described in the article “I Can Do Anything Better Than You” (Citkin, 2014). There, the case of Raegan Moya-Jones, an immigrant from Australia, illustrated what success drivers push her and other immigrants to self-reinvention, as shown in figure 1.
Self-reinvention is far from easy but here’s a positive example: see how Ying McGuire overcame her inhibitions and shyness of a Chinese girl to turn into a global leader at a high-tech company: “I used to shy away from speaking about my contributions and accomplishments. Dell [her company] had a leadership program for high potential diversity employees. At one of the leadership program classes, an author talked about her book called “Brag! The Art of Tooting Your Own Horn without Blowing It.” I walked out that class telling myself that I needed to start to toot my own horn without blowing it. Soon I developed a brand for myself as a driver, a leader, and a confident public speaker”.

Immigration is not for the faint-hearted. Multicultural identities of the immigrant women under study got fortified with their increasing growth mindset and mental toughness, which in turn, backed their grit, so they finally found the way to pull their act together and win in the end.

**Implications and Shortcuts**

Discussing five key domains of multicultural identity is important because it enriches practices of all interested parties. The interviews and explorations for the project not only gave me a wealth of field material on the topic but also expanded the initial horizons and goals, both conceptually and culturally. The implications of this field study may be
relevant to policy practitioners, cultural anthropologists, and “learned multiculturalists” (Gehrke, 2017).

Principal shortcuts to training/coaching migrants and consulting a broader roster of people with multicultural identities – like those who work with immigrants – can be found in “Transformational Diversity” (Citkin and Spielman, 2011). This book marries two areas of knowledge and leadership competencies: intercultural studies and diversity and inclusion, areas that traditionally compete for corporate funding. It presents the roadmap of Diversity and Inclusion culture-based training; the toolbox of Six Action Archetypes, or prototype training outlines/programming templates provided in that book illuminate core program series as well as their structure and content.

Conclusions
All five key domains of multicultural identity appear to be in a flux. They evolve during adaptation and integration, and our field study demonstrated that they have helped prominent American immigrant women to succeed in the US. We recommend that these key domains receive more attention - while coaching, mentoring, or training the individuals, before or after their relocation. Why? Being aware of the tendencies and blueprints that make a newcomer a success in a new land—helped with the case studies of the immigrant women who made it big in America—will add to people’s inspiration, motivation, and perseverance, so necessary for those on the life crossroads.

It is important to keep in mind, however, that despite the progress made, the situation in the USA today is not too inviting for the women of foreign descent – and it forces them to double their efforts to adapt quickly: very soon they realize that reinventing self, integrating, and practicing
multiculturalism—without losing core self—is paving their way to success and happiness. And their happiness is our fundamental goal as people caring about the human rights worldwide.

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Born and raised in Ukraine, Dr. Fiona Citkin came to America as a Fulbright Scholar studying languages and cultures. She published two books on language/translation and cultural diversity and received the Top 2012 Champion of Diversity award from DiversityBusiness.com, a think-tank. Her monthly Huffington Post column explores the issues of multicultural women: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/fiona-citkin-phd/. With experience as Director of Berlitz and a personal consulting portfolio, Fiona has skills in public speaking, marketing, magazine, podcast, and TV interviews, entrepreneurship, and certainly, intercultural communication and languages.
Lo sviluppo della conoscenza e consapevolezza del sé mediante la mobilità studentesca internazionale

Mattia Baiutti
Assegnista di ricerca presso l’Università degli Studi di Udine con il sostegno della Fondazione Intercultura Onlus

No savarés nualtri
di me se no savês
di me che o soi forest

[Non saprei nient’altro
di me se non sapessi
di me che sono straniero]

Pierluigi Cappello

The internationalisation of education has become an imperative within the agenda of educational policies and institutions. According to the main scientific literature, one of the expected outcomes of the internationalisation of education is to develop interculturally competent students. This paper explores the internationalisation of secondary school, focusing on student mobility. More precisely, it investigates one aspect of intercultural competence, namely the knowledge and understanding of the self. To do this, an empirical research project is discussed. The findings suggest that being in contact with otherness and living difficult moments, such as not speaking the language, not understanding family habits, or not sharing the same school system, allow students to learn more about themselves and to have a greater critical understanding of the self.
Introduzione

Nell’orizzonte contemporaneo, l’internazionalizzazione dell’educazione sta iniziando a essere un processo strutturale delle istituzioni educative al punto che oggi si parla di una “globalizzazione dell’internazionalizzazione” (de Wit, Gascel-Ávila, Jones & Jooste, 2017). Questo processo, complesso, poliedrico e non privo di ambiguità e rischi, è, infatti, un tema presente nell’agenda delle politiche e delle istituzioni educative.

L’internazionalizzazione dell’educazione è generalmente definita come “the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education” (Knight, 2001, p. 11). In altre parole, l’internazionalizzazione dell’educazione può essere intesa come quell’insieme di pratiche e attività che tendono a sviluppare una dimensione internazionale, interculturale e globale fra gli studenti, gli insegnanti e il personale di scuole e università con l’intento di promuovere “a sense of global citizenship” (Yemini, 2014, p. 21).

tiche di promozione dell’internazionalizzazione\textsuperscript{1}. Una delle più tradizionali attività dell’internazionalizzazione dell’educazione è la mobilità studentesca internazionale individuale. Quest’ultima, nel contesto della scuola secondaria di secondo grado in Italia è un fenomeno in continua crescita. Secondo l’Osservatorio Internazionale sull’Internazionalizzazione delle Scuole e la Mobilità Studentesca, infatti, dal 2009 al 2016 vi è un aumento degli studenti italiani all’estero con un programma annuale, semestrale o trimestrale del 111%.

Attraverso una ricerca empirica, il presente contributo intende esplorare un aspetto circoscritto della mobilità studentesca individuale internazionale nella scuola secondaria di secondo grado ovverosia lo sviluppo della conoscenza e della consapevolezza del sé. Per fare ciò, si prenderà in considerazione la cornice teoretica di riferimento concentrandosi sulla conoscenza e consapevolezza del sé in alcuni modelli della competenza interculturale. Successivamente, si presenterà la metodologia della ricerca adottata nello studio empirico alla base del presente contributo e si illustrate e discuteranno i principali risultati di esso. Infine, si analizzeranno le principali conclusioni del lavoro di ricerca, i limiti e le implicazioni pedagogiche connesse.

La conoscenza e consapevolezza del sé nei modelli di competenza interculturale

Secondo la letteratura pedagogica, uno dei principali obiettivi dell’internazionalizzazione dell’educazione e, quindi, anche della mobilità studentesca, è lo sviluppo di studenti com-

\textsuperscript{1} Si veda ad esempio i risultati delle ricerche condotte dall’Osservatorio Internazionale sull’Internazionalizzazione delle Scuole e la Mobilità Studentesca www.scuoleinternazionale.org

Il primo tentativo di trovare un consenso fra gli esperti in ambito interculturale sulla definizione della IC è rintracciabile nella ricerca di Deardorff (2006). In tale studio, la IC è definita come “the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one’s intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes”\(^2\) (Deardorff, 2006, pp. 241-266). Pertanto, la IC può essere intesa come quella capacità che consente a soggetti che si percepiscono come aventi background culturali diversi (non solo in senso di cultura, ma anche rispetto a genere, età, orientamento sessuale, religione, etc.) di interagire in modo efficace e appropriato. Tale capacità si fonda su conoscenze, abilità e attitudini interculturali.


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\(^2\) “La capacità, basata su conoscenze, abilità e attitudini interculturali, di comunicare in modo efficace e appropriato in situazioni interculturali” (trad. it. dell’autore).
elaborato da Fantini (2009).
Si ritiene interessante sottolineare che lo sviluppo del costrutto di IC è rintracciabile anche all’interno di alcune policies educative. Diversi sono, infatti, i documenti pubblicati dall’Unione Europea (ad es., 2006, 2008), dal Consiglio d’Europa (ad es., 2008, 2009, 2012, 2014, 2016), dall’UNESCO (2013) e dall’OECD (2016) sull’IC. Anche in questi documenti, la conoscenza e la consapevolezza del sé rappresenta uno degli elementi chiave. Ad esempio, nel modello delle competenze per una cultura della democrazia elaborato dal Consiglio d’Europa (2016) fra le conoscenze è elencata anche “la conoscenza e la comprensione critica del sé”. Con questa espressione il Consiglio d’Europa intende ad esempio “knowledge and understanding of one’s own cultural affiliations”, “knowledge and understanding of one’s perspective on the world and of its cognitive, emotional and motivational aspects and biases”, “knowledge and understanding of the assumptions and preconceptions which underline one’s perspective on the world”, “understanding how one’s perspective on the world, and one’s assumptions and preconceptions, are contingent and dependent upon one’s cultural affiliations and experiences, and in turn affect one’s perceptions, judgments and reactions to other people” (Consiglio d’Europa, 2016, p. 51).
Preso atto di quanto evidenziato fino ad ora, è affermabile che la conoscenza e consapevolezza del sé, nelle diverse sfumature terminologiche presenti nei modelli di IC e nelle varianti sociale, culturale, personale, gioca un ruolo centrale nel costrutto della IC. Tuttavia, va notato che uno dei limiti dei modelli di IC, fatta eccezione per alcuni (ad es., Byram, 1997; Consiglio d’Europa, 2016), è che essi rimangono vaghi su cosa si debba intendere con l’espressione “conoscenza e consapevolezza del sé”. Questo è probabilmente dovuto al fatto che, come afferma Deardorff (2011), i modelli e le defi-
nizioni della IC sono per loro natura generali e che, pertanto, è necessario comprendere il significato dei singoli elementi della IC nel contesto specifico di riferimento in cui si desidera applicarli. In questo senso, il presente contributo desidera comprendere il possibile significato di ciò che i modelli di IC chiamano “conoscenza e consapevolezza del sé” nel contesto della mobilità studentesca internazionale individuale nella scuola secondaria di secondo grado in Italia.

Metodologia della ricerca

Il presente contributo si basa su una rilettura di alcuni dati raccolti per la ricerca di dottorato dell’autore (Baiutti, 2017) svolta presso l’Università degli studi di Roma “Tor Vergata” dal 2012 al 2015, con il sostegno della Fondazione Intercultura Onlus e la supervisione del Dott. Anselmo R. Paolone. Nello specifico, i dati riletti in questa sede sono alcuni di quelli raccolti per rispondere alla seguente domanda della ricerca: Quali sono gli elementi che compongono la IC degli studenti della scuola secondaria di secondo grado che hanno partecipato a un programma annuale di mobilità internazionale individuale?

Per rispondere a questa domanda della ricerca si è adottata una metodologia qualitativa principalmente per due motivi: (i) preso atto della complessità del concetto indagato – la IC – si è reso necessario un’esplorazione in profondità, così come assicurato da una metodologia qualitativa; (ii) la metodologia qualitativa era stata adottata da una precedente ricerca che indagava le competenze trasversali (tra cui la competenza interculturale) degli studenti rientrati da un’esperienza di studio all’estero durante la scuola secondaria di secondo grado (Paolone, 2013).
Raccolta e analisi dei dati

I dati sono stati raccolti fra febbraio e maggio 2014 mediante interviste semistrutturate in presenza condotte dall’autore. Ogni intervista è stata audio-registrata (tot. 14 ore e 42 minuti) e trascritta verbatim dall’autore seguendo i principi dell’unfocused transcription (Gibson & Brown, 2009).

Per l’analisi dei dati si sono seguiti i principi della thematic analysis (Ayres, 2008; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Gibson & Brown, 2009) e si è utilizzato il software NVivo for Mac.

Partecipanti

Alla ricerca hanno partecipato:

- 11 studenti (17/18 anni) che hanno partecipato a un programma annuale di mobilità studentesca internazionale individuale nell’a.s. 2012/13; 5 genitori che hanno avuto un figlio che ha partecipato a un programma annuale di mobilità studentesca internazionale individuale nell’a.s. 2012/13; 2 insegnanti che hanno avuto un loro studente che ha partecipato a un programma annuale di mobilità studentesca internazionale individuale nell’a.s. 2012/13;
- 3 volontari dell’associazione Intercultura Onlus;

I partecipanti alla ricerca provenivano da tre regioni italiane: Friuli Venezia Giulia, Lazio e Sicilia.

I progetti educativi di mobilità studentesca internazionali individuali considerati dal presente contributo erano quelli annuali e promossi dall’associazione Intercultura Onlus3. L'of-
ferta educativa di Intercultura Onlus è di far vivere in prima persona agli studenti delle scuole secondarie di secondo grado (16/17 anni) un’esperienza di educazione alla mondialità mediante la mobilità individuale. Nello specifico, Intercultura Onlus organizza programmi di mobilità individuali di diversa durata (da un mese a un anno scolastico) nel quale i partecipanti, dopo aver passato una selezione, vivono in una famiglia del Paese ospitante e frequentano una scuola locale secondaria di secondo grado come studenti full-time. Prima e dopo la loro esperienza, gli studenti italiani vengono accompagnati dai volontari di Intercultura Onlus mediante un percorso di formazione che li preparano ad affrontare l’esperienza all’estero e il ritorno. Inoltre, mentre gli studenti sono nel Paese ospitante, vengono organizzate attività di formazione e sostegno all’esperienza in un quadro coerente tra i partner della rete AFS Intercultural Programs utili a facilitare il percorso di apprendimento interculturale.

**Risultati e discussione**

Nel presente paragrafo si presenteranno e discuteranno i risultati più significativi e connessi alla conoscenza e consapevolezza del sé sviluppate dagli studenti che hanno partecipato a un progetto di mobilità studentesca internazionale individuale.

Una studentessa afferma che doveva
I: «[...] “assolutamente fare questa cosa [esperienza all’estero]” perché volevo un po’ non aprirmi di mente, perché comunque, sì, mi sono aperta di più, però sono sempre stata aperta, quindi. Non era quello. Però era proprio “devo vivere con persone diverse e in una realtà diversa, per capire io chi sono veramente”» (Studentessa andata in Canada, R1L).

Da questa prima citazione si evince che secondo questa studentessa uno dei metodi per conoscere meglio se stessi è quello di uscire dalla propria confort zone. Questa idea, accompagnata dal desiderio di conoscersi meglio, è stata la principale motivazione che ha spinto la studentessa intervistata a candidarsi al concorso per partecipare a un progetto di mobilità studentesca internazionale individuale.

Trovarsi in un contesto diverso dal proprio e con persone nuove crea alcune difficoltà. Per gli studenti che vanno all’estero, una di queste difficoltà tendenzialmente è il non conoscere o conoscere poco la lingua locale come nel caso di questa studentessa:

I: «Allora, diciamo, che questo fatto delle difficoltà che ho enormi, che ho superato, soprattutto quello linguistico, appunto, mi ha fatto capire che intanto mi sbagliavo su, su tanti punti su me stessa. Nel senso che ho detto “vabbè, se sono partita da zero e sono arrivata ad avere un livello, diciamo, buono della lingua tedesca, posso fare di tutto”» (Studentessa andata in Austria, R2S).

Quanto riportato da questa studentessa evidenzia come una problematicità (il non parlare la lingua del Paese ospitante),
se adeguatamente affrontata, può trasformarsi in una sfida che consente allo studente di ‘allenare’ aspetti del sé che non sapeva di possedere e che possono cooperare in futuro ad affronare nuove difficoltà.

Non solo le difficoltà, ma l’intera esperienza permette una maggiore conoscenza del sé in quanto essa stimola gli studenti a fare un confronto critico fra il contesto d’origine e quello ospitante:

I: «[…] facendo un confronto con una cultura diversa, tu analizzi e ripensi aspetti della tua personalità, del tuo carattere, della tua cultura che altrimenti non noteresti» (Studente andato in Svezia, R1S).

Un’esperienza all’estero, quindi, porta a instaurare un confronto critico che diventa la genesi di una messa in discussione di aspetti del sé e della propria cultura che altrimenti si darebbero per scontati. Questo è anche sottolineato da una madre:

IM: «Al di là della lingua, della maturità, la cosa che ti aiuta in questa esperienza secondo me, al primo posto è di conoscere te stessa, di capire effettivamente quali sono i tuoi limiti e quali sono invece i tuoi punti di forza. Tu in un ambiente tuo, in un ambiente, in un’età adolescenziale in cui sei comunque protetta dalla tua famiglia in primis, ma da quella che è la società che ti circonda, non sai fino a che punto puoi metterti in gioco. E questa esperienza ti aiuta a capire cosa tu hai dentro di te e cosa puoi ottenere con le tue sole capacità perché tu sei catapultata in un mondo che non è il tuo, in una famiglia che non è
la tua, una scuola, una lingua, niente è tuo e quindi tutto ciò che c’è, tu devi per forza tirar fuori tutto quello che c’è dentro di te e serve proprio a questo” (Madre, GS).

Preso atto di quanto emerso dalle parole degli intervistati, si può affermare che il progetto di mobilità studentesca internazionale è, a tutti gli effetti, un progetto educativo nel senso etimologico del termine: educare, dal latino ‘educère’, significa ‘tirar fuori’, ‘condurre fuori’ nel senso di “essere svelati a se stessi altrove, lontano, nell’aperto di un incontro, di un contatto con il nuovo” (Guidolin, 1997, p. 12). In questo senso, la mobilità studentesca internazionale echeggia l’allegorico viaggio descritto da Platone ne La Repubblica: l’uscire dalla propria caverna (la comfort zone), l’andare oltre il mondo circoscritto delle ombre, può essere un vero e proprio atto conoscitivo; un atto che consente di avvicinarsi, non solo all’altro, ma anche a se stessi. Infatti, come emerge dagli estratti delle interviste presentati, mediante l’esperienza all’estero e le relazioni interculturali, gli studenti dichiarano di aver sviluppato una maggiore conoscenza e consapevolezza del sé. L’incontro interculturale, in altre parole, può essere inteso come uno specchio: «We only learn who we are through the mirror of others, and, in turn, we only understand others by understanding ourselves as Other» (Kramsch, 2009, p. 18).

Conclusioni, limiti e implicazioni pedagogiche

Con il presente contributo si desiderava esplorare lo sviluppo della conoscenza e della consapevolezza del sé mediante la partecipazione a un progetto educativo di mobilità inter-
nazionale individuale. L’autoconsapevolezza è considerata dalla letteratura pedagogica una componente essenziale della IC la quale rappresenta uno dei principali risultati attesi da progetti educativi di questo tipo.

Dall’analisi dei dati è emerso che trovarsi in un contesto di alterità e, in alcuni casi di difficoltà, permette di conoscere meglio se stessi, le proprie potenzialità come i propri limiti. In questo senso, l’incontro interculturale non è solo uno spazio dialogico dove tentare di conoscere l’altro ma è anche il luogo dove conoscere meglio sé stessi, dove comprendere come il soggetto reiteri, rinegozi, reintepreti valori e significati culturali. Nell’incontro con l’alterità, infatti, ci si scopre stranieri (Zoletto, 2007). (Ri)conoscere l’alterità in sé è un passo fondamentale per conoscere meglio se stessi e i propri contesti culturali. La mobilità studentesca, facendo prendere le distanze dalla propria confort zone, è un progetto educativo che consente potenzialmente tale conoscenza.

Per quanto riguarda i limiti della presente ricerca se ne evidenziano alcuni di seguito. Il primo concerne il fatto che la rilevazione dei dati è stata effettuata con un unico metodo ovverosia le interviste semistrutturate. Sarebbe stato opportuno una triangolazione di dati (ad es., osservazioni in contesto, questionari). Per ridurre questo limite, le interviste sono state condotte con persone appartenenti a categorie diverse: gli studenti rientrati e quanti hanno avuto modo di osservarli (genitori, amici, insegnanti, volontari di Intercultura Onlus). Un secondo limite è rintracciabile nell’impossibilità di confrontare il livello di conoscenza e consapevolezza del sé degli studenti prima della loro partenza e al loro rientro. Anche in questo caso si è ricercata una soluzione che potesse ridurre gli effetti di questo limite: nelle interviste si è chiesto agli intervistati di fare un confronto dello studente prima e dopo l’esperienza all’estero.
Quanto emerso dalla presente analisi dei dati sottende diverse implicazioni pedagogiche. In questa sede si è scelto di considerare quelle connesse alla valutazione. Tale scelta è determinata dal fatto che una delle questioni più urgenti per la scuola rispetto a questo tipo di esperienze è proprio quella connessa a come valutare le competenze acquisite dagli studenti che rientrano da un periodo di studio all’estero (Baiutti, 2014/2015).

Secondo la legislazione vigente, gli insegnanti del Consiglio di classe italiano devono considerare, nel processo valutativo dello studente rientrato, oltre alle conoscenze disciplinari, anche la competenza interculturale (Baiutti, 2014/2015). Da quanto emerge dai risultati di questo contributo, è affermabile che gli insegnanti dovrebbero porre attenzione, fra le varie, anche allo sviluppo (o meno) della conoscenza e consapevolezza del sé. Per fare ciò può essere utile adottare degli strumenti di valutazione di natura qualitativa. Nello specifico possono essere efficaci gli strumenti autoriflessivi e autovalutativi che presentano diversi benefici:

1. Consentono allo studente di attribuire significato al proprio percorso educativo all’estero;
2. Consentono agli insegnanti del Consiglio di classe italiano di monitorare l’esperienza all’estero dello studente e di individuare le evidenze dello sviluppo (o meno) della IC e, quindi, anche della consapevolezza del sé;
3. Permettono di prorogare lo sviluppo della IC. Infatti, come suggeriscono diversi pedagogisti (ad es., Savicki, 2008; Deardorff, 2009; Paolone, 2013) il momento riflessivo è un momento cruciale per lo sviluppo della stessa IC.

Alcuni esempi di questi strumenti autovalutativi possono essere i diari di bordo (ad es., si veda quelli adottati nella ricerca in corso Protocollo di Valutazione INTERCULTURA⁴), le

⁴ La ricerca "Protocollo di Valutazione INTERCULTURA" è una ricerca in corso a cura

Tali strumenti, tuttavia, non sono sufficienti per valutare la IC. È consigliabile affiancare a questi anche strumenti oggettivi (ad es., prove di realtà) e strumenti di eterovalutazione (ad es., peer assessment)\(^5\).

**Ringraziamenti**

Desidero esprimere un particolare ringraziamento alla Fondazione Intercultura Onlus che ha sostenuto la ricerca dotto-rale che sta alla base di questo capitolo e l’associazione Intercultura Onlus. Desidero, inoltre, ringraziare tutti le persone intervistate durante la ricerca di dottorato e coloro che hanno letto una prima versione di questo contributo dando significativi suggerimenti per migliorarlo.

\(^5\) Per un modello di valutazione di competenza si veda Castoldi 2009.
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Cosmopolitanism and global citizenship through the eyes of international students

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This study reveals the attitudes and preferences of international students towards cosmopolitanism and the idea of global citizenship. It shows their views on mobility and study abroad in connection with this concept as well as the perceptions of the validity of cosmopolitanism for this age group. Mobility and experiences abroad increased students’ encounters of diversity, which was considered to have a positive connotation on the development of cosmopolitan identity. However, students perceived mobility as a bonus not as a condition for cosmopolitan affiliations, because diversity, whether cultural, social, political and so on can be experienced also in local settings. This captures the essence of the Ancient cultural, rooted and banal cosmopolitanism. Furthermore, students believed that the concept of global citizenship should be natural to contemporary societies because of their multicultural set up and the global challenges they tend to face. Finally, cyber space often substituted mobility and was seen as an enabler and a unifier in terms of banal cosmopolitanism, because it facilitated diversity and enhanced (online) communication.

Introduction

“Their role is to act as bridges, go-betweens, mediators between the various communities and cultures... if they themselves cannot sustain their multiple allegiances ... then all of us have reason to be uneasy about the way the world is going”.

(Amin Maalouf, L'identità, 1998)
If the participants of this study elaborated further on this quote, the majority of them would most probably follow that we should all strive to share this planet responsibly and try to improve the circumstances of fellow citizens whose living conditions or personal circumstances are less fortunate than ours. Maalouf’s quote captures the idiosyncrasies of multicultural societies and the views on and self-perceptions of internationally mobile students on their role in society. It is also a premise to the idea of global citizenship mitigated by cosmopolitan virtues as a subset of intercultural competences. These are important nuances for some of the challenges of the contemporary world.

The world is becoming an increasingly interconnected space in terms of cultures, politics and economics; this is believed to be the case mostly thanks to the pervasive forces of globalisation. As a catalyst, globalisation is perceived both positively and negatively in this regard. Yet a strong drive, motivation and curiosity are arguably innate to humanity, this is often omitted in this context. Similarly, the concept of otherness has its historical legacy, as it sets the present international context and impacts on general perceptions. International students also represent a historical phenomenon. They are a diverse sub-group of global migration and mobility, with a corresponding variety of experiences and mindsets. There exist an amplitude of concepts and coined terms regarding international student mobility (ISM), such as: “knowledge brokers” (Williams and Baláž, 2008, p.18), “boundary spanners” (Ibid., 2008, p.43-45), “semi-finished human capital” (Khadria, 2011, p.45), “future highly skilled migrants” (Mahroum, 2000, p.24), “global careerist[s]” (Ho, 2011, p.122), “globetrotters” (Mahroum, 1999, p.122), “new strangers” (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002, p.5), “migratory elites” (Ibid.), “middling transnational actors” (Smith, 2005, p.8) and/or “aliens” (Robertson, 2009, p.105).

This article first introduces the concept of cosmopolitanism
and global citizenship in its greater context and through its brief historical development and various forms. This is followed by its operational definitions that have been adopted by this study and used also in its empirical section to present this concept to the participants of this study. It then lays out the methodological aspects of this research. Finally, it will discuss the empirical findings and the implications of these in terms of students’ perceptions of cosmopolitanism and the idea of global citizenship.

**Cosmopolitanism**

Concepts of global citizenship and cosmopolitanism in literature are often connected with the phenomena of ISM, as they possess international, intercultural and transnational aspects (Campbell, 2012; Coryell et al., 2010; Gargano, 2009, 2012; Howe, 2009). While, an explicit and popular identification with cosmopolitanism is not widespread or spontaneous among international students, and empirical evidence is scarce, the authors’ research in this field revealed interesting findings. Within multiple identities, affiliations to cosmopolitanism and local communities were felt strongest by the international students (Weibl, 2015a, 2015b). This article will investigate more thoroughly the attitudes of students towards the concept of global citizenship since the empirical evidence originates from the same dataset. Next to the cosmopolitan identities, research revealed a need for education for global citizenship, which should ideally take both, a curricula and extracurricular form (Weibl, 2016).

In addition, students’ views on the internationalisation of higher education gravitated towards ideas of education
for global citizenship (Weibl, 2016) and the overwhelming majority of students perceived that their role in society was in line with Maalouf’s quotation (Weibl, 2015c). This is because global citizens feel moral responsibilities and obligations to everyone around the world (Rönnström, 2011). There are calls for cosmopolitan education to prepare students for this multicultural world with frequent interactions with people of different backgrounds and values (Ashwill and Oanh, 2009), because becoming a global citizen is not only practical but from an economic and moral point of view also an inevitability for the survival of humanity (Adams, 2003). These should be composed by the teaching of universal values and by the development of intercultural competence (Weibl, 2015c).

The concept of cosmopolitanism crosses many fields, from diaspora and identity politics to multiculturalism, political correctness and transnationalism (Hannerz, 2006). Cosmopolitanism is also considered as a moral and political response to globalisation (Rönnström, 2011). Over time cosmopolitanism has developed into several branches, such as: cultural, economic, political and moral or philosophical and banal or rooted cosmopolitanism (Appiah, 1997; Beck, 2004; Brown and Held, 2010; Kleingeld and Brown, 2006; Saito, 2011). This study is interested in moral or philosophical cosmopolitanism because it is committed to the idea of solidarity and the attachments between human beings; as well as, in the promotion of human rights, justice and providing aid to those in need and to those who suffer. It can manifest in the idea of world-wide peace, supported by Erasmus of Rotterdam based on the concept of ‘cosmopolitan law’, which transformed also to political cosmopolitanism for example by the creation of the League of Nations. This is connected with cultural cosmopolitanism as it captures the multicultural aspect of societies, referring to new people, places, sights, sounds and tastes (Hannerz, 2006); it values openness toward difference
and particularly the ability to enter other cultures (Kleingeld and Brown, 2006).

A rift exists between the economic and moral cosmopolitanism, because the later criticizes the former of advocating for the single global market and neoliberal free trade without political involvement, which triggers global economic inequality (Ibid.). Apart from the moral and cultural cosmopolitanism, this research is also inspired by banal or everyday cosmopolitanism, because it describes all aspects of culture consumed frequently, which is the forte of international students. Banal cosmopolitanism also bridges the national, with the transnational through the process of cosmopolitanisation (Beck, 2004). It captures the advantages of globalisation and by extension it has the potential to support multiple sociocultural loyalties and through leisurely attitudes cause a “quiet revolution in everyday life” (Beck, 2013). Consequently, this study adopted the following understanding of global citizenship: cosmopolitanism is a “moral egalitarianism and reciprocal recognition of the equal moral respect of every person” (Held, 2010, p.230), it is about cultivating intercultural competences so that an individual is able to deal with ethical frameworks different from one's own; it is also a “moral assumption that we have an obligation and responsibilities to other people” (Rönnström, 2011, p.260), and it is a loyalty not to locality but to the relationships which are rooted locally or floating globally with whom we are related. These definitions were used in the empirical part of the study to familiarize students with this concept.

Similarly, they were chosen to comprise the historical and contemporary understanding of cosmopolitanism, which include: a Socratic self-examination and critical thinking; equal dignity of human beings; pluralities of people and of the world; humble and genuine curiosity and an attempt to empathise (Nussbaum, 1994). To strive towards
equality and justice is based on the Ancient idea of the pure accident of where one is born (Ibid.). Even though this study focuses on ISM, cosmopolitanism does not entail mobility as Diogenes, the self-proclaimed cosmopolitan, chose not to travel (Kleingeld and Brown, 2006). This notion has been arguably amplified by the advancement of communication through the internet, social media and cyber space, which support the concept of rooted cosmopolitanism. It helps to dismiss the fears of globalisation and the tendency of using this term interchangeably with cosmopolitanism, because it is principally against the stances that native cultures are being threatened by foreign cultural contamination (Appiah, 1997). It helped to coin the term cosmopolitan patriotism (Ibid.), which describes multiple loyalties, from local and regional to national and global through cultural interaction (Hannerz, 2006). In a sense, it captures the co-existence of multiple identities, potentially forming “cosmopolitan nation” (Giddens, 2000, p.21). This study sought to identify these nuances through the ideas and perceptions of international students in regards to cosmopolitanism.

Methods

The findings of this study originate in a comparative, longitudinal and multidisciplinary study conducted for the author’s PhD thesis titled: International Student Mobility and Internationalisation of Universities - The role of serendipity, risk and uncertainty in student mobility and the possible development of cosmopolitan mindset and identity through knowledge transfer and intercultural competence. Employability, students’ future mobility aspirations and the EU’s support of international student mobility. The research attended calls for
more holistic and ongoing study representing student voices. It employed a mixed-method analysis and a variety of methods of data collection in order to gain an in-depth perspective on the research interests of the study. The participants were first time international students, both postgraduate and undergraduate, enrolled at New Zealand universities, the University of Oxford and Charles University in Prague. The empirical part was conducted between the years 2010 – 2014.

The research at each university commenced with an on-line anonymous survey (n=563), which was followed by a face-to-face interview with students interested in participating in the longitudinal study (n=90). The third phase consisted of twelve diary-type online surveys (n=81/44). These were followed by Skype interview (n=46) and an email survey (n=39), and were the source of data used for this paper. The participants were recruited by an invitation letter to the online anonymous survey containing the survey link and distributed by the international offices of their host universities; print advertisements and the online snowball method of distribution were also employed in order to attract participants. The face-to-face interviews were conducted with all those students who expressed willingness to further participate in this study; they did so by typing in their email addresses at the end of the anonymous survey and were contacted by the author. From that point the students entered the longitudinal phase of the study which in some cases lasted over a year. Students were rewarded with vouchers from Amazon for their participation in the longitudinal study. All interviews and data collection was conducted by the author of this study. Some of the findings of this research were already published and are referred to in this paper (Weibl 2015a, 2015b, 2015c). The following three questions served as the main source of information for this publication.

1. “Does cosmopolitanism do you think require mobility?” (Skype
2. “Some would say that cosmopolitanism nowadays is a necessity rather than a choice – what do you think?” (Skype interview, n=46)

3. “What interest do you have in the concept of global citizenship or cosmopolitanism?” (Cosmopolitanism/global citizenship can be defined as: ‘a moral egalitarianism and reciprocal recognition of the equal moral respect of every person’? (Email survey, n=39)

Aside from the interesting findings, this study itself became a tool for self-reflection and of self-examination, which contributed to the learning process and personal growth as expressed by some students. In terms of the challenges of data collecting, the empirical task proved to be a rewarding, albeit time consuming exercise. The biggest difficulty was to attract students to the initial anonymous survey and then later in keeping students motivated for the longevity of the research. The launch of the research was also delayed by two strong earthquakes in the city of Christchurch, New Zealand and by difficulties in gaining access to students through official avenues at individual universities.

Results

Most of the students believed that cosmopolitanism does not require mobility, meaning that the lack of mobility would not prevent one from becoming a cosmopolitan individual. Although students added that it would be a welcome addition, a bonus and would help in comprehending this concept due to the more intense learning from experiences of diversity and self-reflection. While students believed that one can be a cosmopolitan without leaving her/his local environment,
just as Ancient Stoics thought, it would most probably require vested interests and a greater effort than that of simply being abroad. Thus, Diogenes’s idea that it is possible to not travel and yet also be cosmopolitan is still relevant. International students are most likely to merge into different cultures on a daily basis, in comparison to an individual living a multicultural setting in their home environment. However, it is also true, as the students mentioned that the quality of interaction and integration of different communities, which are often based on sound intercultural competence, can make a culturally diverse home environment a greater learning environment than an international setting without any or minimal social interaction.

On the other hand, mobility mattered for Nikita_UK who likes the idea of a person’s choice of residence; yet, he could not freely move to any country he wanted. He also identifies with the Ancient premise of the pure accident of where one is born because his ‘citizenship of the Russian Federation and the limitations associated with it did not come as a result of (my) [his] choice – this is something, that was assigned to (me) [him] simply because (I) [he] was born there.’ Consequently, ‘(I) [he] would like to add that those principles [of global citizenship and cosmopolitanism] should be guaranteed by law, rather than proclaimed’.

Furthermore, students appreciated the new venues offered by cyber space as the use of internet and social media can go a long way in easing interaction between different cultures worldwide. Hence; cyber space can be considered another alternative to physical mobility for the purpose of a cosmopolitan experience, bringing the concept of global citizenship and of cosmopolitan patriotism within the reach of individuals’ online devices. Students also comment that although cyber space is not without challenges, for example communication across continents requires scheduling and so on; it is quick, cheap and can be more spontaneous than face to face interaction would be.
When it came to the opinions as to whether cosmopolitanism is a necessity or a choice, students predominantly agreed that it was a necessity, because of the multicultural composition of our societies.

Turning to the students’ interest in cosmopolitanism, all 39 respondents identified with cosmopolitanism and global citizenship according to the proclaimed definition. Moreover; a quarter of them expressed a particular interest in this concept, based on their acquired values and personal beliefs, as the outcome of their experiences studying abroad. This outcome is reinforced by students’ statements regarding personal growth, broadened horizons and becoming more independent, (Weibl, 2015c); as well as, their preferred affiliation with local and cosmopolitan identity over national or regional identities while abroad (Weibl, 2015b). One of the main reasons for the majority of students to be interested in cosmopolitanism and the concept of global citizenship was their realisation, also outlined by the literature, that this concept is necessary for the survival and functioning of the modern globalised world due to its benefits to all humans and to the broader environment.

Tom_NZ was increasingly interested in this concept because of the realisation that the ‘natures of issues are global and the interconnected role (of humans) on Earth’ thus, he stated ‘moral egalitarianism is central to what should govern your day to day decisions and how you interact with the world’. Likewise, Alexandra_NZ proclaimed a strong interest in this concept because of her belief that ‘in the modern world it is the best approach to life and people around you.’ Cosmopolitanism for Benjamin_UK and Heather_NZ was a personal matter because of their political beliefs and religious backgrounds. ‘As a Jew, cosmopolitanism is not a mere hypothesis or an option, it is compulsory’ (Benjamin_UK).

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1 Email_7: What interest do you have in the concept of global citizenship or cosmopolitanism? Cosmopolitanism/global citizenship can be defined as: ‘a moral egalitarianism and reciprocal recognition of the equal moral respect of every person’?
‘I’m a communist (in the sense of equality for all not (...) when [in] really it’s a dictatorship, and so I feel that there should be equality between everyone and moral respect of all’ (Heather_NZ). Other three students also shared this view thanks to its practical implementation; Carlos_CZ said that he found ‘it important to translate it into practical life’. Similarly, Linh_NZ said he is ‘interested in the ways to facilitate the application of the concept, because (he) loved the fact that people act ethically’. Michael_UK explained: ‘first of all, I do consider myself as a global citizen (...) I think this [cosmopolitanism and global citizenship] will be a cornerstone of my later work as well’. Thus moral cosmopolitanism turned out to be the most appealing concept for students.

Furthermore, there were signs or precursors of banal cosmopolitanism, as students thought that societies globally have embedded diversity. The nature of reality is multicultural and globalised they said, which was their perception based on their experiences, rather than a wishful expression or support of a policy or an ideology. Yet, Ghislaine_NZ pointed out that ‘for globalization to truly work, we really have to stop thinking of ourselves solely based on our nationality’. And Benoit_UK added that one of the general definitions of global citizenship is ‘a desire to live together’. Jason_UK supported this view by stating that ‘living together should be the ultimate objective of global societies’.

Noelani_NZ argued, that ‘global citizenship is not only a great idea, but a necessary one’. She continued with a frequently mentioned statement of ‘unity in diversity’ (Golmohamad, 2009) which is the often cited EU motto (Europa, 2012), ‘I can name myself cosmopolitan, I really believe that all people in all lands should have the equal rights and common moral basis, I believe that it is possible’. Zhanna_CZ valued the personal contact with students of different backgrounds: ‘I am really interested in the concept; I strongly believe that everyone should be exposed to people and cultures across the world.’ Similarly; Sarah_NZ actually expressed
the idea of unity in diversity by stating that: ‘I like the concept and support it. I think people in all countries have much more things in common than separates them’. Simon_CZ and Namisha_NZ pointed out another advantage of embracing cosmopolitanism, it will make people realise ‘the stupidity of racism’.

Matt_UK expressed the idea of rooted and patriot cosmopolitanism as he put it: ‘strangely, going abroad has made me more focused on enjoying all of the things New York has to offer. My focus has shifted locally (...) but that also means I think that in some ways, people around the world are concerned with similar things’; while Jess_NZ was interested in ‘how global citizenship can be applied to environmental concerns (...) [and how it] can be applied at a local level (...) [because] micro-cultures and regional groups need to also be taken into account when focusing on global citizenship’.

Conclusion and Discussion

While mobility and study abroad are believed to contribute to the development of cosmopolitan identities and global citizenship (Campbell, 2012), the findings of this study revealed that they represent a bonus in this regard, but are not necessary preconditions for an individual to become a cosmopolitan or to embrace the concept of global citizenship. Thus, the findings confirmed the relevance of the ancient rooted and also patriotic cosmopolitanism, especially mitigated by the advancement of online media and the existence of cyber space as a catalyst for cosmopolitanisation. The respondents collectively identified and proclaimed interest in the concept of global citizenship and globalisation, especially with the moral or ethical variant of cosmopolitanism. A quarter of the students reiterated their vested interest in this concept, because they adopted them as
their personal beliefs and values.

Further studies on cosmopolitan virtues could test the self-proclaimed identification and interest in this concept, especially through the assessment of students’ intercultural competences, in particular empathy. This is because it can be characterised as an ability to step into someone else's shoes, which in this case would ease communication with people of different backgrounds. Empathy has the capacity to leverage diversity and enhance the understanding of others. Maalouf’s quote thus represents one of the indicators of banal and cultural cosmopolitanism in society. Moreover, as outlined by a related study (Weibl, 2016), education for global citizenship would go a long way towards the widespread adoption of this concept, at the same time capturing students’ genuine interest in cosmopolitanism and the concept of global citizenship.

