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### *Theatre and migrants' inclusion. The case study of the PASAR project.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The migration phenomenon has always aroused great interest in me; probably because I myself lived it first within my family, as some relatives very dear to me had to emigrate abroad, and then personally because I myself, although for a short time, had to leave my home and relocate to Padua to attend the course of studies that I wished to pursue so very much.

Moreover, I have always tried to understand and “wear the shoes” of those who are forced to leave their native country and move elsewhere in order to improve their life and their future. One is not always well received in a new place and in most cases, unfortunately, one is the victim of unpleasant episodes related to racism.

During my second year at the University of Padua, I chose to attend the Advanced Sociology course taught by Professor Annalisa Maria Frisina, currently supervisor of my thesis. The themes and topics covered during the course inspired and intrigued me so very passionately, that I immediately knew I wanted to explore the subject of art and immigration, particularly in connection with ways and or techniques that would improve inclusion of migrants in a new society through theatre. Relating to this, it was also very interesting the International Conference *A World in Transition In-Between Performing Arts and Migration* curated by the Department of Sociology and Business Law of the University of Bologna where we participated in March 2019. The aim of the conference was to discuss and analyze the role of the performing arts within migration issues.

In addition, the decision to deal with and address this theme within my thesis was born spontaneously also and above all thanks to my strong passion for theatre and the belief that art in general and consequently all the various artistic forms can contribute to eliminate all borders and break down all barriers.

In fact, art turns out to be one of the best ways to promote social inclusion in order to combat exclusion and inequality.

The thesis is divided into three chapters. In the first chapter entitled "Migration, Immigration, Emigration: A Plurality of Perspectives", I deal with the topic of migration from a historical point of view, starting from the origins up to the present day. I also use statistical data, graphs and tables in order to offer a detailed picture of the migratory situation. Later, I also introduce and elaborate on the theme of racism, unfortunately a growing social phenomenon within Italy and Europe<sup>1</sup>, both from a historical and sociological point of view.

In the second chapter entitled, "The role of arts in migrants' inclusion", I expand on art as a means of social inclusion for migrants, and outline in detail all the various artistic forms, focusing on music, cinema and especially on theatre in order to focus on the specific topic of my thesis in the third and final chapter.

Finally, in the third chapter entitled "PASAR project: A case study", I get to the heart of the topic of my thesis since I deal with the theatre project that I have chosen to study, analyze, and describe all the methods used with those who took part in it.

Writing this thesis has really enthused me; thus, I sincerely hope to have been able to show how social inclusion of migrants can be also a matter of a collective creative work and how participatory theatre can be used to enrich social research.

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<sup>1</sup> Associazione Lunaria, *Cronache di ordinario razzismo. Secondo libro bianco sul razzismo in Italia*, Roma: Edizioni dell'Asino, 2011.

## CHAPTER I

### MIGRATION, IMMIGRATION, EMIGRATION: A PLURALITY OF PERSPECTIVES

#### I.1 Migration, Immigration, Emigration

The terms *migrant*, *immigrant* and *emigrant*, to which *migration*, *immigration* and *emigration* are related, refer to the action of moving from one place to another; what distinguishes them, however, is the different point of view.

First of all, in order to talk about *migration*, which is the overall term for the movement of people between different countries, it is important to differentiate between two interrelated aspects: on the one hand, *emigration* puts the focus on the country of departure; on the other hand, *immigration* instead focuses its attention on the country of arrival or landing.

In relation to the subject, historian Peter Gatrell<sup>2</sup> states:

In speaking of «migration» rather than «immigration», I have taken a deliberate decision: the two missing letters make all the difference. Dropping them conveys the various strands of mobility. «Immigration» implies that people buy a one-way ticket, whereas «migration» takes account of regular return journeys-- the decision not to burn bridges with one's place of birth. «Migration» speaks of interrupted journeys, and travel between different destinations. It acknowledges that migrants may have a stake in more than one place simultaneously.<sup>3</sup>

In his essay, *La doppia assenza. Dalle illusioni dell'emigrato alle sofferenze dell'immigrato*, the Franco-Algerian sociologist Abdelmalek Sayad explains how the combination of emigration - immigration is a complex intertwining of numerous shades that are reflected both on the subjects of migration, both on their departure and arrival companies. In fact, according to him «Migration is a total social fact and in order to understand it, it is necessary to

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<sup>2</sup> Peter Gatrell is a renowned historian of modern migration and Professor of economic history at the University of Manchester. He is the author of a trilogy of books in refugee history, including *A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia during the First World War*, published in 1999, *The Making of Modern Refugee*, published in 2013 and *The Unsettling of Europe. How migration reshaped a continent*, published in 2019. *The British Academy*, <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/fellows/peter-gatrell-FBA>, [7 October 2019].

<sup>3</sup> P. Gatrell, *The Unsettling of Europe. How migration reshaped a continent*, New York, Basic Books, 2019, p. 4.

investigate every aspect without limiting oneself to painting it as a purely economic or demographic phenomenon»<sup>4</sup>.

The *Double Absence*, of which Sayad speaks, is therefore useful to shed light on the complexities of migration, not only as regards the movement itself, arrival or departure, but above all for everything that migration implies in terms of integration, work, acceptance or stigma.

*Migration* is the movement of a subject from one place to another. Therefore, the *migrant* is one who weighing the merit of an individual or family migration project, realizes his shift which can take place both in a collective and individual dynamic.

An *immigrant* is defined as someone who, coming from a foreign country or from another region of the same country, has temporarily or permanently settled in a place. The displacement of a subject or group of subjects can be determined by several factors. Among the most common can be listed the environmental, economic, social, and political causes.

Therefore, *immigration* means «arriving in another country». The *immigrant* is the person, but *immigration* is the process of settlement from one's place to a new country. For instance, if Italians move to America, the act of arriving in America is called *immigration*, and Americans will consider them *immigrants*. For Italians, instead, *immigrants* are those who settle in Italy. Most of the time they are Third World inhabitants who leave their families and their country where living conditions are poor and difficult to go looking for work and luck in the rich countries of the European Community.

This phenomenon is the opposite of *emigration*.

An *emigrant* is defined as someone who has left his/her country to live elsewhere. *Emigration* is the process of transfer abroad or to a different

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4 B. Palla, *Cos'è la "doppia assenza" dell'immigrato, secondo Abdelmalek Sayad*, *La rivista Culturale*, 2019, <https://larivistaculturale.com/2019/09/14/cose-la-doppia-assenza-dellimmigrato-secondo-abdelmalek-sayad/>.

region than one's own and may be temporary or permanent; generally, it occurs because of economic or political reasons.

Therefore, the term *emigration* means «to go away from one's country». For example, when young people leave Italy because they cannot find work and move to those countries more open to a mentality of growth and development and which can offer them more possibilities, they emigrate. Thus, if we go to America, we *emigrate* from Italy and *immigrate* to America.

This phenomenon is the opposite of *immigration*.

### **I.1.2 Specific types of migration**

In his book *Migration*, Michael Samers<sup>5</sup> claims that migration can take different aspects.

It can be *internal*, *international* and *temporary*.

The *internal migration* concerns those who move within their country, from rural to urban areas, for example. It often takes the characteristic of a *circular migration* where migrants go back and forth between the two areas.

On the contrary, the *international migration* indicates the movement beyond the international borders from the country of origin (or country of emigration) in order to obtain residence in the country of destination (or country of immigration).

*Temporary migration*, instead, refers to international migration whose length of time in a country does not exceed three months.

Samers also explains the difference between *regular migration* and *irregular migration*.

*Regular migrants* are those who have received permission from a government to stay in a particular country. Some migrants are granted only the right of residence while others receive both the right to reside and to work.

*Irregular migrants*, instead, are those who have no documents and cross borders without being discovered by the authorities (*illegal entry*), or who

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<sup>5</sup> Michael Samers is primarily an economic and urban geographer, with interests that span political economy, migration, immigration, labor markets and employment. He is also Associate Professor in the Department of Geography at the University of Kentucky, USA. *College of Arts and Sciences*, <https://geography.as.uky.edu/users/msame2>, [7 October 2019].

stay in the country of destination beyond the expiry of the residence permit for which they have applied.

According to the *International Migration Law– Glossary on Migration*, an *irregular migrant* is:

someone who, owing to illegal entry or the expiry of his or her visa, lacks legal status in a transit or host country. The term applies to migrants who infringe a country's admission rules and any other person not authorized to remain in the host country.<sup>6</sup>

Another important distinction is that between *forced migration* and *voluntary migration*.

Generally, there are two kinds of *forced migration*: the migration of *asylum seekers* and *refugees* and the *economic migration* caused by poverty, low wages, unemployment, and undernourishment.

*Asylum seekers* are people who, having left their country of origin and having submitted a request for asylum, are still awaiting a decision by the host country regarding the recognition of their refugee status. The *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*<sup>7</sup> (UNHCR) assists them in the procedure for the recognition of international protection. *UNHCR* states that an *asylum seeker* is:

an individual who is seeking international protection. In countries with individualized procedures, an asylum seeker is someone whose claim has not yet been finally decided on by the country in which he or she has submitted it. Not every asylum seeker will ultimately be recognized as a refugee, but every recognized refugee is initially an asylum seeker.<sup>8</sup>

The *International Migration Law– Glossary on Migration*, describes *asylum seekers* as:

persons seeking to be admitted into a country as refugees and awaiting decision on their application for refugee status under relevant international and national instruments. In case of a negative decision, they must leave the country and may be expelled, as may any alien in an irregular situation,

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<sup>6</sup> *International Migration Law– Glossary on Migration*, Geneva, International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2004, p. 34.

<sup>7</sup> The *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees* (UNHCR) was founded on 14 December 1950. It is a United Nations agency specialized in the protection of refugees, providing them with international protection and material assistance. *UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency*, <https://www.unhcr.org/>, [8 October 2019].

<sup>8</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Master Glossary of Terms*, 2006, p.4. <https://www.refworld.org/docid/42ce7d444.html> [8 October 2019].

unless permission to stay is provided on humanitarian or other related grounds.<sup>9</sup>

The migration of *asylum seekers* and *refugees* is recognized by two international conventions: the *Convention relating to the status of Refugees*<sup>10</sup> (also known as the *1951 Refugee Convention* or the *Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951*) and the *Protocol relating to the status of Refugees*<sup>11</sup> or the *1967 Protocol*.

The first organic definition of the legal concept of *refugee* is contained in the *Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951*. Therefore, according to the *1951 Refugee Convention*, a refugee is any person who:

As a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.<sup>12</sup>

Later, in 1967, the *Protocol relating to the status of Refugees* removed the first words of the refugee definition: « as a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951» so the definitive definition of the term *refugee* is any person who:

owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not

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9 *International Migration Law- Glossary on Migration*, p. 8.

10 The *Convention relating to the status of Refugees*, also known as the *1951 Refugee Convention* or the *Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951* is a United Nations multilateral treaty that defines who a refugee is and specifies the rights of individuals who have obtained asylum and the responsibilities of the nations that guarantee asylum. The Convention also establishes which people do not qualify as refugees, for example war criminals. The *Refugee Convention* is based on Article 14 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which recognizes the right of people to seek asylum from persecution in other countries. *UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency*, <https://www.unhcr.org/1951-refugee-convention.html>, [8 October 2019].

11 The *Protocol relating to the status of Refugees* or the *1967 Protocol* is a key treaty in International Refugee Law. It came into force on 4 October 1967 and 146 countries are part of it. *United Nations, Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner*, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/ProtocolStatusOfRefugees.aspx>, [9 October 2019].

12 *Convention relating to the status of Refugees*, Article 1, 28 July 1951. <https://www.unhcr.org/4d934f5f9.pdf>, [9 October 2019].

having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.<sup>13</sup>

If asylum seekers obtain the refugee status, depending on the country in which they are, they and their families will be granted similar rights to those granted to regular immigrants.

Finally, *voluntary migration* concerns all those who voluntarily move from one country to another.

### **I.1.3 The migration process**

The migration process is made up of two very important and strongly linked factors:

- *push factors*;
- *pull factors*;

The *push factors* are the conditions that push an individual or a human group to emigrate while the *pull factors* are the conditions which attract an individual or a human group who is pushed to move in order to reach them.

There are various and different reasons pushing migrants to leave their native land.

Generally, the *push factors* linked to the choice of migration are represented by:

- situations of underdevelopment, poverty, undernourishment;
- impossibility of obtaining a minimum level of survival;
- political or religious persecution;
- lack of stable employment;
- environmental emergencies;
- inability to satisfy material needs;
- impediment to the realization of a personal project;
- difficulties related to the personal fulfillment of the individual according to his/her own aspirations.