Finally, a (follow up) study could be conducted bridging the cultural aspects of cosmopolitanism to its political dimension, for example through the grassroots cultivation of a sense of cosmopolitan identity, because it could work towards a “principle of unity in diversity” (Golmohamad, 2009), which is also the EU’s motto (Europa, 2012). In this sense, it should test whether cosmopolitan identity, as suggested thus far, does not reject other communal identities; rather it promotes the co-existence of multiple identities, capable of forming a “cosmopolitan nation” (Giddens, 2000, p.21). ISM offers a valuable case study in this regard, due to students’ encounters with diversity and mobility and their potential to act as ambassadors.
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The Way of St. James Pilgrimage: towards a European Identity?

Katharina Maak
Ph.D. of Cultural Sciences

The Way of St. James, pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela, is one example of diversity and mutual understanding and repeatedly highlighted within the process of finding a European identification. A closer examination shall give an idea about concepts of regional and collective identity asking on the one hand about the relationship between the Way of St. James and the pilgrims starting their voyage and creating through their interaction a new understanding. On the other hand, it will be discussed what this pilgrimage route does with the regions, a lot of them rural, through which it passes.

Introduction

Is there a place on Earth where people from different cultural, religious and social backgrounds meet and interact in a peaceful manner for a couple of days or weeks getting to know each other’s culture and learning one from another? The Way of St. James, pilgrimage route and first Cultural Route of the Council of Europe, is considered an example of diversity and mutual understanding as well a symbol of European identification though serving as a channel for intercultural dialogue, and providing a better understanding of the history of Europe through cross-border exchanges of people, ideas and cultures. It is a model for grassroots cultural co-operation and provides important lessons about identity and citizenship through a participative experience
This paper analyses the evolving concepts of identities tracing the question which role plays the network of pilgrim routes to Santiago de Compostela within the process of constructing a European identity. Starting from the presumption that the interaction with the pilgrimage environment contributes significantly to peaceful encounters and mutual understanding as well as a better understanding of spiritual and cultural tourisms. It takes a closer look at the ideas and tools behind the concept of Cultural Routes, asking about the relationship between this pilgrimage route and the individuals who are starting their voyage with an individual approach leading them to interconnect constantly with other travelers and creating a new understanding. On the other hand, talking about regional and collective identity, the question is what does the Way of St. James do with those regions through which it passes? A lot of them are classified as rural, structurally lagging regions and receive special attention from the rural development policy of the European Union (EU) and its rural development programs providing co-funding for projects with economic, environmental or social objectives. Therefore, tourism and regional development are two concepts that are being discussed in relation with a sustainable development of those regions. A lot of touristic products in relationship with culture and/or nature, apart from the Way of St. James, are experiencing nowadays revitalization and try to combine a volume of visitors with predominantly religious interests and tourists visiting also for other reasons. A critical thinking requires also the question if EU policies on culture and identity as theoretical concepts stand in contrast with the pilgrimage phenomenon itself which can rather be described as an unregulated, hardly controllable bottom-up concept. Which answer could we find looking at European history and heritage with regard
to revitalize the European idea?

A Legend Coming Back to Life

The Way of St. James or in Spanish „Camino de Santiago“ is a large network of ancient pilgrim routes stretching across Europe and coming together at the supposed tomb of the apostle Saint James in the city of Santiago de Compostela in the northwest of Spain. The most popular route is the Camino Francés of around 800 kilometers that begins in St. Jean-Pied-du-Port in France. But actually, there is no official starting point because the idea is that everyone can be a pilgrim and normally the voyage starts at the doorstep. In Spanish this is described with the words “El caminio comienza en su casa”. Every year the numbers of pilgrims increase, which shows also the growing popularity of the Way. In order to give an impression about the dimension of this phenomenon nowadays, Table 1 shows some numbers from the Pilgrim’s Reception Office in Santiago de Compostela\(^1\) from the year 2016.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2016</th>
<th>No. of pilgrims</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total no. of pilgrims that arrived at the Pilgrim’s Reception Office</td>
<td>277,854</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>144,034</td>
<td>51,84%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) The Pilgrim’s Reception Office, run by the Cathedral church of the Archdiocese of Santiago de Compostela, welcomes all pilgrims arriving in the city who have walked, travelled on horseback or by bicycle. Please note, that the statistics published by the Pilgrim’s Reception Office include exclusively those pilgrims who have arrived and registered for the final stamp of the Cathedral of Santiago as well as the traditional certificate, the \textit{Compstela}. 
The motivation for starting a pilgrimage can be ambivalent. It is not always of an exclusive religious nature, but also involves widely secular culture. In most cases a search for identity plays an important role. This diversity in motivations makes it challenging to distinguish between pilgrims and tourists. In recent years the new category of ‘religious tourism’ became more popular. The Association for Tourism and Leisure Education (in Griffin, 2007, p.20) states: “perhaps paradoxically the decline in churchgoing in recent years has been paralleled in many cases by a growing interest in religion and religious travel. The reason for this seems simple: people are searching of meaning in their increasingly uncertain lives. Many people have not been able to find this through tradition and forms of worship, so
they are now taking to different forms of experience to find it. This includes the rediscovery of pilgrimage or journeys to sacred places.”

The history of the Camino de Santiago dates back to the early 9th century. Legends say that the body of the St. James, who was beheaded in Palestine, was brought by boat to the Iberian Peninsula where he reportedly preached the gospel. After discovering his remains, a small shrine dedicated to St. James quickly became one the most famous pilgrimage site in the Christian world apart from Rome and Jerusalem.

The appearance of the legends about St. James and the beginning pilgrim traffic are in a proximate relationship with the Reconquista – the Christian reconquest of the peninsula from the Muslim kingdom. Within the Christian ruled territories the apostle was praised as interceder and protector of Spain and attributed a central role as the Moor-slayer (span. Matamoros). The worship of the apostle led to the development of an extensive network of routes as well as a complex infrastructure, particularly along the old trade routes, which for centuries were used as a logistical network. After the phenomenon had reached its climax in the 15th century, the pilgrimage began to decay as a result of wars, epidemics, failure of crops and starving in addition to the beginning of the Reformation and the criticism on pilgrimage (Herbers, 2016).

The reactivation of the route began during General Francisco Franco’s authoritarian regime. Spanish nationalism and St. James as national hero were emphasized as part of this regime. However, it took until the last quarter of the 20th century for the authentic contemporary resurge of the peregrination and the interest for the Camino to be awakened. In cooperation with various government and clerical institutions, as well as with help from private companies, the route and places for pilgrims were reconstructed and adapted to meet modern
needs (Santos Solla, 2006, p. 139).

The most important change took place during the “Holy Year”\(^2\) 1993 with the initiation of a new tourism policy and the creation of the new brand called Xacobeo’93. Simultaneously religious tourism became more important and the number of participants of religious and spiritual events and pilgrimages increased. Many destinations, apart from the Way of St. James, are experiencing a current revitalization and are catering to a large number of visitors with predominantly religious interests and tourists alike. A milestone was the declaration of the Way of St. James as the first Cultural Route of the Council of Europe.

*Figure 1* Pelegrin, official mascot of Xacobeo’93
*Source: S. A. de Xestión do Plan Xacobeo*

In this context it is essential to have a look at the role of heritage for territories and their identity. As a result of pilgrimage in the Middle Age, a rich heritage was formed in form of tangible heritage such as places of worship, hospitals, bridges as well as non-tangible heritage in form of legends, poems and songs that have been conserved and are appreciated today. There are various dimensions of tradition which take a vital role when talking about identity. In order to improve regional and local identity it is necessary to strengthen the awareness and responsibility of local and regional communities towards their environments, landscapes, cultures and other unique values. This plays a key role, for example, within the territorial development policy of the European Union, including the promotion of Cultural Tourism. The EU supports the protection, rehabilitation and utilization of heritage through a place-based approach.

“May the faith which has inspired pilgrims throughout history, uniting them in a common aspiration and transcending national differences and interests, inspire us today, and young people in particular, to travel along these routes in order to build a society founded on tolerance, respect for others, freedom and solidarity.” This excerpt from The Santiago de Compostela Declaration from October 23, 1987 (Council of Europe, 1987) describes the beginning of new a chapter within the Council of Europe's cultural policies and the idea of fostering political, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue through diverse cultural themes. The Pilgrim Routes to Santiago de Compostela was the first Cultural Route chosen by the Council of Europe as an illustration of European unification and identity, “a European
space bearing a collective memory and criss-crossed by roads and paths which overcome distances, frontiers and language barriers” (Council of Europe, 2015, p.9).

This Cultural Routes program was launched in 1987 with the aim to “demonstrate, by means of a journey through space and time, how the heritage of the different countries and cultures of Europe contributes to a shared and living cultural heritage” (European Institute of Cultural Routes, 2017). It primarily constitutes a larger European theme, which enables us to better understand the history and memory of Europe in a continental continuation extending from the Atlantic to the Southern Caucasus and from the Baltic to the Mediterraneanean. The declaration as Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe in 1991 emphasizes on the symbol character for process of the construction of Europe stating that “the main aims [...] are to promote the European identity in its unity and its diversity; to preserve the diversity of Europe’s cultures; to encourage intercultural dialogue and to facilitate conflict prevention and reconciliation (Council of Europe, 2010)”. The European ideas currently go far beyond an economic union and the process of European integration has been coupled with identity negotiation and geopolitical re-organization within the member states. The fundamental idea of the Treaty of Maastricht is a European citizenship overcoming political and juridical boundaries and establishing the basis of a self-concept based on cultural diversity and shared values. “Exploring Europe’s cultural heritage can provide the backdrop to the plural European citizenship required in contemporary times. Europe’s historical routes, today rediscovered with the help of the Council of Europe as the network of ‘Cultural Routes, influenced the history of cultural relations and for centuries supported intercultural exchange; they provide access to Europe’s multicultural heritage and illustrate
the ability to live together peacefully in diversity” (Council of Europe, 2008, p.33). Through this program the Council of Europe implements some of its fundamental tasks, promoting the principles, which underlie all its work and values: human rights, cultural democracy, cultural diversity, mutual understanding and exchanges across boundaries. It contributes to the conservation and valorization of European heritage, raises awareness for a common cultural identity in Europe and supports the development of cultural tourism under consideration of sustainable, social and ethnic values. Additionally, cultural routes represent a resource for innovation, creativity, small business creation, cultural tourism products and services development.

Without entering into a discussion whether these routes are being developed as tourism attractions or genuine pilgrimage experiences, these ‘products’ seem to be serving a growing public interest in walking, cycling, and trails for pilgrimage or religious tourism motives. Many pilgrimage routes are organized to the highest international standard with the provision of traditional tourism management tools such as interpretation materials, signage, publications and ancillary facilities including accommodation.

Importance is given to the regional level that plays a key role in European territoria development. One of the priorities regarding the EU framework for rural development programs fosters knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas. There are cultural territorial cross-border projects, and they need to be linked within the regions they cross in order to become effective and operative. Participation of the inhabitants of the territories and sites are crucial part of this process.

The goals for a sustainable Cultural Routes management on the socio-cultural level are to stimulate cultural preservation
and continuity among the communities, with focus primarily on the younger generation. Through the appreciation of the past and hence bonding it to the present, it is possible to raise awareness and promote the strengthening of a regional consciousness. Similar strategies are applied for regional development where the promotion of Cultural Tourism is considered an important factor. Not only cultural itineraries certificated by the European Council contribute to those effects. In general, pilgrimage and heritage tourism foster the finding of meaning and identity in the past. Important is the development of strategic partnerships and an entrepreneurial leadership with support to the local economy and especially to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Another issue is to gain cultural influence on sustainable and less sustainable tourism development agendas and processes (Council of Europe, 2015).

**European Identity and its Significance Regarding Pilgrimage**

When attempting to discuss (European) identity, one quickly gets caught between many different concepts and ideas. This topic has spawned a lively academic debate in recent decades and has generated hundreds of references ranging from abstract theoretical treatment to political discussion results from surveys. The validity of a concept of European identity has itself been questioned. However, at this point the author wants to discuss some aspects relating to pilgrimage. Arguing and adopting a sociological perspective that European identity can be defined as a form of collective identity, we consider a concept that describes a person’s sense of belonging to a group and accepting its “fundamental and consequential similarity that causes them to feel solidarity
amongst themselves” (Fligstein, 2012). According to Alberto Melucci (1989, p.34), who developed the most influential and systematic theory of collective identity, it is an interactive and shared definition produced by several interacting individuals who are concerned with the orientation of their action as well as the field of opportunities and constraints in which their action takes place”. Collective identity is an individual’s cognitive, moral and emotional connection within a broader community, practice or institution. It is a perception of a shared status or relation, which may be imagined rather than experienced directly. Furthermore, it is distinct from personal identities, although it may form part of a personal identity. Collective identity is neither fixed nor innate, but rather emerges through interaction and reaction of different actors to each other. These groups deriving from its members’ common interests, experiences and solidarities can be of diverse nature. As stated in a policy review from the European Commission (2012, p.3) there are various dimensions for the expression of European identity: multiple social identities and biographical identity, transnational intimate relationships and collective action, standardization and regulation, cultural production, intercultural translation, inclusion/exclusion, structural conditions and opportunity structures as well as public sphere and state-regulated institutions.

The construction of identity always comes along with a clear division between cultural in-groups and out-groups, between “us” and “them”. It is the contrast of inclusion and exclusion, at the same time using empathy as a basis for solidarity and loyalty. When talking about European identity it means that people in Europe are cognitive and emotionally bound to a defined area, in this case Europe as a political or geographical category, or more precisely the European Union with its 28 Member states. Without entering this
topic more deeply, it shall be mentioned that in the special case of the configuration a European identity it supposes that individuals need to incorporate a transnational identity into their national identity. In order to do so, they need the feeling of security and the desire to join a transnational identity without sacrificing their personal and national identities (Marín, 2003, p. 33). This idea becomes important when analyzing the dynamics of pilgrimages and especially the Way of St. James.

In order to approach the question whether the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela contributes to strengthening a European identity, we should consider that a person starting the pilgrim's way is most likely to support the ideas of a Europe without borders. Those travelers could be seen as supporters or ‘ambassadors’ of the European idea. In general, the phenomenon of pilgrimage is shaped by the idea of discovering and overcoming borders and boundaries, trying out new dimensions and forming new relationships. Establishing bonding and reflecting identity is part of the (spiritual) experience and comes along with the fact, that on the Camino linguistic encounters are multiple. Possible language barriers, unlike in history, are tried to overcome by the means of language, symbols, emotional expressions, songs and poetry. It is a universal understanding as part of a wide activity with many people following without putting the focus on language training, yet accepting the variety of linguistic encounters. The world of the pilgrims is a unique sphere apart from the normal world, but everyone gets access for it.

Wagner (2006) states there exist very clear relationships between collective identity and the two facets of the concept of territory, for example territoriality (the geographical basis of certain methods of space-appropriation) and the
territory, which is defined by the interaction on a given area thus establishing legitimacy. On the Way of St. James, as a network of an endless number of branches everywhere in Europe all marked through the schematic yellow scallop shell on blue ground (colors of the European Union), people use a spatial structure guiding towards the southwest of the Iberian peninsular. The pilgrimage on the Way of St. James in general is easy to access though being open to everyone. Besides, there is no need for huge amount of money or knowledge about the activity, since it mainly consists in walking or cycling and satisfying the basic, daily needs. Not even a special preparation becomes necessary, since every individual is planning the course accordingly to his or her physical condition.

Its symbolic character derives from the fact that very different people come together for one purpose: pilgrims, travelers, inhabitants, as well as clerics, administrative officers and businessmen. As shown in Table 1, pilgrims represent many different nationalities, but travel also with different motivations, religious and non-religious. The pilgrimage serves as an interactive event that allows participants to formulate and perform alternative spirituality and identities, also blurring the distinctions between pilgrim and tourist, sacred and profane. But something else forms a typical pilgrimage more significantly: each individual traveler regularly meets up with others, is inspired by the accounts of pilgrims walking the pilgrims’ ways before them, and are welcomed in the evenings by hosts. The exposure of both, locals and pilgrims or travelers, is a typical situation leading to experiencing interculturality in the places the route is passing through. A pilgrim is a stranger, being distant and outside of his or her familiar environment. On his journey he meets everyday individuals, that are alien for him and they walk and interact with him independently
of their usual pattern of social interaction and ascribed roles. Moving in unison for many hours, in a sometimes barren countryside such as the Meseta in central Spain, and suffering together, not only helps the pilgrims to find their own selves, but also connects with others in this concrete, limited space. In addition, irritation can cause the situation of proximity to other pilgrims, which is unusual to most of the participants (sleeping every night in a dorm room with many persons, sharing daily routine with others). This proximity and the exceptional emotional state due to a situation of steady self-concern can provoke exceptional emotions. Not only personal identities are at stake here but also social and collective ones. This absence from one's accustomed environment and detachment from traditional pattern is ambivalent: it is loss and gain at the same time. The pilgrim is experiencing difference, is threatening with dissimilarity. Through this, he or she is constantly crossing borders. This situation can be irritating, however, it offers a possibility: at the end, coping with the difference can also imply a resource and transform into competence.

Conclusion

Since the discovery of the supposed tomb of Saint James Major in the 9th century, the Santiago routes have played a vital role in the development of European culture. Even today pilgrims continue traveling on that route with its symbolic significance of the goal to be reached as the principle consideration. This devotion is not only limited to Southern Europe, but crosses geographic and religious boundaries and connects different topics from religion, politics and science. It is an example of diversity and mutual
understanding. Repeatedly the role of the Way of St. James is highlighted within the process of finding an European identification and determination, for example through the declaration as Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe in 1991. Looking at other topics of European policy many parallels can be drawn: equitable exchange and dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples, based on mutual understanding and respect and the equal dignity of all cultures is the essential prerequisite for constructing social cohesion, reconciliation among peoples and peace among nations. It highlights the importance in public policies in progress, the role and activities of the local associations and the valorization of implemented projects as related to those itineraries recognized by the Council of Europe.

The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe are in line with the key trends of cultural tourism development in Europe today. They have achieved a noteworthy impact and progress within the last two decades, and shown enormous potential for the development of rural regions, SMEs, clustering, networking (intercultural dialogue), and promoting the image of the Council of Europe and Europe in general. After twenty years of experience, the Cultural Routes program continues to promote and render more visible these common values and principles rooted in the cultural, religious and humanist heritage of Europe, a heritage at once divided and enriched by its diversity. Cultural Routes encourage widespread community participation in cultural activities raising awareness of a common cultural heritage.

The identification of citizens with Europe, the European Union and its integration project is an issue of perennial concern for EU institutions. To investigate in-depth how language, identity and culture depend on each other, how valuable they are for people, and what problems and opportunities
arise from these interrelations would be fascinating. How is European identity promoted and perceived – for example by European cultural tourism? In the minds of different actors, how relevant are language and culture to national identity and cohesion.

Both pilgrimage and cultural tourism provide a space and an experience that offer individuals the potential of constructing meaning and negotiating identity. The Way of St. James provides an intense human experience and creates a sense of fraternity amongst travelers and a strong bond with the regions through which it passes. Pilgrimage is not only a form of identity building, but also a superb example for cross-border communication and fostering mutual understanding. The Way of St James illustrates how Europe was constructed on a shared history of exchanges and encounters between people with different backgrounds, nationalities and beliefs.

References


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As most interculturalists would agree, *stereotypes* are a socio-cognitive component of human interaction, where *prejudice* is the evaluative and *discrimination* the behavioral component. Given the power of stereotypes, awareness is the first step in any effort to develop intercultural sensitivity. If stereotypes and prejudices are left unexamined, they might end up in hate and aggressive speech, but also in radical and discriminatory behaviours, that can feed dangerous and disruptive intercultural interactions.

Discrimination certainly is not a new problem, but increasingly diverse and multicultural societies make the problem more complex. Immigration is probably the most prominent issue in this respect. All the many various manifestations of extremism and *radicalization* contribute to erode social cohesion, but also create obstacles for building trust in the other and thus block our ability to fully benefit from the advantages of multicultural societies.

This second part touches various aspects of this dangerous phenomena. Talking about the hate speech of xenophobic ideologists, or of minorities outside mainstreams norms, in the following section the authors describe how these phenomena are related to the fear for loss of identity, to ethnocentric attitudes and to the perception of superiority. All of them are using qualitative, and also very innovative research and training methods based on conversations,
discourse, text analysis or role playing.

Young people as they are looking for their place in the world often are struggling in particular with questions of identity. Stefania Lorenzini (Chapter 8) shows that feelings of otherness or alienation can make adopted young people or members of a second migrant generation victims of stereotypes and prejudice, and consequently more vulnerable. Margherita Cardellini (Chapter 9) focuses on stereotypical perceptions and prejudices about ethnicity and skin colours of children in primary schools. Both authors emphasize the educational role of families and teachers in constructing positive perceptions and in deconstructing negative meanings associated with visible diversity.

If we try to understand the phenomenon of radicalization, we should look at the push and at the pull factors that may put an individual at risk. A charismatic recruiter might pull the individual down a path of violent radicalization. Other factors, such as experiencing violence, including from the state, might make an individual more vulnerable to any appeal to radicalization (OSCE, 2014).\(^1\)

Chiara Fioravanti and Francesco Romano (Chapter 10) focus their research on legislative texts and on official Memorandums, documents and e-mails emanating from public offices in Italy, and their use of language particularly when addressing foreigners and migrants issues. They propose a method of text and content analysis to sustain public administrations to improve the social representations which they disseminate, associated with being a foreigner or a migrant.

Experiencing violence on the internet may be very traumatic and there is an increasing concern about violence advocated

\(^1\) OSCE, 2014, Preventing Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism A Community-Policing Approach.
in social media. Cristina Bosco, Viviana Patti and Marcello Bogetti (Chapter 11) describe their project of using Artificial Intelligence tools to detect hate speeches against immigrants appearing in social media, and in their efforts to substantiate anti-discrimination interventions.

Addressing specifically young Muslims who potentially might give an extreme interpretation of Islam, Aziza Benraham, Grazia Ghellini, Salah Boudi, Ghislaine Tamisier (Chapter 12) report about an experimental training tool that involved them in a theatrical role play. The young people involved learn how to balance the seemingly contradicting aspects of their identity. This theatrical approach is especially used to address young Muslims in particular who might potentially be susceptible to engaging with extreme interpretation of Islam.
Adozione internazionale: multiculturalità nell’identità?
Una lettura educativa e interculturale

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Since long time and still today, Italy has been a country where the phenomenon of international adoption is very considerable: it is in fact second in the world only to the United States. The development of children’s identities in international and interethnic adoption can be complex because it involves people born and often lived, for some years of their young life, in geographical, human, social and cultural contexts very different from those they live after adoption. So, the crucial question is: is there any possibility of expression for multiculturalism of these identities? That is, for the coexistence of elements referable to different cultural and experiential contexts? The second question is: if this multiculturality of identity is present, can it be expressed and recognized in harmonious coexistence and integration of all its parts in an intercultural way? The present work analyzes these particular issues related to foreign daughters and sons in adoption.

Una premessa: l’identità, tra multiculturalità e interculturalità

Con il termine multiculturalità intendiamo una situazione di fatto, che caratterizza i contesti di vita attuali, soprattutto occidentali, ma non solo, nei quali sono compresenti elementi culturali diversi e soggetti che si riconoscono in riferimenti culturali diversi, per lingua, religione, stili di vita, etc. (Genovese,
E’ importante precisare che possiamo individuare uno sfondo meticcio delle culture (Padoan, 2012), e cioè un’originaria multiculturalità insita nella genesi e nell’evoluzione di culture diverse in cui, a ben guardare, compaiono tante differenze interne, oggi ma anche nel passato (benché, invece, tendano a essere percepite come unitarie e omogenee). D’altra parte, è nella contemporaneità che gli andamenti dell’incontro/scontro tra culture diverse, e soggetti che in esse si identificano, sono particolarmente rapidi, intensi e pervasivi, foreri di trasformazioni profonde ma, al tempo stesso, anche di forti resistenze alla trasformazione. Possiamo aggiungere ancora che, per multiculturalità intendiamo un’eterogeneità in senso ampio, poiché essa attiene tanto alla composizione e alle caratteristiche di gruppi umani diversi, siano essi nazionali, sociali, religiosi, politici, etnici, linguistici…, quanto ai singoli individui, donne e uomini le cui identità e percorsi di vita si evolvono mediante processi dinamici e in rapporto a una sempre maggiore varietà di contatti, riferimenti e appartenenze possibili (Bolognesi e Lorenzini, 2017).

Il dato di fatto della multiculturalità in un certo contesto di vita non implica però, di per sé, lo svilupparsi di interazioni positive, basate su scambio e confronto, rispettoso e paritetico, tra differenti soggetti e riferimenti culturali in cui si riconoscono (Idem). Nel discorso pedagogico interculturale si mette in luce come, affinché la compresenza di differenze possa sussistere e svilupparsi in modo armonico, vi sia bisogno anzitutto della disponibilità a una tolleranza attiva (Genovese, 2003) basata su interazioni e reciproche mediazioni. È cioè necessario che si sviluppi una dimensione di interculturalità che persegua – in modo consapevole, mediante scelte mirate e un attento impegno educativo - gli obbiettivi dell’incontro e dello scambio. Incontri e scambi che possono concretizzarsi solo nella misura in cui, nel confronto, sappiano accogliere anche l’indispensabile responsabilità verso una gestione non violenta e non distruttiva.
dei conflitti possibili.
Il riconoscimento delle differenze entro gli spazi e le possibilità del pluralismo corrisponde, in senso interculturale, alla necessità di creare opportunità di partecipazione ed espressione di voci diverse in uno stesso contesto sociale, unitario ma articolato e complesso per la pluralità di elementi che lo compongono e che in esso interagiscono (Genovese, 2003; Bolognesi e Lorenzini, 2017).

Qualcosa di analogo si può dire per le identità individuali.
E’ vero che ogni identità è plurale, intrinsecamente multiculturale, e si sviluppa in relazione a una molteplicità di riferimenti, appartenenze, esperienze, relazioni. Come ben esemplifica Amartya Sen, economista di origine indiana, docente ad Harvard, premio Nobel per l’economia nel 1998: “La stessa persona può essere, senza la minima contraddizione, di cittadinanza americana, di origine caraibica, con ascendenze africane, cristiana, progressista, donna, vegetariana, maratoneta, storica, insegnante, romanziera, femminista. Eterosessuale, sostenitrice dei diritti dei gay e delle lesbiche, amante del teatro, militante ambientalista, appassionata di tennis, musicista jazz, e profondamente convinta che esistano esseri intelligenti nello spazio con cui dobbiamo cercare di comunicare al più presto (preferibilmente in inglese)” (Sen, 2006). Tuttavia, è anche vero che, l’identità di persone che compiono i propri percorsi di vita attraversando contesti geografici, culturali, umani differenti, può presentarsi ancor più variegata ed esposta ad una pluralità di esperienze particolarmente diversificata. Questo è il caso di coloro che vivono la migrazione; e non di meno lo è per coloro che vivono il cambiamento radicale di luoghi e contesti vita, come nel caso dell’adozione internazionale, e per molti versi anche nei casi di adozione nazionale.

I processi identitari in soggetti in crescita quali le/i figlie/i nell’adozione internazionale e interetnica si possono presentare particolarmente interessanti da questo punto di vista, poiché ri-
guardano persone in crescita che sono nate e talora vissute per più anni della loro pur giovane esistenza in contesti geografici, umani, sociali, culturali differenti da quelli in cui, a un certo punto del loro cammino, si trovano a vivere.

La domanda centrale in questa riflessione è dunque: vi è spazio e possibilità di espressione per la multiculturalità - e cioè per la compresenza di elementi riferibili a contesti culturali ed esperienziali diversi - di queste identità?

A questa prima domanda ne fa subito seguito un’altra: se questa multiculturalità dell’identità è presente, può essere espressa, riconosciuta e trovare armonica compresenza e integrazione di tutte le sue parti, in senso interculturale?

Un breve cenno all’evoluzione delle adozioni internazionali in Italia e nel mondo

Prima di riprendere gli interrogativi appena espressi, può essere utile considerare alcune caratteristiche del fenomeno adottivo, anche sul piano quantitativo dal momento che i numeri aiutano a capire l’estensione e la diffusione delle realtà familiari adottive internazionali. Riferendosi al panorama mondiale, si può constare come dagli anni Sessanta del secolo scorso il numero di adozioni internazionali sia cresciuto, a seconda dei periodi, anche con notevole intensità. In questo che mi piace definire un rilevante fenomeno di mobilità della prole nel mondo (Lorenzini, 2005) possiamo certamente individuare anche l’effetto dei processi di globalizzazione che hanno facilitato e accresciuto il collegamento e le interazioni tra luoghi diversi del pianeta (Lorenzini, 2004). Tuttavia, in scala globale, il trend di crescita ha evidenziato una battuta di arresto dal 2004, anno a partire dal quale si è registrata una progressiva riduzione del numero di
adozioni. Secondo quanto riportato nel sito della Commissione Adozioni Internazionali per l’Italia (CAI)¹, questa tendenza ha accomunato tutti i principali Paesi di accoglienza, producendo, nell’arco di dieci anni, un calo delle adozioni nel mondo pari al 73,5%². Si è passati, infatti, dai 45.383 minori adottati nel 2004, ai 12.001 del 2015. Esaminando i dati relativi ai primi dieci paesi di accoglienza dei minori si vede come la riduzione delle adozioni internazionali, tra il 2004 e il 2015, abbia riguardato ciascuno in misura diversa: è stata dell’85,6% per la Spagna, dell’81,6% per la Danimarca, dell’80,0% per la Francia, del 75,3% per gli Stati Uniti, del 73,3% per la Germania, del 72,9% per l’Olanda, del 68,9% per la Svezia, del 65,2% per la Svizzera, del 53,6% per il Canada e del 34,9% per l’Italia (Idem). Come si può vedere il calo riguarda l’Italia in misura significativa ma decisamente inferiore rispetto agli altri Paesi di adozione; tra l’altro, è proprio nel 2010 e nel 2011 che è stato realizzato il numero massimo di adozioni nel corso di un anno raggiungendo rispettivamente 4.130 e 4.022 minori di origine straniera divenuti figli/e in Italia. Pur se, in particolare, dal 2012 è iniziato il calo, la riduzione in Italia ha registrato percentuali inferiori rispetto agli altri principali Paesi di accoglienza.

Le ragioni più importanti della contrazione a livello mondiale vanno ricondotte a trasformazioni sul piano politico, econo-

¹ La Commissione Adozioni Internazionali (CAI) opera presso la Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, è l’Autorità Centrale per la Convenzione de L’Aja del 29.5.1993 e ha il prioritario compito di garantire che le adozioni di bambini stranieri avvengano nel rispetto della legalità e cioè dei principi stabiliti dalla Convenzione de L’Aja del 29 maggio 1993 sulla tutela dei minori e la cooperazione in materia di adozione internazionale. Per approfondimenti si rimanda a http://www.commissioneadozioni.it/it/gli-attori-istituzionali/la-commissione.aspx, data di accesso 12 settembre 2017.

² Si possono consultare il rapporto statistico Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri Commissione per le Adozioni internazionali, Autorità centrale per la Convenzione de L’Aja del 29.05.1993 in collaborazione con Istituto degli Innocenti di Firenze, Dati e prospettive nelle adozioni internazionali. Rapporto della Commissione per le adozioni internazionali sui fascicoli dal 1° gennaio al 31 dicembre 2015, e tutti i precedenti Rapporti con i dati relativi agli anni compresi tra fine 2000 e fine 2015 nel sito www.commissioneadozioni.it, data di accesso 1 settembre 2017. I Rapporti statistici ad oggi hanno cadenza annuale.
mico e sociale interne ai Paesi di origine dei minori. Tra questi cambiamenti relativi ai Paesi di origine rientrano, come dato positivo, anche l’adesione e la ratifica della Convenzione de L’Aja del 1998, e un insieme di modifiche legislative volte a rendere più sicure e trasparenti le adozioni, unitamente al miglioramento delle politiche interne a tutela dell’infanzia e delle misure di protezione dei minori, nonché all’incentivazione dell’adozione nazionale. Queste trasformazioni hanno determinato in certi casi la riduzione o il rallentamento o la temporanea sospensione delle adozioni all’estero per consentire alle transizioni legislative interne di compiersi. Tra i cambiamenti in atto nell’ultimo decennio ve ne sono altri che riguardano i Paesi di accoglienza dei minori in cui si registra un calo nelle richieste di adozione internazionale dovuto a una multifattorialità che comprende anche la crisi economica che ha gravato su molti contesti sociali.


3 La Convenzione de L’Aja, ratificata dall’Italia con la legge 31 dicembre 1998 n. 476, chiede espressamente agli Stati aderenti di attenersi alle norme sottoscritte che secondo il principio di sussidiarietà pongono l’adozione internazionale quale misura di tutela dell’interesse superiore del/della bambino/a cui fare ricorso solo se non è possibile trovare per il minore una famiglia adottiva o affidataria nel suo paese di origine, poiché questo è parte essenziale del diritto a vivere nel proprio Paese di nascita. La Commissione per le adozioni internazionali in Italia ha la funzione di assicurare che in tutti i Paesi di origine con cui interagisce attraverso gli enti autorizzati, le normative e le procedure di adozione siano rispettose dei principi espressi dalla Convenzione del L’Aja e che, quindi, rispondano agli standard di garanzia e trasparenza necessari ad assicurare la tutela del superiore interesse dei minori. I Paesi di origine hanno procedure e modalità operative spesso profondamente diverse e ciò comporta per la Commissione una delicata, complessa e continua attività di confronto, controllo e verifica per assicurare l’effettivo rispetto dei diritti dei minori e del principio di sussidiarietà.

Relativamente al genere, i bambini adottati in Italia nel biennio 2014-2015 sono stati per il 58,3% maschi e per il 41,7% femmine. L’età media è stata di 5,9 anni. Il 41,2% dei bambini aveva un’età compresa tra 1 e 4 anni, il 44% un’età compresa tra 5 e 9 anni, l’11,9% età pari o superiore a 10 anni, solo il 2,9% dei bambini aveva meno di un anno d’età.

I continenti di provenienza dei minori adottati in Italia in ordine di rilevanza sono: Europa (52% dei minori adottati nel 2014 e 49,9% nel 2015), Asia (20% nel 2014 e 20,1% nel 2015), America (19% nel 2014 e 18,1% nel 2015), Africa (9% nel 2014 e 15,9% nel 2015). Negli ultimi anni, benché le macro aree di provenienza geografica abbiano evidenziato le medesime prevalenze, si rileva comunque una riduzione delle provenienze interne all’Europa e un aumento di quelle dal continente africano.

Queste e numerose altre informazioni sono disponibili nel sito della CAI poiché la legge italiana permette alla Commissione di acquisire e di diffondere, nel rispetto dell’anonimato, per fini statistic, di studio e di ricerca, i dati relativi alle famiglie e ai minori adottati o affidati a scopo di adozione. Questa attività di monitoraggio è fondamentale per un’approfondita analisi e conoscenza del fenomeno e per il perfezionamento delle strategie e delle politiche in ambito nazionale e internazionale, per gli interventi a tutela dei diritti dei minori e per i rapporti con le Autorità Centrali degli altri Paesi di origine o di accoglienza. Le rilevazioni, infatti, riguardano molteplici ambiti conoscitivi della realtà adottiva, e mirano a fornire informazioni utili a favorire

l’evolversi di una cultura dell’adozione e dell’accoglienza il più possibile attenta alle necessità di bambini e bambine, nonché a quelle delle famiglie che li accolgono. Per quanto riguarda il contesto italiano, in linea generale, si può riconoscere anche la crescita e l’evoluzione di una cultura dell’adozione maturata, imperniatasi via via sulla prioritaria tutela dei diritti dei più piccoli di cui parte importante è il rispetto delle plurali appartenenze di bambine/i, e sul riconoscimento dei legami affettivi ed educativi nei nuclei adattivi.

Testimonianze di figlie/i adottivi di origine straniera

In Italia, tra il 16 novembre 2000 (anno di avvio di rilevazioni quantitative sistematiche) e il 31 dicembre 2015 sono entrati complessivamente 46.470 bambine/i per 37.482 coppie di coniugi, con una media di 1,24 bambini per coppia. In considerazione di quanto sin qui detto possiamo definire diffusa, da diversi decenni a questa parte, la realtà dell’adozione internazionale, ma anche in tempi più recenti dell’adozione interetnica compiuta a livello nazionale, che riguarda bambini di origini straniere diverse che si trovano in stato di abbandono in Italia e sono così adottabili secondo le procedure nazionali. Nei due casi, cioè, ciò che cambia riguarda gli iter burocratici e le norme cui formalmente riferirsi: nel primo caso, percorsi di carattere transnazionale; nel secondo, procedure nazionali. Resta comune la caratteristica plurietnica e pluriculturale interna alle famiglie adottive; mutano comunque le esperienze pregresse dei figli che, nel primo caso, sono cominciate in luoghi diversi dal contesto italiano; mentre nel secondo potrebbero essersi sviluppate a cavallo tra contesti culturali esteri e l’Italia, o solo in Italia (Lorenzini, 2017). La distribuzione delle famiglie adattive interetniche riguarda l’intero territorio nazionale: si concentra-
no maggiormente nelle regioni centrosettentrionali; anche se, negli ultimi anni, sono andate aumentando le percentuali delle adozioni internazionali nel centro sud e nelle isole.

Tra le tante peculiarità che presentano i nuclei adottivi interetnici e multiculturali, ognuno con proprie specificità, caratteristiche, esperienze e storie particolari, ve ne è una che sovente li accomuna, e cioè che i membri della famiglia possono presentare caratteristiche somatiche molto differenti gli uni dagli altri, a cominciare dal colore della pelle, per proseguire con altre caratteristiche somatiche che rendono *visibile* (EFA, 2011) non solo l’adozione (il patrimonio genetico differente e la discontinuità intergenerazionale in seno alla famiglia), ma anche l’origine reciprocamente straniera di figli e genitori. Se volgiamo l’attenzione in particolare al colore della pelle dei figli adottivi provenienti da particolari origini straniere, specie quando scuro o molto scuro, il dato di fatto che si trovano a sperimentare questi bambini e ragazzi è quello di trovarsi entro nuclei affettivi in cui tutti, o gran parte dei membri della famiglia, hanno un colore differente - più chiaro -; e in contesti sociali e scolastici in cui, ancora oggi, restano prevalenti colori della pelle e tratti somatici differenti (Lorenzini, 2017, 2015, 2013). Questo che è un mero dato di fatto, può divenire fonte di problemi nella misura in cui molteplici ricerche, come del resto numerosi fatti di cronaca nonché l’esperienza quotidiana diffusa, dimostrano la presenza di stereotipi e pregiudizi negativi verso coloro che sono considerati stranieri, ancor più quando il colore della pelle è scuro e viene facilmente ricondotto a specifiche provenienze sovente bersaglio di disprezzo e discriminazione nel contesto sociale (Cardellini, 2017, 2015; Lorenzini, 2015, 2017; Luciano & Balsamo, a cura di, 2013; Komla-Ebri, 2002; Tabet, 1997). Figli e figlie adottivi di origine straniera, italiani a tutti gli effetti, si trovano a vivere in un Paese in cui, specie negli ultimi anni, sono

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aumentate le forme di chiusura e ostilità verso chi è considerato “non appartenente”, estraneo, straniero.

Lo sviluppo dell’identità di bambini/e adottati/e di origine straniera può presentarsi come processo complesso per una pluralità di aspetti che attengono tanto all’origine adottiva dell’essere figli, alle biografie precedenti l’adozione, alla discontinuità nei percorsi di vita che l’evento adattivo stesso produce (Bramanti e Rosnati, 1998; Rosnati, 2011; Lorenzini, 2012), quanto ancora, e nello specifico qui considerato, in relazione agli aspetti legati alla differenza somatica che può far sentire distanti ed estranei in quanto esteriormente diversi, entro la famiglia e ancor più nei contesti extrafamiliari.