These conditions, experienced in a negative way, mean that the individual, finding himself in a situation of suffering in the place where his identity has been manifested until then, thinks of a migratory project that takes into

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<sup>13</sup> *Convention relating to the Status of Refugees*, Article 1, 28 July 1951, modified by the 1967 Protocol. <https://www.unhcr.org/4d934f5f9.pdf>, [9 October 2019].



account territories where the *pull factors* represent the possibility of realizing his life expectations. Each migrant, as an individual, has a point of view. He/she is placed in a social space and, starting from that point, he/she observes the world.

## **I.2 The origins of the migratory phenomenon**

The whole history of humanity is history of immigration. Ours is a migratory species and humans have always moved. More precisely, in the last five centuries, there has been no area in the world where immigrants have not been present for at least a certain historical period.

In more ancient ages, in the X- VIII millennium B.C., despite the introduction of agriculture in some areas of the world, for a long time, many populations remained substantially nomadic or, more generally, mobile simply because their economy was linked to sheep farming, trade or the sea.

In antiquity, the Mediterranean was crossed by ships and armies that moved from one side of the coast to the other of its coasts to create market outlets and expand kingdoms. Medieval society was founded on agriculture, on land ownership and therefore on the value of sedentary lifestyle, whereas in the very concept of travel there is an element of marginalization: a marginalization that vagabonds and wayfarers began to suffer also in legislative terms, gradually becoming *outsiders* of society; they were considered «bandits», that is, people affected by a ban, a restriction on freedom of movement.

In short, during the Middle Ages, the movement of people became something that needed to be controlled. In spite of this, people did not give up on moving and indeed it was precisely the search for new places or new ways to reach already known places, that made possible a geographical conquest of crucial importance for the history of all of us such as that of America.

### **I.2.1 The conquest of America and the mass migration**

The conquest of America gave rise to fundamental migratory flows between the sixteenth and the seventeenth century. Migration from Europe took place

on a voluntary basis, but there were also migratory flows linked to the *Atlantic slave trade*<sup>14</sup> from African countries.

Furthermore, at the time, transoceanic travels were still very expensive and also quite dangerous so that only the richest classes travelled across the sea obviously in the company of those who were forced to do so because in conditions of slavery.

According to Timothy J. Hatton<sup>15</sup> and Jeffrey G. Williamson<sup>16</sup>, if we consider the period since the conquest of America until 1820, only 18% of migrants were free individuals while the remaining 82% were African slaves, servants, and convicts from European countries.

The percentages reversed very quickly during the nineteenth century. In 1880 free men emigrating to the Americas had become 81% of the total. Even the European migratory flows towards Australia had the same evolution; the first Europeans who settled there were mostly convicts.

Between 1846 and 1876 the whole emigration from Europe comprised around three hundred thousand people a year. From that moment on, Europe thus became the starting point of an unprecedented emigration and the era of mass migration started.

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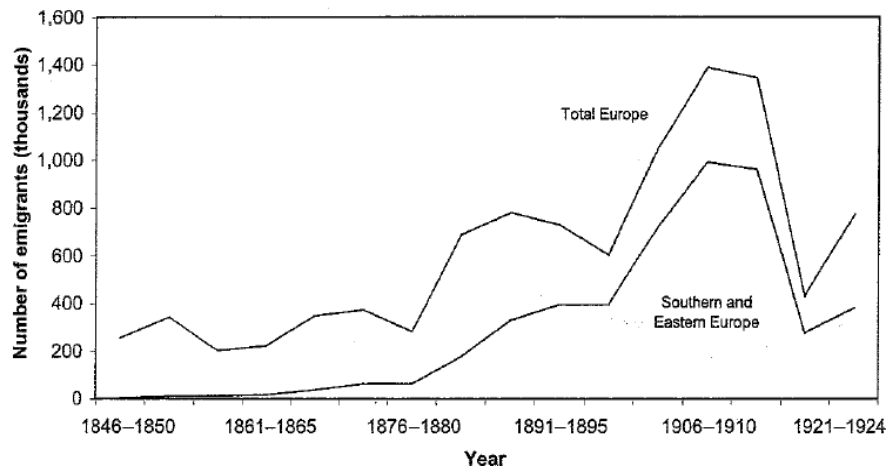
14 The *Atlantic slave trade* or *transatlantic slave trade* refers to the trade of African slaves across the Atlantic Ocean between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The process of deporting African slaves to the Americas contributed to the birth and development of the European colonies of South and Central America first and then of North America. Due to the *Atlantic slave trade*, two to four million Africans died. Many African Americans and Africans call this phenomenon *black holocaust* or *African holocaust* or *maafa* which means *disaster, terrible event, great tragedy* in Swahili language. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/transatlantic-slave-trade>, [10 October 2019].

15 Timothy J. Hatton is Professor at the University of Essex, in England and is also affiliated with the Australian National University. His main research interests are in economic history and the economics of international migration. He also deals with the study of refugees and the flow of asylum applications to the developed world. *IZA Institute of Labor Economics*, <https://www.iza.org/person/129/timothy-j-hatton>, [10 October 2019].

16 Jeffrey G. Williamson is the Laird Bell Professor of Economics, emeritus, Honorary Fellow in the Department of Economics at the University of Wisconsin (Madison). His main researches are focused on comparative economic history, the history of the international economy and development and the impact of international migration. *Harvard University*, <https://scholar.harvard.edu/jwilliamson/home>, [10 October 2019].

In 1890 there were about eight hundred thousand departures per year, while at the beginning of the twentieth century there were annual flows of over a million people, as shown in Figure 1 and Table 1 below.

**Figure 1** – Emigration from Europe, 1846-1924.



Source: Hatton and Williamson, 2005.

As we can also see in Figure 1, in the first decade of the twentieth century the rate of emigration from Italy was equal to 108 people per thousand inhabitants while 57 people per thousand inhabitants from Spain and Portugal left.

**Table 1**– Emigration rates from the main European countries, 1850- 1910 (number of immigrants per thousand inhabitants).

	<b>185</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>
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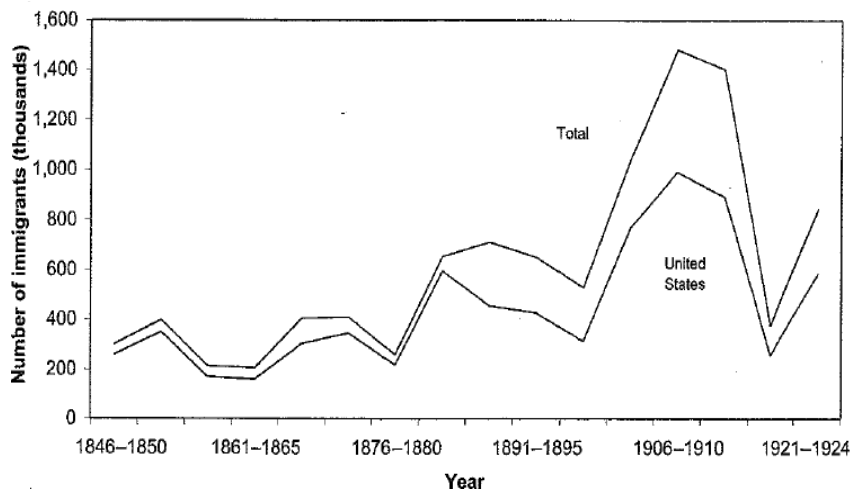
	1-1860	61-1870	71-1880	81-1890	91-1900	01-1910
Austria-Hungary			2,9	10,6	16,1	47,6
British Isles	58	51,8	50,4	70,2	43,8	65,3
Denmark			20,6	39,4	22,3	28,2
France	1,1	1,2	1,5	3,1	1,3	1,4
Germany			14,7	28,7	10,1	4,5
Ireland			66,1	14,1,7	88,5	69,8
Italy			10,5	33,6	50,2	10,7,7
Norway	24,2	57,6	47,3	95,2	44,9	83,3
Portugal		19	28,9	38	50,8	56,9
Spain				36,2	43,8	56,6
Sweden			13	32	14,1	13,9

Source: Hatton and Williamson, 2005.

As we can see in Figure 2, even during the era of mass migration, the United States were still the prevalent destination. People who, at that time, had decided to move to America were attracted by the fact that the US economy was experiencing a remarkable growth in all sectors. In fact, this strong expansion had occurred in conjunction with the realization of large infrastructure works, such as railways and powerful urban growth.

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, even destinations of Latin America, such as Argentina and Brazil, had begun to assume a central role followed by Canada, in the early years of the twentieth century.

**Figure 2 – Immigration to the Americas, 1846- 1924.**



Source: Hatton and Williamson, 2005.

### **I.2.2 The main causes of mass migration**

The main elements contributing to the birth of mass migration were linked to several facts and events:

- Transport costs were significantly reduced. Technological advancements had made it possible to build faster and safer ships, and the improvement of sanitary conditions had helped to reduce mortality rates on board ships whose tariffs of the so-called «third class» had become increasingly accessible also to the poorer sections of the European population. At the same time, the construction of the widespread railway lines on the continent had given millions of people easier access to the ports of departure of the migratory routes (Le Havre, Marseille, Hamburg, Antwerp, Genoa, Naples); furthermore, the establishment of shipping companies which carried out regular passenger service on the transoceanic routes, had allowed to plan for travel more efficiently.
- There was an important reduction in the restrictions on emigration which had been imposed in many European countries, mainly including England, Ireland, Germany and Sweden and, also the introduction of subsidies to facilitate the transfer of citizens to distant territories overseas. The British government, for example, launched generous subsidy schemes to encourage the establishment of British citizens in Australia.

➤ Another important event was The *Great Famine*<sup>17</sup>, the last major European famine, which took place in Ireland between 1845 and 1849 and caused the emigration of at least one and a half million people, mainly to the United States. According to Cormac Ó Gráda<sup>18</sup> and Kevin Hjortshøj O'Rourke<sup>19</sup>:

The migrants were not the very poorest or the worst affected by the potato famine. Most of them relied on their own resources in funding their emigration; perhaps fifty thousand of nearly a million were assisted by landlords or the state. [...] This implies that the very poorest [...] could not travel.<sup>20</sup>

➤ There was also an increase in average wages as a result of the industrialisation process which had now spread to a large part of Europe. Therefore, if on the one hand, the improvement in the average level of living conditions had reduced the rate of emigration, on the other hand, it allowed people to afford a transoceanic journey and the possibility to live a better life elsewhere.

### **1.2.3 The migratory flows between and after the Two World Wars**

The outbreak of the First World War marked the end of the era of mass migration.

The impact caused by the global conflicts, the period of the *Great Depression*<sup>21</sup> between the two wars which struck the main country of destination (the United States) as well as that of origin (Europe) and a series

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17 The *Great Famine* or The *Great Hunger* was a period of mass starvation and disease in Ireland from 1845 and 1849. This event is also known as The *Irish Potato Famine*; in fact, the famine was caused by a potato blight (fungus) which infected potato crops throughout Europe during the 1840s. The worst year of the period was 1847, known as *Black '47*. Throughout the famine, about one million people died and a million more emigrated from Ireland, causing a decline of island's population between 20% and 25%. *History*, <https://www.history.com/topics/immigration/irish-potato-famine>, [11 October 2019].

18 Cormac Ó Gráda is an Irish economic historian and professor emeritus of economics at University College Dublin. His research has focused on the economic history of Ireland, the *Great Irish Famine* and the history of the Jews in Ireland. *University College Dublin*, <https://people.ucd.ie/cormac.ograda/about>, [11 October 2019].

19 Kevin Hjortshøj O'Rourke is an Irish economist and historian, who specializes in economic history and international economics. He is a Professor of Economics at NYU Abu Dhabi. *NYU| ABU DHABI*, <https://nyuad.nyu.edu/en/academics/divisions/social-science/faculty/kevin-o-rourke.html>, [11 October 2019].

20 C. Ó Gráda, K.H. O'Rourke, *Migration as disaster relief: Lessons from the Great Irish Famine*, in "European Review of Economic History", vol. 1, Issue 1, 1997, pp. 3-25.

of restrictive immigration policies introduced by the United States government, which included literacy tests and annual quotas of citizens admitted from the southern countries, caused an abrupt halt in the migratory flows leaving Europe.

On the subject of restrictive immigration policies, two decrees were issued in 1921 and 1924:

- the *Emergency Quota Act*<sup>22</sup>;
- the *Immigration Act of 1924*<sup>23</sup>.

The first one, the *Emergency Quota Act*, was created to limit immigration into the United States, introducing a ceiling, a precise quota, which meant greater control to prevent the situation from degenerating.

Later, the *Immigration Act of 1924* accurately indicated those countries from which to decrease the arrival of migrants and made the quotas stricter and permanent.

This decrease concerned mainly emigration from southern and eastern Europe while the migratory flows maintained an almost constant intensity over time in Anglo- Saxons and Scandinavians countries, which had historically been the first countries of emigration.

Well before the outbreak of the Second World War, the great emigration could be considered concluded and a new phase began.

The Second World War in Europe ended in May 1945.

Later, in the 1950s, although many people continued to emigrate to America and Australia, Western Europe was gradually changing from a place of

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21 The *Great Depression* also known as the *1929 Crisis*, the *Great Crisis*, or the *Wall Street Crash* was a serious economic and financial crisis that shocked the world economy in the late 1920s, with strong repercussions also during the first years of the following decade. It began in the United States after a major fall in stock prices that started around September 4, 1929 and became a global news with the stock market crash of October 29, 1929, known as *Black Tuesday*. The *Great Depression* is commonly used as an example to show how intensely the world economy can decline. *History*, <https://www.history.com/topics/great-depression/great-depression-history>, [12 October 2019].

22 The *Emergency Quota Act* is also known as the *Emergency Immigration Act of 1921*, the *Immigration Restriction Act of 1921*, the *Per Centum Law* and the *Johnson Quota Act*. Immigration to the United States, <https://immigrationtounitedstates.org/589-immigration-act-of-1921.html>, [12 October 2019].

23 The *Immigration Act of 1924* is also known as the *Johnson-Reed Act*. *History, Art and Archives, United States House of Representatives*, <https://history.house.gov/Historical-Highlights/1901-1950/The-Immigration-Act-of-1924/>, [12 October 2019].

departure into one of the main destination regions of international movements of workers.

The *Post-World War II economic expansion*<sup>24</sup>, the achievement of *full employment*<sup>25</sup> and the resulting shortage of labour force in the early 1960s had allowed some countries to open up their labour markets to foreign workers through active recruitment programs of the so-called *Guest workers* to provide a temporary response to labour market needs.

According to the *International Migration Law– Glossary on Migration*, a *guest worker* is «generally considered to be a migrant worker recruited for a restricted time of residence and employment»<sup>26</sup>.

In fact, Peter Gatrell in his book, *The Unsettling of Europe– How migration reshaped a continent*, claims:

the term *guest workers* indicated that migrants were not expected to remain permanently. Many did return to their country of origin, not out of choice but because they were no longer needed when the Western European economy ran out of steam in the early 1970s [...]<sup>27</sup>.

Some *guest workers* coming from southern European countries (Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Turkey, Yugoslavia) and from North Africa (Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria) migrated to France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Belgium and Holland.

In Germany, between 1957 and 1972, the share of the foreign labour force increased from 0.6 to 11.2 %. In fact, between the early 1950s and the early 1970s, the total number of foreign residents in Europe rose from around 4 million to 10 million.

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24 The *Post-World War II economic expansion*, also known as the *golden age of Capitalism*, the *post-war economic boom* or the *long boom* was a wide period of worldwide economic expansion which began after the Second World War. This important economic growth involved not only the United States, Soviet Union, Western European and East Asian countries, but also those countries that had been destroyed by the war, such as Japan, South Korea, West Germany and Austria, Greece, Italy and France.

*Project Gutenberg Self-Publishing Press*, [http://www.self.gutenberg.org/articles/post-world\\_war\\_ii\\_economic\\_expansion](http://www.self.gutenberg.org/articles/post-world_war_ii_economic_expansion), [16 January 2020].

25 In economics, the term *full employment* indicates the condition in which all those who want a job have access to all the working hours they need by earning fair wages. *Investopedia*, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/f/fullemployment.asp>, [16 January 2020].

26 *International Migration Law– Glossary on Migration*, International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2019, p. 86.

27 Gatrell, *The Unsettling of Europe. How migration reshaped a continent*, p. 9.



In 1973, however, something new happened: the *Global Economic Crisis* following the *1973 Oil Crisis*<sup>28</sup> forced the central and northern European countries to review their migration policies in a restrictive sense; consequently, the flows of migrants on the south-north axis as well as the recruitment of foreign workers were drastically reduced.

On the other hand, Southern Europe (Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece) had shifted from an area of origin to an area of destination for migratory flows as a result of an increasing migratory pressure from developing countries.

In fact, later in the early 1990s Italy became a promised land for thousands of Albanians, and the first great exodus of Albanian migrants began.

On 9 February 1991, after the fall of the Communist regime, more than 10.000 people gathered in the port of Duress (Albany) to emigrate to Italy in search of work. On 7 March, within a few hours, 27.000 Albanians landed in Brindisi (Italy). On 8 August of the same year, the merchant ship called *Vlora* landed in Bari: there were 20.000 migrants on board.

In 1997 there was a new migratory wave: On 4 March, a Chinese-made Albanian *Mig*<sup>29</sup> landed unexpectedly on the runway of the military airport of Gelatina, in the province of Lecce, and the two soldiers on board immediately sought political asylum. Since then, many Albanians began to flee to the Italian coast because of the serious problems occurring in their country caused by the bankruptcy of financial companies.

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28 The *1973 Oil Crisis* began in October 1973 when the members of the *Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries* declared an oil embargo. This embargo was aimed to those nations which supported Israel during *Yom Kippur War* which was an armed conflict fought between 6 to 25 October 1973 among Israel and an Arab coalition composed mainly of Egypt and Syria. The first nations aimed were Canada, the Netherlands, Japan, the United States with the embargo also later expanded to Portugal, South Africa and Rhodesia. Later, in March 1974, the price of oil had risen. The embargo provoked an *oil crisis* or *shock* providing a series of very important consequences on global politics and on the global economy. The *1973 Oil Crisis* is also known as the *First Oil Shock*, followed by the *1979 Oil Crisis*, also called the *Second Oil Shock*. *The Balance*, <https://www.thebalance.com/opec-oil-embargo-causes-and-effects-of-the-crisis-3305806>, [17 January 2020].

29 A *mig* is a Russian fighter aircraft made by the MiG company. Its origins date back to 1940 from the initial letters of the surnames of A. I. Mikoyan and M. I. Gurevich (Soviet aircraft designers), linked by Russian *I* which means «and». *Lexico*, <https://www.lexico.com/en/definicion/mig>, [20 January 2020].

After a few weeks, on 28 March 1997, there was a real slaughter better known as the *tragedy of Otranto*. An Albanian ship, *Kateri i Radës* with on board about 140 refugees fleeing from Albania collided in the strait of Otranto with the *Sibilla* corvette of the Italian navy, whose purpose was to counter the attempt to land on the Italian coast: 81 immigrants died and 27 people went missing. In his book, *Storia dell'immigrazione straniera in Italia. Dal 1945 ai giorni nostri*, Michele Colucci extensively explained the numbers of migration and the ways of arrivals, their dependence on the international situation and, at the same time, the social and legal conditions of migrants, their dependence on the laws, and therefore on Italian politics.

In addition, people also started to emigrate from Latin America countries because of serious political situations and the establishment of authoritarian and heavily repressive military political regimes.

Moreover, the end of colonialism in Africa and Asia and the progressive improvement of life in many former European colonies allowed the citizens of these countries to emigrate. Therefore, Northwest Europe, in particular, France and England but also Holland, Belgium and Germany began to register increasing flows of migrants coming from former colonies.

Finally, a very important factor to consider in the geography of contemporary migrations and within the European context is the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe which paved the way for predominantly female migrations.

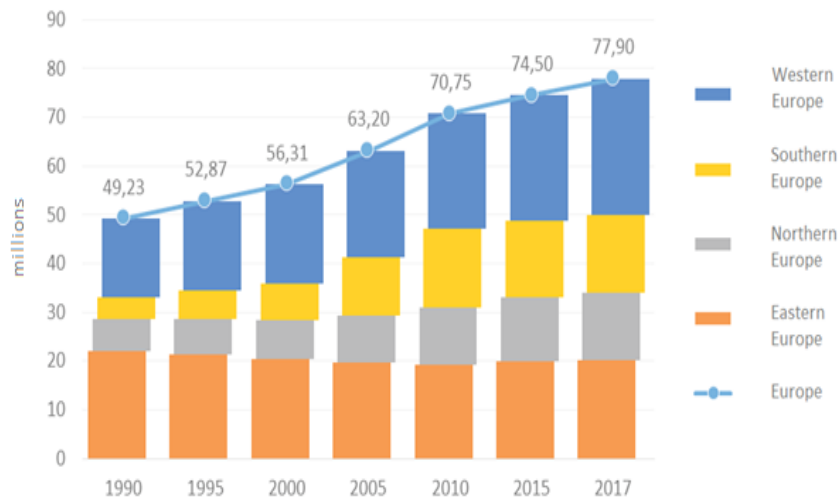
#### **1.2.4 The contemporary situation of the European immigration**

In 2017, the number of migrants in the world reached 258 million, the highest level ever, with a dramatic increase in refugees fleeing conflicts in Syria and Sub – Saharan Africa.

In Europe, in 2017 the number of migrants was 60 % higher than in 1990. From 1990 to 2017, although Western Europe continued to host the highest number of migrants, the greatest increase has been recorded in Southern

Europe where the number of migrants had more than tripled, going from around four million in 1990 to almost sixteen million in 2017.

**Figure 3**– Stocks of international migrants in Europe by region of destination, 1990– 2017 (millions).

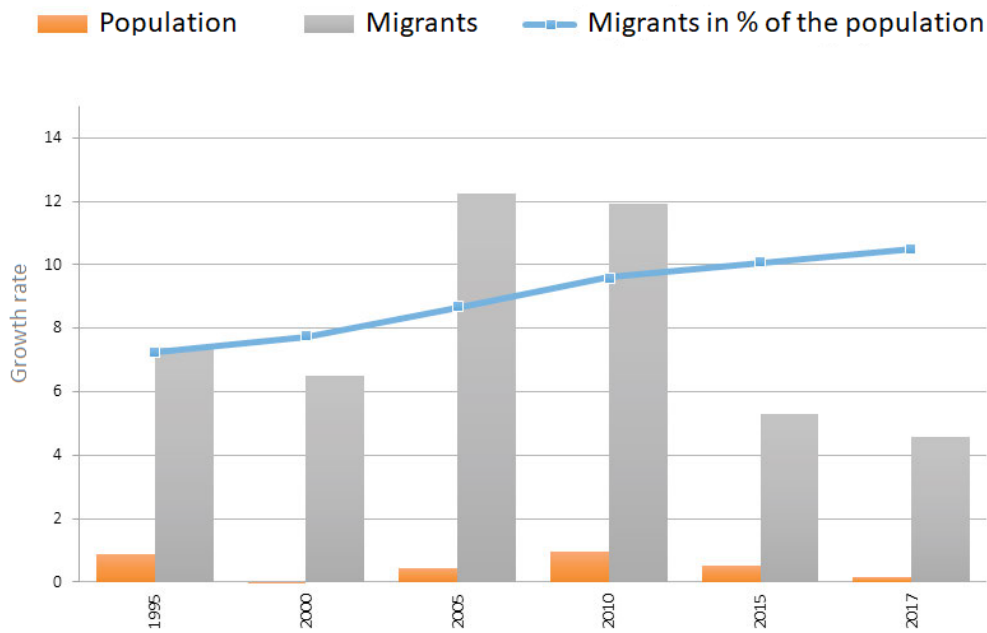


Source: ICID<sup>30</sup> elaborations on UN population division data.

The significant increase in the immigrant population in Europe has made migration a key factor in the demographic dynamics of many countries. The second chart below (Figure 4) shows that between 1995 and 2017 the whole population in Europe grew by 1.9% , while the presence of migrants increased by 47.3%, determining an increase in the number of migrants in the total population from 7.3% to 10.5%.

**Figure 4**– Population and migrant growth in Europe, 1990– 2017.

<sup>30</sup> ICID is the acronym of *Italian Centre for International Development*. It is hosted by CEIS (The Centre for Economic and International Studies)– *University of Rome "Tor Vergata"* and its purpose is to promote a better understanding of current and prospective global development challenges through an inter-disciplinary approach. More information is available on [www.icid.info](http://www.icid.info).