I processi di evoluzione delle identità dei figli possono essere particolarmente complessi quanto maggiore è la difficoltà per la famiglia di riconoscere a se stessa e agli altri il proprio essere un nucleo multietnico di affetti, capace di accogliere e valorizzare la pluralità di appartenenze dei propri membri. E quanto più nell’ambiente scolastico come negli altri ambiti del vivere sociale, sono rimandate immagini della differenza (di origini, tratti somatici e soprattutto del colore della pelle quando scuro) connotate negativamente. Infatti, testimonianze di giovani adottati da famiglie italiane, di età pari o superiore a 18 anni, di provenienza extraeuropea, raccolte mediante interviste qualitative nel 2000 e nel 2011, esprimono sentimenti di appartenenza in relazioni familiari vissute tanto più profondamente quanto più hanno saputo accogliere differenti origini, estraneità reciproca e plurali appartenenze. Tuttavia, come vedremo nel prossimo paragrafo, i giovani intervistati riferiscono esperienze, vissute

7 I giovani di origine extraeuropea, adottati da famiglie italiane e intervistati nel 2000 e nel 2011, sono stati in totale 52 (37 femmine e 15 maschi). Quando sono stati intervistati avevano un’età compresa tra 18 e 34 anni (con una prevalenza di giovani di 23 e 24 anni), erano tutti residenti nell’Italia centro-settentrionale, avevano raggiunto una scolarizzazione elevata (oltre la scuola dell’obbligo) e vivevano nella famiglia anche a seguito del compimento della maggiore età e, ancora, al momento dell’intervista (Lorenzini, 2011, 2013).
soprattutto nei contesti esterni alla famiglia, che rendono difficile lo sviluppare di una consapevole e positiva percezione delle proprie origini unitamente alle appartenenze nate nel contesto di adozione (Lorenzini, 2012 e 2013).

La narrazione di episodi di discriminazione/razzismo

Numerosi giovani adottati di origini extraeuropee testimoniano, narrandoli nel corso delle interviste, episodi vissuti in prima persona nei quali sono stati bersaglio di vere e proprie aggressioni, anzitutto di tipo verbale. In queste circostanze sono stati appellati con parole pesantemente offensive, che solo per desiderio di chiarezza nella presente riflessione mi consento di riportare: “negro di merda”, “sporca negra”, “negro fottuto” … In altri casi, riferiscono episodi in cui, ad esempio, sono stati fermati da pattuglie di polizia che chiedono il permesso di soggiorno e non la carta d’identità; guardati con forte diffidenza come se fossero sul punto di rubare un motorino o una borsa; approcciati in un italiano lento e scandito che presuppone che non conoscano la lingua; rifiutati nella richiesta di locazione di un appartamento; e, in particolare, le giovani donne identificate come colf, mogli di italiani per interesse economico, persone da cui aspettarsi disponibilità sul piano sessuale (Lorenzini, 2013).

I luoghi esterni al protetto ambiente familiare e amicale, risultano particolarmente “a rischio”. Gli intervistati menzionano diversi tipi di soggetti da cui hanno ricevuto offese e ostilità: adulti, coetanei, anziani, ragazzini amici di condominio, vicini di casa, compagni della squadra di calcio e, spesso, compagni di scuola, conosciuti o sconosciuti, incontrati in luoghi diversi: incrociati per strada, sull’autobus, in treno, alla guida della propria auto; in luoghi pubblici quali discoteca, negozi, bar, stazione ferroviaria. È nel contesto scolastico (soprattutto della scuola primaria e
secondaria di primo grado) che sono descritte le esperienze più dolorose: “Di quelle che non si dimenticano”, perché avvengono di fronte ai compagni, in età precoce in cui è difficile dare un significato all’accaduto, rispondere, rielaborare e gestire le emozioni collegate. Secondo i racconti di diversi intervistati, a volte la scuola (dentro e fuori dalle classi) è l’unico contesto in cui si sarebbero verificate: esperienze di derisione, offesa, rifiuto, in qualche caso veri e propri comportamenti persecutori nei loro confronti.

Alcuni intervistati si riferiscono a episodi di questo tipo definendoli “Fatti ineliminabili dal contesto sociale”, “inevitabili”: le opinioni negative che circolano nel contesto sociale sono così notoriamente frequenti che sembrano accettate e accettabili.

E’ proprio in questi episodi che nell’incontro con gli altri si realizza la scoperta di essere «diversi da...» (dagli autoctoni italiani), ma anche «simili a...» (persone con cui si condivide la medesima origine straniera). Durante le interviste condotte, emergono svariati e contrastanti timori: essere considerati stranieri dagli italiani, stranieri dagli stranieri, simili e connazionali da persone con le quali non si ha, né in certi casi si vuole, avere nulla a che fare, ma con cui si condividono tratti somatici affini e le origini in un certo luogo e gruppo umano.

Complessivamente, i giovani intervistati evidenziano la difficoltà a parlare degli episodi narrati durante l’intervista, ad affermarne la gravità, a riconoscere il disagio che hanno causato loro nel divenire bersaglio dell’ostilità degli altri in relazione alle proprie caratteristiche somatiche e origini (Lorenzini, 2017 e 2015).

La narrazione dell’identità e delle appartenenze

Consideriamo ora come si esprimono gli intervistati in merito
ad aspetti della propria identità, in particolare riguardo alla possibilità di sentirsi e definirsi italiani e, al tempo stesso, legati ad altre origini (quelle della loro nascita e a volte dei primi anni di via, in Brasile, India, Colombia, Madagascar, ecc.). Si rileva come la maggior parte di loro dichiari, in modo univoco, di sentirsi “italiano”. Alcuni sottolineano come l’aver vissuto sin da piccoli in Italia e/o il fatto di non conoscere il contesto di nascita non possa che far sentire “Italiani”. Altri riconoscono in sé qualcosa che, a loro dire, li riconduce alle origini, come ad esempio la “propensione a riflettere” menzionata da giovani nati in India. Molti spiegano che l’unico aspetto che ricorda loro le origini, magari guardandosi allo specchio, sono le caratteristiche somatiche e in particolare il colore della pelle. Dalle parole di alcuni intervistati risultano però difficoltà, più o meno intense, a riconoscersi nella propria origine; difficoltà che sembrano anzitutto conseguenti alla necessità di adattamento al contesto di adozione.

Una domanda nasce dunque inevitabile in una riflessione interculturale: nel contesto di adozione, che spazi e opportunità di riconoscimento e di espressione sono offerti a caratteristiche riconducibili a origini plurali e a esperienze compiute in anni di vita vissuta in luoghi diversi (a volte anche più di 10)?

Richiamando gli interrogativi espressi in premessa: che riconoscimento è dato alla multiculturalità delle loro identità?

Nelle parole di diversi intervistati sembra emergere l’espunzione dalla definizione di sé di aspetti che fanno parte delle origini. Di esse ci si ricorda davanti allo specchio o quando gli altri fanno da specchio, rimandando un’immagine di diversità fatta corrispondere a estraneità, distanza, non appartenenza. Alcune peculiarità somatiche legate alle origini degli adottati, come ad esempio il colore scuro della pelle, sono riconosciute e valorizzate in certe testimonianze solo se e quando questo porta vantaggio, convenienza, ad esempio, quando la carnagione scura è assimilata all’“essere abbronzati”, una delle poche accezioni posi-
tive attribuite alla pelle nera (Lorenzini, 2013; Cardellini, 2015). Il tema della “convenienza” (espressa ad esempio nel riconoscere e accettare le proprie origini indiane quando la pelle scura è apprezzata dagli altri perché così “non ti devi fare le lampade”) fa capire l’importanza, nella definizione di sé, del giudizio che gli altri, nel contesto di adozione, rivolgono a certe caratteristiche somatiche e alle origini geografiche e culturali cui rimandano. Il giudizio altrui pare condizionare fortemente la possibilità di riconoscere e conciliare in se stessi, e di fronte agli altri, aspetti legati alle origini che possono essere accolti quando conviene (quando cioè sono valutati positivamente: “sembri abbronzata”), e respinti in tutte quelle circostanze in cui “non conviene” presentarsi ed essere identificati come di altra origine (per una valutazione negativa: “sporco negro, tornatene al tuo paese”).

Diversi intervistati inoltre utilizzano le parole “in fondo” o “nel mio cuore”, e dunque intimamente “dentro”, per riferirsi alla parte di sé che sentono legata alle origini e che risiede in una profondità che è occultata alla superficie. Altri mostrano una problematicità ancora maggiore nella definizione di se stessi, e il forte bisogno di definirsi “italiani al cento per cento” pur avvertendo il desiderio di recuperare legami con le origini.

Un altro modo di definirsi, utilizzato da alcuni intervistati, è espresso con le parole “metà e metà”; “metà italiano e metà brasiliano, indiano ecc.”. Questa espressione, se da un lato sembra assegnare paritetica importanza alle diverse appartenenze, da un altro pare implicare una cesura tra le parti: la difficoltà a conciliare aspetti diversi, presentati come separati e non comunicanti. Per rispondere agli interrogativi iniziali, ci troviamo a rilevare una multiculturalità nell’identità che non trova la via dell’integrazione in senso interculturale. In altre parole, i tasselli plurali e variegati, multiculturali, che compongono l’identità (e la biografia) della persona adottata sono riconosciuti dal soggetto stesso come parti di sé, ma sembra che restino su piani diversi e
distincti, privi di scambi e intersezioni, anche nella definizione di sé.
È interessante e importante mettere in luce come, invece, nelle parole di altri intervistati risultino possibili formulazioni diverse, non “metà e metà”, ma “entrambi”, “l’uno e l’altro insieme”. Si tratta, cioè, di espressioni dalle quali pare emergere la consapevolezza della compresenza ma anche della mescolanza e dell’integrazione in se stessi di elementi identitari riconducibili a origini e appartenenze diverse.
Alcuni giovani nel definire se stessi, durante l’intervista, parlano non solo degli aspetti legati alle proprie origini, ma richiamano anche appartenenze allargate oltre la dimensione nazionale italiana a quella europea, sino a dirsi “cittadini del mondo” (rimane, qui, il dubbio se il sentimento di un’identità allargata, europea o in quanto cittadini del mondo, sia legato alla percezione di plurappartenenze a seguito dell’adozione, oppure alle esperienze di vita, forse di studio, o alla consapevolezza di vivere in un mondo multicultural e globale, o a tutti questi elementi insieme).
Altre intervistate utilizzano l’aggettivo “armoniosa” per definire l’appartenenza a diversi riferimenti culturali; rivendicano plurime appartenenze e, pur se in pochi casi, spiegano di aver mantenuto rapporti con il paese di origine; in un solo caso anche la cittadinanza.
Va ribadita, qui, l’importanza di rilevare come l’evolversi di «identità plurali» nell’adozione, sia possibile. Potremmo dire ancora seguendo gli interrogativi da cui siamo partiti che la multiculturalità delle identità può trovare una dimensione interculturale nella quale la compresenza di elementi diversi trova conciliazione, espressione, armonica integrazione.
E’ possibile esemplificare quanto affermato riportando, qui, stralci dell’intervista rivolta a una giovane di origine brasiliana, giunta in Italia nella famiglia adottiva all’età di soli tre mesi e che ciononostante describese stessa affermando la pluralità delle
proprie caratteristiche e appartenenze:

“Mi sento brasiliana non solo perché ho mantenuto la doppia nazionalità, ma anche perché sento che sono nata in Brasile e sono contenta di essere nata là. Sono anche contenta perché, sembra stupido è vero che io a livello somatico non ho niente che riconduca al Brasile, però quando è estate io mi sento più brasiliana che mai, perché qualcosa ce l’ho, qualche caratteristica, la fisionomia, la pelle scura, non sto un secondo all’ombra, questo vorrà dire qualcosa sento di avere la pelle grossa come una persona sudamericana, sento di avere tutte le caratteristiche di una persona che è nata là e vissuta qua. Mi sento appartenente, anche proprio fisicamente appartenente a quel paese, mi sembra di conservare delle caratteristiche (51, f, Brasile, 3 mesi, 2011)⁸” (Lorenzini, 2013, p. 337).

La giovane parla anche del viaggio compiuto insieme e nella condivisione e sostegno da parte dei suoi genitori nella terra natale come di un’esperienza molto importante per rispondere a interrogativi sul proprio passato preadottivo (benché breve), sia nell’acquisizione di consapevolezza tanto rispetto alle proprie origini quanto ai sentimenti di appartenenza al paese e al contesto di adozione:

“Dopo che siamo andati in Brasile, avevo 17 anni, io da lì ho cambiato proprio registro […]. Anche la città dove sono nata io, cioè ho visto e… come se fosse stata una dose di calmante, tante crisi per sapere, poi arrivì lì e ti sparisce d’un tratto tutto. Forse dovevo semplicemente

⁸ Tra parentesi le seguenti informazioni relative all’intervistata: numero progressivo assegnato all’intervista a garanzia dell’anonimato dell’intervistata, sesso, paese di provenienza, età di arrivo in adozione in Italia, anno di svolgimento dell’intervista.
vedere, capire, darmi risposte, anche se poi risposte non ci sono, in fin dei conti. Però una cosa che mi ha accompagnato da quando siamo arrivati in Brasile era vedere se c’era gente che mi assomigliava, questo mi ha fatto molto ridere. Ma là poi sono tutti diversi, come qua, io semplicemente stavo soddisfacendo delle mie curiosità. Poi quando siamo tornati in Italia, in quell’anno, ho maturato la consapevolezza di volere il doppio passaporto, ho deciso di mantenere la nazionalità brasiliana, perché penso che avere due passaporti sia un lusso e poi mi fa piacere. Io voto per il Brasile, ogni 4 anni vado a Milano per votare, quest’anno mi hanno fatto una specie di carta d’identità per il consolato, a me fa molto piacere. Ci sono stati momenti del mio viaggio che mi hanno proprio aiutato visivamente a cancellare paure e ansie e ad avere voglia di tornare a casa mia (51, f, Brasile, 3 mesi, 2011)” (Idem, pp. 282-283).

Come si può constatare l’intervistata descrive, con ampiezza di particolari, livelli, canali e forme plurime di rapporto con le proprie origini:

“Mi sento italiana in tutto quello che è la mia vita quotidiana, aspettative, modo di pensare. Sono cresciuta qui. Mi sento brasiliana nel modo di rapportarmi, in una parte di me un pochino più “selvaggia”, nel portare qualcosa al mio paese con la doppia nazionalità, per le caratteristiche fisiche, però io ne sono consapevole, con i ricordi e... (51, f, Brasile, 3 mesi, 2011)” (Idem, p. 309).

“Mi informo attraverso internet [sul Brasile]. I miei genitori sono andati alla fiera del turismo a Rimini e mi hanno portato di tutto sul Brasile, piace a tutti anche a
loro, mi hanno comprato biscottini e altre cose brasile- 
ne. Mi informo sugli aspetti politici perché se devo vota-
re devo farlo con motivi fondata, leggo un giornale di là
che è come la Repubblica da noi. Guardo foto. L’aspetto
turistico se c’è qualche occasione. Il Brasile è un paese...
enorme... molto incasinato. Io mi informo, leggo da in-
ternet, dai giornali. L’idea che ho è che è un paese mol-
to ricco, ma molto frammentato, adesso è in sviluppo...
ma dal punto di vista sociale è troppo frammentato,
troppe differenze... troppi poveri e pochi ricchi, troppi
problemi che non vengono affrontati, nonostante sia un
paese ricco di risorse. Mamma e papà..., mamma vor-
rebbe andare a vivere là perché si è trovata bene, al di là
dell’assestamento quando è arrivata, dice che la gente è
solare non come qua. Fa molte considerazioni positive,
poi forse ha nostalgia del paese, di là... a lei è rimasto
qualcosa... (51, f, Brasile, 3 mesi, 2011)” (Idem).

“Io non ho sperimentato la diversità culturale [essen-
do stata adottata a tre mesi] però nel momento delle
mie domande ho preso in considerazione anche quello.
Quando mi ponevo le domande, me le ponevo tutte: l’a-
limentazione, le abitudini, io credo che un legame ci sia
[con il mio paese di nascita] se io mi sento appartenente
a quel paese... (51, f, Brasile, 3 mesi, 2011)” (Idem, p.
318).

La possibilità di riconoscersi in un’identità composita e unitaria,
nelle parole di questa giovane, si mostra strettamente legata
all’emergere, in fasi diverse della crescita, del bisogno spes-
sso sofferto di interrogarsi e cercare risposte in merito a tanti
aspetti attinenti alle sue origini e storia, e alla costante oppor-
tunità da lei descritta di condividere contenuti ed emozioni
in famiglia. Di riceverne ascolto, feedback, sostegno che dalle
sue parole parrebbero incondizionati. Riconosce in Italia e nella propria famiglia ciò che si sintetizza con “casa mia” e, al tempo stesso, il definirsi appartenente non solo alle origini brasiliane ma anche alla realtà attuale di quel paese appare per lei una necessità e una rivendicazione, una scelta consapevole elaborata nel tempo: “Io ho la doppia cittadinanza, io ho anche coltivato quello che mi è stato dato”. Una scelta che giunge (lo ripete più volte nella sicurezza del significato della scelta medesima) sino alla decisione di conservare la nazionalità brasiliana e il doppio passaporto, di votare alle elezioni del Brasile, mostrando così un aver a cuore e un aver cura della propria biografia, anche mediante la forte motivazione per un rapporto continuativo, attivo e responsabile con il paese di origine; rendendolo un elemento presente nella quotidianità italiana, importante nella definizione della sua identità (Lorenzini, 2013).

Da un punto di vista educativo interculturale occorre che, anzitutto in famiglia e poi a scuola e nei contesti educativi in generale, sia offerta e coltivata con gradualità e continuità, giorno per giorno, negli anni, la possibilità di esprimere, mantenere, allontanare, recuperare ogni piccola o grande tessera delle proprie radici e della propria biografia. Cercando di favorire in chi è adottato, la consapevolezza che dare continuità e unitarietà al proprio itinerario di vita, pur con le sue frammentazioni, perdite, separazioni, è fondamentale; e che, soprattutto, è possibile. Inoltre, i risultati della ricerca mostrano come la possibilità di espressione del personale modo di rapportarsi alle origini, legata a un approccio educativo genitoriale aperto verso le origini dei figli. Segnali di benessere paiono associati alla conciliazione tra i tanti tasselli identitari di persone dalle storie di vita articolate. Rendere proficuamente coabitanti in se stessi riferimenti esperienziali e culturali diversi, non va tuttavia inteso come un dover essere; deve, invece, trattarsi di un “poter essere”; di un poter avere l’opportunità di... (Lorenzini, 2017, 2015, 2013). E questa opportunità deve poter garantire anche il diritto di essere apprezzati e accolti per le proprie peculiarità somatiche, prima fra tutte il colore della pelle.
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Discorsi sul colore della pelle tra bambini di scuola primaria: parole, significati e pregiudizi

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The aim of this paper is to highlight a specific form of discrimination related to the "melanin diversity". This form of discrimination is often and unconsciously acted through the words. The results of this study are part of a wider research project with a view to detect stereotypes and prejudices related to skin color in primary school children. This research project had confirmed that the melanin prejudice is still present and widespread in this age group and it allows to focus on the words that children use to name skin colors and their meanings. Ethnocentric and white-centric shades are often hidden under these words.

Tu non sei come me: tu sei diverso
Ma non sentirti perso
Anch'io sono diverso, siamo in due
Se metto le mie mani con le tue
Certe cose so fare io, ed altre tu
E messi insieme sappiamo far di più
Tu non sei come me: son fortunato
Davvero ti son grato
Perché non siamo uguali:
Vuol dire che tutt'e due siamo speciali
(Bruno Tognolini)
Introduzione

Sono numerosi i documenti ufficiali che, negli ultimi anni, affermano l’importanza del concetto di “diversità” come elemento chiave dell’educazione, intensa come riconoscimento e valorizzazione delle peculiarità umane che contraddistinguono e rendono unico ogni singolo individuo (Consiglio d’Europa, 2008; UNESCO, 2013; UNESCO, 2015). Un grande focus di attenzione è stato (e tuttora è) riservato al concetto di diversità culturale, definita dall’UNESCO un “fatto” del quale bisogna prendere atto e “una risorsa da promuovere” (UNESCO, 2009, p.5) attraverso la valorizzazione del dialogo interculturale, “strumento essenziale, senza il quale sarà difficile conservare la libertà e il benessere di tutte le persone che vivono nel nostro continente” (Consiglio d’Europa, 2008, p. 13). Concetto che alle volte viene accostato al dibattito riguardante la diversità culturale, sebbene con minor intensità, è quello di diversità etnica (menzionata alle volte come “racial diversity” nella letteratura americana)\(^1\), utilizzato per dar maggiore rilievo alle differenze fenotipiche che distinguono le persone di diversa origine (es: colore della pelle, taglio degli occhi, texture dei capelli, ecc.). La questione “etnica” e quella “culturale” si intrecciano e dialogano reciprocamente, spesso unite in un medesimo aggettivo, ovvero “etnico-culturale” (Ambroso & Mingione, 1992; Chiozzi & Grechi, 1992; Ting-Toomey et al., 2000; Pozzi, 2012). In altre parole potremmo dire che, nel grande meltingpot della diversità etnico-culturale, esiste un tipo di diversità più visibile, fatta sia di elementi fisici propri del corpo del soggetto (es: colore della pelle, taglio degli occhi, colore dei capelli, colore degli occhi, ecc.), elementi altrettanto visibili ma

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\(^1\) Si rileva difficoltosa una comparazione tra dibattito italiano e americano su tali tematiche poiché esso richiederebbe uno spazio relativo ad un’approfondita riflessione terminologica. Parole come race, ethnicity, diversity, ecc. hanno un differente significato pronunciato in lingua italiana o in lingua inglese. Pertanto, sebbene in questo paper questi aspetti non vengano approfonditi questi temi, si ritiene esplicitare tale rilevante differenza.
“accessori” (es: vestiario, simboli religiosi, ecc.) e una diversità meno visibile fatta sia di elementi velocemente rivelabili nell’incontro con l’Altro (es: lingua), ma anche di elementi più sfumati, meno evidenti, intimi e percepibili solo all’interno di una relazione (es: abitudini, comportamenti, usi, alimentazione, routine, ecc.). Sebbene interconnesse e dialoganti, queste diversità non sempre viaggiano parallelamente e il loro continuo accostarsi potrebbe alimentare e rafforzare il già veloce processo di inferenza che porta ad agganciare a una differenza fisica, riconducibile a un’origine diversa da quella italiana, ad un altrettanto differente cultura, dimenticando quelle persone che, sebbene caratterizzate da tratti che nell’immaginario comune non vengono ancora associati all’essere italiano (es: colore scuro della pelle), di fatto sono nati e/o cresciuti in Italia. È il caso, ad esempio, delle cosiddette “seconde generazioni” (Demarie & Molina, 2004; Benadusi, 2006; Palmas, 2006; Cosacchia et al., 2008; Ceravolo, 2013) o delle bambine e dei bambini divenuti italiani tramite un percorso di adozione internazionale (Lorenzini, 2012; 2013; 2017), ancora ottime vittime di questa sovrapposizione concettuale che alimenta lo stereotipo di una diversità culturale sempre rafforzata da una diversità fisica e viceversa.

Il dibattito sulla diversità, fisica e culturale, meriterebbe quindi un doppio canale di riflessione, tanto intrecciato quanto aperto, tanto sovrapposto quanto separato, vicino e lontano allo stereotipo allo stesso tempo, in direzione di un pensiero complesso (Morin, 2000), multiforme, plurale e aperto al possibile, possibile che sì, ma anche possibile che no (Contini, 2006; 2009).

Cenni sull’evoluzione storica del fenomeno del colorism

La parola colorism è stata per la prima volta utilizzata da Alice
Walker (1982), scrittrice e attivista femminista per la difesa dei diritti civili delle donne afroamericane e delle lesbiche, nel suo romanzo, “Il colore viola”, vincitore del Premio Pulitzer per la narrativa. Il termine *colorism* viene definito come “*prejudicial or preferential treatment of same-race people based solely on the color of their skin*” (Walker, 1982, p. 290). Benché si tratti di un termine certamente innovativo e di sostegno all’individuazione di un fenomeno con caratteristiche peculiari, il tema del pregiudizio e della discriminazione legata al colore della pelle non era certo nuovo, ma collocato e compreso all’interno del grande fenomeno del razzismo. Già altri romanzi avevano visto il narrare e il narrarsi di vicende volte a denunciare il complesso e difficile rapporto tra società e colore della pelle come, ad esempio, il romanzo Clotel di William Wells Brown (1853).

Secondo la sociologa ed esperta di *colorism* JeffriAnne Wilder, gli USA hanno attraversato almeno 3 tappe significative in relazione a questo particolare fenomeno (Wilder, 2008):

1. L’epoca che ha preceduto la legge sui Diritti Civili (1865-1950);
2. L’epoca della legge sui Diritti Civili (1950-1964);
3. L’epoca che ha succeduto i Diritti Civili (dal 1964 in poi).

La prima, ovvero la l’epoca che ha preceduto la legge sui Diritti Civili (1865-1950), ha segnato un profondo cambiamento in relazione alla questione melaninica. Il 18 Dicembre 1865 segna un passaggio fondamentale nella storia dei diritti civili poiché la schiavitù nera viene definitivamente abolita dal 13° emendamento della Costituzione degli Stati Uniti. Termina un lungo periodo di storia nel quale il legame tra pelle scura e schiavitù era stato legalmente sostenuto. Sebbene venga istituzionalmente dissolto e condannato questo legame, a livello sociale e culturale esso continua ad avere forti ripercussioni. Gli USA si apprestano a vivere una primissima fase di cambiamento e numerose
ricercate cominciano a essere pubblicate in campo psicologico e sociologico per denunciare le forti correlazioni tra discriminazione e colore della pelle, in particolar modo da autori di origine afro-americana (Drake et al., 1945; Parrish, 1946; Cox, 1948; Frazier, 1957). Lo strumento della ricerca sembra scendere in campo a favore della lotta per il riconoscimento dei propri diritti, cercando di dimostrare scientificamente le conseguenze della discriminazione in termini di lavoro, guadagno, selezione matrimoniale, status, educazione, potere, ecc.

Escamotage locali, come le Leggi di Jim Crow\(^2\), vengono organizzati per rendere possibile la separazione tra bianchi e neri, utilizzando lo slogan “separate but equal\(^3\)”. Alcune di queste citano: “Sarà illegale per una persona nera e una persona bianca giocare insieme o in compagnia a qualsiasi gioco di carte o dadi, domino o dama” (Birmingham, Alabama, 1930, trad. mia) o “Sono state istituite scuole gratuite separate per l’educazione di bambini di discendenza afro-americana; sarà illegale per ogni bambino di colore frequentare qualsiasi scuola bianca, o per qualsiasi bambino bianco frequentare una scuola di colore” (Missouri, 1929, trad. mia).

Le leggi di Jim Crow verranno abolite solo nel 1964 con il Civil Rights Act, con la grande soddisfazione e riscatto delle persone con pelle scura che finalmente sentono di aver conquistato un posto nella società equivalente a quello delle persone con pelle bianca. Si diffonderanno numerosi movimenti connotati da sentimenti di flessione e orgoglio nei confronti della pelle nera, accompagnati da slogan come “Black is beautiful” e “Black is Ok!\(^4\)”. Nel 1972, Goering (1972), un ricercatore americano pubblicherà uno studio dimostrando che i giovani neri, proprio in quegli anni, avrebbero aumentato il senso di apprezzamento

\(^2\) Vengono chiamate leggi di Jim Crow per ricordare una canzoncina/filastrocca che si ricollegava alla cultura afro-americana e al periodo della schiavitù denominata, appunto, “Jim Crow”. Ferraris State University, Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia, http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/origins.htm, USA.

\(^3\) “Separati ma eguali” (trad. mia).

\(^4\) “Nero è bello” e “Nero è ok!” (trad. mia)
e stima nei confronti del loro colore della pelle. Sebbene il percorso storico sinora presentato sembra mostrare una tensione rivolta al superamento del pregiudizio melaninico, la curva di cambiamento sembra non essere lineare ed attraversare momenti di up e down continui. E’ interessante, ad esempio, osservare che ancora molta della letteratura presente mostri e dimostri la presenza delle medesime forme di discriminazione denunciate intorno agli anni ’50 del secolo scorso (Sykes, 2016; Hunter, 2016; Kosny et al., 2017). Il tema del colorism sembra quindi essere ancora attuale, poiché il fenomeno non solo rimane presente a livello sociale e culturale in molte zone del mondo, ma pare riproporre i medesimi outcomes.

Pregiudizi e stereotipi legati al colore della pelle: quali parole per dirli?

Obiettivi della ricerca

In questa pubblicazione si presenteranno alcuni degli esiti di una ricerca che si colloca all’interno di un progetto più ampio avviato nel Novembre 2013, dal titolo “Colori della pelle: cosa pensano i bambini? Studio su stereotipi e pregiudizi nella scuola primaria”. Tra Novembre 2013 e Gennaio 2014 sono stati raccolti oltre 1300 testi scritti grazie a 658 bambine e bambini di età compresa tra 6 e 11 anni frequentanti 5 scuole primarie di Bologna. L’obiettivo della ricerca era quello di individuare la presenza o meno di stereotipi e pregiudizi legati al colore della pelle e osservare in quale modo si manifestassero nelle produzioni scritte dei bambini di questa specifica fascia d’età⁵. I risultati della ricerca, ⁵ Gli esiti principali di questa ricerca sono stati pubblicati sulla rivista Educazione
attraverso l’analisi delle parole usate dai bambini nel testo scritto, hanno consentito di individuare la presenza di pregiudizi e stereotipi legati al colore della pelle nelle parole dei bambini e la modalità con la quale questi ultimi venivano esplicitati in forma scritta. L’analisi dei testi conferma un fenomeno di ipervalorizzazione della pelle bianca e la svalutazione della pelle nera, così come Paola Tabet, antropologa senese, aveva esplicitato nel suo libro “La pelle giusta” (Tabet, 1997) dal quale la precedente ricerca ha tratto spunto. Da qui si è consolidata la consapevolezza che tale ricerca andasse approfondita e che la tematica andasse indagata ulteriormente anche con modalità differenti dal compimento scritti. Da qui l’idea del focus group, strumento di ricerca utile e funzionale per attivare una conversazione su uno o più tematiche individuate dal ricercatore in un clima di dialogo spontaneo, rispetto e ascolto. In totale sono stati effettuati 30 focus group, in 5 scuole primarie di Bologna, ubicate in 4 diversi Quartieri della città di Bologna con un totale di 225 bambine e bambini. Sono state complessivamente coinvolte 10 classi 4° e 5°, ovvero le ultime due classi della scuola primaria e in ciascuna scuola sono stati fatti 6 focus group in 2 diverse classi (3 focus group per classe) da Novembre 2015 a Febbraio 2016 (Cardellini, 2017).

Strumento di ricerca

Grazie all’utilizzo dei focus group è stato possibile cogliere la dimensione relazionale e avere uno sguardo attento alla co-construzione dei contenuti emersi durante quello specifico momento (Zammuner, 2003). È stato altresì possibile facilitare l’e-

6 Una email di richiesta di partecipazione è stata inviata a tutte le scuole primarie del territorio bolognese.
mergere di un numero maggiore di racconti legati ad esperienze e vissuti, poiché il focus group stesso ne consente maggiore ampliamento grazie alla condivisione e il confronto dei propri racconti con quelli degli altri partecipanti (Palmer et al. 2010, p. 100).

Scegliere di svolgere focus group con bambine e bambini richiede particolari attenzioni e accorgimenti legati alla specifica tipologia di partecipanti alla ricerca e che, pertanto, richiederanno il ripensamento di un setting di ricerca utilizzando “children centered research methods”, ovvero metodi di ricerca rispettosi, sia dal punto di vista strumentale che etico, dei bambini (Barker & Weller, 2003; Einarsdottir, 2005; Cappello, 2005; Mithchell, 2006; Dennis et al., 2009). Alcuni elementi di fondamentale importanza, ai quali i ricercatori occorre che pongano grande attenzione nei focus group con i bambini sono:

1. **Importanza di elementi concreti.** In particolare modo nella fascia di età dai 7 agli 11 anni, denominata da Piaget (1966) la “fase delle operazioni concrete” è importante riferirsi a concreti accadimenti, elementi tangibili e vicini all’esperienza dei bambini. L’elemento astrattivo dovrà essere limitato se non assente almeno fino alla “fase delle operazioni formali”, individuata da Piaget tra gli 11-14 anni, fase nella quale bambine e bambini possono utilizzare una forma di pensiero analogico.

2. **Utilizzo di elementi visivi.** In relazione a quanto appena detto pare evidente l’importanza di utilizzare concreti elementi visivi durante il focus group (oggetti, fotografie, immagini, brevi video, ecc.) per aiutare i piccoli partecipanti a una maggiore connessione con l’oggetto di conversazione del focus group.

3. **Importanza del rapporto.** Questo elemento, rappresenta una rilevante differenza tra i focus group svolti con adulti e quelli svolti con bambini. Infatti, se nel caso di focus group con adulti il moderatore viene invitato a porre molta attenzione al suo comportamento non verbale, evitando troppi sorrisi o partico-
lari atteggiamenti di vicinanza, l’elemento della “relazione” dovrà essere diversamente modulato nel caso di focus group con bambini. Si ritiene infatti di grande importanza che il moderatore possa instaurare una relazione piacevole e di fiducia con i bambini che partecipano al focus group. Ancora una volta si rinnova l’importanza di porre grande attenzione al comportamento non verbale, ma in maniera differente rispetto alle sessioni condotte con gli adulti. In tal senso un atteggiamento di apertura e predisposizione al rapporto al moderatore sarà sicuramente più indicato e necessiterà di una maggiore attenzione. Il sorriso, la postura, lo sguardo, la mimica facciale e la modulazione del tono della voce dovranno essere sapientemente utilizzate con tutti i bambini, cercando di stimolare in loro fiducia nei confronti dell’adulto (McDonald e Topper, 1988, p.4).

Sebbene esistano in letteratura alcuni esempi di focus group condotti con bambini, si osserva una maggiore attenzione ai risultati emersi dai focus group e una scarsa attenzione alla parte metodologica (Baraldi e Maggioni, 2000; Morcellini e Grassi, 2005; Dejman et al. 2015; Shields e Synott, 2016), la quale passa in secondo piano. Alle volte si percepisce la difficoltà a distinguere l’intervista di gruppo dal focus group, in quanto raramente vengono evidenziati gli aspetti inter-relazionali e comunicativi propri di questo strumento così come frequentemente vengono estrapolate alcune frasi dette dai bambini e dalle bambine senza un’adeguata contestualizzazione e cancellando i turni di parola del moderatore.

Coerentemente con quanto appena detto si è scelto di presentare alle bambine e ai bambini 4 fotografie, presentate in Figura 1, scelte tra le centinaia scattate dalla fotografa Angélica Dass per progetto Humanae, chiedendo loro di scrivere su dei post-7 Il progetto Huamane (http://www.angelicadass.com/humanae-work-in-progress/) è ancora work in progress e si pone l’obiettivo di fotografare il maggior numero di gradazioni cromatiche (PANTONE) di colori della pelle. L’artista brasiliana è attualmente impegnata in un tour internazionale e nell’ultimo anno ha esibito le sue foto in: Svezia, USA, Sud Corea, Spagna, Italia e Indonesia.

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it colorati le prime *due cose che ti vengono in mente guardando queste persone*.

*Figura 1* Fotografie utilizzate durante lo svolgimento dei focus group e scelte tra le centinaia scattate dalla fotografa Angélica Dass per il progetto Huma-nae (*Courtesy of Angélica Dass*)

Nel prossimo paragrafo verrà presentato un focus limitato relativo alla ricerca condotta, ovvero il tema delle parole per parlare dei colori della pelle. La postura relativista scelta per portare avanti questo progetto, ovvero il paradigma scelto per analizzare e interpretare i dati di questa ricerca, ha richiesto di osservare le parole utilizzate da bambine e bambini non come termini “neutri” per descrivere un colore della pelle “oggettivo”, ma come elementi che si contenevano spunti tratti dal dato di realtà, ma anche (e forse soprattutto) parole che potessero raccontarci qualcosa della persona che le pronunciava, della sua relazione simbolica con l’”oggetto-pelle” e di entrambi questi elementi situati in una relazione, comunicazione e situazione gruppale come quella del focus group.

**Quali parole per parlare dei colori della pelle?**

Secondi il relativismo linguistico, le parole non sono solo strumenti di comunicazione, ma anche strumenti propri del pensiero (Castiglioni, 2005). Utilizzare questo assunto come lente per osservare i discorsi emersi durante i focus group, richiedere di
analizzare le parole non come descrittori oggettivi della realtà, ma come strumenti soggettivi e culturali di percepire, interpretare e condividere la realtà. Quando una bambina o un bambino utilizza un termine per descrivere il colore della pelle di una delle persone delle fotografie non sta solo dando informazioni rispetto all’elemento melaninico, ma sta anche esplicitando una soggettiva modalità di percezione intrecciata a una modalità culturalmente influenzata di riferirsi a quel particolare aspetto fisico.

Partendo proprio dalle parole scritte dalle bambine e dai bambini sui post-it, alcune delle quali esplicitamente riferite al colore della pelle dei 4 soggetti rappresentati nelle fotografie, si sono attivate diverse interessanti conversazioni accomunate dalle medesime domande e perplessità: che parole devo utilizzare per parlare di colori della pelle? Posso nominare i colori della pelle? È un atto di discriminazione parlare dei colori della pelle? Come posso chiamare la pelle scura?

Ad esempio, in questo primo stralcio di conversazione, Michele ed Elisa esprimono l’idea che sia inappropriato, inadeguato e maleducato nominare i colori della pelle e che, pertanto, sia meglio esplicitare il nome del paese d’origine. In aggiunta, dalle parole di questi bambini sembra potersi dedurre il ruolo di chi agisce e chi subisce l’eventuale offesa arrecata e/o agita pronunciando il nome del colore della pelle, ovvero le persone con pelle chiara nel ruolo di autori di offesa e le persone di pelle scura come destinatari dell’atto offensivo.


Elisa: Volevo dire che comunque per me, anzi, per loro... tutti i termini che possiamo dire sui colori della pelle sono un po’ maleducati dal...
loro punto di vista.

Moderatrice: Da quale punto di vista?

Elisa: Loro si trovano unici come sono, ma noi li troviamo un po’ diversi da noi.

Moderatrice: Elisa, quando dici noi a chi ti riferisci?

Elisa: Noi...

Marco: Tutta l’Italia.

Elisa: Sì.

Marco: Tutto il mondo.

Elisa: Noi con pelle più o meno bianca. Io non ce l’ho proprio bianchissima però. Comunque per me non c’è un termine non offensivo, perché dal loro punto di vista può essere offensivo tutto.”

(5B-1, Scuola 1°)

“Noi con pelle più o meno bianca”, provenienti dall’Italia o addirittura da tutto il mondo (secondo le parole di Marco), rischiamo di offendere “loro”, termine utilizzato ipoteticamente per definire tutti colori i quali hanno un colore della pelle identificabile come “scuro” o che sono “un po’ diversi da noi”. Il punto di vista etnocentrico e biancocentrico (Orelus, 2013) che questi bambini mostrano in questo frangente di conversazione, sembra portarli in un sentiero a senso unico, senza la possibilità di invertire il senso di marcia verso una più ampia riflessione critica. E se venisse utilizzato un termine per definire la pelle chiara? Sarebbe altrettanto offensivo? Elisa per ben due volte ribadirà che “dal loro punto di vista” (ovvero dal punto di vista delle persone con pelle scura) tutto potrebbe essere ritenuto offensivo o maleeducato, quasi a voler ricordare e rimarcare il potenziale discriminante di queste parole per le persone con pelle scura.

9 La sigla che segue stralci di conversazione indica la classe, il numero e la scuola corrispondente al focus group. Il nome della scuola non viene esplicitato per ragioni di privacy.
che le ascoltano. Sembra essere solo in tal senso che viene agita l’inversione di prospettiva, ovvero la possibilità di mettersi nei panni dell’altro. Quello che appare essere un decentramento empatico, necessita però una maggiore problematizzazione per non rischiare di essere letto solo nella veste di un’apprezzabile desiderio di non arrecare offesa all’Altro. La bambina, infatti, sembra continuare ad utilizzare, nell’immaginare l’emozione della persona con pelle scura, un punto di vista decisamente bianco-centrico ed etnocentrico, ovvero, ancora una volta, il proprio punto di vista. Sebbene ipotizzandolo in una dimensione puramente trascendentale (Banfi, 1967), ovvero una tensione mai del tutto realizzata, sarebbe forse ipotizzabile uno sforzo in direzione di embodied empathy (Finlay, 2005), ovvero un maggiore avvicinamento al punto di vista dell’Altro. Pertanto è altresì importante riflettere, cercando di comprendere se l’evitamento di alcune parole sia pensato solo in un’ottica di non offesa discriminante o possibilmente anche per evitare eventuali sensazioni di imbarazzo della persona con pelle chiara nel pronunciare alcune parole come, ad esempio, pelle nera.