Source: ICID elaborations on UN population division data.

However, it is important to highlight that the percentage of the immigrant population in Europe remains well below that of other major target areas such as North America and Oceania; in fact, in North America migrants account for 16% of the population while in Oceania migrants are 21% of the population.

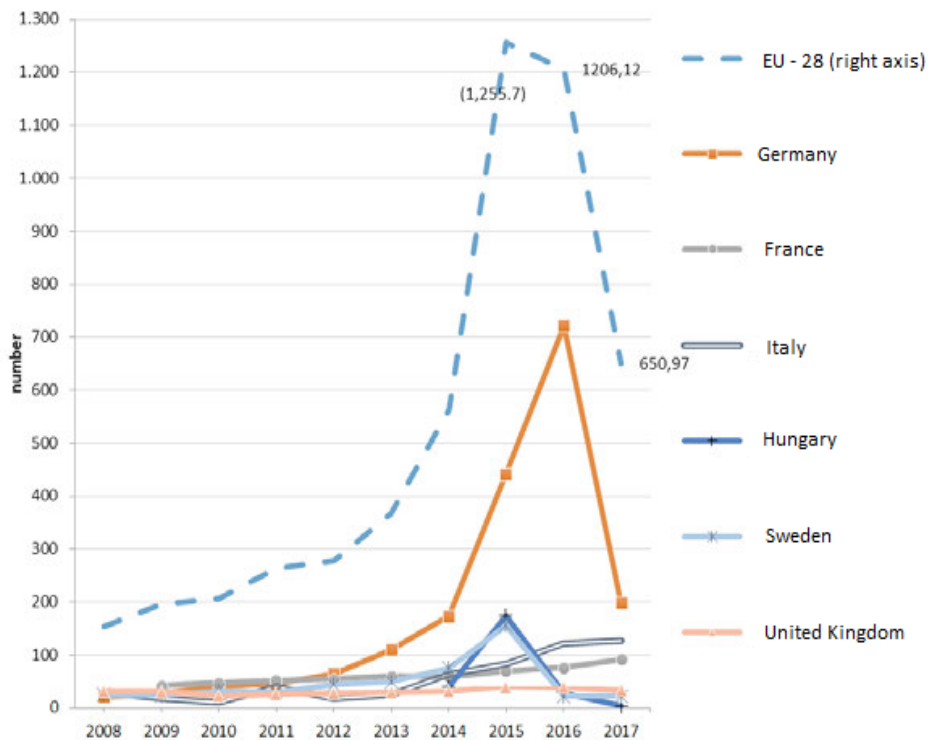
In recent years there has been a new and massive wave of migration to Europe. It depended mainly on significant flows of refugees and asylum seekers fleeing from war-torn countries such as Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

In the third chart (Figure 5), concerning the period 2008-2017, *Eurostat*<sup>31</sup> data showed a sharp increase in the number of new asylum seekers in Europe, from 278,000 in 2012 to more than 1.2 million in 2015; then in 2017, there were about 650,000 new asylum requests.

**Figure 5**— New asylum seekers in Europe, 2008-2017.

<sup>31</sup> *Eurostat* is the statistical office of the European Union situated in Luxembourg. It provides high-quality statistics for Europe.

Further information can be found on <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/home?>



Source: Eurostat.

Most of the requests concerned Germany, but even Hungary, Sweden and Austria recorded significant increases after 2014.

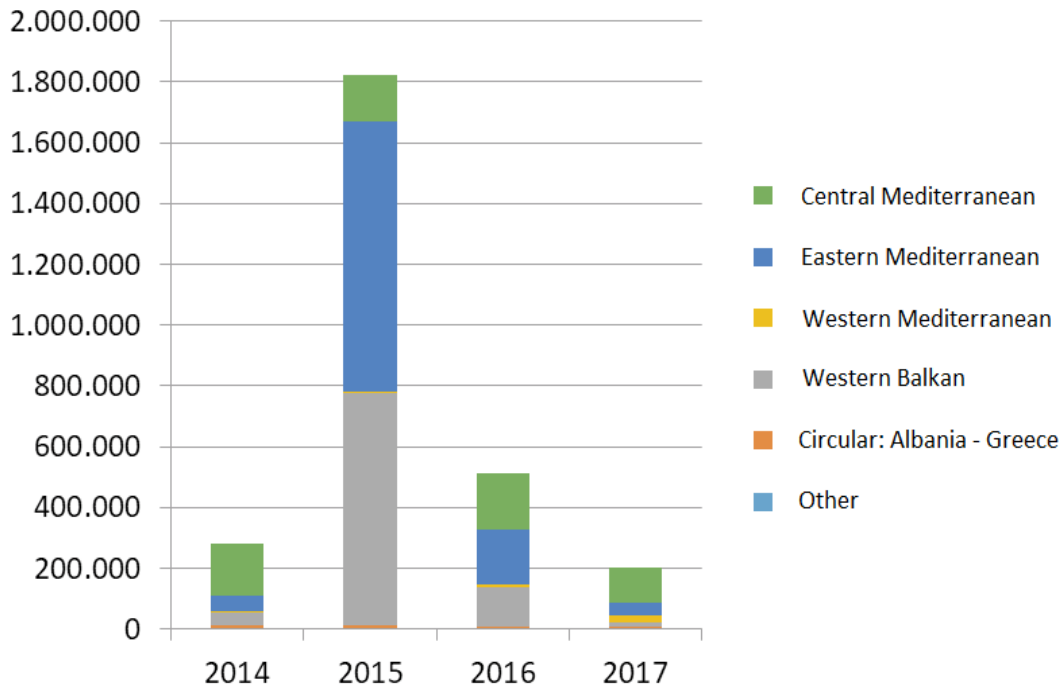
In Italy, asylum applications increased from 17,000 in 2012 to 126,000 in 2017.

Syrians represent the majority of asylum seekers in Germany, Hungary, Sweden and Spain while in Italy asylum requests come mainly from Nigerians and Sudanese.

Furthermore, according to *Frontex*<sup>32</sup> data, in 2017, about 200,000 people irregularly crossed the borders of the European Union, albeit there was a drastic reduction compared to previous years.

<sup>32</sup>*Frontex* (from French: "frontières extérieures" for "external borders") is the European Border and Coast Guard Agency. It is located in Warsaw and was founded in 2004 to assist EU Member States and Schengen Associated Countries in protecting the external borders of the European Union's free movement area. In 2016, the Agency was expanded and its role has been extended from migration control to border management and it was given more responsibility in the fight against cross-border crime. *Frontex*, <https://frontex.europa.eu/>, [20 February 2020].

**Figure 6– Irregular entries by migratory route, 2014-2017.**



Source: Frontex.

As shown in Figure 6, in recent years migrants have also changed their routes; in fact, a series of greater illegal entries were found along the Eastern Mediterranean route, both by sea and by land, mainly because of the protracted war in Syria.

In addition, in the last few years, many of the people emigrating from Turkey and from the south-east route continued their journey through the route of the Balkans in order to reach Northern Europe.

### **I.3 Racism and migration**

In her book, *Il diritto di migrare*, [Catherine Wihtol de Wenden](#)<sup>33</sup> deals with a very sensitive and important topic: *the right to migrate*. It is not only the right to leave one's land or to leave one's country but also the right to have a refuge or simply to seek a placement (a job, a new life) and to be welcomed in a different country. The countries of the North of the world recognize this right

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33 Catherine Wihtol de Wenden is a Research Director at CNRS (CERI Sciences-Po) is a specialist in international migration. She lectures at the Paris Institute of Political Studies (Sciences-Po) at the University La Sapienza and LUISS in Rome. *ISPI – Italian Institute For International Political Studies*, <https://www.ispionline.it/en/bio/catherine-wihtol-de-wenden>.

but despite this, their governments are increasingly reluctant to welcome and to accept migrants who come from poor countries with high migratory pressure.

In addition, a very important reflection is that of the Afro-Italian journalist writer Igiaba Scego who talks about the inequality of passports in the world and how this is an expression of institutional racism of colonial matrix. According to her, not all passports are the same. What changes is not only their color, but also the weight they have on the mobility market. There are passports that are granted fast, comfortable and safe mobility. Others are considered waste paper. In fact, there is a great travel inequality when it comes to moving bodies. For instance, for a European is very easy to go to any part of Africa while for an African even traveling within Africa is an ordeal.

Therefore, the travel for those who have *weak passports*, often passports from countries in the southern hemisphere, becomes practically impossible.

It is no coincidence that the Cameroonian philosopher Achille Mbembe often speaks of prison bodies, segregated bodies. He also talks about a new global order of mobility where some bodies (those of the richest and oldest areas of the world: Europe, the Americas, part of Asia) are allowed a safe and rapid journey, while other bodies are not allowed nothing. (Scego, 2019).

In the next paragraph I will introduce the concept of race and racism by exploring some crucial historical episodes that shows how it is a global phenomenon.

### **I.3.1 Introducing race and racism**

The first article of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* «All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood»<sup>34</sup> should be imprinted in the mind of every human being but

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<sup>34</sup> *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Article 1, 1948.

United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>, [25 March 2020].

unfortunately the reality is very different and this will be explained in this paragraph.

The category of race emerged with the conquest of America (1492), and it was applied for the first time to 'Indians/Native Americans', but not 'Blacks'. (Frisina, 2018).

Its coding by virtue of color took place at the time of the plantation slavery in North America and the Caribbean Islands. In fact, the first theories on racism based on the biological and cultural superiority of one race over another appeared and developed in the 1500s with the rise of the great colonial empires; that is, when Spanish and Portuguese people began the trade of African slaves to be employed in American mines and cotton plantations.

The concept of race was created as a classification of human beings in order to give power to "white people"<sup>35</sup> and allow them to impose their dominance over non-white people.

In his book *Uprooting Racism: how white people can work for racial justice*, Paul Kivel<sup>36</sup> writes:

Racism is based on the concept of whiteness— a powerful fiction enforced by power and violence. Whiteness is a constantly shifting boundary separating those who are entitled to have certain privileges from those whose exploitation and vulnerability to violence is justified by their not being white<sup>37</sup>.

In the seventeenth century predominated the belief that progress was an exclusive prerogative of whites and that other people could not achieve the same results precisely because of a biological difference. In addition, the

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35 In her book, *Razzismi contemporanei- Le prospettive della sociologia*, Annalisa Frisina writes that «Being identified as white therefore means being in a privileged position in a racialized social system. "Whiteness" like "race" is a changing social category, linked to certain hierarchical social relations; it cannot be understood without referring to a racist social order and the processes of reproduction of a racial hegemony». Annalisa Frisina, *Razzismi contemporanei- Le prospettive della sociologia*, Roma: Carocci Editore, 2020.

36 Paul Kivel is an American social justice educator, activist and writer. He deals with racism, diversity, family violence and the impact of class and power on daily life. He wrote many books, including *Uprooting Racism: how white people can work for racial justice*, which won the 1996 Gustavus Myers Award for best book on human rights.

*Paul Kivel, Educator, Writer, Activist*. <http://paulkivel.com/about-paul/>, [25 March 2020].

37 P. Kivel, *Uprooting Racism: how white people can work for racial justice*, Philadelphia, New Society Publishers, 1996, p.19.



affirmation of such belief led to consider that the differences between individuals and people were unalterable and to establish a hierarchical principle according to which the white race was a superior race, predominant over the others; therefore, the domination of other people by the whites was justified.

Between 1853-1855, [Arthur de Gobineau](#)<sup>38</sup> published his most famous work, *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*, in which he resumed from [Johann Friedrich Blumenbach](#)<sup>39</sup> the division of human races into yellow, black and white, arranging them in hierarchy but— unlike Blumenbach and similar to Carolus Linnaeus<sup>40</sup>, to each race, he attributed certain innate moral and psychological characteristics to which he referred in order to support the superiority of whites over blacks and yellows.

He claimed that the white race was born somewhere in Siberia, the yellow race (the Asians) in the Americas, and the black race in Africa.

He believed that race created culture and made a distinction between the three races.

In particular, he stated that the yellows were physically and intellectually mediocre but possessed a very strong materialistic streak which led them to achieve certain results; in fact, the yellow race would be destined to excel in trade and business. The blacks were physically very strong but their intelligence was considered poor. Finally, the whites were the greatest of the three races because they embodied the virtue of nobility and aristocratic values, such as love for freedom, honor, spirituality, and were physically the most beautiful. The purest of the white races were the Aryans.

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38 Arthur de Gobineau, in full Joseph-Arthur, comte de Gobineau was a French diplomat, writer, ethnologist and social thinker. He became famous for having written his work *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* published between 1853-1855. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Arthur-de-Gobineau>, [26 March 2020].

39 Johann Friedrich Blumenbach was a German anthropologist, physiologist and comparative anatomist, also called the father of physical anthropology. He proposed one of the first classifications of the races of humanity. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Johann-Friedrich-Blumenbach>, [26 March 2020].

40 Carolus Linnaeus also known as Carl Linnaeus and Carl von Linné was a Swedish botanist, naturalist and explorer. He was famous for his work in Taxonomy which is the science of identifying, naming and classifying organisms. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Carolus-Linnaeus>, [26 March 2020]. *The Linnean Society of London*, <https://www.linnean.org/learning/who-was-linnaeus>, [26 March 2020].

In fact, he claimed that humanity was divided into races but the superiority belonged to the Aryan race:

The white race originally possessed the monopoly of beauty, intelligence and strength. By its union with other varieties, hybrids were created, which were beautiful without strength, strong without intelligence, or, if intelligent, weak and ugly.<sup>41</sup>

One of Gobineau's great admirers was Houston Stewart Chamberlain<sup>42</sup> who, in his main work *Die Grundlagen des Neunzehnten Jahrhunderts (The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century)* published in 1899, exalted the Aryan race, considering it pure especially in the German strain and attacked Jews as being degenerate. His book also had an important influence on racial *anti-Semitism*<sup>43</sup> and racial politics in Nazi Germany.

Anti-Semitism also played an important role in the politics of fascism; in fact Theodor W. Adorno<sup>44</sup> and Max Horkheimer<sup>45</sup> in their book *Dialectic of Enlightenment* wrote: «The fascists do not view the Jews as a minority but as an opposing race, the embodiment of the negative principle. They must be exterminated to secure the happiness of the world»<sup>46</sup>.

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41 J. A. Gobineau, *The Inequality of Human Races*, New York, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1915 p.209.

42 Houston Stewart Chamberlain was a British-German political philosopher who wrote works about political science and natural philosophy. Following Gobineau's line of thought, he developed and exalted the concept of the Aryan race. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Houston-Stewart-Chamberlain>, [3 April 2020].

43 *Anti-Semitism* concerns hostility towards or a discrimination against Jews as a religious or racial group. This term was coined in 1879 by the German agitator Wilhelm Marr to designate the anti-Jewish campaigns under way in central Europe at that time.

*Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/anti-Semitism>, [3 April 2020].

44 Theodor W. Adorno was a German philosopher and music critic and was one of the leading exponents of the Frankfurt school. He also wrote about sociology, psychology and musicology. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Theodor-Wiesengrund-Adorno>, [3 April 2020].

45 Max Horkheimer was a German philosopher and sociologist. He is considered the founder of the "critical theory", an original interdisciplinary movement, which combined Marxist-oriented political philosophy with social and cultural analysis based on empirical research. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Max-Horkheimer>, [3 April 2020].

46 T.W. Adorno, M. Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, London, Verso, 1986, p.168.

Furthermore, through the spread of the superiority of the Aryan race, National-Socialist Germany<sup>47</sup>, led by Adolf Hitler<sup>48</sup>, managed to mobilize large masses of people and unite them around the project aimed at imposing German supremacy in the world.

Hitler created a dictatorship based on a precise ideology. His ideology, introduced and exposed in his work *Mein Kampf*, was based mainly on nationalism and racism. He strongly believed that there were superior races destined to dominate and rule the world and inferior races destined to be dominated.

As noted earlier, the Aryan race was considered the purest one and for this reason its fundamental characteristics had to be preserved in order to be passed on from generation to generation. The elements within society that threatened to make the Aryan race impure were mainly Jews, but they also included Roma, Communists, homosexuals, and people with disabilities.

According to Hitler, the Jews were a religious community but a race, and as such wanted to ruin all of the others; in fact, he believed that if the Jews had mixed with the rest of the population, they would have destroyed the purity of the Aryan race, thereby eliminating their strength and their position of domination over the other races.

Therefore, the myth of the race and the Nazi stigma against the Jews, who were considered "Untermenschen"<sup>49</sup> (sub-men), legitimized and made possible the genocide of six million Jews and five million other people considered marginal, inferior, or deviant such as Roma, communists,

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47 The *National Socialist German Workers' Party* or *Nazi Party* ruled Germany through totalitarian means from 1933 to 1945 under the leadership of Adolf Hitler. It was founded as the German Workers' Party by Anton Drexler, a Munich locksmith, in 1919.

*History*, <https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/nazi-party>, [4 April 2020].

48 Adolf Hitler, whose byname was "Der Führer" ("The Leader") was a German politician and leader of the Nazi Party. He rose to power as the chancellor of Germany in 1933 and then he became *Führer* of Germany from 1933 to 1945.

*Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Adolf-Hitler>, [7 April 2020].

49 *Untermensch* is a German term meaning under man, sub-man; the plural is *Untermenschen* (sub-men). It became sadly known when the Nazis used it to describe non-Aryan "inferior people" often referred to as "the masses from the East" which are Jews, Gypsies, Armenians and Slavs— mostly Poles, Serbs, Belarusians, Russians and Rusyns.

*Definitions*, <https://www.definitions.net/definition/untersch>, [7 April 2020].

homosexuals, and people with disabilities; in fact, the extermination plan pursued by the Nazis was called "the Final solution"<sup>50</sup>.

Sadly, however, Nazi Germany was not the only country marked by racism; on 5 September 1938 in Italy, Benito Mussolini<sup>51</sup> enacted a series of *Racial Laws* which led to the discrimination of the Jews and subsequently favored their deportation to the *extermination camps*<sup>52</sup>.

The corpus of *Racial laws* prohibited marriages between Italians and Jews, expelled teachers and students from all state and semi-public schools of all levels and of the public administration, and banned Jews from positions in banking, and certain professions such as doctor, lawyer, engineer, architect, journalist and notary.

Another very important form of racism occurred in South Africa in 1948 when *apartheid* was established by the *National Party*<sup>53</sup> that gained power and adopted it as its official state policy.

The term *apartheid* literally means "separateness", "apartness" in the language of Afrikaans, refers to a system of legislation that upheld

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50 The "Final solution" or "Final solution of the Jewish question" was a euphemism used by Nazi Germany's leaders to refer to their plan to annihilate the Jewish people.

*Holocaust Encyclopedia*, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/final-solution-overview>, [7 April 2020].

51 Benito Mussolini, in full *Benito Amilcare Andrea Mussolini* also known as "Il Duce" ("The Leader"), was an Italian politician who became the fascist dictator of Italy from 1925 to 1945. He was the founder of Italian Fascism and made an alliance with Adolf Hitler during the Second World War.

*History*, <https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/benito-mussolini>, [10 April 2020].

52 The *extermination camps* were used by the Nazis from 1941 to 1945 to murder Jews but also Roma, Slavs, homosexuals, alleged mental defectives and others. In order to implement their plan known as the "Final Solution", the Nazis settled six purpose built extermination camps in Poland. These were: Chełmno, Bełżec, Sobibór, Treblinka, Majdanek and Auschwitz-Birkenau.

*The Wiener Holocaust Library*, <https://www.theholocaustexplained.org/the-camps/types-of-camps/extermination-camps/>, [10 April 2020].

53 The *National Party* (NP), in full *National Party of South Africa*, was a South African political party which ruled the country from 1948 to 1994 and was dissolved in 2005. It was established in 1914 by J.B.M. Hertzog who was a member of the Union Government and was proudly nationalistic. The policies of the *National Party* included *apartheid*, the establishment of a South African Republic and the promotion of Afrikaner culture. NP members were sometimes known as 'Nationalists' or 'Nats'. *South African History Online*, <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/national-party-np>, [10 April 2020].

segregationist policies against non-white citizens of South Africa and which remained in force until 1994.

This policy of racial discrimination was enshrined in special laws, known as the *Apartheid laws* in which a clear distinction was made between the population and three main racial groups: white, black African and "colored", that is, belonging to a mixed race.

According to the political theory of *apartheid*, all the races that cohabited a territory had to live separate from each other; in fact, interracial relations were not at all favored and consequently some areas of public transport were reserved only for whites, as were also beaches and schools which blacks could not access; blacks also received much lower wages and were deprived of the right to vote. In addition, the *Apartheid laws* prohibited marriage and sexual intercourse between different races in order to stop the procreation of mixed race individuals. Subsequently, in 1956, these prescriptions were also extended to all other citizens of color, including Asians.

Moreover, the Apartheid Government established the so-called *Bantustans* also called *homelands* where the Black population was forced to live.

*Bantustans* were states with an autonomous administration but heavily dependent on the White South Africa government and those living there lost their South African citizenship. *Bantustan*'s lands were arid and poor, so as a consequence the blacks had to go to work in the South African territories controlled by the whites: there, however, they were considered foreigners and did not enjoy any civil rights.

The struggle against the *Apartheid* regime was led by the *African National Congress*<sup>54</sup> (ANC), a party born in 1912 to defend the rights and freedoms of the black majority of the South African population. In 1944, Nelson Mandela,

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54 The party's original name was *South African Native National Congress*. Its founding members were Saul Msane, Josiah Gumede, John Dube, Pixley ka Isaka Seme and Sol Plaatje. It was composed of both traditionalist and modernist members, so that women were admitted, as affiliate members, only in 1931 and as full members in 1943.

*Lumen – Boundless World History*, <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-worldhistory/chapter/apartheid-repealed/>, [20 April 2020].

Oliver Tambo<sup>55</sup>, and [Walter Sisulu](#)<sup>56</sup> founded the *ANC Youth League* which ensured a generational turnover and a commitment to non-violence. From 1947, the *ANC* party began collaborating with the *Natal Indian Congress*, an Indian party founded by [Mahatma Gandhi](#)<sup>57</sup> in the Natal region thus creating the basis for opposing the racist government of the country led only by whites.

In the early 1950s, the *ANC* initiated a series of non-violent protests, boycotts, strikes, and marches against apartheid policies, and in 1955 approved the *Freedom Charter*, which many decades later would be the basis of its government program.

We, the People of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people [...]<sup>58</sup>

After further protests, in 1960 the National Party outlawed the *ANC* and responded violently by arresting its main members, including Nelson Mandela, for many years.

Although the *ANC* movement had become clandestine, protests and sabotage actions continued to exist throughout the 1970s and 1980s until the rehabilitation of the *ANC* by Frederik William de Klerk, the last white president of South Africa. In fact, the decisive turning point occurred in 1990 when De Klerk also released Nelson Mandela, after 27 years in prison, and

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55 Oliver Tambo was a South-African politician, one of the leaders of anti-apartheid movement and president of the South African black- nationalist *African National Congress* (*ANC*) between 1967 and 1991.

*Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Oliver-Tambo>, [20 April 2020].

56 Walter Max Ulyate Sisulu was a South African political activist and one of the leaders of anti-apartheid movement too. He was also a prominent *African National Congress* (*ANC*) member. *Encyclopædia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Walter-Sisulu>, [20 April 2020].

57 Mahatma Gandhi, by name of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, was an Indian writer, socialist activist, politician and lawyer. He became the leader of the movement for freedom and independence of India. He became famous, admired and appreciated all over the world for his doctrine of non violent protest, known as *satyagraha*, in order to reach political and social progress. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Mahatma-Gandhi>, [20 April 2020].

58 *The Freedom Charter*, [http://www.historicalpapers.wits.ac.za/inventories/inv\\_pdfo/AD1137/AD1137-Ea6-1-001-jpeg.pdf](http://www.historicalpapers.wits.ac.za/inventories/inv_pdfo/AD1137/AD1137-Ea6-1-001-jpeg.pdf), [20 April 2020].

began the process of dismantling apartheid; in 1991 racial laws were abolished.

In 1993 Frederik W. De Klerk and Nelson Mandela were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for "their work for the peaceful termination of the apartheid regime, and for laying the foundations for a new democratic South Africa".<sup>59</sup> A year later, on 27 April 1994, the first and free democratic elections were held in the history of South Africa and black citizens were also allowed to vote for the first time. This decreed the victory of the *African National Congress*, along with the election of Nelson Mandela who became the first black president of South Africa, and who entrusted the vice presidency to Frederik W. De Klerk.