Nel secondo stralcio di conversazione qui riportato, è la moderatrice a provare a sollecitare la riflessione critica dei bambini e delle bambine, cercando di comprendere se la sensazione di offesa che ipotizzano poter essere percepita da una persona con pelle scura della quale viene nominato il colore della pelle, potrebbe essere percepita anche da una persona con pelle chiara nella medesima situazione.

“Maria: Si dice di colore!
Paolo: Se no è razzismo!
Moderatrice: E’ razzismo cosa?
Paolo: Negro o nero.
Mattia: Una persona può offendersi. È come se noi adesso andiamo
in Asia e lui ci dice “bianchi, bella zio bianchi”.

Moderatrice: Ti offenderesti se ti chiamassero “bianco”?

Mattia: No. Però forse i neri che vanno in una città sì.

Paolo: È razzismo.

Maria: Secondo me è giusto chiamarli di colore perché se uno, anche se uno passa e dice “quello è uno nero” è come dire che a te non ti importa niente della persona, ma guardi il colore della pelle.

Moderatrice: E quando dici “guarda, c’è uno di colore”, così va bene?

Maria: Cioè... è più educato.”

(4B-1, Scuola 3)

Come si evince dalle parole di Mattia, il quale afferma di non percepire alcuna offesa nel sentirsi chiamare “bianco”, la problematica che più volte è stata sollevata durante i focus group, legata ad un’ipotesi di offesa discriminatoria legata al nominare il colore della pelle, sembra essere valida solo nel caso della pelle scura. Secondo questi bambini, tale offesa sarebbe sovrapponibile ad un atto di razzismo tale per cui sarebbe più giusto ed educato utilizzare il termine “di colore”. Ancora una volta, questo termine di utilizzo quotidiano e politically correct, necessiterebbe ancora una volta una riflessione problematizzante in direzione di maggiore comprensione delle motivazioni del suo ridondante “utilizzo sostitutivo”. La persona che pronuncia questa parola sta cercando di evitare di offendere l’Altro o sta evitando il personale imbarazzo che il pronunciare alcune parole gli arrecherebbe? O entrambe le cose?

Un altro aggettivo che frequentemente è stato utilizzato, ipotizzandone nuovamente un uso “sostitutivo”, è il termine “abbronzato”. Ancora una volta, come precedentemente osservato, questo termine potrebbe essere utilizzato nella sua funzione sostitutiva all’utilizzo degli aggettivi scuro o nero, come termine più politically correct.
“Moderatrice: Posso chiedervi quali sono le parole che prendono in giro e quelle che non prendono in giro?

Michele: Dire “pelle color...”, è una presa in giro.

Moderatrice: E invece cos’è che non prende in giro?

Michele: Non dire la parola color, dire “pelle scura” non è presa in giro perché puoi intendere anche abbronzato.

Moderatrice: E ci sono altri modi di dire il colore della pelle di questa ragazza qui, per esempio (indica la donna con pelle scura)?

Davide: Marrone.

Luca: Nata in un posto caldo in cui le situazioni... nascono... in un posto così caldo da fare in modo che i bambini dentro alla pancia si sviluppano già con la pelle abbronzata.

Davide: Comunque il modo più educato è dire “di colore”.”

(5B-1, Scuola 1)

Sebbene rimanga indiscutibile, secondo le parole di questi bambini, l’utilizzo del termine “di colore” come la modalità più educata di definire la pelle scura, un termine altrettanto polite sembra essere quello di “pelle abbronzata”. Sono numerose le considerazioni in relazione all’utilizzo di questo termine, in particolare modo se si sceglie di leggerlo nel suo essere culturalmente e socialmente costruito. Proviamo, pertanto, a analizzare l’utilizzo del termine “abbronzato” nel suo uso all’interno di una classe di bambine e bambini a prevalenza bianca in Italia, ovvero in un contesto dove l’essere abbronzati (e non l’essere neri) si delinea come un elemento apprezzato, valorizzato ed esteticamente ricercato. Ancora una volta, la percezione di imbarazzo e difficoltà nel pronunciare alcune parole, sembra portare i bambini verso la scelta di altri termini come, ad esempio, “pelle abbronzata”; ovvero un termine che non descrive il colore della pelle della persona che stanno osservando, poiché il termine abbronzato viene utilizzato per descrivere una pelle che si scurisce grazie
all’esposizione di raggi ultravioletti.

Poter lavorare sulla dimensione della consapevolezza e sui perché legati alla scelta di queste parole, potrebbe consentirci, come adulti e responsabili educativamente e affettivamente delle bambine e dei bambini che incontriamo, di “svelare” meccanismi nascosti, impliciti e dati per scontato e per questo insidiosi e alle volte pericolosi. Le parole che utilizziamo sono figlie e madri del pensiero, culturalmente connotato, che si respira in un determinato contesto geografico, sociale e culturale; esse derivano e sono influenzate dal contesto, ma sono anche potenziali portatrici di un cambiamento educativo interculturale. Una maggiore consapevolezza, supportata da una riflessione critica relativa alle motivazioni sottostanti alcune scelte terminologiche e alle emozioni che ci spingono ad allontanarci da alcune parole per evitare sensazioni di imbarazzo, potrebbe sostenere pratiche educative supportanti l’idea che avere la pelle nera o scura sia essere portatori di una fra le tante differenze caratterizzanti gli esseri umani e che, pertanto, il pronunciare tale differenza non dovrebbe essere né motivo di difficoltà, né tantomeno motivo di offesa.

Conclusioni

I risultati di questo studio e le riflessioni critiche che sono state presentate, portano ad ipotizzare che ancora oggi sussista un certo imbarazzo, timore e/o paura nel pronunciare “cette parole” piuttosto che altre. Quali parole devo utilizzare per parlare di colori della pelle? Come posso non offendere l’Altro (soprattutto se l’altro ha la pelle scura)? Quali sono le parole educate e quali quelle che possono ferire? Questi sono solo alcuni degli interrogativi che sembrano sottostare le riflessioni delle bam-
bine e dei bambini incontrati durante questa ricerca. Ipotizzando che questo senso di timore e imbarazzo non riguardi sono i bambini, ma anche gli adulti, sembra essere necessario in primis un lavoro critico e auto-critico, verso la possibilità – certo fatidica, ma altresì piena di arricchimento e potenzialità conoscitive – di rimettere in discussione l’implicito, ciò che ormai non si nota più, ovvero ciò che percepiamo come “verità” senza averne mai compreso il perché sottostante. Accompagnati dalla consapevolezza che tutte le parole che utilizziamo – e pertanto anche i nostri pensieri – sono culturalmente connotati e che l’implicito sia un prezioso strumento che consente di non dover affaticare costantemente il nostro cervello, impegnandolo in un faticoso lavoro meccanico di comprensione e analisi, è importante altresì permettersi di dedicare momenti e spazi di formazione verso la scoperta di ciò che non si conosce.

In relazione all’importanza delle parole e alla loro non neutralità, Taguieff (1997) afferma che il linguaggio ha una vera e propria “forza plasmatrice” e che “le categorie di quest’ultimo impongono surrettiziatamente, agli attori, modi di individuare e di percepire i fenomeni sociali che implicano dei giudizi di valore e trasmettono delle norme. [...] i termini possono suscitare dei sentimenti intensi, risvegliando dei ricorsi o alimentando un aspetto dell’immaginario sociale. In breve, una determinata parola non nomina nello stesso modo, non compie gli stessi atti, e non produce gli stessi effetti di un’altra parola. [...] alcune parole possono funzionare come frecce avvelenate, capaci di far morire il nemico, di ‘neutralizzarlo’” (p. 74).

Secondo una prospettiva pedagogica interculturale (Genovese, 2003; Giusti, 2007; Portera, 2013; Catarci et al., 2015; Tarozzi, 2015; Bolognesi e Lorenzini, 2017), interrogarsi su questo può e deve essere un primo punto di partenza per la riflessione critica di adulti educativamente e affettivamente responsabili e competenti, verso un mondo dove la diversità – di qualsivoglia natura essa sia – possa veramente essere considerata un valore.
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Dopo la laurea triennale in Educatore nei Servizi per l’Infanzia (2011-2014), presso la Scuola di Psicologia e Scienze della Formazione (UNIBO), consegue la LM in Pedagogia (2014-2016) presso il medesimo Dipartimento e, parallelamente, intraprende la scuola triennale in Psicomotricità IFRA (Istituto per la Formazione e la Ricerca Applicata).


I suoi interessi di ricerca riguardano la pedagogia interculturale e la discriminazione legata al colore della pelle, con particolare riferimento alla scuola primaria.
Linguaggio e discriminazione: dai media alle leggi

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Over the last few years the focus on the Italian media’s use of a language defined as “discriminatory” towards Third Country Nationals living in Italy has increased. It has become such an issue that in 2008 the Italian Journalist Guild decided to draw up a specific code of conduct (the so-called “Carta di Roma”) regarding the language used in the news about immigration and asylum. In addition, recent research on discriminatory language in the media has indicated formularies of words that in some contexts may stigmatize certain groups of people. This paper refers to these words and proposes some applications to measure its presence in the normative and administrative “dictionary”. Further, considering these “dangerous” terms, support tools are designed for normative and administrative document drafting. A collaborative method to support public officers in the process of simplification of informative contents for immigrants are briefly described.

Il contesto della ricerca sul lessico discriminatorio nel linguaggio istituzionale

Come risultato di una recente ricerca sulle parole a rischio discriminatorio nell’ambito del linguaggio istituzionale abbiamo proposto e illustrato (Fioravanti, Romano, 2014, pp. 143-180) un indice di termini stigmatizzanti nei confronti di persone provenienti da altri Paesi. La scelta del tema della ricerca nasceva dalla constatazione che diversi autori (ad esempio Bartoli, 2012, p. VI e anche Balbo e Manconi, 1993, p. 60)

**Metodologia di ricerca**

La nostra ricerca si è avvalsa di applicazioni nel campo dell’informatica giuridica documentaria, in quanto l’utilizzo di banche dati strutturate in linguaggio XML consente di analizzare vasti corpora di dati\(^2\).

La prima fase della ricerca è consistita nell’individuazione di una serie di parole ed espressioni che possano denotare la presenza di un pregiudizio razzista, di uno stigma xenofobo. Le parole da ricercare sono state tratte da un’analisi di testi che si occupano di questo tema. La bibliografia consultata è stata


\(^2\) Per la comunicazione dei testi normativi tramite Internet, le istituzioni parlamentari e governative di molti paesi hanno avviato un processo di conversione dei loro “giacimenti” in un formato standard per facilitare la ricerca e visualizzazione dei testi. Il linguaggio di marcatura XML si è affermato come standard per il trattamento e la pubblicazione sul Web dell’informazione legislativa.
vasta e varia (e può essere consultata per intero in Fioravanti, Romano, 2014, p. 178-180) proprio per la necessità di fondare un metodo che, altrimenti, poteva sembrare soggettivo e che comunque in qualche misura potrà risultare tale. I libri consultati appartengono a diversi ambiti scientifici e tematici, e i loro autori sono stati selezionati tra le seguenti aree scientifiche: sociologia, etnologia, antropologia, filologia, psicologia, psicologia sociale, letteratura, pedagogia, linguistica e sociolinguistica, partendo da quelli che più direttamente si sono occupati del tema (AA. VV., 2013; Faloppa, 2011; Faso, 2008; Gallissot, Kilani, Rivera, 2001; Guadagnucci, 2010). Tra gli autori vi sono poi giornalisti, politici, politologi, filosofi, giuristi, storici (anche della lingua e delle idee) oltre a scrittori e psicanalisti ed esperti nei processi di inclusione economica e sociale dei cittadini di origine straniera e in ricerche sociali comparative. Vi sono infine anche esperti di mass media e comunicazione interculturale. L’elenco delle parole e delle espressioni che sono state ricavate costituisce un indice (da ora in avanti indicato nel testo “l’indice”).

Molte di queste parole sono mutuate dal linguaggio dei media: la maggior parte dei testi che abbiamo consultato si occupano proprio del peculiare rapporto tra mezzi di informazione e narrazione del mondo dei “diversi”, infatti nel 2008 l’Ordine dei giornalisti ha ritenuto necessario redigere uno specifico protocollo in tema di immigrazione e asilo (la cosiddetta “Carta di Roma”) per fare in modo che l’informazione sui temi dell’immigrazione e dell’asilo fosse corretta e non discriminatoria. Inoltre, già dal 2008 la Commissione europea ha sottolineato la necessità di contrastare espressioni razziste da parte di leader politici ed istituzionali, in quanto tali espressioni possono legittimare e condonare il fenomeno, contribuendo in maniera decisiva alla loro diffusione nella società.

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3 Protocollo deontologico per una informazione corretta sui temi dell’immigrazione, siglato dal Consiglio Nazionale dell’Ordine dei Giornalisti (CNOG) e dalla Federazione Nazionale della Stampa Italiana (FNSI) nel giugno del 2008.

4 Rapporto della Commissione europea sull’attuazione da parte degli Stati membri
Naturalmente, il legame con il linguaggio della legislazione è molto stretto, infatti “la sfera politico-istituzionale” sarebbe uno degli esempi di discorso pubblico nel quale emerge il razzismo (Manconi, Resta, 2017, pp. 17 e 20)5; così come è sempre il potere dello Stato a stabilire cosa è dicibile e cosa non lo è, anche attraverso le decisioni del potere giudiziario: “di fatto lo stato produce attivamente l’ambito delle parole pubblicamente accettabili” (Butler, 2010, p. 110).

Di conseguenza i termini dell’“indice” sono stati ricercati nei documenti giuridici al fine di verificare se fossero presenti espressioni frutto di un retaggio razzista all’interno di quell’insieme di regole che dovrebbero garantire la possibilità di convivere in modo pacifico e civile, infatti una legislazione razzista tenderebbe a produrre i propri effetti sulla popolazione, che assorbirebbe il messaggio veicolato dalle leggi (Borretti, 2010, p. 500).

Il campione utilizzato per l’analisi dei testi è stato quello fornito dai documenti presenti nella banca dati del Portale PAeSI6.

Descrizione dell’indice

Qui di seguito riportiamo le parole e le espressioni che, in base ai testi consultati, vengono ritenute, pericolose o con un alto connotato di emotività.

5 Alcuni ritengono che le norme così come i romanzi abbiano la caratteristica di narrare, inventare personaggi e suscitare emozioni, ma le creazioni giuridiche, a differenza della produzione narrativa diventano realtà e si oggettivizzano dato il loro valore performativo. Si veda sul punto (Bartoli, 2012, p. 55). Infatti “Il linguaggio non descrive soltanto i fatti, perché, in un certo qual modo, li crea” (Searle, 2000, XII-190 p.).

Come si vedrà si tratta di termini molto disomogenei ed è per questo che dopo la loro individuazione abbiamo pensato che fosse utile una loro sistematizzazione in alcune categorie semantiche.

Le categorie individuate sono le seguenti:


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\(^7\) Passare al paradigma differenzialista (o razzismo culturale) da quello delle ideologie razziali naturalistiche comporta non usare più il lessico della razza ma quello – che solo in apparenza sembra più tenue e neutro - dell’etnia e della cultura (Burgio, 1998, p. 92-93).
mondo”/“terzomondista”, “turco”.


4. Termini legati al mondo scolastico-formativo. In questa categoria sono state collocate una serie di parole ed espressioni che si riferiscono al mondo della scuola o ad attività formative che si rivolgono a persone straniere. Le parole e le espressioni tipiche che appartengono a questa categoria sono: “corso di alfabetizzazione”/“alfabetizzato”/“alfabetizzare”, “livello zero”, “soglia/e”.


6. Metafore di allarme ambientale. In questa categoria rientrano
tutti quei termini che ingigantiscono e tendono a segnalare come negativi i fenomeni immigratori associandoli a fenomeni naturali allarmanti. In particolare rientrano in tale categoria parole ed espressioni quali: “flusso”, “marea”, “onda/e”, “onda migratoria”, “orda”, “piaga”, “pressione migratoria”, “tsunami umano”.

7. Luoghi. Sono i luoghi nei quali vivono, lavorano, o sono relegate le persone oggetto di stereotipi e discriminazioni. Sono spesso termini usati dalla stampa con connotazione negativa per riferirsi a luoghi dove vivono immigrati, o ci sono mercati abusivi, abitudini dannose, traffici loschi, o comunque sporczia e situazioni anarcoïdi e di caos (Faloppa, 2009, p. 548). Queste parole sono percepite come negative perché si riferiscono a luoghi da evitare in quanto pericolosi e sinistri. Sono termini noti a tutti e molto diffusi quali: “baraccopoli”, “campo nomadi”, “campo profughi”, “casbah”, “favela”, “ghetto”, “suk”.


9 Se non nel discorso legislativo tali termini sembrano essere di sicuro presenti tra le circolari ministeriali. Infatti il carattere emergenziale attribuito all’immigrazione e la politicità del fenomeno stesso hanno da sempre giustificato l’affidamento della sua gestione agli organi esecutivi e alla autorità di polizia. Vedi sul punto (Gjergji, 2010, p. 440).

10 Concetto sviluppato in Spagna e Portogallo intorno alla fine del 1400: serviva per distinguere i vecchi cristiani dai “nuovi” (gli ebrei e i musulmani convertiti).

11 Fabietti usa questo termine riferendosi però a vocaboli quali cultura, tribù ed etnia (Fabietti, 1995, p. 51.).
10. **Processi.** In questa categoria rientrano tutti quei termini che si riferiscono ai processi sociali che si attuano nell’incontro tra “nuovi cittadini” e la società di accoglienza. Le parole in questa categoria sono: “assimilazione”, “integrazione” (“integrazione sostenibile”), “multiculturalismo”.

Oltre a questa classificazione abbiamo anche proposto una categorizzazione che distingue tra “termini comunque pericolosi” e “termini pericolosi in determinati contesti”.

Il motivo di questa divisione risiede nella necessità di distinguere parole che riteniamo comunque pericolose, perché il loro uso può avere ripercussioni negative sulla percezione del tema immigrazione, o comunque sulla percezione “dell’altro” in generale, da parole che possono avere accezione negativa quando usati in specifici ambiti, e che quindi debbono essere contextualizzati.

Tale contextualizzazione può essere fatta, ad esempio, per mezzo di appositi strumenti di *natural language processing* (NLP)\(^{12}\).


mine abusato nel linguaggio della convivenza civile” (Giustinelli, 1991, p. 18).


Verifica dell’indice nei focus-group

L’indice dei termini a rischio discriminazione è stato testato attraverso la conduzione di “focus-group” su un gruppo di media-

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13 Bonazzi M. a colloquio con Jullien F. a proposito dell’ultimo saggio di quest’ultimo intitolato Il n’y a pas d’identité culturelle, nel quale attacca il ripiegamento identitario da cui sono minacciati i Paesi europei che secondo l’autore proprio per definire una identità europea stanno mettendo in crisi la costruzione dell’Europa (Bonazzi, Jullien, 2017). Secondo l’autore proprio per definire una identità europea stanno mettendo in crisi la costruzione dell’Europa (Bonazzi, Jullien, 2017).
tori linguistico–culturali. Al focus-group hanno partecipato mediatori linguistico-culturali provenienti dall’Albania, Argentina, Cina, Filippine, Marocco, Sry Lanka e Ucraina, in servizio presso la Prefettura di Firenze nell’ambito del Progetto “InfoMedia”\textsuperscript{14}. L’obiettivo del focus-group era comprendere come persone con background migratorio, che ben conoscono l’italiano e che agiscono da ponte tra la propria cultura di provenienza e la cultura italiana considerassero i termini individuati come “a rischio discriminatorio”, con lo scopo di indagare la reale percezione di tale parole sui cittadini stranieri.

Durante il focus-group i termini a “rischio discriminatorio” scritti su alcuni cartoncini, sono stati disposti su un tavolo e mostrati ai mediatori. È stato quindi chiesto loro di posizionare dei post-it rossi sulle parole considerate comunque negative e dei post-it gialli su quelle considerate negative ma solo in certi contesti.


A quest’attività è seguito una discussione in merito ai termini individuati come “discriminatori” e le opinioni dei partecipanti in alcuni casi sono risultate diversificate. Ad esempio, sulla parola “etnia”, considerato termine discriminatorio da molti, un partecipante ha sottolineato come il termine possa essere utilizzato con accezione positiva, se riferita a usi e a costumi di un certo Paese.

L’indice è stato utilizzato per verificare attraverso un’analisi informatica la presenza dei termini in esso evidenziati, all’interno dei documenti giuridici presenti nella banca dati del portale PAeSI\textsuperscript{15}.

\textsuperscript{14} Progetto finanziato dal Fondo Europeo per l’Integrazione.
\textsuperscript{15} Per approfondimenti sul Progetto PAeSI si veda Fioravanti, C. e Rinaldi, M., (2010), \textit{Il sistema informativo PAeSI: un accesso telematico unico a informazioni, norme e procedure in materia di immigrazione in Informatica e Diritto} n. 1-2, 93-131.
I termini che sono risultati maggiormente ricorrenti all’interno del campione considerato sono stati: “extracomunitario” (1091 occorrenze al plurale e 176 nella forma singolare); “identità” (spesso con significato neutro nell’ambito dell’accertamento dell’identità personale degli individui, ma in alcuni casi anche con riferimento all’identità di un gruppo – identità culturale/nazionale/etnica); “immigrato” (20 volte al singolare e 319 volte al plurale e anche nelle forme “bambini immigrati”, “immigrati clandestini”, “immigrati illegali”); “clandestino” (una sola volta al singolare, 19 volte al plurale, 78 volte nella locuzione “immigrazione clandestina”), “flusso” (al plurale 737 occorrenze); “razza” (presente 48 volte); “badanti” (28 occorrenze nel campione); “integrazione” (presente 1699 volte, anche se non solo con significato di inclusione).

Uso dell’indice per editor di testi istituzionali

L’indice dei termini a rischio discriminatorio, e soprattutto le parole individuate all’interno del campione vanno a individuare una serie di termini a cui prestare particolare attenzione durante la redazione di testi istituzionali. Tale libreria di termini potrebbe essere inserita in strumenti automatici per la redazione di testi amministrativi “racism-free”, in modo che durante la scrittura di una certa parola o frase, lo strumento di editing possa “suggerire” che la parola o l’espressione è ritenuta “pericolosa” e “connotata”, proponendo, ove esistenti, termini alternativi.

D’altra parte, strumenti simili sono già stati progettati e sperimentati in passato per proporre suggerimenti di scrittura di atti normativi, sulla base delle regole di tecnica legislativa che dettano ai produttori di norme standard, sia per la struttura del testo, sia per l’uso del lessico (Mercatali, 2016, pp. 193-210). Analoghi strumenti possono essere sperimentati per la redazione degli atti amministrativi (Mercatali, Romano, 2011, pp. 1136-1147).
L'indice si propone come strumento per mettere in grado la PA italiana di redigere documenti o comunque produrre informazioni che tengano conto del contesto sempre più interculturale in cui essa si trova ad operare. Faremo un esempio di questo tipo di applicazione nel capitolo che segue.

Il caso della semplificazione delle schede informative sui procedimenti amministrativi in materia di immigrazione del Portale PAeSI della Regione Toscana

L’“indice”, ricavato così come descritto nei paragrafi precedenti, ha avuto una prima applicazione per la scrittura amministrativa “racism free” nell’ambito del Progetto PAeSI.

PAeSI (acronimo di “Pubblica Amministrazione e Stranieri Immigrati”)16 è un progetto della Regione Toscana, nato nel 2005 dalla collaborazione tra la stessa Regione, l’Istituto di Teoria e Tecniche dell’Informazione Giuridica (ITTIG) del CNR e la Prefettura di Firenze17.

Il progetto ha permesso di creare, tra i diversi soggetti della Pubblica amministrazione che in Toscana operano nell’ambito dell’immigrazione, una condivisione di informazioni finalizzata alla trasparenza dei procedimenti amministrativi a vantaggio dei cittadini stranieri e dei datori di lavoro italiani e stranieri. Questa si è concretamente realizzata attraverso il Portale PAeSI che rappresenta tutt’ora un punto di accesso telematico unico alle informazioni su norme e procedimenti amministrativi in materia di immigrazione e si avvale della collaborazione attiva delle stesse amministrazioni interessate.

16 Inizialmente inserito nel Piano di azione regionale e.Toscana, programma di sviluppo dell’e-government della Regione Toscana, è attualmente uno dei progetti dell’azione “Cittadinanza digitale e competitività” della Agenda digitale Toscana.

17 www.immigrazione.regione.toscana.it
Il Portale si rivolge agli operatori degli sportelli immigrazione degli Enti locali e degli Sportelli informativi di organizzazioni e associazioni del privato sociale che svolgono servizio di supporto informativo e assistenza ai cittadini di Paesi terzi che vivono e lavorano in Italia.

I contenuti del Portale sono quindi stati progettati e realizzati per la fruizione da parte di “addetti ai lavori”, utenti esperti in materia immigrazione e in grado di decifrare il linguaggio tecnico-giuridico specifico del dominio. I testi sono caratterizzati, per questo, da terminologia tecnica e da un linguaggio molto aderente a quello delle norme da cui discendono.

Nel Portale, le informazioni sui diversi procedimenti sono comunicate attraverso schede con struttura standard che descrivono in dettaglio le procedure per ottenere i diversi provvedimenti o servizi amministrativi. Esse contengono tutte le informazioni essenziali relative ai singoli procedimenti: dal titolo, alla descrizione, ai tempi del procedimento, ai dati del responsabile, ai requisiti necessari per l’attivazione, alla documentazione richiesta, ai moduli occorrenti, alle modalità di presentazione e ricezione del provvedimento, ai riferimenti normativi, oltre ad ulteriori approfondimenti.

Nell’ambito dello sviluppo del Portale è nata recentemente l’esigenza di dar vita ad una specifica sezione “semplificata”, nella quale il cittadino straniero potesse trovare alcune informazioni in modo diretto, senza la “mediazione informativa” degli opera-

18 “In generale, un linguaggio settoriale è il modo di esprimersi (parole, espressioni, termini tecnici, ecc.) proprio di un ambito specialistico, in particolare (ma non soltanto) di natura tecnica o scientifica. In tal senso, il linguaggio settoriale ha delle affinità con i gerighi professionali e di mestiere (gerghi di mestiere), di cui rappresenta una evoluzione, anche se se ne distingue per la maggior precisione e in taluni casi (si pensi al linguaggio della matematica o della fisica) per la formalizzazione esplicita” Treccani. Linguaggi settoriali http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/linguaggi-settoriali_(Enciclopedia-dell'Italiano)/, ultimo accesso ai dati 3 agosto 2017.
tori dei servizi immigrazione. Per questo si è dato il via ad un’attività di riprogettazione di alcuni contenuti del Portale: in particolare l’azione di semplificazione delle informazioni sulle procedure ha previsto la trasformazione di schede informative, progettate e redatte per l’utente “operatore”, in schede facilmente fruibili per un utente “non esperto” del dominio. Si è trattato, quindi, di adattare contenuti elaborati per utenti che ben conoscono la materia e il linguaggio tecnico-burocratico di settore, in contenuti facilmente fruibili da tutti i cittadini, compresi i cittadini immigrati in Italia. Le schede informative semplificate dovevano essere inoltre idonee alla consultazione su Web.

In questa operazione di “riscrittura” delle schede informative l’attenzione è stata rivolta non solo all’obiettivo della chiarezza e della comprensibilità ma anche all’utilizzo di un linguaggio idoneo alla contemporanea società multiculturale, ovvero un uso di termini che non risultasse discriminatorio o offensivo per nessun cittadino. Per questo l’“indice” è stato uno degli strumenti teorici utilizzati durante il processo di revisione dei contenuti informativi del Portale.

Quest’attività di semplificazione linguistica e comunicativa si è avvalsa, infatti, di alcuni strumenti teorici già in uso per la scrittura amministrativa chiara ed efficace e per la redazione di contenuti web usabili e di altri due strumenti elaborati ad hoc.

19 Così come previsto dal Piano di indirizzo integrato per le politiche sull’immigrazione 2012-2015 della Regione Toscana in relazione alle azioni previste dal Progetto PAe-SI.

per lo specifico dominio in cui si stava operando, le procedure amministrative in materia di immigrazione. Il primo consiste in linee guida per la scrittura amministrativa chiara estrapolate dall’analisi di manuali redatti da Istituzioni di Paesi extraeuropei, ed il secondo è l’indice dei termini “a rischio discriminazione”.

Dall’analisi delle linee guida per la scrittura amministrativa redatte da istituzioni di Paesi extraeuropei è emersa un’attenzione anche al linguaggio discriminatorio. Ad esempio, nella guida “Canadian Style”, elaborata dal Dipartimento “Public Works and Government” del Governo del Canada, una delle indicazioni riguarda l’eliminazione degli stereotipi razziali ed etnici e l’identificazione di gruppi (Tabella 1).

| Tabella 1 Eliminazione degli stereotipi razziali ed etnici e l’identificazione di gruppi, Public Works and Government”, Governo Canadese |
| Be aware of the current self-identification preferences of racial and cultural groups in Canada: |
| • “Black(s)” not “Negro(es)” |
| • “Ethnic (or cultural) minorities” not “ethnics” |
| • “Aboriginal person” not “Aboriginal” |
| • “Aboriginal people(s) in Canada” not “Aboriginal Canadians” |
| • “Native people(s)” not “Natives” |
| • “Inuk” (singular), “Inuit” (plural) not “Eskimo” |
| • “Métis” not “Metis” |

Semplificazione “teorica”

L’attività di semplificazione delle schede informative del Portale PAeSI è stata svolta seguendo le fasi qui di seguito elencate:
1. Selezione delle schede informative sui procedimenti da sottoporre a semplificazione;
2. Verifica e riscrittura dei termini;
3. Semplificazione della struttura sintattica;
4. Modifica dell’organizzazione del testo;
5. Test con strumenti informatici per la leggibilità;
6. Validazione giuridica.

Nella seconda fase, quella di “verifica e riscrittura dei termini” per prima cosa si è verificato se i termini usati nelle schede originali del Portale fossero compresi tra quelli che costituiscono il “vocabolario di base” indicato da De Mauro (De Mauro, 2003, pag.161). Questo vocabolario è costituito da circa 7.050 parole: tra esse vi sono 2000 parole di maggiore uso che vanno a formare il “vocabolario fondamentale”; 2.750 parole definite come “altro vocabolario di alto uso”; e infine 2.300 termini di “alta disponibilità” L’utilizzo del vocabolario di base permette di farsi comprendere dalla maggioranza della popolazione. Il secondo parametro di verifica è stato l’indice delle parole “a rischio discriminatorio”: qualora un termine delle schede fosse tra quelli segnalati nell’indice si è provveduto a sostituirlo con un diverso termine, proposto come più neutro, dagli autori consultati per la sua realizzazione. Così, ad esempio, è stato ritenuto di non dover utilizzare il termine “straniero” perché tale parola, al pari di “extracomunitario”, per molti autori implica la volontà di escludere una persona dalla comunità in cui vive. “Straniero” è stato, quindi, sostituito con “non comunitario”.

Semplificazione “pratico-partecipativa”

Alla fase “teorica” della semplificazione è seguita una fase
“pratico-partecipativa”, che ha avuto l’obiettivo di verificare e condividere i risultati del processo di semplificazione delle schede informative online sui procedimenti amministrativi includendo le categorie di soggetti coinvolti usualmente nel processo di diffusione delle informazioni amministrative verso i cittadini stranieri.

Questa fase si è realizzata attraverso la conduzione di numerosi focus-group che hanno coinvolto gruppi rappresentativi delle seguenti tipologie di soggetti: mediatori linguistico culturali, dirigenti e funzionari della pubblica amministrazione che operano nei settori “immigrazione”, operatori di sportelli informativi per l’utenza straniera e insegnanti di italiano come lingua seconda (L2). Inoltre, la fase di test è stata effettuata coinvolgendo diverse tipologie di utenti, ovvero cittadini stranieri che vivono e lavorano in Italia, di differenti età e provenienti da Paesi diversi. Tale attività ha permesso di acquisire ulteriori linee guida e indicazioni specifiche per migliorare la comprensibilità dei contenuti in oggetto per questo particolare target di utenti.

Durante i focus-group condotti, oltre ad aver testato la comprensibilità delle schede informative riscritte, è stato approfondito con i partecipanti l’aspetto legato all’esigenza di comprensione dei testi per i cittadini stranieri in relazione all’utilizzo di parole che non siano offensive o discriminatorie per i destinatari della comunicazione.

Questo argomento, che potremmo definire come “bilanciamento tra esigenze di non discriminazione e chiarezza”, è stato inizialmente affrontato nel focus-group svolto con alcuni funzionari della pubblica amministrazione. Si tratta di persone che operano nel settore dell’immigrazione da oltre quindici anni e che hanno quindi sviluppato e acquisito una rilevante esperienza pratica in ambito di rapporti tra cittadino con

21 Alla conduzione di alcuni focus-group ha collaborato anche la Fondazione Spazio Reale di S. Donnino (Firenze) con la quale ITTIG/CNR collabora dal 2012.
background migratorio e PA\textsuperscript{22}.

Durante l’incontro alcuni funzionari hanno evidenziato come l’uso di alcune parole “a rischio discriminatorio” nella pratica quotidiana possa servire per comunicare con una maggiore chiarezza. Così, ad esempio, la parola “integrazione”, che alcuni autori considerano “a rischio discriminazione”, è, secondo i funzionari intervistati, molto più conosciuta rispetto alla parola “inclusione” che viene suggerita come possibile parola sostitutiva (Faso, 2010, pp. 77-78). Un altro partecipante evidenziando come l’espressione “facilitare l’inclusione” sia di difficile comprensione per persone non italiane, ha suggerito di spiegare tale concetto facendo uso di espressioni quali: “aiutare la persona e chi gli sta intorno a svolgere la propria vita in modo migliore per sé e per gli altri”.

Parimenti il termine “badante” - seppure “a rischio discriminatorio” - per alcuni viene considerato ormai di uso comune e più chiaro ed immediato rispetto al sinonimo “assistente alla famiglia”. Altri funzionari, invece, hanno manifestato l’opinione secondo la quale non è giusto usare termini a “rischio discriminatorio” che etichettano determinate persone. Per questo al posto di “badante” è stato suggerito l’uso di “persona che aiuta gli anziani”.

Una delle intervistate ha comunque considerato da escludersi l’uso della parola “straniero” che, seppure molto comune, è da lei considerata estremamente negativa. Mentre un altro funzionario ha ritenuto che tale parola si possa usare in quanto più chiara rispetto a “non comunitario”.

Anche durante il focus-group con gli insegnanti di italiano come lingua seconda (L2) è stato trattato il tema relativo ai termini a “rischio discriminatorio”. Il focus-group si è svolto presso il “Centro

\textsuperscript{22} Hanno partecipato al focus-group, la dott.ssa G. Bonanni, responsabile dell’ufficio “A.O.C. Accoglienza e Immigrazione” del Comune di Firenze, il dott. P. Bisignano, referente dell’ufficio “Asilo e protezione internazionale” del Comune di Firenze, la dott.ssa K. Diaconescu, assistente sociale presso l’ufficio “Accoglienza e Immigrazione” del Comune di Firenze e la dott.ssa R. Pilotti, dirigente dei servizi educativi del Comune di Firenze.
internazionale studenti Giorgio La Pira” e vi hanno partecipato 11 insegnanti di Italiano L2 che svolgono la loro attività presso il Centro stesso. Durante l’incontro è stato chiesto agli insegnanti di esprimere la loro opinione sull’opportunità di utilizzare tali termini quando si ritiene che il loro uso facili ti la comprensione. A tale proposito molti docenti hanno detto che l’uso di parole che potrebbero essere degradanti (come ad esempio “badante”) sono entrate nell’uso e utilizzando un sinonimo (quali “assistente familiare” o “coadiuvante”) ci potrebbe essere il rischio di non farsi capire; inoltre, secondo loro, molti cittadini stranieri non percepiscono il termine come negativo. Altri invece hanno consigliato di non utilizzare comunque tale termine perché ritenuto appunto degradante.

Una soluzione emersa durante la discussione è stata quella di utilizzare in modo critico il termine più in uso, seppure a “rischio discriminatorio”. Secondo questo suggerimento sarebbe auspicabile quindi utilizzare nella scheda informativa il termine tecnico più corretto (“assistente familiare”), ma affiancandolo al termine di uso più frequente (ovvero in questo caso “badante”).

Per esplorare la tematica “Comprensibilità versus Linguaggio a rischio discriminatorio” si è rilevato d’interesse anche il confronto con la categoria degli “utenti stranieri”, con i quali sono stati condotti quattro distinti focus-group ai quali hanno partecipato in totale 35 studenti della scuola di italiano per stranieri del “Centro internazionale studenti Giorgio La Pira” di Firenze. Gli studenti erano anche differenziati per provenienza, età e motivo di soggiorno in Italia. I partecipanti provenivano dai seguenti Paesi (sia extraeuropei che europei): Argentina, Brasile, Camerun, Colombia, Filippine, Gambia, Georgia, Germania, Giappone, Giordania, Grecia, India, Iran, Israele, Mali, Marocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Perù, Repubblica democratica del Congo, Somalia, Spagna, Sry Lanka, Svezia, Taiwan, UK, USA. Le età oscillavano tra 16 e 70 anni e i partecipanti soggiornavano

http://www.centrointernazionalelapira.it
in Italia per lavoro, studio o motivi familiari. Per quanto riguarda i livelli linguistici, 14 persone appartenevano al livello A1, 5 al livello A2, 10 al livello A2-B1 e 6 al livello B1 del “Quadro europeo comune di riferimento per le lingue” (QCER)\textsuperscript{24}.

Anche i focus-group con questi soggetti hanno dimostrato che non sono risultate di facile comprensione alcune parole o espressioni che abbiamo proposto per sostituirne altre che facevano parte dell’indice. Si tratta, ad esempio, dell’espressione “cittadini non comunitari” che era stata utilizzata nelle schede in sostituzione di “cittadini stranieri”. Tale espressione non è stata compresa da 19 partecipanti al focus-group su un totale di 35, quindi dalla metà degli utenti.

Il termine “inclusione”, inoltre, era stato utilizzato in sostituzione di “integrazione”, parola presente nell’indice. Il termine non è però risultato di facile comprensione, in quanto 15 partecipanti su 35 hanno segnalato di non conoscerlo, ovvero circa un terzo degli utenti.

**Conclusioni**

Il processo di semplificazione effettuato, relativo al passaggio da schede informative sui procedimenti online redatte per la fruizione da parte di operatori della PA a schede idonee alla consultazione da parte di utenti “non esperti”, ha consentito:

- Nella sua fase teorica, di individuare gli scenari d’uso e le funzioni degli strumenti di supporto alla redazione;
- Nella fase “partecipativa” di ricavare numerose informazioni sotto forma di linee guida, strategie e indicazioni per la

redazione di testi istituzionali chiari ed efficaci per tutti i cittadini della nuova società interculturale.

Le “linee guida” riguardano il lessico, la sintassi, lo stile, la struttura del testo e il *layout*; mentre gli “strumenti di supporto” comprendono elenchi di termini e espressioni per i quali viene suggerita:

1. La sostituzione con altri termini ritenuti più idonei o efficaci
2. Il loro mantenimento o eliminazione;
3. La necessità di annettere testo esplicativo.

Tra gli “strumenti di supporto” alla redazione è presente anche l’elenco dei termini a “rischio discriminatorio” con indicazioni degli autori che ne sconsigliano l’uso e i relativi termini sostitutivi da questi suggeriti. Qui di seguito l’estratto della tabella di sostituzione relativa.