On May 10, 1994 in his inaugural speech, Mandela declared:

The time for the healing of the wounds has come. The moment to bridge the chasm that divide us has come. The time to build is upon us. We have, at last, achieved our political emancipation. We pledge ourselves to liberate all our people from the continuing bondage of poverty, deprivation, suffering, gender and other discrimination. We succeeded to take our last steps to freedom in conditions of relative peace. We commit ourselves to the construction of a complete, just & lasting peace. [...].<sup>60</sup>

In the United States, a very important person considered to be the leader of civil rights and world icon of the non violent fight against racism was Martin Luther King. In fact, he had always been at the forefront of bringing down all sorts of ethnic prejudice in America in the 1950s and 1960s.

The episode that gave rise to protests and also to King's real political commitment was the arrest of Rosa Parks.

On December 1, 1955 in Montgomery (Alabama), Rosa Parks, a black woman who was returning home by bus, refused to leave her seat, the only one left free, to a white passenger.

At that time there were very specific rules in force and Rosa knew them well: the blacks had to sit behind, the whites in front while the central seats were

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<sup>59</sup> *The Nobel Prize*, <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1993/summary/>, [22 April 2020].

<sup>60</sup> *Speakola*, <https://speakola.com/political/nelson-mandela-inauguration-1994>, [22 April 2020].



mixed and could only be used if all the others were occupied, but the priority always belonged to the whites.

In response to Rosa's refusal, the driver stopped and called the police: she was arrested and imprisoned. That rejection suddenly turned her into a hero of black rights, engaged in the fight against segregation that oppressed Alabama and the other Southern states.

When the bus episode occurred, Rosa Parks had reached the end of her endurance for the treatment reserved to African Americans, so that some years later she wrote:

*People always say that I didn't give up my seat because I was tired, but that isn't true. I was not tired physically, or no more tired than I usually was at the end of a working day. I was not old, although some people have an image of me as being old then. I was forty-two. No, the only tired I was, was tired of giving in.<sup>61</sup>*

At first, the news of Rosa Park's arrest sparked a violent reaction from the black community of Montgomery, but soon after it was decided to face the situation in a different way. Martin Luther King, together with other leaders of the African American communities decided to start a protest by boycotting public transportation in Montgomery which went on for 381 days in order to abolish a discriminatory rule that even compromised the normal daily possibility of sitting, like the others, on a bus. The protest also gained the support of African American taxi drivers who had adjusted their rates to those of buses.

On November 13, 1956, the United States Supreme Court outlawed racial segregation on public transportation as judged unconstitutional. Since then Rosa Parks has been considered *The Mother of the Civil Rights Movement*.

On August 28, 1963, Martin Luther King delivered his most famous speech entitled *I have dream* in front of the *Lincoln Memorial*<sup>62</sup> in Washington at the end of a civil rights protest march known as the *March on Washington for*

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61 *National Women's History Museum*, <https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/rosa-parks>, [22 April 2020].

62 The *Lincoln Memorial* is a monument built in honor of Abraham Lincoln, the sixteenth president of the United States and is located on the western end of the National Mall in Washington, D.C. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Lincoln-Memorial-monument-Washington-DC>, [22 April 2020].



*Jobs and Freedom*. It became a symbol of the fight against racism in the United States. In a small excerpt of his speech he stated:

I say to you today, my friends, though, even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up, live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold the truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal." [...] *I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character. I have a dream... I have a dream that one day in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.*<sup>63</sup>

In the fight against racism, a key role has also been assumed by the *United Nations*<sup>64</sup> (UN), an international organization founded in 1945 in order to safeguard the future from the disaster of war and racism, to keep up international peace and security, improve friendly relations between nations and reach international cooperation.

On 26 June 1945 the representatives of fifty countries signed the *United Nations Charter*; it banned the use of sex, language or religion as justifications for differential treatment in the recognition of human rights. All human beings have the right to enjoy all their rights and without any discrimination. Relating to this, the Article 55 of the *United Nations Charter* declares that:

With a view to the creation of conditions of stability and well-being which are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, the United Nations shall promote:

- a. higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development;
- b. solutions of international economic, social, health, and related problems; and international cultural and educational cooperation;

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63 Martin Luther King, *I have a dream*, <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/sites/default/files/inline-pdfs/king.dreamspeech.excerpts.pdf>, [22 April 2020].

64 The term "United Nations" was coined by United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt and was used for the first time in the Declaration by United Nations of 1 January 1942, during the Second World War. It officially came into effect on October 24, 1945. *United Nations*, <https://www.un.org/en/>, [22 April 2020].

c. and universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion<sup>65</sup>

The reasons pointed out in the *United Nations Charter*— race, sex, language and religion— were greatly expanded by the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR), the most important document concerning humanity's aspiration for rights, freedom and justice ever heralded.

In the next paragraph, I will reflect on racism shifting from an historical perspective to a sociological point of view.

### **I.3.2 Racism from a sociological perspective**

In her book, *Razzismi contemporanei- Le prospettive della sociologia*, Annalisa Frisina states that from a sociological point of view, naming the "race" (strictly in the singular, as a device of racialization) makes sense in unveiling domination practices that seem to belong to the past, but which, despite undergoing metamorphoses, continue to significantly affect the lives of social actors considered "white"; that is, those who imagine being the neutral norm, have the power to hierarchically classify "others", and derive symbolic and material advantages from racialization processes. The effects of the domination practices extend also to the lives of "racialized", "non-whites" social actors; that is, those who are discriminated against because they are considered less human, non-human, less civil, uncivilized, less intelligent, stupid, less beautiful, ugly and so on, characteristics considered immutable and attributed to the group to which they belong.

«Studying racism sociologically means investigating it as a social fact and exploring the effects of racialization, rather than being interested in the (good or bad) intentions of white people».<sup>66</sup>

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65 United Nations Charter, Chapter IX: International Economic and Social Co-operation, Article 55. *United Nations*, <https://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/un-charter-full-text/>, [22 April 2020].

66 A. Frisina, *Razzismi contemporanei. Le prospettive della sociologia*, Roma: Carocci, 2020, p. 12.

It is important to note that in contemporary sociology the use of the term "racialization" is preferred to emphasize the notion of social and political processes.

Two of the most important and renowned pioneers of the sociology of racism are W.E.B. Du Bois and Anna Julia Cooper.

W.E.B. Du Bois's recognition as a sociologist and pioneer of the study of racism was delayed as he was an African-American (son of a black woman and a white man) in a society deeply marked by the "color line", defined by Du Bois himself as «the problem of the twentieth century»<sup>67</sup>.

He was the first African American to be awarded a doctorate from the prestigious Harvard University by presenting a historical thesis on the slave trade and to establish the Sociology department for Blacks at the University of Atlanta. He was deeply convinced that research represented a decisive step towards social reform and that along with training it was essential in order to transform the lives of Black people. In fact, according to him, education should not only teach work, but above all it should serve to live. (Frisina, 2020, p. 26).

Du Bois, a scholar-activist, fought long against racial inequality<sup>68</sup> and the numerous injustices that Blacks were forced to suffer. For instance, he proved that Black people did not work or were not as successful as Whites because of the strong racism of American society. The high unemployment rates of African Americans, in fact, could not be attributed to laziness, but rather to the unwillingness of white employers to hire Black people. (Frisina, 2020, p. 27).

According to Aldon Morris,<sup>69</sup> Du Bois:

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<sup>67</sup> Ivi, p.26.

<sup>68</sup> «Social and economic factors were considered the main causes of racial inequality that relegated blacks to the bottom rung of the social hierarchy». A. D. Morris, *The Scholar Denied: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Birth of Modern Sociology*, Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2015, p. 58.

<sup>69</sup> Aldon Morris is Leon Forrest Professor of Sociology and African American studies at the Northwestern University. His main areas of interest concern social Movements and protest, sociological theory, sociology of W. E. B. Du Bois, social inequality and race. *Northwestern University*, <https://www.sociology.northwestern.edu/people/faculty/core/aldon-morris.html>,

believed that an authentic social science was possible and that there were no upper and lower races, Du Bois was the first social scientist to create a sociological laboratory where systematic empirical research was conducted to understand well the scientific causes of racial inequality.<sup>70</sup>

Du Bois showed that the main causes of racial inequality were economic exploitation, the lack of political power, the absence of black education, and a widespread culture of functional subordination to racist domination. In addition, besides investigating how racial inequality influenced the lives of Black people, Du Bois experimented with different methods of social research, making particular efforts on the qualitative side. He spent a year participating in the social life of the neighborhood personally interviewing hundreds of people. In fact, in one of his letters from 1904, he stated that in order to study social problems, a person cannot remain closed in the office, but needs to live among people interacting with them in a direct way. (Frisina, 2020, p. 28).

One of his most important works is *The Philadelphia Negro*. The themes covered in *The Philadelphia Negro* are among others, poverty, education, family life, racial relationships, and in particular crime, the causes of which are traced back to the social conditions of Black people. The high crime rates among African Americans could, therefore, not be understood without taking into account the effects of slavery, racism, migration to the north, and poverty. (Frisina, 2020, p. 29).

Moreover, Du Bois was an innovator in social visual research and also developed some key ideas on the sociology of racism.

In his book, *The souls of Black Folk*, he talks about the concept of *double consciousness*, an ambivalent psychological and cultural condition. It means being simultaneously included and excluded from citizenship, feeling the weight of asymmetries of power, and not being able to do without seeing oneself also through the dominant gaze of whites.

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[3 June 2020].

<sup>70</sup> A. D. Morris, *The Scholar Denied: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Birth of Modern Sociology*, Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2015, p. 3.

*Double consciousness* arises from political and economic conditions and is experienced by those who have formally freed themselves from slavery, but who at the same time continue to feel not completely free in a segregationist regime. According to sociology Professor Marco Santoro, three meanings of *double consciousness* emerge from the text:

- the daily implications of the stereotypes of whites towards Blacks;
- ordinary racism that excludes Blacks from traditional social life;
- the cultural dilemma linked to feeling forced and choosing between being American and being African.

According to Du Bois, African origins must be remembered through the enhancement of spirituality that finds expression in the music of African Americans and in particular in the sorrow songs of slaves.

«*Double consciousness* is, therefore, both a burden and a gift».<sup>71</sup>

In addition, during the universal exhibition in Paris in 1900, Du Bois curated an exhibition on Blacks of America that won fifteen international awards and included almost five hundred photographs also featuring the results of his sociological and historical research work.

He worked intensely on the exhibition, involving students and graduates of the University of Atlanta. He deeply believed that in order to change the condition of Black Americans, a need for conscious collective action based on new self-knowledge was of paramount importance.

For Du Bois, in fact, racism had to be told through the publication of interviews, poems, short stories, theatrical pieces, and literary passages, which would allow readers to be emotionally involved and called upon to act against social injustices. (Frisina, 2020, pp.30-31-32).

In 1919, Du Bois organized the first Pan-African conference whose main focus was to make Africa's voice heard in Paris. He believed that black

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<sup>71</sup> M.Santoro, *Presentazione di W.E.B Du Bois*, Le lotte del popolo negro in "Studi culturali", vol. 2, 2004, p. 308.

Americans could and should play a leadership role in Africa's historic redemption and in the global revolt against colonialism.

Between the 1920s and 1930s he was influenced by black communism and Caribbean intellectuals such as Cyril Lionel James. The African diaspora was in political turmoil and from London it influenced both the colonial world and the political discourse of African Americans. Thus, according to Du Bois, the main element capable of politically uniting the Afro-descendants was the *badge of race*; that is, the result of the memories of slavery and the experiences of racial discrimination.

Finally, according to Du Bois, true freedom has economic roots and must be conquered politically. Besides influencing numerous black intellectuals and political activists, such as Franz Fanon, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, and the Black Panthers, it maintains its relevance in post and de-colonial sociology. (Frisina, 2020, p.33).

Another important pioneer of studies on racism is Anna Julia Cooper. Her recognition took place only recently as mainstream sociology written by white men has historically ignored not only the contribution of black sociologists but also that of female sociologists.

Anna Julia Cooper has also been recognized as anticipating the intersectional feminist perspective that studies race in its connections with gender and class. In fact, she was a Black woman who had fought for a long time for her education and supported the cause of female higher education, also documenting herself on European history.

As a sociologist, she analyzed how racism affected all institutions from the family to the educational sphere; above all, she focused on the importance of the struggles of both African American men and women against economic exploitation, racism, and sex.