*Tabella 2* Estratto dello strumento di supporto relativo all’elenco dei termini “a rischio discriminazione.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Termini a rischio discriminatorio</th>
<th>Riferimenti autori che ne sconsigliano l’uso</th>
<th>Proposte termini sostitutivi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Badante</td>
<td>A. Meli (a cura di), Linee Guida per l’applicazione della Carta di Roma, 2012; [...]</td>
<td>assistente familiare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>corso di alfabetizzazione</td>
<td>G. Faso, La lingua del razzismo: alcune parole chiave, pag. 34 in G. Naletto, Rapporto sul razzismo in Italia, Roma, Manifestolibri, 2009; [...]</td>
<td>corso di lingua italiana</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
immigrato | F. Olivieri, La critica dei pregiudizi sui migranti come strategia contro le discriminazioni razziali, in T. Casadei, Il lessico delle discriminazioni tra società, diritto e istituzioni, Parma, Diabasis, 2008; [...] | cittadino di Paesi terzi |
---|---|---|
integrazione | G. Faso, Lessico del razzismo democratico. Le parole che escludono, Roma, DeriveApprodi, 2008, [...] | inclusione |
Razza | M. Aime, La macchia della razzia, Milano, Ponte alle Grazie, 2009; [...] | / |

**Prospettive future**

Per l’utilizzo e lo sviluppo delle informazioni ricavate si è ritenuto adeguato ipotizzare la strutturazione dei dati attraverso uno strumento del Web 2.0 come una piattaforma di tipo Wiki. Il Wiki\(^{25}\), infatti, permette lo sviluppo collaborativo dei contenuti da parte della “comunità di pratica”, necessario per incrementare la base dati in relazione a nuove attività di semplificazione, l’evolversi della lingua e l’emanazione di nuove normative in materia di comunicazione pubblica.

Il concetto che è alla base del metodo Wiki è che tutti gli utenti

\(^{25}\) Il concetto di base del Wiki è che tutti gli utenti possono modificare in maniera collaborativa e paritaria le informazioni, non solo aggiungendo contenuti ma anche modificando quanto pubblicato da altri. I Wiki si basano su software wiki, ossia software installati in diversi server che gestiscono i contenuti (generalmente archiviati in un database relazionale) e i servizi del Wiki, come la possibilità di editare le informazioni attraverso il browser, la registrazione degli utenti, ecc. Wiki ha la capacità di porsi come alternativo a quel sistema chiuso di gestione della conoscenza che esiste all’interno della maggior parte delle istituzioni pubbliche. Cfr. http://wikipa.formez.it/index.php/Aiuto:WikiPA.
possono modificare in maniera collaborativa e paritaria le informazioni, non solo aggiungendo contenuti ma anche modificando quanto pubblicato da altri. I Wiki si basano su software Wiki, ossia software installati in diversi server che gestiscono i contenuti (generalmente archiviati in un database relazionale) e i servizi del Wiki, come la possibilità di editare le informazioni attraverso il browser, la registrazione degli utenti, ecc. (Clerici, De Petra, 2012, pag.140). Wiki ha la capacità di porsi come alternativo a quel sistema chiuso di gestione della conoscenza che esiste all’interno della maggior parte delle istituzioni pubbliche. L’organizzazione dei risultati ottenuti relativi alle linee guida generali e gli strumenti di supporto alla redazione dei testi può, quindi, trovare un’adeguata collocazione in un ambiente Wiki, che permetterà, attraverso il lavoro collaborativo degli stakeholder coinvolti, di essere condiviso e di evolversi in base a successive esperienze di semplificazione linguistica di contenuti informativi della PA.

Anche l’“indice” potrà essere ospitato sulla piattaforma Wiki, ad esempio per “registrare” le osservazioni derivanti dai focus-group con stakeholder e categorie di utenti già effettuati e quelle che scaturiranno da altre esperienze di confronto partecipativo che verranno effettuate.

Questo permetterà di arricchire le indicazioni degli autori con i suggerimenti di chi per il proprio lavoro o per il proprio background potrà fornire suggerimenti utili per rendere sempre più accessibili e inclusivi i contenuti informativi pubblici.

Una versione “beta” della piattaforma ipotizzata e descritta precedentemente è stata realizzata utilizzando la versione free del sistema di editing pbworks\(^{26}\) ed è denominata WikiPAeSI\(^{27}\).

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\(^{27}\) Cfr. http://wikipaesi.pbworks.com/w/page/116350053/WikiPAeSI
La piattaforma, la cui pagina di accesso è rappresentata in Figura 2, fornisce anche la possibilità di discussione attraverso l’attivazione di forum. Si auspica che la partecipazione degli operatori della PA allo sviluppo dell’indice attraverso la piattaforma sia uno strumento utile per aumentare la loro consapevolezza su questo tema, soprattutto per chi nella propria attività lavorativa è chiamato a redigere contenuti pubblici che sempre più tengano conto della eterogeneità culturale tipica delle moderne società.

Infatti, la PA (intesa anche in senso lato in modo da comprendere anche le istituzioni legislative nazionali e locali) deve produrre informazioni e documenti in grado di integrare e costruire valori comunitari anche per i nuovi cittadini. Non si tratta di rinunciare alle nostre regole e ai nostri valori, ma di saperli comunicare e magari migliorare sulla base di nuove esperienze, partendo dal presupposto che la nostra cultura (anche giuridica) non sia necessariamente l’unica né la migliore. Il primo passo per costruire una società libera, aperta e interculturale è costruire (o rinnova-
re) istituzioni forti e efficaci, in grado di farsi capire, fare capire le proprie regole, i propri valori e le proprie informazioni. L’indice, le metodologie di semplificazione partecipativa e le linee guida che ne sono derivate vogliono dare un contributo per questa nuova costruzione.

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Laureata in Scienze della Comunicazione (indirizzo ICT) nel aver lavorato presso lo spin-off del Dipartimento di Scienze della Comunicazione dell’ateneo senese, nel 2004 inizia a collaborare con l’Istituto di Teoria e Tecniche dell’Informazione Giuridica (ITTIG) del CNR nell’ambito del progetto PAeSI (Pubblica Amministrazione e Stranieri Immigrati), dove è attualmente ricercatrice a tempo determinato.

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http://www.ittig.cnr.it/persone/ricerca/francesco-romano/
Detecting Hate and Prejudice against Immigrants in Social Media

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The paper describes an ongoing project for the development of artificial intelligence tools and resources to detect and analyze hate speech and prejudice against immigrants: “Immigrants, Hate and Prejudice in Social Media” (IHatePrejudice). The approach aims at integrating different knowledge sources and at applying the skills of a multi-disciplinary team, which includes computational linguistics, social network analysis and visualization. It is currently mainly focused on a local case study (Piedmont, a region of Italy), but scalable over larger territories and different languages which can be considered more representative, such as European Union.

Introduction

Nearly a quarter of a billion people currently live in a country other than their own, and Europe is facing an unprecedented refugee crisis. In this scenario, the way we behave towards immigration, immigrant integration and social inclusion for newcomers and their children are becoming more and more decisive and must be addressed both at a local and global level, under a political and social perspective.

This phenomenon also stimulates the generation and diffusion of hate speech and hate crimes. While several initiatives are promoted to fight against this, awareness and empathy of the receiving populations should further increase, in order to avoid polarization against immigrants.

In this paper we describe objectives, motivations and
methodology of a new research project, “Immigrants, Hate and Prejudice in Social Media” (IHatePrejudice), aimed at addressing hate speech and prejudice against immigrants by exploiting Artificial Intelligence (AI) methods and tools. The project is carried out in continuity with the “Hate Speech and Social Media” project, aimed at promoting social integration and coexistence among different cultures by studying, and countering, the spread of hateful content in social media\(^1\).

The approach is mainly based on the integration of different disciplines for developing computational tools for accessing and analyzing small and big data about immigrants and coming from different sources/media. The synergy of disciplines ranging from data analysis to computational linguistics (in particular Sentiment Analysis, SA), discourse analysis, computational social science and data visualization, can be useful to address the phenomena related to immigration. By developing computational tools for accessing and analyzing data about immigrants we accomplish two goals: on the one hand, transforming analyzed data in actionable knowledge for territorial entities working on raising awareness about discrimination and taking action against it; on the other hand, democratizing data, by improving their accessibility and opening new opportunities for enhancing the quality of citizens’ life.

Artificial Intelligence can play an important role on understanding and managing the complexity of migration issues in order to define better policies towards migrants’ integration and community building. Knowledge about immigrants is indeed diluted in a huge variety of texts from different sources - the so-called big data - which humans cannot directly access in a reasonable amount of time and manner, contrary to AI techniques that deal with natural language (Natural Language Processing, NLP). Furthermore, network analytics,

\(^1\) See http://hatespeech.di.unito.it/ for an overview of related projects our research group.
data aggregation and visualization can be applied to show the diffusion of phenomena related to geographical locations, to share knowledge with operators or to make citizens more aware of these issues. Even policy makers can be helped in order to make more informed decisions on matters related to migration management.

The way we address these challenges is innovative in that it focuses on identifying different patterns of hate and prejudice in online expressions. Furthermore, the involved phenomena will be studied in a bidirectional perspective, for instance movements and communication dynamics of immigrants, or the reactions of local community, media and single citizens.

In the following sections the study’s motivations and main references of previous similar studies are presented. We then illustrate how different disciplines contribute to the project in an innovative way. We conclude by discussing expected results and future developments of the project.

Motivations

Population change occurs as a result of two main factors: natural change, defined as the difference between the number of births and the number of deaths, and net migration, commonly defined as the difference between immigration and emigration.

Data released by European Community about population change (Eurostat, 2015) show that, from the 1990s onwards, natural population change had a diminished role in EU demographic developments, while the role of net migration became increasingly important. In the period between 2011 to 2013, net migration contributed more than 80% to total population growth. This means that the overall pattern of
growth of EU’s populations is driven increasingly by changes of migratory flows, which hides a range of demographic situations among the EU Member States. In fact, between 2004 and 2013, the population of 11 EU Member States decreased, with the biggest reductions recorded in Germany and Romania, whereas a high overall increase in population numbers was recorded in the other countries like UK (a gain of 4.51 million inhabitants), Spain (3.96 million), France (3.54 million) and Italy (3.29 million). It has been observed that in all these countries the decline of population is due to the negative natural population change (more deaths than births). Also in Italy the same trend can be observed, but together with a very positive growth of population depending on the contribution made by migration. This makes it especially crucial to deal with immigration and related phenomena in Italy and motivates our selection of Italy (and of Piedmont, as an important Italian region) as reference starting point of our research project.

Given this scenario, European policies encourage to enforce integration at country, city and community level. Integration is the successful outcome of acculturation, defined as the dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by immigrants and receiving communities (Berry, 1997). In this perspective immigration can be a source of cultural enhancement. However, negative attitudes to immigration increased in recent years, and prejudice and more or less direct feeling of hostility towards foreign people can be found all across Europe. Episodes related to the Brexit electoral campaign in UK, or to the refugee referendum in Hungary, are symptomatic of this very worrying trend. Therefore, it is becoming increasingly decisive to address the implications of our behaviour towards immigration, immigrant integration and social inclusion for newcomers and their children taking a local and global, as well as political and social perspective.
The focus on hate speech of our project is mainly motivated by the growing presence of anti-immigration attitudes, which frequently fuel the spread of hate expressions in the variety of media exploited nowadays. Like a mirror of the political choices, of attitudes of the population and feeling encoded in the collective memory of a nation, words exploited for defining migrants are coined and used by people involved in the immigration challenges. Such lexicon is relevant for determining who is migrant and for classifying in categories, that often fossilize in prejudices, different forms of migrants related to different positions in the society. Language is crucial for determining boundaries among groups and minorities, to confer them specific social roles, rights and opportunities. It can thus be used to describe migrants as others, as outsiders of our society, often as dangerous and unwanted people notwithstanding their real nature. Conversely, language can also be effectively used by immigrants to react to the challenges of integration in a different society.

Starting from the relevance of language in the immigration phenomena and the huge variety of linguistic data available as digital traces, the main objective of our project is the development of computational tools for accessing and analyzing data from different social media, so as to acquire a deeper knowledge about anti-immigration attitudes related to prejudices and hate speech. In view of the fact that the local context is crucial when studying attitudes towards immigrants (Markaki and Longhi, 2012), we are currently focusing our activities on a case study representing Italy, and Piedmont Region in particular.

The first step of the project consists in collecting data (or creating a data set) from social media where hate expressions can be carefully annotated. This data set will be exploited in the development of a system for automatic hate speech detection which, in turn, will be the core of a web platform where hate
diffusion and related dynamics will be displayed in terms of maps and other data aggregation.

This form of analysis of hate allows both a greater understanding of social phenomena linked to the integration of migrants, and more targeted actions for positive interventions. The integration of migrants is strongly linked to the new cultural context where they try to rebuild their lives. The acculturation process depends on personal and social variables of the migrant. This is first of all the cultural context of his/her origin, characteristics of the context of resettlement and events occurring during this life period. The different migrant’s strategies strongly affect the different outcomes achieved. In particular, s/he can decide whether or not to maintain the cultural identity of origin and whether or not to establish and maintain new relationships within the new context. This gives rise to four possible different outcomes: integration, assimilation, separation/segregation, marginalization (Berry, 1997). Integration in particular is the outcome of a process of maintaining his/her own identity of origin in a multicultural context, but at the same time of the expansion of a relational system with locals and of the exposure to the cultural context of insertion.

The outcome of the process of acculturation, and therefore the possibility that integration will actually take place is determined by a number of factors. It first depends on the features of the migrant’s country of origin, as well as on his/her personal (i.e. demographic, socio-economic) characteristics. In addition, the social context of the country of settlement also plays a significant role. This is mirrored in particular by the ethnic attitudes of the native people, such as their degree of openness or prejudice (or even overt hostility) towards those who come from different cultures, especially if very different from their own.

Through the analysis of the online language used in social media, we are able to detect this degree of openness or, on the contrary,
of prejudice (if not overt hate) towards migrants. Furthermore, we have the opportunity to better understand what kind of relationship immigrants are likely to create and, accordingly, what kind of social networks they will rebuild, and finally, how this can influence the result of the acculturation process.

There are at least two possible practical applications of the tools developed within IHatePrejudice project. The first use concerns the possibility, to a certain extent, to support national stakeholders which deal with migratory flows, by detecting areas at lower risk of hostility, and increasing awareness of the possible risks of insertion in potentially hostile environments. The second one concerns the possibility to program adequate action enforcement efforts, that allow - knowing how and where hostility is expressed and manifested - to design targeted education and communication campaigns.

Related Work

The immigration phenomenon stimulates the production and diffusion of hate speech and hate crimes. As a counter-measure, several initiatives have been promoted, for example the No hate speech movement\(^2\), a youth campaign of the Council of Europe to reduce the levels of acceptance of hate speech. Others are the Research - Report - Remove project\(^3\), and the Map of Intolerance promoted by Vox Diritti\(^4\) (Musto et al., 2016). Such initiatives are most often devoted to the detection of the target/diffusion of hate speech, or to their containment.

Few studies address the detection of sentiment about

\(^2\) https://www.nohatespeechmovement.org/
\(^3\) The project is described in http://www.inach.net/fileadmin/user_upload/Research_Report_Remove_short.pdf
\(^4\) http://www.voxdiritti.it
immigrants, like for instance Carr (2014). Our approach is novel and unique in this respect, as to the best of our knowledge, we first propose to combine fine-grained computational linguistics analysis, including sentiment analysis, and data visualization based on interactive maps. And second, we address specifically hate and prejudice in relation to the immigration phenomenon in Italy (in particular in Piedmont region), and define strategies for increasing tolerance and integration and enabling stakeholders to understand hate spreading within communities.

As regards finer-grained tasks related to sentiment analysis, we mention here two important tendencies that we will consider in our work: the first one is related to the recent and growing interest of the NLP community in the development of aspect-based techniques, where the detection of sentiment targets (and orientation towards/against them) is addressed beyond generic polarity of expressions (for stance detection see Mohammad et al., 2016a; Mohammad et al., 2016b; Taulé et al., 2017). The other research trend that will be taken into account deals with the impact of figurative language on sentiment analysis, with a particular emphasis on ironic contents, whose presence may undermine the results of automatic systems (Bosco et al., 2013; Sulis et al., 2016; Hernández Farías et al., 2016).

Among the crucial objectives of the project, we also aim at monitoring the public debate on migrant integration, so as to increase integration, awareness and empathy with migrants. By virtue of the strong polarization that often characterizes political debates, the SA community has recently shown an increasing interest in these debates, especially the ones having a strong social impact. Several projects were thus carried out, where such data were annotated for training and testing SA systems. As for Italian, which is the language analyzed in our case study/project, the annotation of debates was addressed for instance in Bosco et al. (2013) and Stranisci et al. (2016).
For French, we developed a corpus on the debate on the homosexual marriage (Bosco et al., 2016). Also for Catalan and Spanish a corpus about the debate on the separatism of Catalonia was created (Taulé et al., 2017). Most of these corpora were usefully exploited also within the context of SA shared tasks in evaluation campaigns for NLP tools and resources (Barbieri et al., 2016; Basile et al, 2014; Taulé et al., 2017). This is a guarantee of their quality and usability as benchmarks on which the tools developed in the project can be trained and tested. In continuity with this line of research about the analysis of sentiment and irony in political debates, we will contribute to the development of lexical resources with a specific and novel focus devoted to detect sentiment, hate and prejudice about immigrants in Italian social media.

Visualization techniques will be applied for an interactive access to maps and other data aggregation displays, which is advanced and novel with respect to the state of the art related to Hate Maps. Several initiatives for hate speech visualization exist indeed, see for instance the Geography of Hate project\(^5\) in US and the Map of Intolerance promoted by Vox Diritti in Italy. However, they do not have a specific focus on immigrants as in the present project, and do not provide any possibility to dynamically interact with the map and with the data from where information was extracted.

### Objectives and Methodology

The project methodology is based on the development of a computational framework for data semantic exploration. It will follow a holistic approach, which integrates several sources of knowledge to describe a multi-faceted reality. The cooperation

\(^5\) [http://users.humboldt.edu/mstephens/hate/hate_map.html](http://users.humboldt.edu/mstephens/hate/hate_map.html)
of the different skills involved in the team, including those made available by the associations working on immigration in our local area (and playing the role of stakeholders and domain experts), will ensure an inclusive and real multi-disciplinary approach. The success of the project strongly depends on the synergetic application of the methodologies from the different involved research areas, in particular those related to the linguistic and sociological analysis of communication, and those related to the automatic detection of hate speech with the aim at visualizing their aggregations in hate maps (see following sections).

*Linguistic and Sociological Analysis of Hate Speech*

The complexity of communication dynamics related to immigration may make the development of novel forms of computational analysis especially challenging. Nevertheless, traditional and computational approaches complement/support each other in this sense (Zagheni, 2014): the study of this phenomenon can be fruitfully addressed by analyzing large-scale data, such as those represented by social media texts and their users’ digital traces, where causes and consequences of hate and prejudice are diluted.

The project will apply a methodology well known in corpus-based NLP, where data collections are carefully annotated by teams of experts to provide systems with ground-truth information about the observed phenomena. In our project, this methodology thus consists in: i) collecting text samples from several media where hate speech expressions against immigrants are present; ii) analyze them for detecting a set of relevant expressions; iii) select a set of texts to be annotated according to a scheme that makes explicit those expressions, their targets and polarization.
As far as annotation is concerned, the first results of our research are published in Poletto et al. (2017) and mainly show that to address the complexity involved in phenomena related to hate speech, we need to design a multifaceted representation of such phenomena. In this contribution, a preliminary corpus together with its annotation scheme are described; the collection consists of texts collected from Twitter by filtering data regarding the hate targets identified in our study, while the tag set designed for its annotation is specifically meant to encode the information related to hate speech according to several perspectives. In particular, for each tweet, additional labels were used to indicate the level of aggressiveness and offensiveness, as well as the presence of irony and stereotypes.

Automatically Detecting Hate Speech and Building Hate Maps

The framework to be developed during the project will integrate innovative techniques for collecting social data and analyzing them by data mining and aspect-based sentiment analysis. The dataset mentioned in the previous section (Poletto et al., 2017) will be suitable for the development of tools for the automatic hate speech detection and the creation of the web platform. The goal of the latter in particular will be to aggregate and analyze data under several semantic perspectives going beyond the linguistic one. It will include geographical and temporal components that can be extracted from the digital traces associated as metadata with the posts that users generate in social media. Furthermore, geo-social data will be exploited both to derive a geography of hate and prejudices about immigrants and to study immigrants’ mobility across our territory. This web-based platform will be moreover designed for supporting interactive access to analyzed data and visualization.
of hate maps: a powerful tool to be exploited in the variety of decisions humans must take every day with respect to their behaviour towards community or other people. That is a contribution for democratizing the knowledge about immigration. The platform will provide indeed a visual easy to read representation of reports coming from the modules devoted to analysis, showing the sentiment, the social and political reactions and the dynamics of the information flow on the topic. The dashboard will allow the different end users to gather the intelligence required, for example, to make informed decisions on local policies or support investigations on online hate speech and prevent crimes that would potentially affect the stability of local communities. With pervasive diffusion of mobile devices, social media data provides a spatial dimension that characterizes where a content is generated, providing an additional layer to study the geography of online information processes. We also plan to implement an alternative cartography of a city that visually maps the spreading of hate speech in time and space. This would allow, for example, to observe which neighbourhoods of a city are subject to a negative/positive sentiment towards the immigration phenomenon. This gives the possibility to link online discourse to offline characteristics of the built environment like demographics, ethnicity, socio-economic conditions of the population. The use of different spatial and time aggregation, for instance, at street, block, neighbourhood, city, region level or at day, week, month or year level, will provide an effective tool to visually explore the complexity of the phenomenon at different scales.

Expected Results and Future Work

The expected results of the project are the acquisition and
spreading of a wider knowledge about immigration, to be employed in the education to citizenship. The automatic analysis of hate speech and the detection of immigration networks can be effectively used for better designing activities related to the awareness of people, for improving the quality of the information diffused by newspapers and other media and to more adequately deal with vocational training for young people (born both into Italian or immigrant families). The knowledge on how to support teaching methodologies for preventing disadvantages and discrimination can be exploited to prevent conflicts between groups, promote tolerance and integration among citizens and immigrants. A dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by immigrants and receiving communities. Since communities characterized by successful integration of immigrants are proved to be stronger economically and to be socially and culturally more inclusive, adequate knowledge may prevent exposure to cruel conditions and crimes, and with this may enhance citizens’ life quality.

Even though the scalability across different European countries and with different languages is the ultimate goal of the project, its application on a local case study is twofold crucial for our purposes. This allows us to easily test the approach on a reasonably-sized territory, but it also provides the opportunity to develop immediately-impacting actions on the socio-cultural context at issue.

Our cooperation with three Italian local associations, Acmos\(^6\), Babelica\(^7\) and Fondazione Piazza dei Mestieri\(^8\), will further enhance the impact of the project. In particular, the current project follows our long-time collaborations with Acmos, with which in the recent past we have promoted awareness-raising activities in schools, namely related to hate speech issues. In

\(^{6}\) http://acmos.net
\(^{7}\) http://www.babelica.it/
\(^{8}\) http://www.piazzadeimestieri.it/en/
addition, working with Babelica and Piazza dei Mestieri will allow us to further extend our audience in the creation of a new inclusive culture and in involving young people. These associations as a whole are the stakeholders that can express the needs to be satisfied by the project; they also constitute domain experts and testers, and will have a crucial role in the dissemination of the project’s results.

Beyond the activities devoted to the education of citizens, our territorial actions are thought to have an impact on long-term monitoring of the evolution of immigration phenomena, producing a repository of knowledge to be exploited by policy makers for improving integration.

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Tools for the prevention of radicalization among young second and third-generation Muslims in search of identity

Aziza Benrahal, Grazia Ghellini, Salah Boudi, Ghislaine Tamisier
SIETAR France

This chapter introduces briefly the main causes of second and third-generation Muslims’ Islamist radicalization. Being caught up in between apparently incompatible values systems, these young people are often socially or psychologically vulnerable and tend to undergo a deep identity crisis. The authors have developed experimental activities based on Ismaël Saidi’s Play Djihad encouraging young people in search of identity to find a balance. They show how role-lying can help to explore issues such as lack of self-esteem, victimization and lack of knowledge about religion.

Introduction: the causes of radicalization and identity issues

According to Fethi Benslama (2016b; 2016a), amongst the main causes of second and third-generation Muslims’ Islamist radicalization is the lack of belonging to a community sharing the same values. As well as the need to belong to a united family (radicalized youngsters who commit or plot terrorist attacks often come from single-parent families) and the desire to be perceived as heroes and become famous (even though as terrorists, and therefore anti-heroes). But, above all, caught up in-between values systems they see as incompatible – that
of their Muslim families and that of the Western countries in which they were born and live in – these young people, often socially or psychologically vulnerable, tend to undergo a deep identity crisis. They feel they belong to no-one’s land and no culture, and therefore lack reference points. This can lead them to adopt what Amélie Boukhobza (2017) calls «une identité de rupture», a «breakaway identity»:

“A breakaway identity results from the process whereby an individual adopts an identity shaped by [...] values and norms she/he considers as being above a democratic, republican, French and/or Western identity.”

As Boukhobza points out, second and third generation Muslims who undergo this process tend to reject the other facets of their identity completely, and Muslim identity takes a predominant and then one-dimensional place: “Paradoxically, apparently, the individuals who adopt a breakaway identity often do not know much about Islam. [...]” (ibid.). They usually also take refuge in communitarianism, and in most cases sever all ties with their history, family, society and its values (ibid.). They therefore become easy prey for Salafist indoctrination and Jihadist online recruitment networks. In such types of radicalization, the idea of belonging to an ideal community, a “neo-ummah” (a welcoming, homogeneous Muslim community) is central. This is often coupled with feelings of humiliation and victimization, which stem from the conviction of belonging to a constantly aggressed community. This can transform such young people into enemies of society in the name of the “religion of the oppressed” (Krosrokhavar, 2014, pp. 26-27). Adolescents, who are at an age when they are both in search of identity and ideals, and therefore inclined to take distance from their parents’ model and from established authority in general, are particularly
vulnerable, as they need to find new reference points. As Farhad Krosrokhavar suggested (op.cit.), educators and, we believe, interculturalists too, are amongst those who can help young people in search of identity question such dangerous attitudes before it is too late.

It is with this aim that, following the terror attacks which occurred in France in 2015, Aziza Benrahal organized a series of conferences on Islam and the prevention of radicalization among young people for SIETAR France, and then founded a SIETAR FRANCE work group to tackle this issue.

“Youth: What antidote against radicalization?” - Our Work Group and its Aim

According to a well-known legend, a huge forest caught fire, and only a small hummingbird tried to do something about it, carrying some water with its small beak and pouring it onto the fire. The other animals asked him: “Hummingbird, are you crazy? Do you think you can extinguish this enormous fire with a few droplets of water?” To which the hummingbird replied: “I know, but I am doing my share!”

We like to draw a parallel with our expertise. Since, as interculturalists, we strive to create harmony from cultural differences, we can without doubt contribute to finding ways of helping young people from a Muslim minority background in search of identity find a balance. We can encourage them to explore their issues such as lack of self-esteem, victimization and lack of knowledge about religion.

Without pretending to have found miracle solutions to such a complex problem, we wish to share our belief that each one of us can, like a small hummingbird, bring his/her own contribution.
With this aim in mind, we have produced a number of art and game-based personal development tools, one of which was presented at the SIETAR Italy Conference in Milan on 5 May 2017.

A Case Study: Presentation of a Role-Play Activity Based on Ismaël Saidi’s Play Djihad

Pedagogical aim

The objective of this activity is to encourage young people to stop perceiving themselves as victims and make them adopt a more positive/constructive position despite dissenting with the situation they are in.

Background material

The identity-questioning mechanism which can lead young people to become radicalized is illustrated by a play produced in 2015 by Ismaël Saidi, a francophone Belgian playwright of Moroccan origin. Djihad, which has been and is still being performed at several theatres in Belgium and France, has been recognized as being of public interest and is being shown for free to students and teachers in Belgium. It invites young people to question themselves about the causes of radicalization and shows the uselessness and dangers for young Muslims in search of identity to adhere to the hateful and deadly discourse of Jihadists. Djihad stages the tragi-comic trip of three young Belgian men, Ben, Reda and Ismaël, who decide to leave for Syria to go fight with other jihadists in the name of their religion. The
three young men do not actually know much about Islam, nor about the reasons why they are supposed to kill non-Muslims. During their expedition they discover the real reasons which pushed each one of them to become jihadists, realize how little they know about the religious cause they are supposed to defend, and must face their own contradictions.

Our work group had developed a pedagogical activity based on an excerpt from this play.

Description of the activity itself and our pedagogical method

The aim of this exercise is to invite a group of potentially-at-risk young people to question their own perception of reality by means of a game. After a short warm-up activity, the trainer shows them a passage from the play *Djihad* by Ismaël Saidi, in which one of the main characters says “*Whatever we do, we will always be different: this started a long time ago. First they called it the problem of immigration, then they called it the problem of second-generation immigrants, then they called it the problem of integration. Today, they call it the problem of third generation Muslims. We will always be different for them, in their eyes!*”

The participants are then invited to express their immediate feelings and reactions to this specific case of discrimination, i.e. how they are responding to this situation here and now. They are then asked to put themselves in the shoes of three different people, respectively, a joker or a clown, a wise person and a role model. These transitions are facilitated by someone impersonating a magician, who invites the young person to turn, successively, into these three characters, and « act out » their reactions.

At the end of this exercise/itinerary, each participant is invited to take some distance and adopts what is called a “meta position”,
i.e. a “neutral position” resulting from a global vision acquired by embodying the three different characters and reflecting on the different steps, subsequent different perceptions and ensuing personal growth. A “witness”, i.e. an observer who has noted down all of the different reactions, then reports on what he/she has observed about each of the impersonations and the evolution of a character into another one, which provides a mirror effect.

*Role of the facilitator/trainer*

During the whole activity, the intercultural trainer carefully observes how the participants behave and react all along the various steps of the activity. S/he asks them a series of questions to help them reflect on their feelings and attitudes and put words onto their feelings and emotions. A thorough debrief of the exercise needs to be provided, insisting on the interest of decentering and adopting other people’s points of view. In order to further improve the activity and ensure its real suitability to those young people’s needs, the trainer must ask the participants to provide feedback on both the content and the methods used in this exercise.

*Take-away message*

With this activity, the participants will both reflect on a particular example of discrimination and receive a very useful and concrete take-home message. They are encouraged to remember this exercise and try to put it into practice whenever they find themselves in a comparable situation and/or feel attacked, shocked, hit, destabilized. “How would my grandfather / Zidane / My Best Friend/ Tinker Bell / My basketball coach / My
English teacher have reacted in my place?”. The idea is to help them take positive distance from their frustration, anger, rage.

Prospects for the Future: Forum Theatre and the Prevention of Radicalization

Another major source of inspiration for our SIETAR work group has been Forum Theatre. Also known as « Theatre of the Oppressed», Forum Theater was first conceived and developed by Augusto Boal in Brazil, and then in France during his exile in Europe 1979. It is based on the idea that theatre can change the world. The joker, or stage director, plays a fundamental role in this type of performance, since s/he facilitates the debate with the public and coordinates the interventions of the Spect-Actors on the stage. During the show, s/he leads the audience to « dig deeper », by encouraging them to express themselves, develop their point of view and contribute to finding alternatives to negative responses to difficult situations.

With this in mind, our work-group has developed another pedagogical tool related to the issues of identity and the prevention of radicalization. It consists in staging a short interactive show focusing on one sentence from the above quoted passage from Ismaël Saidi’s play, Djihad: “Whatever we do, we will always be different, in their eyes”.

Firstly, a group of students play a scene in which three young people who have become radicalized decide to become jihadists. One of them pronounces the sentence: «Whatever we do, we will always be different, in their eyes». Once s/he utters this sentence, the stage director asks him/her to stop moving and stand still. S/he then invites the Spect-Actors watching the scene to come on stage, where they «de-center» by putting themselves in the radicalized character’s place, saying out loud what else he might be thinking in this moment besides what he has already said.
(Whatever we do, we will always be different, in their eyes....).

Then, in a second phase, the trainer/joker invites the Spect-Actors to create other characters of their choice (such as the character’s mother / one of his/her friends / a teacher etc.). The Spect-Actors then step onto the stage and try to find and act out some possible alternatives to the difficulties encountered by the person in quest of identity, e.g. «Put yourselves in the place of a friend / Ismail’s mother, to help him question his victimisation attitude / to unblock the situation and make it evolve in a positive way». Then the trainer/joker asks the public if any of them are willing to take the place of the radicalized character and imagine his or her reactions or thoughts at what has just been said / done. These scenes are played out as many times as necessary, until all of the Spect-Actors have replaced at least one of the characters or created a new one and some possible positive alternatives have emerged.

The aim of this exercise is to involve young people in a questioning, distancing and co-construction process so as to help them rethink their own potentially radical attitude. In an interview, Ismaël Saidi once said that one of the characters in his play, Reda, reflects the quest for identity mechanisms he underwent himself when he was young. It was thanks to a teacher who showed him the way to «salvation» through theatre that the playwright did not take the same path. We are no Tinker Bells, but perhaps, by trial and error, some everyday but powerful «magic» will occur if we keep looking for solutions. Some potentially at risk young people in search of identity might ask themselves the right questions, and find in intercultural dialogue the trigger they need to reach the necessary balance which will help them find their place within society.
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PART THREE - Storytelling and Grand Narratives for Exploring Cultural Identities

According to the *socio-constructivism approach* every person creates their own version of reality, built out of each individual’s unique life experiences, and their interactions within specific socio-cultural contexts. The constructivism approach is widely used in this book. It is important for exploring cultural identities because it helps to understand the socio-cultural meanings people assign to experiences, and how the relationship with oneself and the enacting of one’s own identity is dependent on the context and is fluid in nature.

George Simons has explained and applied this approach in Chapter 1, describing the identity-shaping discourse or narrative with ourselves. In this third part, we continue to further investigate the role of narratives, by focusing on the lives of multicultural individuals, as it is told through their own stories. It is about what and how their stories are narrated, and about the learned significance of individual experiences.

Aude and Jane Fabulet (Chapter 13) use this kind of *narrative inquiry* in a very personal bi-lingual monologue that shows the complexity and fluidity of multicultural identity across different cultural contexts. Narrative research relies on written and spoken words, as well as on visual representations. Subsequently, Sasho Ognenovski (Chapter 14) illustrates, through a sequence of cinematographic narratives, the way people create meanings in their multicultural lives; in which relationship context, and at which identity layers, multicultural conflicts can arise.

Aysun Akan (Chapter 15) talks about conflicting, yet similar
narratives of modernist secularist ideology and conservative Islamist ideology in Turkey, and how symbols are key elements to construct the respective reality.

Storytelling is part of the narrative genre, and this methodology has been used by Urmila Chakraborty (Chapter 16) for intercultural training. Through the traditional Indian art form of Patachitra, she stimulates a way to reflect on “self” and “others” realities.

All these authors show that the narrative approach allows for a richer description of experiences, and gives voice to insights that may have otherwise remained silent.

Indeed, the other contributions in this part of the publication are related to Grand Narratives. In post-modern thinking, master narrative or grand narratives are stories and theories claiming an all-encompassing explanation for the world\(^1\). They exist at various levels (global, national, regional, familiar, organizational, etc.), and they embrace, for instance, theories such as Hofstede’s concept of culture, Marxism and Constructivism. As we can see in the following, grand narratives can also include phenomena like the Western idea of progress, or the idea of The European Union.

Christian Ghymers and Mirta Acero (Chapter 17) start their observations from the identity crisis of the European Union, and talk about how populism is challenging the grand narrative of a United Europe, to then introduce their model of a “Europe of Three Regions”.

To conclude, Carlos Gonzalez Carrasco (Chapter 18) reminds us that the consequences of certain master narratives are suicidal today. Taking the view of new science, he shows how the movement towards a new planetary ecology can be a good example approach for developing a new narrative for the 21\(^{st}\) century.

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\(^1\) Romani et al., 2014 *There is nothing so good as four good theories*, in: Gehrke, B., Claes, M.T., *Global Leadership Practices*, Palgrave Macmillan.
Between conference and monologue, “You are over there” is a bilingual play about a woman who is coming back to her country of origin. There is nothing tragic in her story, just questions and doubts that might come to a person who have changed where they live. She repeats to herself “It takes two years” to feel that you belong. She read it somewhere. She grasps on to this idea and starts dissecting her story, juggling data, navigating between the generalities and the singularities of her situation. She also, simply and humorously, tells us about those awkward moments of being the foreigner, no matter where, no matter where you come from.

Is it possible to belong to several cultures? Does the truth lie in living in the present instead of the past and future? Is it enough to feel that you belong? The play reminds us that it takes time to feel that we have arrived where we are supposed to be.

The following text is an adaptation of the original text “Vous êtes ici”. The text was adapted from mostly French to mostly English. The original text is intended to be 1-hour long. It was also adapted to perform it in any settings (outside of a theatre stage per say) and shortened to a 20 minutes. “Vous êtes ici” has been performed by Jane Fabulet-Roberts during the IX SIETAR Italia Conference.
ACT I. IDENTITY

Let’s say I’m here and now. Ici et maintenant.
Let’s assume I’m 40 years old.
A woman, a wife and a mother.
I am, also, a daughter, a sister, a friend, a French citizen, an American citizen.
A girl raised in France in the 80’s. A woman of the XXIst century.

STOP! Stop. It’s here. It’s here that I want to stop. But no...

I am a 40-year-old woman, wife and mother.
A daughter, a sister, and a friend.
A friend of old friends, a student’s parent, a driver of a
regular car, a cyclist, a Parent association member, a friend of parents of other students, a teacher, a linguist, a performer.

STOP! Stop. It’s here. It’s here that I want to stop. This moment where it seems that there was no gap in my life. Past and present are the same. No before or after. A continuing present.


I am an old child, a young corpse...

ACT II. STOP

STOP! Stop. It’s here. It’s here that I want to stop. Because actually I will not stop.

I’m driving on a highway, listening to the silent noise of my consciousness.

Hoping to cross borders, and time, and space. Reality is catching up to me, making me fall to the big black ground of my destiny.

Living here and there. Loving both. Leaving this tricky situation of my chosen exile.

In my daily dream of travel, I am driving at 200 miles per hour. But...I’m stuck on a highway. I am stuck in traffic actually. My eyes look far, far away. Farther than the limits of my body. Yes, I’m dreaming. I’m dreaming about extra large freedom. Casting a spell on my car to drive it through the limits of my brain that creates my reality.
I could believe I can fly with glory and lightness but my body has a weight I can’t wait to leave. To think no more. To not possess. To be. Just be. Myself.

ACT III. LANGUAGE


What language am I? Dans quelle langue je suis?

Am I more myself when I speak English to my children in France or when I was speaking French to them in the US?
Am I lying to myself when my own mother tongue is fading away?
Which language do I think with?
Which language do I dream in?
Does it even matter?
I would like to not speak anymore, to stop being asked about which language I speak when I think. I don’t think in a language - I don’t think? I just think.
And when I think, I take into consideration my experience there and here. So, I think things both ways. My thoughts are challenged by how I see the world now in non-ethnocentric views and language is a mere mirror of that.

To me, Descartes “Cogito Ergo Sum” is more accurate this way: Je pense en français and in English therefore I am.
So yes, I am French; despite the fact that I don’t cheese. Voilà. I am also American. I have two passports. I can vote in two countries. I even file my taxes in both countries. But, all of this, as important as it can be, it seems that it’s just administration. Yet, that’s the only way I am connected officially to these countries. It was important to me to become a citizen, politically, professionally and personally. It sure can change how people see you, hear you and look at you.

A mixture of pride “we got you/good job/welcome” and of mistrust: “you will never be quite 100%; you were not raised like us; you don’t share the same history”. Your allegiance often questioned. I did swear to the US flag that I would bear arms to protect it, that I will on US soil be considered American first.

All these words... they count but... Deeply, in my soul, in my daily life, I am also different. Not only on paper.

When it comes to parenthood, when it comes to motherhood, I don’t raise our children the way monocultural families do. We sometimes eat peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for picnic and sometimes baguette and pâté.

When it comes to many aspects of my everyday life, I am not one OR the other; I am both.

Imagine we were all born with colored glasses. I have blue glasses and my husband was raised with yellow glasses. By living together, our glasses sometimes would turn green, more or less dark. My children, however, were born with green glasses. Theirs, too, become lighter or darker green depending on the situation.
Sometimes it feels as if my glasses are becoming permanently green but my childhood memories are blue. My husband’s will always be yellow and my children, always green. And even my children don’t have the same green. My oldest has lighter green glasses than my youngest. For now.

ACT V. FAMILIAR AND FOREIGNNESS

10 years away and I was coming back to my “home country”, raising my children in my “homeland”...
Everyone was excited for us.
Some thought that I was coming back where I belong... I was nervous. I was reassuring myself by thinking: “it’s only for a few years; it’s only for the kids and family; it’s only to prove ourselves that we can.” I knew of the cultural shock. I did not know of the intensity of the reverse one.
You can also, really, feel foreign in your native country.
Between the familiar and the foreign... That’s how it is when our roots are from here and there. Some things that were foreign become familiar and vice versa.
Our own foreignness, otherness, float inside us. It leaves us alone often but it can jump out any time and take down your self-confidence and sense of belonging in one second: when greeting someone, when explaining symptoms to a doctor, when ordering a coffee.
It can get quite awkward. You are looking for a word, you start blabbing, you hesitate.
Some people get it but some others give you this look. Everyone gets confused. You start feeling vulnerable.
And I am not even starting on the discrimination you might
ACT VI. TWO YEARS

I read somewhere that it takes between one and two years for a foreigner to feel that life, somehow, is “normal”. Normal, here, implies that you know where to go for such and such paper, such and such information or food item. Normal, as you know a few people here and that you stop feeling anxious about the simplest thing you have to do.

Two years to feel that you have some control on your life. Two years, 730 days, to accept the overwhelming emotional waterfall of thoughts and questions coming through your head once you lay down in bed at night, eyes half closed staring at all these doubts floating around in the room. Two years, 730 days, to see the nostalgia approaching and tame it. Two years, 730 days, to resist the desire to flee for nowhere, to accept that you will always be a foreigner to some, no matter where you are. That might be what it means to be normal after all.

ACT VII. TO BELONG OR NOT BELONG

My sense of belonging has been challenged like ever before since I have moved back. The first few weeks of being in France, my boys and I would
go to the park. I felt like I was suffocating. I was afraid to speak to anyone because I had been told I had an accent. So when people were telling me:
- You speak really good French.
- I am French-American, but I am French “originally”
- Oh, really? You have an accent...

We are never enough this way, or that way for the others. A little bit too much from here or from there. Un petit je ne sais quoi qui vient d’ailleurs.

I was feeling a general national painful absent sense of belonging, and I realized it had been even before I had moved to the US...

After a while at the park, my kids started to make friends. I did too. My neighbor was Swedish, her husband, French, but he would speak English to the kids because they had lived in Scotland. I felt home. Then, I met another multicultural family... French-Italian-Algerian-Colombian. Once again, I felt home.

Then I would just go and talk to people who were different than the “français-français”.
With them, it felt that I did not have to explain my accent, my first name or why I was missing my other home. It was just how we all felt. I felt that I was belonging... But it’s just me. I don’t know how my bicultural children will build their identities. Right now, they are still young and don’t want to move anywhere, not even out of our neighborhood.
They are bicultural but their sense of belonging is highly attached to the school and their immediate family.
Papa et maman and whatever our mixed daily life is.
In French, there is an expression that is used to say that you are undecided, conflicted: “Avoir le cul entre deux chaises”. When we use this expression, it enhances how uncomfortable it is. Which... it is. For once, you can fall at any time. And it implies that it is better to choose one side and let the other one go.

But that’s not how I want to raise my children. I want to be able to be critical of any of my cultures without feeling that I am a traitor. I want us to be able to express ourselves considering both our cultures.

What if we shift the angle?
What if instead of sitting “le cul entre deux chaises”, we were sitting this way. It is quite comfortable.

Sometimes, people with more than one chair are easy to spot. We speak different, we dress different, we look different. We are carrying all of our chairs with us at all times. But some of us are invisible most of the time.

I want to tell my children: “Here is your heritage. You have two chairs. Sometimes, one of them might get in the way. Sometimes you might need to lean on one more than the other. Maybe one of them will get unused, you will have to fix it a bit. Maybe one can be used to play with and dream. The other one is to work, or put things on or you might need to get on it to reach something. But you can do whatever you want with these two chairs. And if a third one comes along?
Use it. They are yours to use.
It will happen that in some situations, people will present your chairs this way. Shift the angle and make them see it.”

**ACT IX. PRESENT**

Here and There. Ici, là et là-bas. In French, different words are used to talk about someone's location.
ICI - “Je suis ici” is “being here at a precise, designated location”.
LÀ - “Je suis là” is “being present, locating myself in relation to an other thing” - “Je suis là”.
LÀ-BAS - «Je suis là-bas» is «being over there». You never really say that: “I am there”.

That’s how I feel sometimes. This confusion of feeling here physically, but not present. I feel “ici”, I am in a designated location but I am not present.
I am here «on the map», with a big red circle telling me where I am.
My body for sure is here but where is the rest of me?
Where do I belong? Is it the place I was born in or the place I gave birth to my children? What if sometimes it seems that I belong nowhere? There are moments where it feels that home is wherever I am not.

I belong to all this multiplicity, all this complexity, all this otherness and foreignness.
I belong to all of this. No matter where it is. No matter when it is.
I belong to the present made of my past and the future is another present.
My home is where I put down my roots maybe for just a moment or maybe for a while.
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Multiculturalism and Macedonian Cinematography

Sasho Ognenovski
Communicologist, Actor and Writer – Macedonia

In recalling historical themes, the most significant films of Macedonian cinematography portray the very moment of multiculturalism and especially its conflict characteristics. The formal belonging to one society and the multicultural element are very often in conflict. Retailoring post-Yugoslavian territories expands this problem of belonging and national commodity. The world of cinematography actually recognizes many films which are concerned with these conflicts. Comparing Macedonian films to selected other films, this chapter opens the discussion to wider considerations about how to contextualize national identity and multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism – an Introduction to Contextualization

Finally, after the recent globalizing tsunami where all of us are equal, its aftermath again creates diversity because the social and religious processes could hardly be changed with globalized recipes. Multiculturalism on its communicational and religious sense becomes a kind of recognizable discourse which in these tense times opens a scientific Pandora’s Box. This is the contextualization of multiculturalism.

The core of the “ethical impregnate” of pluralistic contextualization is found in an understanding of mutual political reality and sharing of civil identity (Habermas, 1988,
The twenty first century reveals a dark chapter of the post-segregation and intolerance. Interculturalism as a relaxed dialogue between nations becomes one very fragile soil for reconstructing that global world whose theories are on its last breath, caused by the violent schemes, whose victims we unfortunately already started to count.

There is not a society on this planet Earth we cannot recognize as multicultural. The United States, an example of numerous ethnicity in the very big part of the twentieth century, has struggled with segregation and racist intolerance. In the beginning of the twenty first century, since 9/11, the idea of multiculturalism has been completely changed. In principle, we could now see the controversy between multiculturalism and interculturalism. Although, the skepticism regarding the cross-cultural dialogue is mostly based on sufficiently credible social cohesion (Chipman, 1980), the intensity of immigration (Knopfmacher, 1982) and the political influence (Birrell, 1978) cause multiculturalism, through the artistic expressions, to attempt to contextualize itself. The relation between state, social policy and political background could produce a multiculturalism commodity that would achieve very stable peace. The opponent theories bring an unstable orientation and not exact view upon the nomenclature of the ethnicities (on which theories insist those low numbered ethnicities) and on the social status as well. Therefore, I insist more on contextualization, instead of inclusion, and mostly because of the involvement of the ghost of the past so-called “patriotism” which turning into ideology inhibits the real status of every multicultural reality. “The patriotism is the sharing identification with the historical community based on particular values. But, they have to be the values in whose essence must be incorporated freedom” (Taylor, 1994, pp.28). Here, in this premise lie the relations that the republican constitution of the citizenship understands the multicultural context (Cateb, 2004). The republican concept
offers a very interesting connection between nationalism and republicanism that after Cateb’s theory turns into radical terrorism on enormous size. Therefore, I think that the contextualization of the national identity as a multicultural reality is one of the theoretical tools that could separate us of the brutal post-segregation and the national intolerance.

On first view, the contextualization doesn’t mean political inclusion in linear relation that understands numbers and domination in presence in the particular social reality. It has, after my point of view deep intimate, communicational and cultural connections. When we perceive political, social and economic relations, and attempt to find a solution for multicultural dialogue coexistence, we always forget about the intimate contexts, the communication relations and the cultural connections as well. It may sound utopian, but the communicating context (the media presence, but not on the level of social network’s chaos) and that media’s presence, opens the doors of the basic tolerance where the historical components are not playing the main roles. This paper deals mainly with the fictional warning of the cultural reality to the possible redundant danger of conflicts during the multicultural relations. That’s why I choose the film as the synthetic art that contains a symbiotic attitude towards these issues and depicts all the conflict conditions of the multicultural relations on the historical context and in nowadays milieu opens the questions whose answers could be based on a kind of initiation for contextualizing the multinational societies, not for their cohesion where every personality does not have feeling of commodity and belonging.

Film and Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is an inevitable part of every film genre whether
it relates to the film story or to the creative team who develops the whole film. The possibility of building and presenting cultural identity and diversity opens a lot of questions in the film arts. The screenplays that incite these issues, always because of their dramatic constellations, touch the conflict situations and inspirational events and build the films on that ground.

We could analyze the problems of multicultural dialogue in many films that take interest in the issues on various continents and on various aspects. We can find dialogues of multicultural tensions for example in films like *Mississippi Burning* to *The Help* (both films that touch the racist problems). The American cinematography, along with the cinematography of other parts of the world, are intensively taking interest in multiculturalism. In this chapter we'll examine first a selection of films that systematize the multiculturalism through creations and screenplays on urban, militaristic and interethnic relations. The analyzed films are: *The Crash, Lebanon* and *I Even Met Gypsies*.

One of the most interesting films that examines multiculturalism is Paul Haggis’ *The Crash*. The legendary film critic, Robert Evert calls this film “highly fascinating” precisely because in very short scenes it emphasizes all social, ethnic and racial conflicts, in only two days in Los Angeles caused by a very simple car crash. From a semiotic point of view, *The Crash* is ethically and morally significant. This film depicts multiple forms of diversity which cut across race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, ability/disability and class. All of these dimensions can be recognized as crucial, along which social systems overlay as structural mechanism of oppression. And of course, as Freire says, “we can legitimacy say that in the process of oppression someone oppresses someone else; nor yet that someone liberates himself, but rather human beings in communication liberate each other”. (Freire, 1994, p.114). Metaphorically, the title “The Crash” itself expresses the communicational relations and the consequences of its redundant product. Therefore,
this film 2006 very unexpectedly won the Academy Award for best picture, yet receiving very mixed reviews. One review was directed towards the fantastic depictions of the social and racial tensions in America. Another review talked about its winning of an Oscar only because of the American Academy’s homophobic policy (Brokeback Mountain was considered as a favorite).

Lebanon is another extremely interesting film directed by the Israeli director, Samuel Moaz, based on his personal experience. The first Lebanese War in 1982 was recognized for its exceptional tragic happenings. This film is a claustrophobic drama taking place in the interior of an Israeli tank, carrying Israeli and Lebanese soldiers, whose very simple mission turns into a nightmare with tragic consequences. The significance of this film lies in the violent and tense interpersonal communications related to the soldiers’ unpreparedness and inadmissibility of their respective national war matters. The intolerance and the redundantly imposed multiculturalism generate in most scenes very incomprehensive cultural dialogues. Contextualized in other situation the depicted relations could have been managed more productively. The oppression in this case rises up to the level of extreme violence and, unfortunately, the final conclusion in the manuscript expresses the distortion of the country’s political landscape in general.

Concerning the nationally inspired war conflicts, Bernice Johnson Reagon is quite insightful in her observation: “We’ve pretty much come to the end of a time when you can have a space that is ‘yours only’ just for the people you (don’t) want to be there ... There’s nowhere you can go and only be with people who are like you. It’s over. Give it up.” (Johnson- Reagon, 2000, p.1105). The soldiers in the tank unfortunately couldn't go anywhere and the recognition of being unsecure and engulfed by the storm of unreasonable force of communicational distortion they unfortunately experience the tragic ending.
The third film is *Even Met Gypsies* by the famous Serbian director Aleksandar Petrovich. The psychological dichotomy of the devastating Roma space opens the multicultural distinction of this artistic case as a national context and in the same time as a socially negative simulacrum. It depicts film language conflict that is analyzed and well-treated until the tragic end. The semantic aspect of this film presents some national tensions, but the instruments are mostly introverted. The tragic love of the young people with varying social status and nationality gets its Shakespearian dimension, but at the same time opens the cautionary chapter concerning the multicultural scheme when in the Yugoslavian sixties multiculturalism was called “Brotherhood and Unity”, a phrase that in the twenty-first century sounds very sectarian, but on a socialistic note in that time probably had its proper function.

The selection of these three films reminds us of Kivisto's premises where multiculturalism in a terminological way was promoted through the process of amalgamation, by assimilation of the national borders through intimate connections (marriages etc.) and with the strong connections between personalities having the same problems and interests. The most painful in these connections is always the urban difference, so however this diagonal that heads upwards has trembling ground, and that trembling ground is the obtrusive conflicts. Kivisto is very close to the previously mentioned contextualization because he attempts to clean the multicultural relations of their religious and patriotic portents. Then, the context of the social and civic codex would have a wide range of possibilities for the integrating of the various nationalities. Finally, that is the way for exposing the least preferred mathematic distinction sometimes called “majority” and sometimes called “minority”.

Macedonian films in large part are inspired by the multicultural aspect of Macedonian society. The multiculturalism in Macedonia in its social and historical point of view came mostly through the conflict process that unfortunately still runs. Macedonian films introduced those themes when the country was still part of the Yugoslavian Federation and lately as an independent country. In the following we shed a different light of the multicultural code of this country. The historically schematized films analyzed the assimilating processes in the turbulent history of the Macedonian Ottoman Empire period until WWII, while the contemporary themes portrayed the inner problems caused by the multicultural aspect that generally problematized the crisis of national identity.

Here, we'll construct the Macedonian film diagonal with three very significant films: Miss Stone, a film that takes interest in the Macedonian problems during the Ottoman period; Black Seed, a war film concerning the destiny of Macedonian soldiers in the Greek army during the Greek Civil War; and the most popular Macedonian film, Before the Rain, that describes the Macedonian multicultural aspect in the nineteen years of the previous century.

One of the most interesting Macedonian films is Miss Stone and it is about the kidnapping of the American protestant missionary, Ellen Stone, during the Macedonian revolution in the beginning of twentieth century. Namely, the assimilation of the Macedonian ethnicity, one of many entities including the Ottoman Empire and also the repression of the Macedonians on their own ground, opened the rebellious page in Macedonian history. This is a story where one well-planned action allowed the Macedonian revolutionists to kidnap the American Missionary, Ellen Stone, just for getting arms and ammunition. The assimilation as a
negative and reverse multicultural process especially in the constellation of political and military occupation is a sort of expression of power and domination. This screenplay analyzes the lady missionary point of view where the cruel and ruthless criminals turn out into orderly organized political organization dedicated to the Macedonian struggle for its identity in the Ottoman Empire’s domination. Besides the assimilating aspect, this film is very significant for the polarization of the two major ethnicities (Turkish and Macedonian) where the minority represents the government and the majority is under social, economic and cultural repression. This multicultural scheme, with its bloody dimension, is completely contradictory and as such a scheme in that period became very famous and public because of Ellen Stone’s articles.

The second film opens a very rigid light on multiculturalism. *The Black Seed* is a film about the Macedonian soldiers who served in the Greek army during the Greek civil war, in the fifties of the previous century. This spinning multicultural construction is about the Macedonians who are living in other countries (as a minority) and are again repressed by the majority. The screenplay discusses the problem of the tormenting of the Macedonian soldiers by the Greek military authorities because their supposedly belonging to particular ideology and it is a sort of spinning multicultural structure. The plot of the film takes place in a more contemporary society than the Ottoman and directly stresses the question of the brutal assimilation as an inevitably unnecessary virus in multiculturalism.

The third film is the most awarded film, the anthological film *Before the Rain* speaks very analytically about the very hard attempts to establish harmony in the country with multiethnic constellations. The fascinating love story, between an Albanian girl and a young Macedonian priest, reveals the universal dimensions of multiculturalism, so sharp and full of prejudices
in these passionate Balkan areas. The film has a very dynamic stream and embraces the many aspects of the multicultural processes like the social cross-cultural relations, including intimate relations, are very dominant in its screenplay especially in the dialogues. The traditional constellations are characterized as redundant moments in Macedonian multiculturalism until the comparing with the international relations in the countries of the western world (United Kingdom).

A Kind of Conclusion – Embracing the Utopian Attitudes

The exploration of multiculturalism is a continually expanding process that understands interactions as the inclusion of multiple voices and lenses. I entitled the analyzed movies as diagonals because the problems of multicultural relations could meet their points only by recognizing the mutual problems in the spots where the various types of communications meet. Trying to understand the basis of the conflicts contextualization instead of inclusion could be powerful and could reanimate still existing problems of misunderstanding. The excerpts belong to the history and the artistic interpretations, but in these situations, their constellations inevitable could be considered modern events of multicultural misunderstanding still alive and dangerous today. Quoting the previous Macedonian Minister of culture, Mrs. Ganka Samoilova Cvetanovska who was in office during the Macedonia military conflict 2001, I’d like to note that the crossroads of cultural digressions might be very entangled. “Speaking about the cultural identity, we inevitably impose to ourselves the question of respecting the right of improving the other nation’s culture and the right of otherness.

However, very often the cultural differences are instrumentalized for political goals and the proposals for
recognition and respecting the cultural differences could grow to something completely different and much more extreme, as a demanding the territories, special privileges and changing the constitutional order, something that emerges out of the frames of the policies of recognition.” (Cvetanova, 2007, pp. 155).

This diagonal of three films compared with the analysis of the other three films of the world cinematography certifies once again the contextualization as one of the possible modes of the multicultural equivalence especially in the Macedonian society. I understand the contextualization of the multiculturalism as a complex process of the prior structure which includes interpersonal and before all cultural cohesion of the nationalities in one social area. The national cultural heritage of one entity always has a kind of similarity with the other one (at least partially), while the intimate and interpersonal relations are never burdened with the religion and so-called patriotic tendencies and influences.

As much as all this sounds utopian, national identity and multiculturalism have an enormous need of intimate understanding because the primal human symbols are very far off from the social reality. Their true contents always are reflected in the arts, not in politics. The twenty first century has already become very politically distorted so returning to the equilibrium between human emotional and rational consciousness is maybe the light at the end of the tunnel.
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A battle of symbols: Turkey in a pendulum swinging back and forth between modernism and Islamism

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Modern Turkish politics has been characterised by a battle between the Western elite and the Islamists. The former, who founded the modern republic, have been strong supporters of Western values at the expense of the Islamist tradition; the latter criticising the western elite for being an alien entity and claiming to be restoring Islamist values. This political antagonism has not only shaped the nature of politics in Turkey but also social, cultural and private life. This chapter demonstrates how this political battle manifested itself over symbols.

Introduction

The modern Turkish Republic is, in many respects, a continuation of the Ottoman Empire. However, the founding father of the modern Turkish Republic (1923), Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, in an effort to create a modern state introduced a series of reforms to disestablish the Ottoman legacy. During the establishment and the consolidation of the secular modern republican regime, the republic de-emphasised Islam as part of the Turkish republic, disempowering the ulema (religious scholars) and dissociating the regime from Islam, in order to control autonomous Islamic political and civil society activities. However, Kemalism did not secure the consent of a large peasant society sensitive to Islamic values. In fact, they challenged the
Historical Context

Kemalism, named after Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founding father of the modern Turkish Republic (1923), is an ideology based on the homogenisation of an ethnically and religiously diverse population, aiming, ultimately, to create a modern western state and society. The modernisation of society from top down alienated the predominantly peasant and religious society. While radical secularism, one of the main pillars of Kemalist modernisation, has been a strong reference for a significant section of the middle class and civil-military bureaucracy, the majority of the Turkish people continue to identify themselves with reference to Islamic culture. During the National Independence War and during the consolidation of the nation state in the 1920s, the Kemalist state adopted an Islamic discourse to mobilise the masses and to secure the support of influential religious leaders. However, Mustafa Kemal made a careful “distinction between regressive and progressive Islam, promoting the latter as compatible with modernisation (Çınar and Duran 2008, p.27)”. Between the 1920s and 1940s, during the establishment and the consolidation of the secular modern republican regime, the republic de-emphasised Islam as part of the Turkish republic, disempowering the ulema (religious scholars) and dissociating the regime from Islam, in order to control autonomous Islamic political and civil society activity. By establishing the Ministry of
Religious Affairs, the Kemalist state aimed at “the promotion of an acceptable state Islam and the submission of religion to the reason of the state (Çınar and Duran 2008, p.22)”. The Kemalist establishment has always viewed Islam and any political demands with an Islamic agenda as backward, reactionary and thus a threat to the secular Turkish republic.

State power was used to change the legal structure, education system, civil code, dress code, alphabet and to enforce the adoption of last names, in order to create a new state and society in line with the western ideals envisaged by the ruling Kemalist elite and crucially was also involved in the transformation of the symbols associated with the Ottoman past and Islam.

In this effort, national celebrations, like the proclamation of the Republic Day on 29th October, the opening of the Grand National Assembly on 23rd April and the commemoration of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s death on 10th November were turned into a spectacle; official ceremonies started with a visit by the state and military to Anıtkabir, (the Atatürk mausoleum), followed by grand spectacles in stadiums. Every school and public office also carried out their own ceremonies. Media coverage was also pervasive; all day live coverage of official and unofficial ceremonies accompanied by panel discussions by various ‘experts’ on the significance of these national days.

*Figure 1  23rd April Celebration in a local school*
Kemalist symbolism also made itself felt in the everyday life of every Turk; every town square has at least one Atatürk statue, bust, picture or one of his sayings, as does every school, university and public institution.

Figure 2 Atatürk statue in a town square

Kemalist hegemony was not only based on a class alliance between the bureaucracy, military and the bourgeoisie but also on the ‘subaltern classes’ (Gramsci, 1926). The Kemalists succeeded in winning over a section of the subaltern classes that achieved social advancement through the Kemalist universal education system and the middle class, who aspired to a western way of life. In addition to securing a support base, mobilising them against the old order, the Kemalists political leadership included “intellectual and moral leadership” in this process of forging the “class alliance” (Gramsci, 1926). Although Kemalism secured its hegemony for the best part of
the 20th century, it failed to accommodate the largely peasant society into its modernist project. Discontent against the Kemalist regime always existed among people with Islamist sympathies but they were unable to be articulate them; they were either suppressed by the state, or the military or they were too weak and disorganised to challenge the dominant order. The election of the Democrat Party (DP) in 1950 was the first challenge to the Kemalist Republican People’s Party (RPP)’s long-standing political project of secularism and westernisation, allowing the Islamic periphery to enter into politics as well as cultural expressions of the Islamists. Thus the DP’s election in 1950 signifies, among other things, the start of a long battle over symbols between the Kemalists and the Islamists, which has been a preoccupation of Turkish politics ever since. 

The republican mass education system created new social groups who came from rural areas, who through their education could find new paths for social advancement in the state bureaucracy (White, 2008). Although a section of these new social groups adapted to the republican ideology, those who identified themselves with Islam were left on the periphery. The DP allowed these groups to take up high positions in the state bureaucracy (ibid), operating in a state bureaucracy, which predominantly consisted of the secularist elite. These new social groups distinguished themselves by their values and lifestyles informed by Islam as a frame of reference for daily life (White, 2008, p.350). The 1960 military coup ended the DP period; however, the 1961 constitution, the most democratic constitution Turkey had so far, allowed freedom of expression, unionisation and the formation of political organisations, benefiting not only Islamist activism but also the working class and leftist activism. Despite the suppression of Islam and the expression of religious demands, Political Islam has secured a place for itself in Turkish
politics since the 1970s. It was in 1970 that Political Islam was first fully articulated by the newly founded National Order Party, NOP (Milli Nizam Partisi, MNP). The party represented the economic interests and values of the petty bourgeoisie of Anatolia and, then, the strong professional and urban mercantile middle class with roots in small towns and villages who found an opportunity for political advancement. The party programme included modernist economist development, promising to construct dams, build missiles and so on, in the name of the glorious Ottoman past and of God. Thus, despite the NOP’s openly Islamic agenda, advocating the transformation of Turkish society in line with Islamic principles, ‘this class antagonism was expressed in the cultural idiom of cultural differences’ (Çakır, 1995, p.21; White, 2008, p.191-2). The NOP was banned in 1971 by the Constitutional Court but Erbakan founded the National Salvation Party, NSP, (Milli Selamet Partisi, MSP) in 1972. The party’s success in the 1973 general election made it a coalition partner with the RPP. The main motto of the NSP was “morality and ethics followed by developing heavy industry” (Çakır, 1994, p.23). The 1980 military coup banned all political parties including the NSP. In 1983 the Welfare Party, WP, (Refah Partisi, RP) was founded after the junta lifted the ban on political parties.

The great breakthrough for the WP came in the 1990s, when the WP turned into a mass party; with over one million members in 1993, a well-established recruitment system and an organisational ability which was the result of the separation of religious matters from its party activities. The focus on winning the elections and expanding the membership base required the party to prioritise economic and social programmes (Çakır, 1994, p.58). This is not to say that the WP abandoned religious demands and language, on the contrary, it adopted a confrontational style in its dealing with the secular establishment, like the bureaucracy and the military. However,
the WP also advocated an Islamic life-style, as defined by the WP, for all nominal Muslims, disregarding their preferences and ignoring the fact that practicing Islam had a number of variations in Turkey, quite different than what the WP adhered to. As Cizre (2008, p.1-10) argues, the WP targeted the idea of secularism as much as the secular establishment, in order to mobilise Islamic values. The WP was closed down as a result of military pressure, in what is known as the 28 February process, in 1997 for violating the secular principle of the republic. It was in the 1990s that wearing of headscarves by women was put on the agenda of Political Islam more decisively than in the 1980s, as the most pronounced cultural expression of the new Islamist political subjects (Yavuz, 2003, p.208). This was partly the result of the increasing presence of the new Islamic middle class in the party, in which Islamist women played a significant role. Involvement in protests against the headscarf ban in universities and party political activism politicised Islamist women who, especially in the 1990s, “began to create new public spaces conforming to basic Islamic requirements, such as Islamic hotels, cafes, hair dressers (Çayır, 2008, p.69)”.

Another significant group within this new middle class was the newly arising Anatolian bourgeoisie, aspiring to compete in European and world markets. These new groups reframed ‘their religious demands and ideals in terms of universal human rights and liberties (Çınar and Duran, 2008, p.32). It was no surprise that the JDP (Justice and Development Party- Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP) arose triumphantly after the split of the WP into the traditionalist Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi, SP) and the reformist JDP in 2001. The landslide victory of the JDP in the 2002 general election, winning two thirds of the seats in parliament, opened up a new era in Turkish politics.

The Prime Minister Erdogan, said that he had taken off his ‘National Outlook shirt’, by which he meant that he had
abandoned the Islamic political project, and defined his party’s line as “conservative democracy” (Çayır, 2008, p.62). The JDP abandoned Islamic language and stressed human rights, social justice and economic development, enjoying support from a wide section of the population, representing people from all strata in its first term in office. The JDP managed to embrace the new urban classes, who had been excluded from cultural and economic life by the Kemalist elite, the rising Anatolian bourgeoisie seeking business opportunities at the centre and the poor urban and rural population who found the JDP’s commitments on social justice and emphasis on Islamic identity attractive, and finally a significant section of the Kurdish people who put their faith in the JDP initiated peace process, which was the first civil attempt to end the war between the PKK and the Turkish military and to recognise a Kurdish ethnic identity.

Although Islamist opposition to Kemalism dates back to the 1970s even to the 1950s, it was in the 1990s that this opposition threatened the Kemalist hegemony. As Gramsci (1926) argued a new hegemony is possible if the old order is in crisis. The existing order was resistant to the identity claims of the Islamists and Kurds. Moreover, it was under pressure to implement structural adjustment programmes and political reforms for the prospect of full membership of the European Union.

**Islamist Government Settles Old Scores**

This liberal phase of the JDP ended after the 2007 election

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1 The emergence of political Islam against the Kemalist hegemony cannot be explained solely by domestic political and social conditions. We need to take into consideration the rising popularity and power of political Islam since the 1960s in the Middle East and North Africa, as a force, rallying discontented masses either against foreign powers or domestic rulers. Nevertheless, Turkish political Islam has been shaped and largely characterised by the nature of the Turkish political context.
victory; the JDP, after passing a series of laws to eliminate the role of the military in politics, adopted an Islamic agenda, implementing a series of changes in the laws. One of the most significant changes was the lifting of the ban on the headscarf in public services in 2013 (Radikal, 8 October 2013), which was later extended to schools (Sözcü, 27 September 2014), the police force (Hürriyet, 28 August 2016) and the military (Hürriyet, 22 February 2017). The headscarf issue had been one of the major confrontations between the Kemalist secular elite and the Islamists, especially since the 1980s. The headscarf ban in the mid-1980s was protested by female university students, which triggered a series of protests, demonstrations and occupied the political agenda until the 2000s. The secular elite supporting the headscarf ban on the basis that “as a pre-modern image it (the headscarf) is unacceptable in terms of the principles of secularism, reformism and the Republic. Using democratic principles to challenge secularism is an abuse of freedom of religion” (Vojdik, 2010, p.669). On the other hand, the Islamists hung on to the headscarf issue, as the most popular manifestation of their resistance, to further their political struggle against the secular elite.

Kemalist reforms, including the unification of the education system and the closure of the medreses (religious seminaries) in 1924, the introduction of the Latin Alphabet in 1928 instead of the Arabic alphabet, were considered to be “a marked break with the Islamic-Arabic past” as part of the “republican campaign of forging a new national identity and creating a hegemonic culture” (Yavuz 2003, p.50) were reversed by the educational reforms in 2012. The new education system, reducing the eight-year compulsory primary education to four years (Sabah, 16 September 2012) and reforming the national curriculum to allow more religious instruction could also be considered one of a series of attempts by the Islamists to settle their scores with the Kemalist elite (Yörük, 2016, p.150-151).
The government’s decision to impose restrictions on abortion (Milliyet, 19 February 2014), the banning of alcohol consumption in open public spaces, restrictions on sales of alcohol in certain districts are taken to be interventions and direct attacks on the secular lifestyle (Hürriyet Daily News, September 2013). The Gezi Park protests\(^2\) in 2013 were the most significant opposition against authoritarian tendencies and the increasing Islamisation of public life.

**Islamists’ Battle over Kemalist Symbols**

The JDP’s attempt to re-structure politics and society is accompanied by another battle, a battle over symbols. In this sense, prohibiting the chanting of the Kemalist oath at schools (Radikal, 8 October 2013) and the ending of official celebrations of National days, such as the Proclamation of the Republic Day on 29th October, the opening of the Grand National Assembly on 23rd April and the commemoration of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s death on 10\(^{th}\) November, are, perhaps, more explicit signs of targeting the symbolic presence of Kemalism in public spaces. As Ökten argues “ceremonies and rituals constitute an important part of the political dramaturgy in every modern society. They contain and transfer information and at the same

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\(^2\) The government’s plans for Taksim Square in Istanbul involved restructuring the square by replacing the Kemalist symbols that dominated the square with an Ottoman era style of barracks and a mosque. The government plan to demolish the Atatürk Cultural Centre, which overlooks the square, was also considered to be granting favourable construction projects to pro-JDP businessmen in the most important commercial centre of Istanbul. Finally, like all right wing governments in Turkey, the JDP wants to control the square, a place which has been a gathering place for all political protests including massive May Day rallies and all sorts of demonstrations. Thus, the JDP awoke the deep-seated fear in secular minded-people by its Islamisation polices; created an anxiety in liberal minded-business by creating a clientalist business culture; caused discontent among the environmentalists by opening up natural reserves for business.
In this sense, it is not so surprising to find out that in many public meetings and in official or unofficial ceremonies, JDP municipalities hire janissary bands (the Ottoman military band) (Bora, 2016). What this practice signifies is that these types of public events used to be marked by accompanying modern bands playing republican songs.

The most striking reflection of the political struggle between Kemalists and Islamists is to be found in everyday life, with citizens using symbols to manifest their alternative identities and to define their political positions. However, the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic have interchanged over the last two decades. Until the 1990s, the Islamists’ use of religious symbols was considered to be a form of resistance to the Kemalist hegemony, and a way to carve a space for manifesting their identities (Özyürek, 2007). However, when the Islamist Party seized power, the Kemalists, found themselves on the defensive.

Since the 1990s, as a reaction to the rising power of political Islam and militant Kurdish nationalism, both considered to be major threats to the founding principles of the republic, the presence of Kemalist symbols in public life became greater: The national anthem was chanted in stadiums before every soccer game (Koçak, 2015), a practice which still continues. Hanging Turkish flags with Atatürk portraits on the windows on national days or after a terrorist attack also became common practices in the 1990s.

Individual appropriation of Atatürk imagery (either as a form of inscription on the body or on the car window) seems to be a way to defend people’s cultural and political identity, perceived to be under threat by the JDP government. As they tattooed Atatürk imagery on their bodies, they articulated how they saw the JDP government as a threat to Atatürk’s Turkey (Zalewski, 2010).
Figure 3 A tattoo of a portrait and signature of Atatürk

Figure 4 A statement showing love for Atatürk on rear window of a taxi - Caption: “If you are bothered by my devote Atatürkism, I’m proud to bother you”.

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The images of figures 3 and 4 are indicative of the appropriation of Kemalist symbols by private individuals. Inscribing Atatürk’s signature and portraits on their bodies or on car windows are both political symbols, signalling the individuals’ political positions and an identity claim against their rivals. In other words, the increasing use of Atatürk symbols in public life reflects the Kemalists’ concerns over the Islamisation of social life under the JDP government.

These attempts to make images of Atatürk more visible, wherever possible, however, do not go unchallenged. Consider the images below, as to how the devoted supporters of both Atatürk and Erdoğan confront each other.

The most striking confrontation between the supporters of Atatürk and Erdoğan is the circulation of images depicting the named leaders as guiding lights for the future. In the image, there is a picture of Atatürk and a quote from him saying “The greatest war is the one waged against ignorance”. These are quite well known and every Turk is familiar with them. Hence, everyone is aware of the connotation of this wise saying and who it targets; those who are uneducated, or rather those who do not have a western style education. Figure 8 is almost a reproduction of Atatürk’s image, a picture of President Erdoğan with a quote from him saying “Read, think, act on it, get a result.” What is most significant in these two pictures and their use
by supporters of both leaders is that it shows a total trust on powerful leaders and venerates their words.

*Figure 7* Picture and signature of Atatürk - Caption: “The greatest war is the one waged against ignorance”

*Figure 8* Picture and signature of President Erdoğan - Caption: “Read, think, act on it, get a result”

*Figure 9* Portrait and Signature of Atatürk Caption: My (founder) father we follow your footsteps

*Figure 10* Portrait of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Caption: The Man, we follow your footsteps
The picture of President Erdoğan and a call on him by his supporters again is a reproduction of Atatürk’s image and his supporters call on Atatürk. This resemblance seems to suggest an eternal struggle of Islamists wrestling with Kemalists. Yeğenoğlu (2017) suggests that the Islamists’ struggle with Kemalism resembles the master and slave dialectic in Nietzsche (1989). According to this, the dominant cultural codes, symbolic language and all cultural practices are shaped by the struggle between two moral constructs of master and slave, eventually one dominating the other.

Conclusion

Turkish politics since the establishment of the Republic in 1923 has been shaped by identity politics.

The founding fathers of the Republic propounded the view that the new state and society would resemble the developed Western states and society, which represented the most civilised form of human society. They attempted to restructure politics and society in accordance with this ideal. Ideal citizens of the new Republic were expected to adopt this vision and change their lives accordingly. Those who resisted the Republican ideals, if assimilation was not possible, were suppressed. However, despite suppression, those repressed expressed their political demands whenever they found favourable conditions. At the outset, the Islamists’ challenge to the Kemalist ideas appeared in the form of resistance; those who resisted Kemalist domination claimed a significant space in political and cultural life.

The JDP’s seizure of state power allowed the Islamists to achieve their goals. However, the political battle carried out by the JDP against the Kemalist status quo, closely resembles the actions of the Kemalists when they were in power. Now the roles are reversed, the JDP aims at creating an Islamic society and state and suppressing those opposed to this new ideal.
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Building Inter-Cultural Bridges through *Patachitra*
From Storytelling to Storyboard

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In today's globalized world people from different cultures need to interact with each other and the purpose of education is to equip individuals to face life. Our workshop gives exposure to various aspects of Indian culture through the traditional art form patachitra and reinterprets the same. The workshop is based on the model Map-Bridge-Integrate and is designed to help people (adults and children) of different cultures to get together and learn about each other and hence about themselves. Recent research and practice focus on the idea of developing cultural intelligence, which is the ability to adapt and work effectively with people from other cultures, while maintaining one's own identity.

**Introduction**

“It was the best of times
it was the worst of times,
it was the age of wisdom,
it was the age of foolishness,
it was the spring of hope,
it was the winter of despair”

Thus wrote Charles Dickens in the year 1859 in his celebrated work “A tale of two cities”¹. This could well be a description of

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¹ *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) is a famous novel by Charles Dickens (1812-1870), set in London and Paris in the period before and during the French Revolution. The
our times which appears to be an age of information but also of ignorance. We live a “click” away from each other but we still have so little knowledge or awareness about countries and cultures other than our own. However, in order to live and operate successfully in today’s globalized world we must have more and more exposure and enhanced awareness of different cultures. Only if we know each other can we hope to better understand each other and of course understanding is at the basis of a peaceful coexistence. Charles Caleb Colton said “We hate some persons because we do not know them and we will not know them because we hate them”\(^2\).

Our workshop on *patachitra* was designed to help people (adults and children) of different cultures to get together and learn about each other and hence about themselves.

We work especially between India and Italy. Often Italians refer to India as “*un paese lontano*, “*una cultura lontana*” i.e. a faraway country and a distant culture. Through our workshop we try to span this cultural distance and to construct an intercultural bridge. The same workshop has also been conducted in India where it helps people to reflect on India’s inherent diversity and to bridge the gap between different sub cultures.

**A Few Words on Culture**

Many volumes have been written the world over in order to define the word culture and its myriad nuances. The Miriam novel depicts the plight of the French peasantry demoralized by the French aristocracy in the years leading up to the revolution and also the brutality demonstrated by the revolutionaries toward the former aristocrats in the early years of the revolution, and it also draws many unflattering social parallels with life in London during the same period.

\(^2\) Charles Caleb Colton (1780–1832) was an English cleric, writer and collector; his books, which include collections of epigrammatic aphorisms and short essays on conduct, had a phenomenal popularity in their day.
Webster dictionary defines culture as “The characteristic features of everyday life shared by people in a particular place or time.”

Swami Chinmayananda said “When a group of people live together for a long time in a particular geographical area, living certain values, the special individuality or fragrance that emanates from that group is said to be their culture (Tejomayanada, 1994)”.

Thus culture is a complex set of shared values, beliefs and behavior that is taught and learned, often unconsciously and passed on from generation to generation. Each individual is shaped and molded by his or her culture.

Culture includes both verbal and nonverbal aspects of behavior. Observable words and actions are based on values and beliefs that are so ingrained in us that we are perhaps not even aware of them. These deep values and beliefs motivate what we see and how we see, what we say and how we say, what we decide and how we decide thus giving us our “cultural glasses” through which we look at the world. Herein lies the secret of stereotypes and generalizations which however though not fully correct always have a grain of truth thus we say things like, Germans are punctual, Italians are uninhibited etc. In any given culture there is a tendency for people to think, believe and act in certain ways that are considered “normal” “correct” or “right” by them. This often leads to seeing things which are different from one’s own culture as “strange”, “incorrect” or even “wrong” rather than just “different.” Culture provides us with our common sense but one must bear in mind that common sense is only common to people who share the same culture. For example: Italian common sense says that when you enter a house you take off your coat while Indian common sense tells you to take off your shoes!

Needless to say culture is complex and multi layered and goes much beyond national culture, it includes for example academic
and educational culture, sports culture, generational culture, gender culture, business culture etc. Thus each individual is a complex creation of diverse influences hence often we find people in any and every culture who do not reflect the central features or traits of the given national culture. However broadly speaking a common culture or national culture means a conformity to certain patterns and hence the concepts of cultural specific traits and being Italian, Chinese, Indian etc. Through our workshop we try to focus on the fact that different cultures have different values and nothing is really absolute. We also try to encourage dialogue to illustrate this idea by talking about simple subjects like food, clothes and languages. The idea is to understand that what is “good“ or “beautiful“ in one culture or country may not be the same in another. This apparently very simple idea is often rather difficult to grasp. For example, in India, most people tend to consider the sari as a very beautiful and elegant dress, and they find it quite incredible that in Indonesia for example the sari is considered improper as it shows the midriff; on the other hand, the Indonesian sarong is considered improper in India as it leaves the shoulders uncovered. Starting with such simple subjects one can move to more complex ones according to the age and experience of the participants.