With regard to Cooper's biographical and intellectual path, sociologist Gurminder Bhambra describes her as an African American born under slavery, who has dedicated her long life to the study of racial injustice and who has also participated as an activist in the movements for the civil rights of African Americans and women's rights. At the age of 67 she received her

doctorate in Paris, from the Sorbonne University, with a research entitled, *L'attitude de la France à l'égard de l'esclavage pendant la révolution* (text translated into English as *Slavery and the French and Haitian revolutionists*). Her thesis stated that if the white revolutionaries had taken the issue of abolition of slavery seriously, and had renounced the empire, they would have given birth to a revolution truly committed to the values of equality and freedom. (Frisina, 2020, pp.36-37-38).

Cooper also wrote one of the most important and significant texts on black feminism: *A Voice from the South* published in 1892.

In her work, the sociologist identifies numerous ways in which anti-black racism occurs. For example, she points out that the cultural productions of Africans and Afro-descendants are systematically underestimated or negated, as if devoid of «any poetry, no invention, no work of art».<sup>72</sup>

Cooper also emphasizes that denying racism is a common daily practice; indeed, she adds that just uttering the word 'Blacks' produces annoyance and unpleasant feelings among white people. Notwithstanding, Cooper details the progress of Blacks in education, the growing number of black-headed schools and institutes, teachers, lawyers and other African American professionals who have succeeded despite the persistent and continuous discrimination.

Cooper is also cognizant of the number of deaths that racism causes; in fact, given the high mortality rates of the Blacks versus those of the Whites, she surmises that, besides the political and economic causes, these deaths are due primarily to marginal and unhealthy housing conditions. Conversely, according to the Whites, the woes and the poverty are due to the immorality, laziness, and viciousness of African Americans. In her analysis, Cooper paints a different picture of African-American males who work hard to provide for their loved ones in oppressive socio-economic conditions. (Frisina, 2020, pp.36-37).

Accordingly, she remarks:

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<sup>72</sup> Law I., *Racism and Ethnicity: Global Debates, Dilemmas, Directions*, London: Routledge, 2013, pp. 56-57.

I wonder how many know that these men are hard workers, they always struggle, from dawn to dusk, for fifty cents a day, with which they must feed, shelter and dress themselves and their families! And who often have to take their wages in vouchers to be converted into meat, flour and molasses in the village grocery, owned by the same ubiquitous employer! [...].<sup>73</sup>

Unfortunately, one of the most tragic episodes of racism that sparked both domestic and international outrage and protest occurred quite recently in Minneapolis, Minnesota, against a black man named George Floyd.

It all started on May 26, 2020, around 8 pm, when Floyd, a citizen of African American origin, entered the "Cup Foods" shop to buy a pack of cigarettes. An employee of the shop, convinced that the \$20 bill, Floyd paid with was counterfeit, stepped outside the shop with another employee and asked Floyd, by this time sitting in his SUV, to return the cigarettes. When Floyd refused to comply, the employee notified the shopkeeper who dialed 911, and a first police patrol arrived with two police officers, Thomas K.Lane and J.Alexander Kueng, who headed for Floyd's SUV, still across the street to talk to Floyd. Officer Lane ordered Floyd to get his hands on the wheel by pointing his gun, got Floyd out of the vehicle, and declared him under arrest for use of a counterfeit banknote. Shortly after, Floyd fell to the ground perhaps for a first ailment.

The agents helped him to move towards the car door and two more police cars arrived and the officers Derek Michael Chauvin and Tou Thao remained in place. Two minutes later, Chauvin went into action, as shown by the "Cup Foods" surveillance cameras. Chauvin dragged Floyd across the back seat, from the driver's side to the passenger's side, and then out of the car, causing Floyd to drop to the ground, where he remained lying on the sidewalk, face down, still in handcuffs. The surveillance cameras, in fact, show Floyd with his face on the ground on the road next to the police car, and Chauvin pressing his knee to Floyd's neck. Although Floyd started complaining, barely managing to say «Please, I can't breathe»<sup>74</sup> and at a certain point he even

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<sup>73</sup> Ivi, pp. 252-253.

<sup>74</sup> E. Ockerman, *A Cop Kneeled on a Black Man's Neck Until He Said He Couldn't Breathe. He Died at the Hospital*, [https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/akzgg/a-cop-kneeled-on-a-black-mans-neck-until-he-said-he-couldnt-breathe-he-died-at-the-hospital](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/akzgg/a-cop-kneeled-on-a-black-mans-neck-until-he-said-he-couldnt-breathe-he-died-at-the-hospital), [ 5 June 2020].



started shouting «Mama»<sup>75</sup>, and pleading, «My stomach hurts, my neck hurts, everything hurts»<sup>76</sup>, the policeman kept his knee pressed against Floyd's neck for exactly 8 minutes and 46 seconds, lifting it only after the request of the paramedics who had recently been called. Unfortunately, Floyd had already lost consciousness for three minutes and upon the arrival of the paramedics, he was later taken to the Hennepin County Medical Center, where he was declared dead. The subsequent official autopsy found that Floyd's death was caused by mechanical asphyxia, with neck compression restricting blood flow to the brain. His death was, as a result, classified as a homicide.

The diffusion of the videos in which the policeman Derek Michael Chauvin kept his knee pressed on Floyd's neck obviously has aroused considerable indignation. In fact, it was interpreted as a racist episode and carried out specifically against a person of African American origin.

The Mayor Minneapolis, Jacob Frey, has requested the immediate dismissal of those responsible for the incident, as well as their indictment. He claimed: «When you hear someone calling for help, you are supposed to help. This officer failed in the most basic human sense. To our black community, to the family: I'm so sorry».<sup>77</sup>

The murder of George Floyd has been defined a modern lynching. As the sociologist W.E.B. Du Bois states: «It is impossible to remain calm, cold, detached scientists while Blacks are lynched, murdered and left to starve».<sup>78</sup> Consequently, numerous protests were immediately organized, especially by the African American community in both Minneapolis and other U.S. cities but also all over the world. The controversy about the episodes of racism perpetuated by the American police in previous years has also spread on social media: the Minneapolis episode, in fact, brings to mind the "Ferguson incident" of 2014, when a policeman shot and killed Michael Brown, an

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<sup>75</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibidem*.

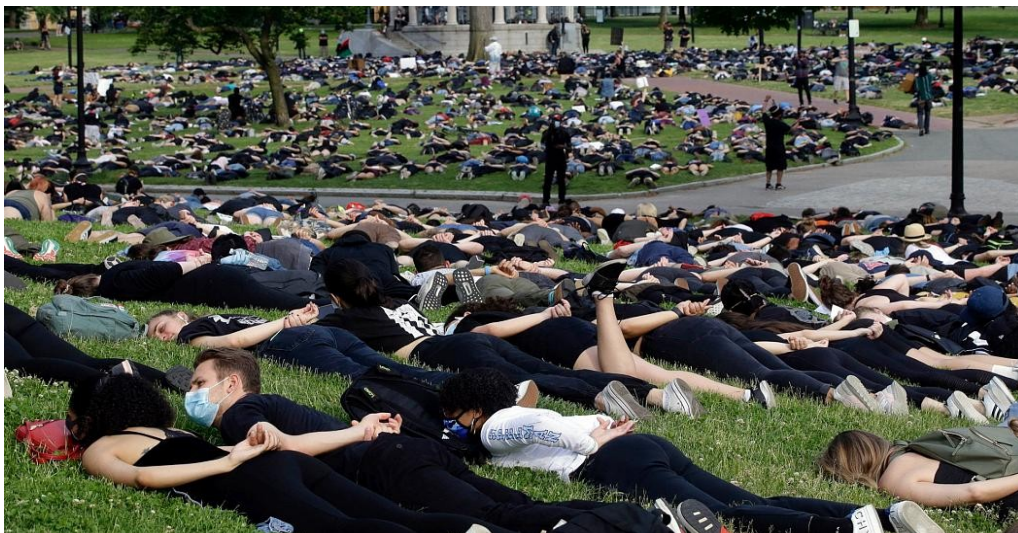
<sup>78</sup> A. Frisina, *Razzismi contemporanei. Le prospettive della sociologia*, Roma: Carocci, 2020, p. 27.

unarmed young African American whose death triggered several days of violent protests.



**Figure 7**– A man sitting in front of the place where George Floyd died in Minneapolis.  
(Bebeto Mathews/ Copyright 2020 The Associated Press. All rights reserved).

Source: *Euronews.*, <https://it.euronews.com/2020/06/10/foto-black-lives-matter-due-settimane-di-proteste-nel-nome-di-george-floyd>.



**Figure 8**– During a demonstration in Boston, the participants lay down with their hands behind their backs, the same position in which George Floyd died.  
(Steven Senne/Copyright 2020 The Associated Press. All rights reserved).

Source: *Euronews.*, <https://it.euronews.com/2020/06/10/foto-black-lives-matter-due-settimane-di-proteste-nel-nome-di-george-floyd>.



**Figure 9**– Flyers with the portrait of George Floyd hanging in front of the US Embassy in Mexico City. (PEDRO PARDO/AFP or licensors).

Source: *Euronews*., <https://it.euronews.com/2020/06/10/foto-black-lives-matter-due-settimane-di-proteste-nel-nome-di-george-floyd>.

On May 27, the *Black Lives Matter* movement organized a big event in Los Angeles in honor of George Floyd: the initially peaceful demonstrations degenerated into episodes of violence and looting. Whole shops and clothing windows were looted; as well, car dealerships and banks were destroyed and set on fire. The violence also caused casualties, both among demonstrators and among police officers.





**Figure 10**– A George Floyd peaceful protest.

Source: <https://www.skysports.com/nba/news/36244/12003281/black-lives-matter-marc-j-spears-on-george-floyd-protests-and-the-nbas-response-to-social-injustice>



**Figure 11**– People hold signs as they march during a protest and rally for justice sponsored by Black Lives Matter from Discovery Green to Houston's City Hall on Friday, May 29, 2020. Source: *Chron*, <https://www.chron.com/neighborhood/katy/news/article/Black-Lives-Matter-protest-honoring-George-Floyd-15310846.php#photo-19484081>.



**Figure 12**– A group of protesters in front of a memorial of George Floyd in Los Angeles.  
(PAULLIER/AFP or licensors).

Source: *Euronews*, <https://it.euronews.com/2020/06/10/foto-black-lives-matter-due-settimane-di-proteste-nel-nome-di-george-floyd>.



**Figure 13**– Protesters set fire to the Minneapolis Police Department's 3<sup>rd</sup> Precinct.

Source: *Slate*, <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2020/05/minneapolis-protests-looting-fires-police-station-george-floyd-death.html>.

*Black Lives Matter* (BLM) is an international activist movement, originating within the African American community, committed to the fight against racism perpetuated on a socio-political level, towards black people. It regularly organizes demonstrations to openly protest against the murders of black people by the police, as well as against more extensive issues such as racial profiling, police brutality, and racial inequality in the American legal system.

Nicolas Mirzoeff<sup>79</sup> wrote about the anti-racist movement *Black Lives Matter* that "to appear is to matter"; that is, to appear means to count, to have relevance. It means being able to express one's right to see / be seen differently from the racist visibility that continues to separate and hierarchize human beings with a classification system that is also affirmed in visual culture.

Regrettably, despite the numerous struggles, protests and rallies against racism around the world and the numerous laws enacted in favor of equality and non-discrimination, xenophobia, racism, racist behaviors, and the rejection of migrants and foreigners are still an everyday reality.

Racism is, in fact, a historical phenomenon that still plagues us nowadays as it manifests itself more often than not in insulting people of color using derogatory words, or even worse in labeling immigrants as criminals.

To counteract and discourage racism, however, a number of artistic projects have been conceived and put into place in Europe for all migrants, in order to welcome them and to facilitate their inclusion in a totally new and unknown land. Inclusion is only possible, in fact, if newcomers are afforded survival strategies and activities that offer equal opportunities and the respect for human rights. This new topic, will however be further explored and dealt with in the next chapter.

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<sup>79</sup> Nicolas Mirzoeff is a visual activist and a Professor of Media, Culture, and Communication at New York University.  
NYU– STEINHARDT, <https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/people/nicholas-mirzoeff>, [6 June 2020].

## CHAPTER II

### THE ROLE OF ARTS IN MIGRANTS' INCLUSION

«[...] But one thing is certain: building walls instead of bridges and closing in on "soundproof" rooms will not lead to anything but a wasteland, mutual separation, which only aggravate the problems».<sup>80</sup>  
(Zygmunt Bauman)<sup>81</sup>

#### II.1 Inclusion towards Integration

Inclusion is a word that encompasses many meanings and is closely connected to globalization. Theoretically, the boundaries, barriers and limits should have collapsed but instead, unfortunately, they still seem to emerge more and more today.