Looking into the different factors which create an individual’s culture also helps to understand that even two brothers could have different cultures simply because of the sports that they practice or the school that they attend. We are created by our culture, and our culture too is created by us thus when collective thinking changes within a culture the process of cultural change sets in.
As we all see the world through our complex cultural glasses we need to vary the power of the lens in order to have a new cultural vision and understanding. All this has been beautifully summed up by Rudyard Kipling in *Debits and Credits* (1920)

“All good people agree
All good people say,
All nice people like Us are We
And all other people are they.

But if you cross over the sea instead of over the way
You may end by (think of it) looking on We as only a sort of they.”

Today the “world is flat” (Friedman, 2005) and whether we like it or not, want it or not people who come from different cultures need to interact and work with each other, and the very purpose of education is to equip individuals to face the realities of life. In today’s new world with its new reality children and even adults
have new needs hence we must find new ways of satisfying these needs.

Our workshop was born with the idea of exposing Italians (children and adults) to various aspects of Indian culture through the traditional art form *Patachitra* and to facilitate dialogue and exchange of thoughts and ideas both on the “self” and “other”.

The project on *Patachitra* is constantly growing and as Ambassador S.K.Verma, in his introduction to the book “*Immagini, Storie, Parole*” has said it is “...a tool of intercultural bridge between the two nations and their respective cultures and traditions.”

**A Few Words about Patachitra**

The art form *Patashilpa* is actually a combination of *Patachitra* (Sanskrit- *patta* cloth and *chitra* picture / painting), painting on cloth and ‘*Pater Gaan*’ (Bengali- songs that accompany a *pat* or scroll). *Patachitra* is a traditional art form wherein stories are depicted or painted scene by scene on long pieces of cloth (*Patta* in Sanskrit). This is also a performing folk art. The performer, *chitrakar* or *patua*, sings the story or *pater gaan* as he or she unfurls the scroll. The songs are oral traditions – usually stories from the epics (Ramayana and Mahabharata) and Hindu mythology, which have been passed down orally through generations.

This art was a form of popular entertainment in the past. The *patuas* used to go from village to village, singing their songs and displaying the scrolls to earn a living. *Patachitra* is a unique blend of painting, storytelling and singing which includes the depiction of a complex theme through a series of picture frames. It may be viewed as an early storyboard or even a precursor of motion pictures. With modernisation and the introduction of radio,
television etc. this form slowly lost its popularity; however, in recent years it has been revived and revitalised.

The art form has also changed with time in terms of theme and presentation. The themes of *Patachitra* which used to be derived from the Ramayana and Mahabharata or Puranas, now embraced global events like Tsunami, the 9/11 attacks, global warming and social evils like human trafficking, violence on women, terrorist attacks etc. Thus *Patachitra* has changed from local to global.

We work, mainly with the women *chitrakars* of Naya village, West Midnapur, West Bengal. In this little village of a few hundred inhabitants *Patachitra* has undergone a major change or evolution in the last 15 years or so, and that change is the active participation of women. In fact, they have changed into major protagonists of this art form while in the past they mainly remained behind the scene doing odd jobs like preparing colors or glue etc. The entry of women has had a major impact not only on the art form but also on the economic and social life of the village and community. These women who were once poor, exploited and backward today have a voice of their own and can make themselves heard through their own artistic ability and skill.

I have been studying *Patachitra* for quite a few years and often visit Naya and have the honor of having some *chitrakar* friends, to name a few Swarna Chitrakar, Mamoni Chitrakar, Karuna Chitrakar, Putul Chitrakar, Sushama Chitrakar and Sonali Chitrakar. To the best of my understanding these women are extremely balanced and socially productive individuals. They are a storehouse of skills, talents and collective memory. They are both traditional and contemporary, local and global.
Patachitra and our Workshop

During the workshop “From Storytelling to Storyboard” we use Patachitra as a building stone or foundation to focus on the following points:

The interreligious aspect: most of the painters or chitrakars are Muslim but they narrate Hindu folklore and the village is an example of harmony between religions. All the chitrakars have two names one Hindu and one Muslim, the same person could be called Manu and also Anwar. The chitrakars are often invited to perform even during Hindu festivals, like Durga Puja celebrations wherein it’s common to hold cultural shows, especially in the evenings. Muslims performing at a Hindu religious event is an incredible example of religious harmony and reciprocal respect.

Empowerment of women and their emergence and socio economic contribution. Through Patachitra women are addressing local and global issues and making their voices heard all over the world. Many of the women chitrakars have travelled to different villages, towns and cities of India and some of them have traveled all over the world from Mumbai to Milan and Delhi to Dubai. This is possible thanks to their artistic skills and abilities.

This art form is in essence like India itself: ancient and contemporary, traditional and modern, on the one hand it talks about tradition (religion, mythology, epics) and on the other hand addresses social issues like HIV, dowry deaths, violence on women, and also illustrates global issues like terrorism. Patachitra is an ancient form, which has evolved through the ages always including new ideas and thoughts. It has had difficult moments when it was on the brink of extinction but it never really died and is presently living a moment of growth and expansion.

Thus, the workshop portrays and presents some of the fundamental points of Indian culture through Patachitra, namely
continuity and evolution, empowerment of women and religious harmony. This art form also illustrates the concepts of Indian diversity and harmonious coexistence.

Another inherent element of the workshop is to talk about cultural differences (this can be done in many different ways and at different levels depending on the age and educational level of the participants), to open dialogue and to dwell not only on differences but also to seek inherent similarities\(^3\). Sometimes we focus so much on differences that we forget our inherent similarities and if we wish to develop the idea of respect for each other we need to understand that cultural differences should not prevent us from understanding our essential human similarities no matter where we are born. The point that we try to get across is that we may be different from each other but we are also equal to each other.

The *chitrakars* are basically storytellers which is an age old tradition the world over. For example, in mediaeval Gaelic and British culture a bard was a professional poet or storyteller so were the *azmari* (Ethiopia), *skalds* (performers in the Scandinavian and Icelandic courts during the Viking and Middle ages), *griots* (West Africa) and last but not the least the *cantastorie* of Sicily. Thus, through our workshop we travel from far to near, and unknown to known.

**Building Identity and Intercultural Bridges**

Needless to say, when two cultures meet, myriad questions are opened up, and we apply the MBI (Map-Bridge–Integrate) high performance model of Lane, Maznevski, Di Stefano and Dietz (2009).

\(^3\) Every individual is unique because their genomes are unique, there are millions of differences between one genome and another but at the same time DNA wise we are 99.9% same.
Mapping is about understanding our cultural differences. It means systematically and objectively describing characteristics of people, or groups, and identifying similarities and differences, the same can then be used to help in understanding each other. Many people do not like the idea of mapping because they are worried that the same may lead to stereotyping. They do not want to categorize others, or be categorized by others. This of course is a healthy and reasonable fear. In spite of this mapping is a powerful tool, needless to say, when used properly, and of course like any other tool it can be misused.

“Maps are objective descriptions of characteristics that are relevant to an interaction. They help people respect each other’s values and perspectives, and give people suggestions about how to use each other’s ideas better in an effective way. Maps should be seen as windows to the complex territory of human beings, ways of entering the different perspectives and really seeing the person inside.

Stereotypes, on the other hand, are subjective descriptions of groups of people that are usually used to judge those people, often in a negative way. Stereotypes
are assumed to be true and are neither tested nor changed with new information. They usually lead people to close doors – making assumptions about how people will behave – rather than open windows. Mapping to understand the lens through which others see the world is an enormous aid to intercultural effectiveness (Lane H.W., Maznevski M., Di Stefano J.J., Dietz J., 2009)."

Bridging is communicating effectively while taking differences into account. Although language is an important part of communication, the latter is not simply a matter of understanding and speaking a language. Communication is broader than language, it involves transmitting your thoughts and ideas to others in a coherent and fathomable, or understandable way.

In any case, communication is challenging, and it’s doubly so across cultures. In cross cultural communication it’s very important to be motivated to understand and to be understood. Integrating is bringing the different perspectives together. The main idea is to encourage the exploration of ideas with the conscious attempt to invent new ideas, to build on the ideas initially surfaced.

When these three skills are executed well, interactions between individuals are smoother and teams have a higher performance. In fact, the MBI model can be applied to any and every intercultural team and is often used in diversity management and conflict management.

A generation ago, when international managers travelled from one country to another one, the best advice they could get was to learn about the other country’s culture and to adapt as much as possible. However, today’s complexity, makes that advice naive. Instead, recent research and practice focus on the idea of Cultural Intelligence. Cultural intelligence is the capacity to act effectively in multiple cultural environments. It is a system of
interacting through knowledge and skills, linked by mindfulness, or the tendency to be thoughtful and deliberate about one’s actions and the reactions to them. One of the hallmarks of Cultural Intelligence is the ability to adapt and work effectively and respectfully with people from other cultures, while simultaneously maintaining your own identity. Needless to say, the same is related to Emotional Intelligence (EQ) however one may have high Emotional Intelligence within one culture, but not necessarily be able to apply it across cultures. (Goleman, 1995). Cultural intelligence (CI) or cultural quotient (CQ) is a critical part of the global mindset, and gives us the cultural context of self - and other -awareness. Interacting effectively and respectfully with other cultures while maintaining our own identity is of prime importance in today’s world.

A few words on Child Rights

Today’s children are tomorrow’s citizens and they have a right to be adequately equipped and skilled to face the challenges of life if they are to live and work across cultures then they need to be exposed to different cultures from their very childhood and trained on thinking about the “self” and the “other”.

In the Universal declaration of Human Rights, the UN has proclaimed that childhood is entitled to special care and assistance. “The child should be fully prepared to lead an individual life in society and brought up in the spirit of the ideals proclaimed in the charter of the UN, and in particular in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity.” Article 29, Part I, of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, UN General Assembly 1989 says “States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to ... the development of
respect for the child’s parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate and for civilizations different from his or her own”. Our workshop aims at developing these very values, and has been conducted in different academic institutions and organizations, both in Italy and India.

The Workshop “From Storytelling to Storyboard”

As the title itself suggests, the activity starts with storytelling, and finishes with the creation of a storyboard. The different workshop’s steps include:
- Narration of a Bengali story (which may be narrated in any language, we have done the same in English, Italian, Bengali, Hindi depending on where the workshop was conducted);
- Seeing the related patachitra painted by the women chitrakars of Naya or seeing photos of the same if the original scroll is not available;
- Viewing the written version in Bengali;
- Discussing the story and coming up with ideas, comments and suggestions;
- Reinterpreting the patachitra or scroll;
- Creating a new song/story for the same in one’s own language;
- Drawing the different scenes;
- Mounting the scroll;
- Signing the names.

We normally use “Bagh Sarosher Golpo” (The tiger and the crane)
or “Pakhir Biye” (The birds' wedding)⁴. Let us take for this purpose the story of the “The tiger and the Crane”.

Through the narration, the storyteller can take the participants on a virtual tour of India. Thus opening up the possibilities for dialogue and conversation.

With children, we start with the animals of India, and then talk about common animals moving to the idea of “common where” monkeys are common in India, but certainly not in Italy. This discussion depends on the age group of the participants and can be simple or complex; however, the basic idea is always to dwell on the “Self” and the “Other”.

We also transmit a few simple Bengali words like “bagh” (The English Tiger and the Italian Tigre are very different from the Bengali word) or “jangal” (both the English jungle and Italian giungla are rather similar to the Bengali word).

The participants can perceive both similarities and the differences. Through the story many different ideas like cultural differences, prejudice, mutual respect and peaceful coexistence may be discussed.

Then we show the original patachitra or scroll. Here again we can discuss the use of colors, and also talk about the fact that in Naya the chitrakars extract colors from roots, fruits, flowers etc. This can be a take off point to discuss conservation and respect for Mother Nature. Each step can be modified to open up

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⁴ This popular story talks about the relationship among some animals who live in a forest. All the animals live in friendship and harmony except the supercilious and arrogant tiger. He looks down on the others and especially the crane. The tiger laughs at the crane for its long and strange beak. But one day the “strange” crane saves the tiger’s life by using its “strange” beak to pull out a bone from the tiger’s throat and thus saving its life. From that moment the tiger sees the crane with different eyes and eventually a new friendship is born.

In the second story “Pakhir Biye” we have a tropical forest where different kinds of birds live together and all of them have similar habits. But there is one bird which has completely different habits and it also looks different thus it is generally considered “strange” or even “bad” by most of the others. On the occasion of a wedding all the birds were invited except the “strange” one.
different subjects according to the specific needs of the group. If the workshop is held in an Art School, then of course a whole discussion on folk art is spontaneously born and developed. Viewing the Bengali script has proved to be an exciting step in all the workshops (except the one conducted in Kolkata of course!).

The Bengali alphabet opens up valuable discussion on language, scripts and dialects. It is also useful to explain the linguistic diversity and challenges of India. In our workshops we have often noted that both, for children and adults, it’s often their first exposure to an alphabet other than the Latin or Greek alphabets. It may appear surprising to Indians but often foreigners, even adults, ask “In India people speak Indian, right? It is quite a common mistake and is born from the fact that for example, in Spain they speak Spanish, in Japan Japanese, and so. On thus it seems logical that in India people speak Indian. Even logic appears to be cultural!

In the next step the story is analyzed well, and discussed in detail, then it is divided into different scenes with a view to creating the story board. Once the storyteller communicates the story and the same is understood well the participants write the story in prose or verse in case they are not capable of this, because they are too young, this step can be eliminated or each picture can have a simple sentence like “This is a tiger” (Questa è una tigre).

So either a story is written, or a song is composed or simple captions are written. During our workshops we have produced “Bagh sarosher gaan” (The song of the tiger and the crane) in English, Bengali, Hindi, Bhojpuri, Rajasthani and of course in Italian. We have also produced simple scrolls just with captions and in a couple of cases just pictures without any song or writing. After this the participants get down to drawing, painting and
coloring. Sometimes they try to follow the *patachitra* style but more often than not they come up with new ideas. At Banasthali University (faculty of Visual Arts) we produced a number of scrolls in different styles. A group of students painted a monochrome, while others produced a scroll like a comic strip and arranged the song in Bollywood style.

In our workshops we cannot follow the original *patachitra* technique, wherein, the painting is done on paper which is reinforced with cloth that is pasted on the reverse of the painting with wood apple glue. We normally draw on white paper and then paste the drawings scene by scene on a dark chart paper and roll up the same. Small teams can be created to draw each scene; or each individual can draw a scene; this depends on the number of participants, their age, duration of workshop, number of trainers etc.

Once the scroll is mounted we put the names of all the artists. We have devised a “fusion signature” where the first letter is written in Bengali or Hindi and the rest in the language of the artist. This is a very positive experience for the participants and they feel really involved; and as the Chinese proverb says “Tell me, I will forget. Show me, I will remember. Involve me, I will understand”.

Our workshop in essence, follows the MBI model, it narrates and maps differences, then it bridges through dialogue and integrates new ideas to create something new.

The workshop has been held in many places the most important ones being the Triennale of Milan, EXPO of Milan, Science Fair of Genoa, Banasthali University, Rajasthan, Aikatan School, Kolkata. Important future appointments are for Bergamo, Italy, and Lugano, Switzerland.

In June 2017, during the festival “Abracciamondo” we held a workshop with children and another one with a group of asylum seekers from different countries (Ghana, Nigeria, Pakistan,
Senegal, etc).

It was extremely interesting to see how *patachitra* has a voice of its own and speaks through its colors and images going across linguistic and cultural barriers. The young men who come from diverse nations were able to understand the story with very minor inputs from the trainers; and they themselves produced a most stunning story board which was displayed to a gathering of about one hundred people.

Studies

I started working with *Patachitra* and the women *chitrakars* of Naya in 2011, when I first visited the village. The year before I had got in touch with Banglanatak dot com of Kolkata and our entire *patachitra* experience has been built in partnership with them.

In 2012 I was the Scientific Coordinator of an exhibition on *patachitra* held in Milan. Prior to that, I visited Naya. The exhibition had considerable success, and following the same I was invited to present *Patachitra* in different organizations and institutes. In 2013 I was invited to hold a special lecture on the subject by Professor M. Giusti (Faculty of Intercultural Pedagogy) at the State University of Milan Bicocca. This lesson led to many more, and was followed by different academic activities and projects which culminated in the organization of a Bicocca University Winter School to India, and the focus of the

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5 Banglanatak dot com is a social enterprise working across India with a mission to promote growth and protection of rights of women, children and indigenous communities. It is specialized in communication for development using theatre and developing community led creative industries, based on intangible cultural heritage like performing arts and crafts.

6 In October 2012, at Il Museo del Fumetto, in Milan, an exhibition of *Patachitra* was held and it was inaugurated with a performance by two *chitrakars* from Naya village, Swarna Chitrakar and her daughter Mamoni Chitrakar.
same was *Patachitra* and the *chitrakars* of Naya.

In January 2015, a group of 32 people, students and professors visited Naya. On this occasion we lived a real firsthand intercultural exchange with the *chitrakars* and our students together, with the *chitrakars* painted a scroll about four meters long, where they narrated our interactions with each other. The scroll has a *pater gaan* in Bengali composed by Swarna Chitrakar, and one in Italian composed by our students. This scroll and the art of *Patachitra* were presented by me in Mantua, at the Museo Dioesano “Francesco Gonzaga”, and also exhibited in Milan as a part of the exhibition “*Coesistence*”, Daniela Cattaneo. The first edition of the winter school was followed by two more.

The first Winter School resulted in the publication of a book “*Seguendo le donne chitrakar, Diario di un viaggio in India*” (Chakraborty U., Caldirola S., 2015). The same is a collection of writings by students and professors. The inherent pedagogic value of *Patachitra* is inestimable, and at present a number of students are working to investigate the possible use of *Patachitra* for children (they often use Pinocchio, a story which Italian children certainly are familiar and they work with the Pinocchio book illustrated by Swarna Chitrakar). Many new workshops have been created and conducted. Recently, a couple of students held a workshop where stories from the Arabian nights were depicted through patachitra. Some workshops have also been conducted with elderly people.

The language of *Patachitra* is powerful and direct, even if one does not understand the Bengali song of the scroll it is not a problem as the paintings with their bold lines and bright colors are captivating, they involve a person and make him think.

The roots of our project are to be found in Naya, India, but many...
new flowers are blooming in Italy. When we organized the first exhibition in Milan, in 2012, I daresay hardly anybody had heard of *Patachitra*; but today there are hundreds of people involved in it, with scores of new projects.

References


Declaration of the Rights of the Child approved by the General Assembly of the UN, November 1989. http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC


Urmila Chakraborty

Urmila Chakraborty born in Kolkatta (India) and has an international background. She has been living in Milan since 1994, working as a corporate trainer and cultural and linguistic consultant. She owns Englishour, a company of Cultural and Linguistic Services. She has numerous publications related to intercultural interactions and the Indian socio-cultural scenario. She also has long standing collaborations with universities in Italy and India (State University of Milan, Bicocca University, IISWBM,...), and various institutions, organizations and multinationals.
Upheavals in Europe: European Identity and Crisis Solution
Europe of the Three Regions

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European Doctorate degree on European identity and the EU crisis

The institutional forms adopted by the EU are based upon the implicit assumption that a common European identity would substitute for national forms of identity as a natural evolution. Although the European identity does exist, it does not allow for the kind of “one-fits-for-all” of the present EU system. The European identity – contrary to national identities – is a common set of democratic values shaped for respecting the very existence of heterogeneous national components. This paper illustrates how the EU institutional structure and governance should reflect such a plural identity by an alternative approach for maintaining social, cultural and economic differences (sub-identities) to legitimize the necessary acceleration of integration.

Introduction

The EU crisis reflects the unresolved opposition “supranational sovereignty” versus “national sovereignty”. The solution we propose is merely to adjust the governance structure along a more active use of the subsidiarity principle in its both constitutive ways (upwards for centralizing very few tools and downwards for most of the policies). The purpose is to reduce the democratic gap with the citizens and between sub-regions, by providing an operational way to ease the consensus building
both among Member States, sharing closer cultures, and across the main groups of Member States with different sub-identities. This solution consists in combining two initiatives that don’t imply any change in the Treaty decision-making procedures: to introduce sub-regional intermediary levels and to focus on market sanctions rather than fines for disciplining budgetary policies. The combination of such an intermediary level with a credibility competition in front of financial markets would allow for strengthening cohesion inside each group of like-minded countries (sharing closer cultural ties), as well as improving the convergence between these main sub-identities that constitute the main building-blocs of the EU common identity.

In the following, we articulate our analysis in more detail and propose problem solutions.

Democratic Gap

The democratic gap comes mainly from the inadequacy of the EU institutional architecture with the common identity shared by the Member States. For pro-Brexit supporter supra-nationality would be a dangerous illusion threatening democracy which would be only nationally rooted; while for the opponents to Brexit national sovereignty would “no longer mattered, that it was an illusion, that it could safely be pooled within the EU, and that anyway trying to exercise it would bring disaster” (Tombs, 2015).

There is an urgent need for a deeper analysis of both beliefs that rely upon identity simplistic views: for Brexit supporters only national identities do exist; for the opponents common EU identity does predominate national considerations.
For IRELAC\textsuperscript{1} Institute this lack of analysis of the identity dimensions is a fundamental reason that allows for explaining the weaknesses of the present EU institutional architecture, and the recent wave of anti-EU populism. In fact, the institutional forms adopted by the EU are based upon the implicit assumption that a common European identity would actually substitute “naturally” for national forms of identity, according to the same process that was observed when big national identities emerged from local idiosyncratic peculiarities. This apparently “common sense” assumption relies upon the current belief that the common European identity would merely be some kind of convergence towards an “average” (or a mixture) of its national components, and that the nature of an EU identity would be similar to any national one. This hypothesis is wrong for reflecting a misunderstanding of what actually is moving the regional integration process: it results precisely from the respect of the national sovereignty, from which something, new but complementary, could result as far as democratic processes might be ensured.

**The Brexit Debates**

The present Brexit debate illustrates the wrong answers both camps are giving to the EU crisis. Our present systemic EU crisis is the result of the “democratic gap” accumulated by several decades of politician practices and abuses in the way the EU is managed and decisions are taken. This deviation of powers is both cause and result of the so-called democratic gap. It also explains the dramatic gap between the collective expectations from the EU and its effective visible results.

\textsuperscript{1} Institut Interdisciplinaire pour les Relations entre l’Union Européenne et l’Amérique latine et les Caraïbes – IRELAC/ICHEC – Brussels Management School.
In turn, citizens address blindly their criticisms against the EU itself, against those who are emblematic of the EU integration, and those who have taken power and advantages from the open regionalism and the globalization.

Independently of discussing whether these criticisms are founded (they are according to our views), the democratic gap is cleverly channeled by populist movements which make now virtually impossible to build consensual solutions, and which push democratic parties to react, but in the wrong directions, by claiming even more national powers, too. Or more centralist powers, but in an intergovernmental manner, allowing to strengthen the national grip of the major countries upon EU decisions in a counterproductive way.

Vicious Circle and Populist Criticisms

A genuine vicious circle is presently in action, strengthening the populist criticisms: more populism provokes more national reactions from traditional democratic parties, which in turn makes more inefficient the EU architecture and tools, worsening the crisis and accelerating the democratic gap in a cumulative circular causality, giving additional arguments to the most primitive populist movements.

*Ceteris paribus*, this game should lead to EU disintegration, conflicts and impoverishment of Europe. Indeed, the reforms required for emerging from the present crisis – i.e. more EU integration, more economic openness, more solidarity, more assimilation of immigrants – are massively rejected impeding any positive escape for democracy and economic growth.

These options could not anymore be supported by clear political majorities, creating a vicious circle which makes worse
the democratic gap, and more difficult to gather a consensus across Europe, impeding so to trigger synergies and better governance. This system is demonstrating what the populists want: the perverse inefficiency of the EU.

An additional round of this vicious circle comes from the official reactions claiming for more Europe, but in fact for more centralism (like the “Merkozy” fiscal union or the Macron’s proposals) for recovering powers, but worsening the popular rejection. EU analysts and journalists generally insufficiently perceive this deep contradiction.

Asymmetry of Information

Populist risk is multiplied by the asymmetry of information when growth and trade are too low. With the present (durable) crisis, perceived winners have become a minority which concentrates unfairly income distribution and majority of citizens reacts with atavistic xenophobic reflex feeling exposed to losing “their rents” (job destruction and wage-cut under external competition and delocalization, technologic restructuring and budgetary austerity). Therefore, they look instinctively for primitive trade protectionism, state intervention and any alternative local options.

This asymmetric collective game is all the more perverse that it leads to revert the EU integration process and the border opening, which are the roots of the past prosperity, but also the only way to adjust productivity upwards for paying for their own ageing, saving financially their own social protection and so the social cohesion. Since the same trend is observed in the US, the UK and in most democratic countries, with the same degree of reluctance to trust the traditional oligarchies and the
(too often corrupted) political parties, it is clear that behind the questioning of integration and openness it is in fact democracy which is at high risk, and not just in Europe.

EU Systemic Fragility and Threat for Integration

The caveats in the EU institutional architecture create a systemic fragility which is a threat for integration. It took half a century to build part of this fragile house, and to set the basis of a genuine “EU identity”; but it could be easily destroyed in a single legislative period, in just a single big country without any possible intervention from the majority of EU citizens. This fragility comes from the insufficient effective common identity, which can only be built by more integration, more collegial decision making, more cooperative cooperation; the reverse of the “Merkozy” or the “Merkollande”, or even the announced search by President Macron for a formula of more centralistic economic government in the euro-area, and mainly through a deeper intergovernmental French-German cooperation.

This is another symptom that something is wrong for systemic reasons, and therefore calls for systemic solutions. The only way to shape an efficient response in this case is to identify the systemic nature of the fragility and risks. This implies that we dare to question the whole building structure, its architecture and the way decisions were (not) taken and mistakes were done. In particular, the main caveat is the mechanism of decision at the ECOFIN level, in which the national Ministers are “judge-and-parts”, making impossible to enact fair and efficient decisions, as clearly illustrated by the management of the Stability Pact and the whole failure of budgetary discipline and Pact sanctions.
Populism is not the Cause but the Symptom of EU Malfunctioning

Populism exploits a legitimate (but contradictory) popular concern – it is not the cause but the symptom of the malfunctioning of the EU. The point is that it is useless and meaningless to accuse populist leaders, or to consider that public opinion is poorly educated or misinformed by crazy politicians, with their electoral strategy to “misinform” with “alternative truths”. Populism is a major reality, a stubborn fact that expresses a reaction against the guilty establishment, which is self-protected from changes by the money of those who are exploiting rents from the current situation and globalization. In the EU, this reaction puts in question the mismanagement of those in charge who were unable to protect citizens against austerity and restructuration, but who extract powers from the fact that the regional integration was supposed to bring growth and macroeconomic stability to their voters.

National Politicians’ Abuse of EU Treaty

The malfunctioning of the EU allowed for populist demands to be effectively satisfied or tolerated by national politicians who violated the common goods and the Treaty². People were told by politicians and EU authorities that the Treaty and the single currency would warrant sound management and more job-led-growth at the very moment they were all cheating violating the common disciplines. Most national politicians (there are very few exceptions) seized the benefits of the euro for themselves

² As expressed very frankly by the President of the Euro-group, Jean Claude Juncker, in 2007 “We all know what to do, we just don’t know how to get re-elected after we’ve done it”.
in order to win next elections, but not for adjusting their wrong policies. People were abused by the coalition of those using the “official truth” of telling they want “more Europe”, when in fact they are using it for domestic purposes and passing the bill to their neighbors. This is the opposite of regional integration.

**Stopping the Present Derive towards EU Inter-Governmental Management and the Euro**

Populism could be defeated by stopping the present derive towards intergovernmental management of the EU and the euro. The genuine priority is to focus upon the “democratic gap” and to be able to undertake a questioning of the way the EU institutions have performed, and overall the way the EU institutional architecture could work when these institutions are used and abused by national politicians and vested interests. It is therefore incoherent and dangerous to claim for deeper integration of the members of the Eurozone together with the revitalization of a genuine solidarity within the single-currency bloc; the creation of a true fiscal union in addition to the monetary one; and the development of a social pillar in the Economic and Monetary Union. These nice ideas and projects – although valuable and corresponding to most official discourses on the Continent -- are precisely options clearly rejected by most populations and several Member States, because they are not supported by a previous consensus towards more centralization, i.e. citizens do not want more transfers of power towards a federal UE. As far as it is not understood from the beginning that pushing towards EU centralization is presently counterproductive, the important exercise of reforming the EU and the euro governance is doomed to fail.
Why? The main reason is not only the present lack of popular consensus for federal actions and goals, but also the popular rejection of the way the previous belief into the EU was used “undemocratically” by national politicians for their own interests. Fighting against this hidden derive towards inter-governmentalism with more centralization – like a social or fiscal union – is making the situation worse if the institutional architecture remains in the discretionary hands of national policymakers who are “judges-and-parts” as the euro crisis has been demonstrating for a decade (and is about to be even clearer). A social or fiscal union in the present situation would strengthen massively the populist movements against the EU and would accelerate the disintegration of the EU.

Embracing the Paradox of the EU Common Identity

The paradox of the EU common identity is the need for respecting fully national sovereignties and differences in national cohesive identities. Acero (2017) formulates a strong thesis to increase awareness of the essential and persistent difference between a common identity at multi-national level and the common identity shared by citizens. In fact, a shared identity as a result of the historical construction of a single nation, should be at the very basis to remedy the democratic gap and the resulting EU crisis.

Considering the processes of identity construction at national (or local) levels, historically identity used to be built by cohesion against foreigners and differences, most often as a result of political movements or power enforcement. At the EU level, a common identity emerges from similar choices for democracy and social values in spite of other differences, making possible to launch a voluntary cooperative processes which create value
added by combining complementary features between different national cohesion processes.

This difference is more fundamental that one could think at first glance, because the historical forces behind the emergence of national cohesion at Member State levels are contrary to the forces that made the EU integration possible. National identities, even after being softened by the (more recent) generalization of democratic practices, remain intrinsically the result of a (very) long historical process for reaching national cohesion and generally imposing it undemocratically: national identities were generally forged by violence (“swords and rapes”), and opposition to – or even exclusion of – foreigners and differences.

On the contrary – and largely in parallel and in reaction against nationalistic violence and messianic dogmatisms against differences – cohesion forces behind the EU integration grew up from a (also very) long process forging a common identity based upon the progressive construction and diffusion of common humanistic values. Leading actually to parallel national democratic processes, generating the respect for differences and local sovereignties. Indeed, the EU is the first (after the comparable and very unique case of the US federation3) democratic process of regional integration in human history. It means that – contrary to other cases of empire integration – it is based upon the full respect of national sovereignties, by sharing common democratic principles and auto-determination basic rule, by reaction to European wars and totalitarian regimes.

3 The case of the US is very specific for having been feasible in a quasi-vacuum space among a quasi-single social class composed with immigrants escaped from European religious, political or economic persecutions, easing the formation of common principles for ruling social life. This experience is not reproducible in other regions of the world. Furthermore, even in these ideal conditions for integration, a bloody civil war was needed during 4 years and 617,000 dead victims (much more than any external war in which the US were engaged) for ensuring the triumph of the federal Union integration.
The needed process for the EU integration towards a common European identity leading to opt democratically for (very limited) supranational tools, and the simultaneous need for respecting the very existence of heterogeneous national components should be seen as two complementary dimensions of a successful EU integration. This kind of integration based upon the “subsidiarity principle” requires sharing a common basis of democratic principles: a minimal but strong common identity, upon which a consensual building of closer cooperation could emerge step by step by democratic consensus.

The “European method of integration” is an attempt to allow for a progressive natural selection of practices favoring the ability to find a cooperative formula (Ghymers, 2005) between various opposed components. The inner character of the European identity – and thus of the “European method” which has led to successful integration – is the ability to capitalize in a collegial way from heterogeneous cultures and differences in identity features. The European identity is the result of interactions between national differences along with a long “trial-and-error” process, which allows for a progressive natural selection favoring the building of cooperation formulas across heterogeneous components.

The “Prisoner Dilemma” of the EU Common Identity

The progress in EU common identity is blocked into a “prisoner dilemma” which impedes to reap the EU value added for solving the crisis. Today it has become a banality to state that

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4 Strictly, a prisoner’s dilemma is considered to exist when individual gains from not cooperating are perceived ex-ante as higher than the individual reward for doing so, or the perceived individual loss from cooperating is higher than the expected cost of not cooperating. We apply it here to national policymakers who are trapped in no-cooperative behaviors.
the global economy is going through, not a cyclical crisis, but a very systemic one, in which economic policies seem unable to solve the major challenges our societies are facing. This is true not just for Europe, but also for other regions and economies, as shown by the populism upsurge and the resulting threats for democracy in other places. However, the specificity of the EU disease is that the failures of the EU institutional construction is more visible, and constitutes such an aggravation for the European crisis that it might create an additional handicap for the world economy.

On the one hand, the macroeconomic policies of the major economies have already reached their limits: the very high level of public debt prevents widespread use of fiscal instruments, which would normally be necessary in the present cycle of balance-sheet recession (“deleveraging”) with a clear need for compensatory demand (standard Keynesian equilibrium of under-employment). While, the pursuit of very expansionary monetary policies for almost a full decade has been exhausting their positive effects on real investment and growth, exposes now the economies to new risks and challenges as they fuelled new financial and real bubbles. They are creating serious distortions in the allocation of savings under the massive speculation that threatens global stability and makes especially delicate to stop pumping in massive liquidities. In this context, a cooperative approach is all the more needed that these economic policies generate growing spill over effects upon integrated partners.

On the other hand, as illustrated before the shortcomings of European institutions and the visible democratic gap inhibit Community responses to the crisis and implementation of structural reforms.

As we have seen, this opens the way to a vicious circle of disintegration, as common identity is impeded to play its role: growing populism destroys trust and impedes cooperative
measures with inevitable worsening of economic difficulties, and making any rational reaction more difficult for correcting the EU caveats. A “prisoner dilemma” which could result in a dramatic socio-political crisis.

Coming cyclical downturns (or slowdowns) could worsen the crisis, and trigger inevitable bursting of the multi-bubbles. A cumulative domino effect that could – in the worst scenario – even destroy the economic and social foundations of our Western civilization.

In the face of this emblematic impasse in which policymakers have been caught since the 2008-2009 crisis, IRELAC launched its multi-disciplinary research on the role of the common identity for efficient EU governance.

In order to find feasible consensual, adequate cooperative policy responses we think that the EU’s deeper problem of identity has to be faced. Our working hypothesis is that to get out of the prisoner dilemma trap the synergies that exist at the regional level should be addressed. Our research on European identity makes us now even more concerned and worried, as we are seeing our problem analysis continuously verified in reality.

The Need for a New Method, Coherent with our EU Common Identity

The recurrent lack of coherent responses from economists and main policy makers, who limit themselves to preserving the status-quo by prescribing no more than short-term prescriptions, postpones only difficult decisions. Actually, amplifies the causes of the difficulties.

We endeavour to undertake a more general reflection based on the contributions of various disciplines. The purpose is to
attempt to achieve a holistic diagnosis, capable of orienting towards coherent and workable solutions.

The crucial challenge is finding a new approach coherent with the existing basis of a common EU identity among a plurality of national identities. In order to make more consensual and legitimate the implementation of EU cooperative schemes, solutions should be able to respect fully the common integration goals by using local and national specificities to create value added cooperative actions. This is feasible by focusing upon pragmatic ways to put in place a “cooperative competition”\(^5\) (Ghymers, 2005), through decentralized and market-conform mechanisms for building broad consensus simultaneously among nations, sub-regions and for the EU as a whole.

The purpose of the research backing our positions was to try to identify the building blocks of the so-called “European identity”, and the degree of perception of this “shared identity” in the EU. This permitted to get an overview of essential perspectives on the identity problem and the system of popular reaction with mass mobilization. Thus the creation of a social discourse both, by the traditional elites and by some outsiders trying to surf on the popular dissatisfaction and fears for catching the power.

Such an analysis of the economic system on which our Western civilization is based, and which has driven its evolution up to now, makes it possible to understand the present emerging risks of schism and disintegration of Europe. As a matter of facts, recent events show that Europe is exposed to losing its identity, and betraying the values which have been making it greater since the Enlightenment.

Although a European identity does effectively exist, it does not allow for the kind of cultural uniformity or harmonization and “one-fits-for-all” of the present EU system, and its Euro area.

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5 Member States compete as sovereign responsible but inside a common scheme of dialogue, rules and collegial monitoring at the EU level which allows for cooperative actions, see Ghymers C. 2005.
The European identity is a set of values that makes it possible and easier to use differences for generating added value, as far as a cooperative system does work. Indeed, a common European identity does exist, but not as a cultural uniformity allowing for single governance scheme; but, rather, as integrative dynamics among durable cultural differences, and even opposite sub-identities.

Therefore, the EU institutional structure and governance should reflect better such a plural identity, by an alternative method for using social, cultural and economic differences (sub-identities at regional levels) to legitimize the necessary acceleration of integration across them, for building consensus able to generate additional benefits for all.

The Crucial Role of More Active Subsidiarity

As already mentioned, historically the formation of national identities was everywhere the result of long processes of forced integration generally imposed by violence, not by democracy. Democracy itself emerged from local forces, which were able to be extended to broader national territories as far as the inner cohesion of a national identity was able to prevail.

The EU integration process, although initially emerging also from previous wars, is the first one (after the US special case) to be based upon a full democratic will, through a fully peaceful manner in the full respect of national sovereignties, demonstrating the existence of the basis of a common European identity, which is - contrary to the creation of national identities - intrinsically associated with democratic values.

However, this common European identity is very different from the national ones, because it offers a peculiar paradox: the
contradiction between the necessary decentralization inherent to democratic pluralism, where cultures and local sub-identities are durably different, and the necessary centralization of actions and tools for making possible the integration process, and its value-added economic efficiency. This contradiction disappears at national level, as far as a territorial entity enjoys a strong single identity; but it is all the more important in the EU where the common identity is not only weaker, but inherently different as it is based upon the acknowledgement of differences and full respect of national sovereignties. Democracy requires a narrower geographical scope; while integration requires a broader scope of actions, and some degrees of centralization of powers.

The solution does exist and is simple: democracy has also a spatial dimension. Subsidiarity principles should make compatible democracy with centralization as far as there is sufficient awareness of the advantage of a clear centralization in very few natural and obvious areas very different with respect to the huge majority of other areas for which the efficiency of supranational action remains unclear. Therefore, subsidiarity tends to be easier to become legitimate and to be perceived as more democratic.

**Europe of the Three Regions: E3R**

Acero (2017) sustains that the key is to “harmonize” economical patterns in a fully democratic way, and not by imposing majority against minorities. This is feasible through a more active principle of subsidiarity in both ways: upwards to the EU and downwards to the regions. By opening an intermediate level of integration made up around the three strong sub-identities: Mediterranean,
Central-Northern and Eastern Regions. Following the three main Indo-European language roots (Germanic, Roman and Slavic languages) that conform Europe.

This approach of a “Europe of the three Regions” (E3R) could be fully compatible with the existing Treaty, the Member States respective sovereignties, and the EU decision making procedures, by merely adding – either voluntarily, or by normal Council of Ministers decision – an intermediary step. In this way, the sub-national regions could get incentives for participating more actively together with their own Member States, in order to build each of these three broader multi-national regions.

Such an intermediary level would create new dynamics and facilitate the EU decision process, which would intervene only after passing through a two-tiers system of dialogues for building consensus. An intra-regional consensus among each of the three main groups, and an inter-regional dialogue across the three regions, for reaching an EU consensus when needed according to the Treaty.

Thus, our proposal of “Europe of the three Regions” is an alternative for maintaining, or even accelerating the integration dynamics through an intermediary level of “subsidiarity”, that each of these three main regions might decide on their own. Such a voluntary level is more apt to take into account the socio-cultural and economic differences (sub-identities), and to benefit from a stronger cohesion for legitimizing the necessary acceleration of integration. The intermediary level could open to more “tailor-made” options, and strengthening, when useful, the voices claiming for sub-identity differences inside the EU. This intermediary level allows to preserve the cultural and social peculiarities while strengthening the European identity in its ability to process the differences. Furthermore, this method would not question nor reduce the common Community mechanisms of the EU at the final level: neither the EU objectives
nor the decision mechanisms. The three Regions may build their own consensus on their own and according to their own rules although they remain exposed to the competition of other sub-regions: they are under constraint to justify their consensus and to debate with other Member States at the EU level, which remains the only legitimate “last-resort” decision making level. Nevertheless, this approach permits to launch a “win-win game”: the debate across different sub-regional consensus should be easier since it reduces differences to the essential and allows for speeding up the awareness of the common interests. It contributes to build up more consensual views and therefore to improve the legitimation of the integration.

In conclusion, our approach consists merely of the combination of two basic principles that ideally could develop to open a new integration road by allowing for a multi-speed Europe inside a strict common EU scheme:

1. Propose the realistic organization of an intermediary level of “subsidiarity” by re-grouping voluntarily the EU Member States into three big sub-regions (Mediterranean, Central-Northern, Eastern). This “Europe of the three Regions” is an alternative for maintaining together the EU, and legitimizing big national economic differences (sub-identities) without impeding the necessary acceleration of integration and without threatening the cultural and social peculiarities. This intermediary level strengthens the European identity in its ability to process the differences, without eliminating common EU Community mechanisms as a final level. The three Regions would build first their own consensus for presenting them to the EU level for decisions. The EU would remain fully valid for reaching final consensus, and legitimized through the European Parliament the will of national parliaments.

2. Implementation of cooperation by “sovereign coordination”
without harmful centralism, driven by the self-interests of national officials themselves; but in permanent dialogue and interaction at the level of each of the three Regions, so that the interdependencies are properly taken into account in the sovereign national decisions in an endogenous way (incentives or penalties on financial markets). To give a concrete application, this should be implemented through the creation by the EU (Commission and European Central Bank) of a new kind of Treasury bonds, stamped as “blue Bonds” and benefitting from a full guarantee of all the Member States once they fully respect the common discipline or the approved adjustment plans (for those Member States in financial stress). These new “blue bonds” would immediately introduced a “spread” in the interest rates paid by common existing national Treasury bonds which would not enjoy a community guarantee. This means national bonds would be rated below blue bonds but with a spread varying according to the quality of their budgetary policies, which compete in front of the rating agencies and the financial markets. This introduces positive or negative market sanctions for national policies, eradicating the need for politically decided sanctions (as in the Treaty and the Stability Pact), and internalizing the effects of each national policy upon the euro-area. Only the constitutionally responsible authorities would be accountable for the rating of the country, eliminating the unpopular aspects of the Treaty and the risks of populism exploitation of the budgetary discipline which is not imposed by supranational power but for the sake of the Member State itself.

Most of the identity opposition between national and community level could be solved by activating these subsidiarity principles. The proposed approach allows sub-regional identities to find out their own economic policy consensus inside the EU decision-making procedures. And allows to debate in competition with
other Member States and other sub-regions. Introducing an EU financial cooperation scheme by creating special national bonds under EU guarantee would further allow for an internalization of competing economic policies.

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This paper proposes a new paradigm to respond to the challenges facing the new millennium. The old scientific paradigm has caused the unprecedented destruction of our planet and the brutal process of dehumanization by reducing life to a degraded, debased and undignified commodity. The old paradigm has decayed to the point of an irreversible collapse; this is a collective failure of human thinking. However, new scientific and technological developments have enabled us to integrate new disciplines, ideas, and models so as to establish the emergence of a “new science”. A new systemic conception of life is emerging, rejecting the old paradigm’s belief system. “We are not predetermined or preordained by an historical flawed, simulated reality of power.

Culture and identity for this millennium are a non-linear dynamic, complex and ever evolving open process of integrated living systems of cognition and consciousness in the development of quality human co-existence and quality co-habiting (Gonzalez-Carrasco, 2010)

Introduction

We are in the process of a fundamental paradigm shift, an unprecedented speed of scientific and technological discoveries, fast changes in all spheres of life, in a way that humanity have never witnessed this before coupled with the emergence of new thinking foundations, based on a systemic view of life. In this new millennium, for the first time, we have made the connection
that the future of humanity is intrinsically intertwined with the future of our planet. I have defined the new thinking as multidisciplinary and multidimensional, an integrative set of new knowledge foundations under the concept of “new science”. These new knowledge foundations are empowering and include quantum physics, epigenetics, neuroplasticity, ecology, biology of human cognition, new discoveries in data science and technology (artificial intelligence), as well as digital social communications.

New science is contributing to the rejection of the old paradigms, inspiring us to opt out of the historically dominant cultural thinking narrative that has maintained our existence, our culture, our identity and our belongings as preordained and predetermined. New science has empowered us to establish that nothing is fixed or preordained; that everything - matter, mind, energy, life - is entangled, and intertwined living systems; and that culture and identity are fluid, dynamic, complex, non-linear, open, and ever evolving.

The collapse of old paradigms

The thinking foundations of the old paradigms were established during the Bronze Age in China, Egypt, Greece, and Arabia. Their prevailing characteristics were: (a) male dominated hierarchical structures of power with the exclusive ownership of the land the sole right of the ruler; (b) self-appointed divine rulers; (c) a detailed division of labor; (d) the emergence of binary logical-rational thinking; (e) the establishment of language and writing; and (f) the creation of written laws, orders and rules, to enhance and retain the power of the rulers (Chan, 2005). A system of beliefs, thinking practices and human perceptions
were thereby constructed which fixed and imposed fictional and mythological stories and predetermined entities. Propagated by religion, ideologies and cultural identity, these divine creators and superhumans became ‘real’ through the unexplained science of the emergence of their creation (Kingsley, 2014; Sagan, 1995), based on rituals, imageries, and taboos to be accepted as “logical”, “rational”, “universal”, and “natural” (Harari, 2015).

The modern “enlightenment” version of the old paradigm practices reinforces the main pillars of male binary hierarchical power: the rulers’ ownership of the land and of the law, coupled with a new Cartesian binary rational, logic, and Newtonian mechanical and reductionist view of life. The key characteristics of this more modern paradigm are:

a. Scientific materialism;
b. Human liberalism (i.e. freedom of the individual and the free market); and
c. Democracy.

These foundations have framed, dominated, degraded, and de-humanized human co-existence and our relationship with our planet (Schafer, 2013). The modern enlightenment developed new fictional entities such as geo-political nation-states, money, and corporations. One of the most successful of all fictional stories, accepted by all ideologies, religions, and cultures, is the story of money (Still, 1996). Moreover. It is this historical alliance of religion, money, the military and science that has been pivotal in securing “military, economic power and cultural supremacy” (Gonzalez-Carrasco, 2015; Robins, 2012).

We live in a perceived reality constructed by powerful rulers, defined by Philip K. Dick (1977) and Jean Baudrillard (1994) as a simulated materialistic reality (living in an illusory reality). Dick
explored philosophical, social, and political themes in novels with plots dominated by global corporate monopolies, authoritarian governments, alternative universes, and altered states of consciousness (Dick, 1977; 1981 as cited in Behrens, 2003 and 2008). The renowned French Philosopher and sociologist Jean Baudrillard (1994) exposed the façade, the masking of the materialistic reality of power. Baudrillard, uncovered the masquerade of the narrative of the enlightened “democracies”, (i.e. “individual freedom” and “free speech”), to be a façade projected by global information networks and global capitalism “...substituting the signs of the real for the real” (Baudrillard, 1994; Musk, 2017; Lipton, 2017).

System of Beliefs – Constructed Binary Rationality

Humanity has evolved with a system of beliefs based on strong, persuasive, and convincing stories which have been used by rulers to impose on us a scientific narrative of “reality” and of “power”, allowing ruling elites to exercise total hegemony while controlling and dominating the world.

The collapse of the financial system in 2008, on which Lord Mervyn King, the former President of the Bank of England, reflected, “Very smart people thought it was fun and completely acceptable to exploit less smart people” provides a recent example of the reality of this power (King, 2017).

Nevertheless, this narrative has been accepted as the sole and exclusive credible “rational scientific reality”. According to Mary Midgley, the institution of “rational materialistic science”, described as the “omnicompetence of science”, is totally integrated in the myths by which we live (Midgley, 2011).

Science is not about human beings seeking real human experiences. It is all about “power”; the intimate power
relationship between science, money, and the military. Historically, science has sought to secure tight alliances with dominant political ideologies, religious institutions, and above all with global corporations (Harari, 2017; J. Bartlett, 2015; 2017).

The old paradigms have been instrumental in ensuring human alienation and setting in motion a widespread crisis, of not only its individual parts, but also of the whole; it is the crisis of the Platonic, Socratic, Aristotelian, Darwinian, Cartesian, Newtonian mechanical and fragmented system of beliefs. The Socratic method was the first to structure the existence of a divine binary rationality of the opposites, consisting of fragmenting, dividing, and distinguishing opposite parts and then separating these parts (units) from the whole.

In this worldview, natural laws consist of the divine logic of binary algorithms of opposites, of (1) and (0). This fragmented binary system is the rational science of God (1) or the Devil (0); God (1) or Humans (0); Leaders (1) or Followers (0); Good (1) or Evil (0); Winner (1) or Loser (0); Material (1) or Immaterial (0); Rational (1) or Irrational (0); Logical (1) or Illogical (0); ... There is nothing inbetween: no intra, no inter, no mixing, no switching, nor anything fuzzy in this binary-asymmetrical-power narrative. All is black or white, good or bad, beautiful or ugly. Fragmented reductionism separates humans from humans, humans from nature, mind from body, body from soul, man from woman, you from the other. It is the binary law of “Yes” or “No”, the law of “all or nothing”, the law of “you are with me” or “against me”. Something is perfect, or ... should not be. (Gonzalez-Carrasco, 2015). This is the political foundation of the modern enlightenment. The old paradigms and systems of belief start collapsing, but they are not yet dead; however, a new and open systemic thinking, and view of life, has now emerged.
Emergence of a New Systems View of Life

Thanks to the rapid advancements in science and human evolution, the Socratic, Cartesian and Newtonian practices have been challenged and, in fact, rejected (Coates, 2012). In this post-Cartesian approach, mind, body and consciousness are now defined as a unifying process of cognition; and with this new perspective, an interdisciplinary convergence of ideas has captured the zeitgeist of the twenty-first century.

Figure 1  New Science and Self, Mind, Body, Soul

The universe and life are no longer a mechanical Newtonian concept of a machine, but, rather, both the universe and life are a process of networks of an inseparable set of relationships. Mind and matter, no longer appear to belong to two separate categories; but are seen as representing two complementary aspects of the phenomenon of life (and of energy): the process aspect, and the structure aspect.
At all levels of life, beginning with the simplest cell, mind, energy
and matter, process and structure are inseparably connected. Thus, for the first time, with this new systems view of life, we have a scientific theory that unifies mind, matter and life (Capra, 2014).

New science has reconnected mind and nature, our ecology with our mind: this is the connectivity and conductivity of living systems. Benson (1979) and Francisco Varela (1993; 1997; 2002) have demonstrated that our human biology is intrinsically in harmony with our environment/nature. It is not culture, or identity, or religions or ideologies that make us “human beings”, it is our eco-biology (Gonzalez-Carrasco 2015). Thanks to new science, we can now reject the historically pre-ordained narrative that culture and identity are both immutably fixed by the nation-state, by race, by class, by ethnicity, by creed, by gender, or by our socio-economic conditions.

Figure 2 New Science and Human Empowerment
Modern Fake Enlightenment and Flawed Identity Biases

The “modern foundations” of the dominant narrative arise from enlightenment (XVI-XVIII), “The Age of Reason”, with the emergence of two antagonistic confrontational rational materialistic ideologies:
(a) human liberalism, embodied by “democracy” and the “free” market, and (b) social humanism, embodied by “communism”, state ownership of the national resources and means of production.

These two binary ideologies brutally confront each other in diverse geo-political zones of influences, to pursue their global hegemony. This endless antagonism is used by these ideologies to enslave humanity in a permanent spiral of brutality and violence, while at the same time exploiting our planet as if it were an endless cash machine; “Mother earth is not sick, we are sick” (Lane and Merriam, 2017).

In this context, modern “enlightened” nation-state laws continue to disconnect the national and international legal systems from power and violence (Capra and Mattei, 2015). The modern nation-state has thus set the legal geo-political boundaries, by which ruling elites are able to establish a homogenous and hegemonic national culture, that takes ownership of both our nationality and of our identity.

The nation-state and its institutions (the law, politics, education, religions, the media) frame the cultural narrative for its citizens, and subjects to accept their adherence to the state, using “nationality” and a “national passport identity” as its legal ownership.

In this context, citizens display a sense of respect and irreverence to state institutions; whereby, a nationalistic-patriotic (and a false and selective) historical narrative involving a profound
sense of loyalty, ensures unquestionable obedience to the nation state.

Amazed, confused, and deluded by the power of statehood - that most artificial construct – we should ask: are we not also citizens of our homes, our neighborhood, our communities, our city, our world? Today, the promoters of nationalism, patriotism and the extreme chauvinists dismiss this question of “citizenship”. This attitude is exemplified by the words of the current British Prime Minister, Theresa May: “If you are a citizen of the world you are a citizen of nowhere” (May, 2016).

This view must be rejected. Instead, we need to recognize that our essential rights flow, not from some delusional circumstances of nationality and certainly not just from our national passport; but from our very essence as individual human beings, involved in a planetary network of human relationships. Unfortunately, the great majority of citizens around the world remains in denial, and are disconnected from the suppression of conscious or unconscious exploitation in its many forms of discrimination, exclusion, disenfranchisement, and marginalization.

**Collapse of the fake culture and identity and the emergence of open belongings**

This flawed fixed cultural and identity reductionism is collapsing, it is not longer convincing and it is increasingly unable to permanently frame us. Despite this deceitful narrative and its accompanied belief system; that our culture is learnt within, acquired and owned by the territorial nation-state, by nation we are born, by the passport we secure, by the nationality given to us by the nation-state, this dominant legal and intellectual narrative, of culture, identity and belonging is evaporating like
hot air.
In this century we are transiting into a new multidimensional and complex self, we are placing a much higher value on quality human coexistence based on mutual respect and mutual validation of each other, at the center of this new quality human co-existence is the practice of open belongings. Today is not culture or identity but is our sense of belonging that give us the opportunity to explore the full potential of our multidimensionality and multi-sensorial self.

*Fallacious Stereotypes, Conscious and Unconscious Self-Censorship*

At the core of the dominant binary scientific system of belief is the compulsory human labeling, the damaging and *fallacious stereotypes*, the flawed classifications, categorizations and the demeaning human generalizations that we make in almost all our daily interactions.

As Jacque Fresco (2008) said “*No one is born with greed, prejudice, bigotry, patriotism and hatred; these are all learned behavior patterns. If the environment is unaltered, similar behavior will reoccur*”.

The labeling of the self as internal, and of the environment (the other) as external, is the product of this rational binary and fragmented thinking. It establishes the barriers and boundaries of our mental process and spiritual experiences that deeply disconnect the self from the other and the self from nature. A newly born child, or our favorite pets do not label us, nor do they pre-judge us or categorize us. They do not ask about our gender, our age, our skin color, our culture, or about our identity.

This disconnect and denial of conscientious and unconscious biases creates the conditions of a self-imposed form of self-censorship, obscuring and limiting our human awareness, our
consciousness, our imagination, and our ability to explore our multidimensionality, our multi-sensorial holistic self.

These human constructed barriers act as a brake when one attempts to transform and change the dominant rational scientific narrative of the single fixed identity of the self, or of the fixed other, or of the fixed culture. The appropriation of the physical, mental, and spiritual space builds the boundaries to the possibility of developing and sustaining new types of beliefs and human thinking.

As a result, our consciousness, as if infused with anesthetics, is in an amnesiac state; we have forgotten how to be citizens actively questioning how we live. We believe that we do not have the information nor the knowledge to transform ourselves, to build a new type of society; moreover, we are convinced that we are powerless to challenge and change the existing structures of power. As long as we cannot break from the simulated reality that has been historically imposed on us by powerful ruling elites, we will be unable to change our societies. This imposed self-censorship is one of the most serious dangers facing society today. (Bartlett, 2017).

**Disempowerment and De-Humanization**

Our human potential has been commodified, degraded, and debased. The dominant system of belief frames us into self-censorship and disempowers us as human beings. It makes human beings victims of a false predetermined fate; it prevents us from being a whole human being and a whole person. Scientific rational materialism has made life and humanity become a “transactional, utilitarian commodity”, and, accordingly, it has created a wasted, degraded and debased commodity. This transactional commodification of humanity has reached an
unprecedented level of destruction, fear, and human delusion. It has transformed us into a commodity that is disconnected from our planet, and our planet has become a transacted business for the benefit of the few.

We have become de-humanized, removed from reality by a deceitful, illusory and simulated sense of security and stability, which the nation-state claims to guarantee to its citizens/subjets. Human beings are prevented from taking control of their own belief systems, of reaching higher levels of consciousness, and as such, are not in a position to maximize their full human potential in developing quality relationships with others and or with our planet (Schafer, 2013).

The Foundations of New Science for Human Empowerment

The modern enlightened nation-state, despite its powerful global corporations and its control over institutions such as the media, religion, and education, can no longer guarantee the promised happiness, stability, and security to its citizens. These institutions have transformed life and humanity into a “debased and degraded commodity”. This commodification of life in most of its dimensions has reached unprecedented levels of insecurity and has created a precarious and fragile state of mind and living.

The nation-state can no longer guarantee anything. On the other hand, global data corporations have become more powerful and are rapidly swallowing existing political structures, thereby changing and going ahead of outdated political and ideological narratives. The modern materialistic enlightenment is not only in an irreversible process of decay, but, in fact, is collapsing in a very brutal manner. As the old system of beliefs and old
paradigms collapse, the new emerging science has provided us with a unique opportunity to develop new qualitative practices of human co-existence and quality cohabiting with our planet. At the core of the development of this emerging science are the works of leading scientists whom in the last forty years have been contributing in their own fields of specialization to a new holistic understanding of a systems view of life. Their aim has been to contribute to the understanding that human beings and our planet are both intertwined, integrated, viable living systems, and that culture and identity are not fixed and linear, but rather that they are complex, open-ended and ever-evolving. This ‘new science’ has given us the know-how to rediscover an integrative-interconnected holistic view of life and has enabled us to establish that nothing is fixed, preordained, rigid or immutable. In contrast to the Cartesian approach of scientific rational materialism, the new science allows us to put forward the view that everything is part of the process of life; life is fluid, dynamic, integrative, systemic, and in a permanent and open state of evolution.

The emergence and rapid evolution of “new science” has completely transformed the old dominant scientific paradigms. I define new science as the Science of Human Empowerment, the science of human transformation. New science empowers us to establish that we human beings have the power to unplug, switch off, and disentangle ourselves from the dominant system of beliefs; and opt to transcend, transform and control our beliefs, our perceptions, our emotions, even our spirit. New science is a set of new multidisciplinary, multi-dimensional, and interconnected knowledge foundations which includes contributions from disciplines such as: (1) quantum physics, (2) epigenetics, (3) neuroplasticity and (4) biology of cognition, as well as such important technological advances as (5) data science - artificial intelligence - and (6) digital communications.
Quantum physics - energy and matter are indivisible

Our mind is constantly changing, shifting, switching. We actually choose this constant flux, or rather, the situation, our socially and psychologically perceived image of reality and of ourselves. This means that every second we evolve into a different being; hence, we have the potential of reaching a variety of states of being. Our experiences are constantly changing, and so are our neuronal connections, as well as our energy and our proteins.

A number of physicists have challenged the rational materialistic notions of scientific “truths” expressed in its binary system of fragmented beliefs. David Bohm, one of the most important theoretical physicists of the twentieth century (David, 1997) has contributed significantly to quantum theory, neuropsychology and the philosophy of mind. He has advocated wholeness as the key foundation of the new holistic human system of belief, thinking, and practice (Bohm, 1997). The neuroscientist Antonio Damasio has also rejected the Newtonian mechanistic, Cartesian rational fragmentation between the mind, body and soul. He has established that “every action involves emotional impulses” (Damasio, 2002).

Sebastian Seung, whose research efforts have spanned the fields of neuroscience, physics and bioinformatics, claims that “there is no proof otherwise – of reasoning – because no person has direct experience of anyone else's feelings” (Seung, 2013). Gerald Eldeman, has rejected dualistic binary reasoning, and has instead proposed a biological theory of consciousness (embodied cognition) (Eldeman, 2007).

Quantum physics and wholeness thinking has enabled us to put together and expose the individual parts of the “control power puzzle” into a unifying synthesis of a systemic view of life. It also allows us to identify that, with all levels of life, from the simplest cell to the complexities of energy, mind and matter, process and
structure are inseparably connected.

**Epigenetics and the Biology of Beliefs**

The central dogma of molecular biology, developed by Francis Crick and James Watson, is a hypothesis of the flow of genetic information within a biological system. This information flow is a linear uni-directional process, starting from the DNA, passing via the RNA, and then to proteins. This was one of the most significant scientific discoveries of the twentieth century, leading to the mantra, still proclaimed today, that “genes determine who we are” (Sanders, 1958; Dawkins, 1987).

However, the emergence of epigenetics has challenged this theory. Epigenetics is the study of changes in organisms, caused by the modification of gene expressions rather than alterations of the genetic code itself. Hence, it questions the concept that the genetic code is the determine factor in our life (Waddington, 1942). Epigenetics is also known as the “science of change”. Scientists such as the French embryologist Paul Winterbert (1962), on his work on developmental biology, writes that “the living being is the creator of his own evolution”, and in the self-development of the living being, embraces the self as a living system (1963), these are significant scientific contributions rejecting genetic reductionism and genetic determinism.

Dr. Bruce Lipton, expert in Biology of Belief, has discovered new types of interactions between our mind, our bodies and the processes by which cells receive information/signals. His findings show that genes and DNA do not control our biology, but instead DNA is controlled by signals/information from outside the cell, including the energetic messages emanating from our thoughts and our consciousness (Lipton, 2005). He has demonstrated how the new science of Epigenetics is
revolutionizing our understanding of the link between mind and matter, and the profound effects inner-self awareness has on our personal lives, on our experiences, and on our environment. Epigenetics is everywhere within us: it is present in what we think, what we perceive, what and how we eat, where we live, who we interact with, and everything that makes us “us” including our sleep (Walker, 2017). All of these factors can cause bio-chemical modifications around the genes, that will turn those genes on or off, over time. Epigenetics tell us that our life is not determined by our genes. We are masters of our own body, of our own mind, of our consciousness; we are not preordained or programed by our genes (Dispenza, 2017).

*Neuroplasticity and the Social Brain*

Neuroscience (or neurobiology) is the scientific study of the central nervous system (CNS). It is the branch of biology that deals with the anatomy, biochemistry, molecular biology, and physiology of neurons and neural circuits. For four hundred years, scientists had held to the Newtonian belief system that the human brain was a machine, like a computer; a machine with parts, with each performing their own functions. This system of belief has promoted the brain-centric narrative, which tells us that the hard-wired brain computer machine is the one that fixes us. In other words, “we are our brains” (Swaab, 2014). Neuro-reductionism claims that we are fixed by our neurons. These neurons control everything about us: our mind, our bodies, our thinking, our emotions, our behavior, our consciousness and our wisdom.

This narrative turns out to be spectacularly flawed. Neuro-scientific determinism has been the prevailing orthodoxy in brain science, claiming that physical laws govern our physical
brain, our behavior, and our so called “rational decisions”. In spite of its dominance, this dominant system of belief has been rejected by some of the leading researchers in cognitive neuroscience. Among these eminent scientists involved in cognitive neuroscience research are: Michael Gazzaniga (2012), with his research on how the separate spheres of our brains communicate and miscommunicate with their separate agendas; and Michael Merzenich (2013), with his research on brain plasticity.

Neuroplasticity came into prominence in the latter half of the twentieth century, and is the science that explains how the brain changes itself. It takes into account both the interconnectivity and conductivity of the energy (bio-chemical flow in neuro transmitters), that takes place in the neuro system as a whole. It also takes into account the whole environment (inside-out/ outside-in) from where the flow of information/signals emanates, and which the human brain receives. In neuroplasticity, the brain is infinitely malleable, and, in fact, subject to change, to improvements, and is exposed to further evolution. The brain is plastic, is fluid, is soft-wired (Doidge, 2008). One hundred billion neurons in our brain are not Darwinian neurons practicing “dog eat dog” neurons. To the contrary, our neurons co-exist by collaborating, co-operating, self-organizing, and “socializing” in an indivisible set of relationships. The brain is a receiver, not a creator of information-signals-data. We are not our data-brains.

Biology of Cognition and a System View of Life

The Santiago Theory of Cognition was pioneered by the biologist Humberto Maturana and the neuroscientist Francisco Varela, who in 1978 published “The Biology of Cognition” in Chile, and lately, along with other like-minded colleagues, have become known as the Santiago School of Cognition (Capra, 1986). The
bio-chemistry of human knowledge, as proposed by Valera and Maturana (1999), has been most influential in the development of a new systems view of life. The theory can be described as follow: “Living systems are cognitive systems, and living as a process is a process of cognition. This statement is valid for all organisms, with or without a nervous system” (Maturana, and Varela, 1980).

From here, the renowned physicist Fritjof Capra has developed the concept of living systems, which he sees as a holistic worldview, with integrative, interconnected, dynamic, complex, and self-organized relational networks. Capra rejects the reductionist Cartesian view that everything can be studied in parts to understand the whole. He encourages a holistic/wholeness approach. In his latest book, “The Systems View of Life”, Capra focuses on systemic information generated by the relationships among all parts, as a significant additional factor in understanding the non-linear and complex character of the whole, emphasizing the systemic interconnectedness of all parts (Capra, 2014).

Data Science (Artificial Intelligence) and Digital Social Communication

Data science has emerged as the main focus of the global corporate scientific and technological data revolution. In this new reductionist narrative view of life, not only humans but also the universe is just a flow of data processes. It claims that we are now predetermined by the data we produce, heart and minds are now a data commodity. Consciousness is information, only an information field; as it is data (Campbell, 2015). We have entered the age of the development of artificial intelligence, the “super intelligence human” which erases any misplaced idea concept of the existence of “human exceptionalism”. Data science is the new religion (Harari, 2016).
Large data corporations use binary algorithms (1), (0) regardless of their destructive effect on individuals and society. These algorithms masquerade as “scientific” neutral practices and data processes. New data-tech platforms are used by individuals, groups, organizations, social networks, and others to open new virtual spaces from where even the most unimaginable expressions can take place. These spaces range from the illegal dark web, containing criminal hacking, terrorism, industrial pornography, and human trafficking to a myriad of networks, expressing every potential variety of digital and belief systems, including social, professional, political, cultural, gender, sexual orientation, recreational, intellectual, family.

The goals of Google, Microsoft, Amazon, Apple, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Uber, AirBnB, Twilio, and many other corporate data tech organizations has nothing to do with “pioneering the free spirit”, “expanding individual freedoms” or “empowering people”, or “democratizing the world” or changing the dominant system of beliefs. The primary and ultimate corporate objective is all about money, about re-programing, re-framing new practices of human control. It is a new delusional digital fix of our human experience.

By the everyday tweaking of algorithms, Silicon Valley treats human beings merely as a data thing. Even when the economic data produced by users often exceed the value of the services rendered (Morozov, 2017), big data monopolies create more inequalities and threaten democracy. So much decision making power resides in the hands of unrepresentative data tech billionaires (O’Neil, 2017). Their business model actively surpasses any political, legal or ethical considerations; they are aiming at disrupting and transforming the flawed political, legal, economic social and cultural landscape in our societies.
Digital Social Communications: Open Belongings, Open Allegiances, Open Affiliations

Social digital communication allows people to go on-line everyday, to switch from one “reality” into an open virtual reality of the self, into fluid varieties of new self, depending on their sense of belonging and affiliations. This digital social communication on-line-off-line switching activity simulates an increase in the variety of choices and enlarges our “connectivity”, seeking rewarding belongings (real-virtual), opting for new affiliations and new allegiances. However, this on-line-off line living reveals something deeply flawed.

We live in a precarious time: evasive happiness, fake pleasure, nothing is certain or stable. However, by opting for the new digital social experience, people can switch to a belief system where they believe they can regain some level of certainty, assurance, and stability. But this is just as illusory as the previous flawed simulated reality of the old paradigms. According to Lustig (2017), instantaneous gratification via high-tech data systems, enhances the commodification of human beings pursuing “happiness”. He argues, that chronic excessive instantaneous rewards, eventually lead to both on-line addiction and on-line depression (Lustig, 2017). Our brains become conditioned to the hope that each click leads to a bigger and better hit than the last, or that the next social media response will be more gratifying to our egos than the one before. Pursuing to secure more and more followers, we believe that the more followers we have, the greater is the gratification (quantity is happiness). This short-term focus on the NOW (on-and-off) virtual relationships are fragile, precarious, uncertain, unstable: they are fluid. This is resulting in an unprecedented epidemic of addiction, anxiety, stress, frustrations, depression, and chronic mental illness. It’s time to log OFF (Goodin, 2017).
Today social and political life is unfolding in the digital social media, the “new virtual and simulated reality”. We use digital tech data networks to seek constant attention and approval from those who are in our connections. The digital era has set in motion the space for people to opt for open belongings, open affiliations, open allegiances, and to transit in all directions. Amin Maalouf (2000) has described this multi, hybrid movement as opting for multi-identities. I have defined this under the the concept of “transculture” and the “transcultural self”: “to transcend and evolve from one’s own existence, environment, culture, identity; to move, switch and shift your mindset, your spirit, to co-exist, to experiment, break, belong, fuse, merge, emigrate, escape, liberate or not, from any culture/identity; and/or to adopt any forms of “self expression”, from your own web of life. To practice qualitative humane co-existence/co-habiting even in situations of adversity“ (Gonzalez-Carrasco, 2010).

Participating and belonging to an array of digital social, family, religious-faith, professional, intellectual, artistic, cultural, political, networking, allows us to act and display a variety of personal identities. People are switching and shifting in and out of both fixed single identities into another or into several selves. The new citizens now unequivocally accept ambiguity, uncertainty, reflection, inflexion, intra-subjectivity, fluidity, and liquidity (Bauman, 2000).

**Conclusion: Human Connectivity, Conductivity and Self-Organization for Action**

I apply and adapt new sciences and viable living system approaches as an open process of interconnectivity-conductivity-action (ICA). The graphic below shows the model I
developed to illustrate and conceptualize “Human Conductivity” as the dynamic flowing of energy in quality human co-existence and in quality co-habiting with our planet. I have defined “human conductivity” as the quality energy in the connection, the energy of life itself, which the Greeks called thumos (Kingsley, 2014).

Figure 3 Living system and Human Conductivity

When applying this new dynamic flow of quality energy to my work, I include four main themes:

1. Oneness (multidimensional–multi-sensorial): the sense of uniqueness, diversity and unity within and without an individual;

2. Wholeness (integrative): the sense of inclusiveness of all the
parts and a realization of both affecting the biosphere and being affected by it;

3. **Relationships** (interconnectivity-conductivity): the need to quality co-exist with other humans, that is, to be a human being and practice quality dignifying relationships of mutual respect;

4. **Self–Sustainability/Self-Organization**: the awareness that a living system has the property to integrate the divergent parts of its self (diversity) into a convergent/unifying whole (wholeness) in dynamic and open relationships through an ongoing process of permanent evolution of self-organization and self-creativity.

It is in this context that I have redefined culture and identity for this millennium as “a non-linear dynamic, a complex and ever evolving open process of integrated living systems of cognition and consciousness in the development of quality human co-existence and quality co-habiting” (Gonzalez-Carrasco, 2010).

New science empowers us to acquire the knowledge to disentangle our existence from our current simulated and deluded reality and to transform the environment (signal/information) in which we live. New science gives us the foundations to know that we have, from within and from without, everything that is needed to maximize our human potential. New science gives us the opportunity to develop new types of quality human relationships of co-operation, collaboration, sharing, co-electing, co-owning, as well as a new quality relationship with our planet.

New science, gives us new perspectives, of interdisciplinary convergence of knowledge, which has emerged and captured the new spirit, energizing new ideas, a new system of beliefs and a new systemic concept of life. We are empowered to know that both the universe and human life are networks of living systems.
in an inseparable set of relationships.
Knowledge is power, and lack of knowledge is lack of power. Knowing about your inner-self is self power, and knowledge about the whole is human wisdom. New Science gives us the knowledge to reach high levels of self and collective awareness, increase and broaden social consciousness, and seek new holistic wisdom to transform our way of living for the benefit of all and for the benefit our planet (Gonzalez-Carrasco, 2015).

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Founder of the Institute of Human Conductivity, an international multidisciplinary and multi-dimensional professional community. Director of ECUANIME a consultancy advocating new eco-sustainable and socially responsible entrepreneurship for the benefit of all and our planet. It also encourages quality human co-existence and quality co-habiting. Author of “New Thinking Culture” http://www.newthinkingculture.com
Identity research can draw upon vast knowledge from Sociology, Psychology, Anthropology, Pedagogy, Philosophy or Neuroscience. The term ‘identity’ in itself bridges the gap between individual interactions and social structuring. We have a sense of identity as individuals, but what makes us unique selves is in large determined by our belonging to a specific collective. In everyday life we tend to take identity for granted, assuming that it is a relatively stable, fixed, secure, factual ‘thing’ (Chandler, 2016). When we describe ourselves as women, as teachers, as Italian or German, we seem to describe something real and concrete with the wish to belong. Identity is vital in shaping our self-perception. Yet, the idea of identity not only calls on similarity, but also on difference – it is about both belonging and exclusion.

This book shows once more how our todays’ globalized and multicultural world confounds a lot the certainties we used to have about our sense of belonging. We can learn about the increasing number of people who find themselves in situations where they have to balance different cultural identities that come from their belonging to different cultural groups. Be it immigrants, exchange students, expatriates, tourists, followers of religious groups, or digital natives. Our authors give a striking account of people who belong to more than one cultural group. They report of people who are caught up between diverse systems, practices and values; as well as of people who actively seek to get out of their comfort zone. We gain knowledge of clashing cultural identities, as well as about how to manage them within a general sense of self.
Time is of course an important factor, and Marco Croci and Margherita Sportelli provide insights of how identification occurs as a process, and how it develops over time and in specific historical and socio-cultural context. In their chapters, we also start to get a first idea of the risks involved when people lose contact with themselves.

Aziza Benrahal, Grazia Ghellini, Salah Boudi, Ghislaine Tamisier talk about these risks with regards to Islamist radicalization of second and third generations of Muslim immigrants in France. Being caught up in between apparently incompatible or rival value systems, those young people often are socially and psychological vulnerable, and tend to undergo deep identity crises. The authors report their experiences in encouraging these young people to explore issues such as lack of self-esteem, victimization and lack of knowledge about religions; and helping them to find an identity balance.

Radicalization and prejudices towards “otherness” is a common theme throughout this book. For example, Aysun Akan illustrates how modern Turkish politics has always been characterized by a battle between supporters of Western values and of Islamist values. Thereby, both political antagonists use similar symbols to discredit the other.

The construction of identity often comes along with a clear division between cultural in-groups and out-groups, between “us” and “them”. And focusing on the relations between in-group and out-group characteristics often involves the use of stereotypes. An illustration of this is given by Margherita Cardellini and Stefania Lorenzini, who look in their chapters at identity threats and identity formation of children, focusing on ethnicity and skin color. In fact, racism has many forms – the way racism comes about in our society might sometimes be deliberate and open, or sometimes be expressed subtler.

Be it for ignorance, thoughtlessness, unconscious bias or racist
stereotyping, prejudices and discrimination are often based on the denial of similarity and of diversity, and represent a dangerous obstacle to the development of multicultural societies.

Chiara Fioravanti and Francesco Romano analyze the presence of discriminatory language towards immigrants in legislative texts and public administrations. To avoid depreciation, negative stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination, they suggest some practical applications to pay better attention to language use in normative and administrative documents. Also the work of Cristina Bosco, Viviana Patti and Marcello Bogetti focuses on preventing or contesting discriminations. With the rapid expansion of the use of social media, also the manifestation of racially charged hate speeches has increased. Their research group is developing Artificial Intelligence tools to detect and analyze prejudices against immigrants in social media.

Describing the interplay of multicultural influences within individuals, several of our authors focus on the chances and opportunities of multicultural identification. They investigate how different identification patterns are related to individuals’ well-being and development. Fiona Citkin describes women immigrants who make very active choices in constructing a bicultural or hybridized identity as businesswomen in the US. When people position themselves in push and pull situations, in fact, complex identity work is going on. Mattia Baiutti and Gabriel Weibl are speaking in their chapters of those kind of enriching experiences where students reconcile and organize their different cultural identities within themselves. They also talk about the necessary intercultural competences, and how international students’ mobility contributes to the development of cosmopolitan identities and of global citizens.

European identity is addressed in two chapters with very diverse perspectives. Katharina Maak talks about how the personal and spiritual experience of taking the pilgrimage route of
St. James can contribute to the construction of regional, collective and eventually European identification. Christin Ghymers and Mirta Acero through a political governance perspective take the view that a common European identity is at risk, because the current EU institutional structure does not reflect the plurality of regional European sub-identities.

Taking yet again another viewpoint, Carlos Gonzalez-Carrasco directs us to the perspective to think about identity with reference to science. The implications of latest scientific and technological discoveries actually support a holistic, systemic approach, whereby culture and identity are considered as fluid, dynamic, complex, non-linear, open, and ever evolving.

Be it implicit or explicit, somehow all our authors consider identity as socially constructed. For example, European identity was constructed in a particular context after World War II. That new narrative of European identity granted a vision to the post-war era. However, it has always meant different things to different people. On the individual level, identities get their meanings from the social context in which they are placed or enacted. Whatever fixed and certain identities seem to be, they are always subject to interpretation, contestation and development as circumstances change, and as we negotiate our identities in interactions with others (Mantovani, 2000; Benhabib, 2002).

For the development of identity, self- and other-awareness is another common theme throughout the book. Many deep-level explorations of the multicultural experience and its implication are needed; therefore, this book has a strong focus on the subtle and deep-level aspects of identity. Here, the chapter of George Simons contributes to understand individuals’ self-talks that are generated by the social discourses and cultural narratives we participate in. He also explores how language and the social construction of our realities are constantly at work in shaping both individual and group identity, our groups and intergroup
perceptions, and social discourses.

Cinema is a form of self-expression that can also help to reveal deeper levels of meaning. Sasho Ognenovski in his chapter uses a contextualized approach with films for deeper level interpretations. How do characters change and develop throughout the course of a film and in different movies’ scenes and contexts? And, how are they part of society at large, of a particular culture, time or place? Another art form is presented by Urmila Chakraborty. She uses *Patachitra* – a traditional Indian folk art, wherein stories are depicted or painted scene by scene on long pieces of cloth, as an intercultural training tool. Through the narration, the storyteller opens up a dialogue on perceived similarities and differences and on the cultural “Self” and the “Other”.

Jane Fabulet explored this kind of identity narrative at the SIETAR ITALIA conference in a bilingual play about a woman who is coming back to her country of origin. There is nothing tragic in her story. Just questions and doubts that come to people who have changed where they live: Does the truth lie in living in the present instead of the past and future? Is it enough to feel that you belong? The play reminds us that it takes time to feel that we have arrived where we are supposed to be. And, interestingly, these are the same considerations of Marco Croci and Margherita Sportelli as previously mentioned.

In our endeavor to discuss multicultural identity, one quickly gets caught between many different concepts and ideas. Most of our authors rely on qualitative research methods, but on a critical note we noticed that the underlying methodological approach of analysis has not always been exactly clear. While some types of qualitative analysis have standard procedures, narrative research for example is a bit weak in this respect.

Flipping over all contributions, it is not easy to compare and integrate the multiple perspectives of our authors. For instance, there is no common and coherent definition of core concepts, like “multiculturalism” or “multicultural identity”.

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Looking ahead, we certainly should have asked for more rigor in multicultural identity research. An overarching conceptual framework to integrate and connect “identity”, “multiculturalism”, “multicultural experience” and “culture” would contribute to much more clarity. Obviously, we do not know if this may be possible at all to construct such a unifying view; but, at least, we want to contribute to a necessary discussion.

We like to conclude with the conviction that better knowledge about Multicultural Identities is of benefit for the individual as well as for society at large. We also like to recall the quest of Professor Mantovani in the introductory chapter that a huge educational project is needed in order to reclaim the soil that has been saturated for too many decades in the poisons of racism, ignorance, and the contempt for the “other”.

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