According to the *Lexico* dictionary, the term *inclusion* is defined as: «the action or state of including or of being included within a group or structure»<sup>82</sup> and also as:

the practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as those who have physical or mental disabilities and members of other minority groups.<sup>83</sup>

Often, the concept of inclusion is made to coincide with that of integration, used as a synonym, but in reality, their meaning is different.

The idea of *integration* would refer above all to individuals who must modify their behavior, needs, and beliefs to adhere to the system of the dominant

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<sup>80</sup> Pesare F., *Liquid life and stories of migration. Precarious life of immigrants: fear and insecurity*, in "[Redefining Community in Intercultural Context](#)", Issue 6, no. 1, 2017, p.53.

<sup>81</sup> Zygmunt Bauman was a Polish sociologist, academic and philosopher. He lived and taught in Leeds, England and he was one of the most influential intellectuals in Europe. He mainly focused on how the poor and the dispossessed have been affected by social changes and has always been in favor of welcoming migrants and refugees who have fled the war. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Zygmunt-Bauman>, [7 May 2020].

<sup>82</sup> *Lexico*, <https://www.lexico.com/definition/inclusion>, [8 May 2020].

<sup>83</sup> *Ibidem*.



culture; therefore, it would have a meaning closer to "assimilation"<sup>84</sup>, rather than to mutual exchange.

On the contrary, a word like *inclusion* contains in itself the concept of a fairer relationship between the person and the environment, a relationship of mutual influence.

In addition, the term *integration*, mostly used in the past, indicates placing people in a given context, but without giving them the choice to participate in the activities; in fact, they would have to perform different activities from the rest of the group.

*Inclusion*, on the other hand, is a most recently targeted concept: it is about doing things together and giving everyone the opportunity to participate in the activities of that context.

In his book, *L'inclusione dell'altro: Studi di teoria politica (The inclusion of the other: Studies in Political Theory)*, the German philosopher and sociologist Jürgen Habermas claims:

Inclusion does not mean assimilative hoarding, nor closure against the different. The inclusion of the other means rather that the boundaries of the community are open to all: also, and above all, to those who are mutually foreign or who want to remain strangers.<sup>85</sup>

The concepts of inclusion and integration also differ in their nature: the integrative concept is a kind of added value compared to the work done by a service within a society, whereas inclusiveness consists of a fundamental right regardless of individual conditions and abilities.

The words inclusion and integration are frequently used in reference to migrants and refugees, especially in a political context.

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84 *Assimilation* is «a one-directional policy approach to integration whereby an ethnic or social group – usually a minority – adopts the cultural practices of another – usually that of the majority ethnic or social group. Assimilation involves the subsuming of language, traditions, values, mores and behavior normally leading the assimilating party to become less socially distinguishable from other members of the receiving society».

*International Migration Law- Glossary on Migration*, p. 12.

85 J. Habermas, *L'inclusione dell'altro. Studi di teoria politica.*, Feltrinelli: Milano, 1998, pp.88-89.



Relating to this: «Integration assumes there is something different about migrant and refugee groups, and they are accepted into mainstream society on the condition that they adapt and "fit in"»<sup>86</sup> while,

Inclusion is based on the idea that everyone is different and all can contribute positively to society. So, migrant and refugee groups are welcomed into mainstream society because they can add something special and valuable to it.<sup>87</sup>

Therefore, it is preferable to use the term *inclusion* precisely because it is a concept that embraces the exchange between cultures and is less "ethnocentric" than integration, which instead looks at the question of migrants' inequalities from a purely Western perspective.

## **II.2 Art and social inclusion**

When we talk about social inclusion, we refer to the society itself and the inclusive activities it carries out. The aim of social inclusion is to ensure the insertion of each individual into society, by welcoming and giving everyone the opportunity to participate and by eliminating all types of discrimination; it does not separate nor does exclude, but on the contrary, it values everyone's differences.

Art is one of the best ways to promote social inclusion in order to combat exclusion and inequality, and to encourage the creation of new identities for immigrants within different contexts. It can be a vehicle for true intercultural dialogue for communities that speak different languages, even in countries that have experienced circumstances of war and deprivation.

Art is used as a manifestation of identity, thoughts, and personal experiences, but also as a collective expression linked to memory, to remember and tell.

It can be a means of protest or diffusion, to make visible a need or an act of discrimination, to show society something different from common thinking or to show something in a different way. Art is a source of relationships, and it can be used as a bridge between two realities, a healing tool, and as a common language to understand a person's reality and differences better.

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<sup>86</sup>Aspire, <https://www.aspiresport.eu/trainingsmodules/migration/theoretical-background/integration-and-inclusion>, [9 May 2020].

<sup>87</sup> *Ibidem*.

Music, theatre, dance, cinema, photography, drawing and all those forms of art created by humankind can be vehicles of a journey within oneself and into one's inner world. Moreover, by being able to look at our own emotions and feelings and to use art as a tool to bring them out, we are able to convey them to others; in other words, art allows us to interact with others through a common language, the artistic one.

Art also supports the social and political expression of individuals; as well, it protects their identity, so precisely for this reason, it is configured as an important and useful means for "newcomers" to create both dialogue and interaction, to bring out their skills, and help them rediscover a full-time occupation in art.

For instance, in the late 1970s, New York became a place of profound inequality and segregation, where the gap between "rich" and "poor" neighborhoods (real ghettos) was evident. It was in that context that the practice of graffiti, still in vogue nowadays, flourished in about ten years. This practice is used by young people to create an identity, to show their presence in the world, and to find a belonging: «Graffiti writing is a way of gaining status in a society where to own property is to have an identity»<sup>88</sup>, commented one gang leader.

Another graffitiist, nicknamed *Cool Earl*, claimed: «I started writing to prove to people where I was. You go somewhere and you get your name up there and people know you were there, that you weren't afraid».<sup>89</sup>

Therefore, graffiti represent personal expressions, manifestations of different identities, create social ties between young people, and give them back a belonging; however, graffiti also influenced and inspired an entire artistic current and were a political-social response to the imbalances of the New York society in the seventies.

Precisely because the artistic forms help us to understand ourselves and others, are a language accessible to all, they can be used as a bridge between

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88 A. C. Villadolid, *How to Wipe Out the Graffiti*, *The New York Times*, <https://www.nytimes.com/1979/06/24/archives/westchester-opinion-how-to-wipe-out-the-graffiti.html>, [9 May 2020].

89 *Ibidem*.

different ethnic groups, or for inclusion initiatives in the most varied situations.

According to writers Alexandre Abreu, Isabel Andréand and André Carmo, the promotion of artistic activities can become a testing ground for the fight against exclusion, deprivation and inequalities; thus, they can promote social inclusion, and contribute to the elimination of prejudices.

Indeed, inclusion through art enables us to identify emerging problems, to meet social needs, and to make people the central heart of initiatives and projects. Therefore, using art as an inclusive tool in different local contexts helps to sensitize the population on different issues and to lead progressively to a systemic change.

Over the years, several studies have been carried out to demonstrate how culture and creative initiatives can effectively contribute to the development of social inclusion. This topic, will be further explored and dealt with in the next paragraphs.

### **II.3 Art and immigration**

According to Marco Martiniello<sup>90</sup>, the academic literature on immigrant incorporation is huge both in Europe and in America, but the fact that the European and American experiences of migration were too different has led us to think that the two macro areas could not be compared. However, things have changed in the past twenty years, and it has become clear that there are also similarities between the USA and Europe in the matter of migration, ethnicity and race.

The first full-fledged book about the importance of art in the lives of immigrants in the United States is entitled *Art in the Lives of Immigrant Communities in the United States* and was published in 2010 by Paul Di

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90 Marco Martiniello is a Research Director at the Belgian National Fund for Scientific Research (FNRS), Willy Brandt Guest Professor at the University of Malmö (Sweden) and Lecturer in Politics at the University of Liège. He is also the Director of the Centre for Ethnic and Migration Studies (CEDEM). *CEDEM, Centre d'Etude de l'Ethnicité et des Migrations* <http://labos.ulg.ac.be/cedem/en/introduction/staff/marco-martiniello/>, [11 May 2020].

Maggio<sup>91</sup> and Patricia Fernandez Kelly<sup>92</sup>. It is a study concerning mainly the second generations: studying the second generations means studying the bridge between the two societies, the way they have to represent, recognize and introduce themselves to the rest of society.

More recently, in 2014, Philip Kasinitz<sup>93</sup> analyzed how the US-born daughters and sons of immigrants were shaping and renewing the artistic scene of New York in domains such as music, cinema and theatre. He concluded that, thanks to the cultural resources coming from their parents' heritage and from the society in which they were socialized, they were able to develop their artistic creativity and enter the traditional art scene.

However, the importance of arts and popular culture in the incorporation of immigrants and ethnic minorities remains a relatively unexplored topic. Why? The answer may be found in the fact that:

For a long time, immigrants in Europe have been exclusively considered as workers. They were not supposed to be politically active; even less were they expected to be interested in culture and arts, especially as producers and artists. With the emergence of second and subsequent migrant generations in the public sphere, the cultural expressions of migrant-origin groups and ethnic minorities started to attract attention, especially in the fields of cultural studies, anthropology and sociology.<sup>94</sup>

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91 Paul Di Maggio is A. Barton Hepburn Professor of Sociology and Public Affairs, with a joint appointment in the Woodrow Wilson School. He has written extensively on organizational analysis, sociology of culture, and social inequality. *Princeton University, Department of Sociology*, <https://sociology.princeton.edu/people/paul-dimaggio>, [11 May 2020].

92 Patricia Fernandez Kelly is Professor of Sociology and Research Associate at the Office of Population Research, at Princeton University. She is also the director of the Center for Migration and Development at the same institution. She is a social anthropologist with an interest in international economic development, gender, class and ethnicity, and urban ethnography. *Princeton University, Department of Sociology*, <https://sociology.princeton.edu/people/patricia-fernandez-kelly>, [11 May 2020].

93 Philip Kasinitz is Presidential Professor of Sociology at the CUNY Graduate Center. He was the director of the program in International Migration Studies (IMS) from 2018-2019. He chaired the CUNY doctoral program in Sociology from since 2001-2011 and 2014-2017. *The Graduate Center, City University of New York*, <https://www.gc.cuny.edu/Page-Elements/Academics-Research-Centers-Initiatives/Doctoral-Programs/Sociology/Faculty-Bios/Philip-Kasinitz>, [12 May 2020].

94 M. Martiniello, J.-M. Lafleur, *Ethnic Minorities' Cultural and Artistic Practices as Forms of Political Expression: A Review of the Literature and a Theoretical Discussion on Music in "Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies"*, vol. 34, no.8, 2008.

Relating to the debates on multiculturalism, the ways in which the artistic expressions of immigrants and members of ethnic minorities were changing the mainstream culture became a fundamental topic.

Martiniello distinguishes two fundamental approaches in reading new artistic productions. The first was to demonstrate to what extent migrants' and ethnic minorities' cultural and artistic productions, inspired by their experience of migration and / or discrimination, were changing and enriching local cultures through processes such as *artistic métissage*, fusion, and invention.

The second, also supported by Ellis Cashmore<sup>95</sup>, was to read ethnic and racial domination in the cultural and artistic sphere as well.

Therefore, art and immigration are considered a multidisciplinary study and an innovative approach, which by combining studies on migratory phenomena and on cultural production, sees a potential improvement and development in both fields through the analysis of the tensions that artists face in finding a balance between their communities and the wider society.

At the cultural level, artistic productions need to be studied in order to observe how ethnic minorities have changed the local and national mainstream of the various artistic scenes. On a social level, the idea that artistic expressions can help build bridges and thus create contact and inclusion, facilitating encounters between populations with different ethnic origins living in the same city or in the same neighborhood, can lead to new approaches and to the creation of more effective projects.

Moreover, at the political level, art has been proven to be influential in successfully negotiating the different conceptions of local identity and therefore, even in the migratory phenomenon, becoming a vehicle of claim for ethnic minorities.

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95 Ellis Cashmore is a visiting professor of sociology at Aston University. He also taught at the University of Tampa in Florida and at the University of Hong Kong. *Aston University*, <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/lss/staff-directory/professor-ellis-cashmore>, [13 May 2020].

Finally, we must not forget the impact that immigrants and their artistic expressions have at the economic level: tourism, festivals and the presence of multi-ethnic cities can also represent economic growth. As the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, suggests:

Migrants need Europe. But Europe also needs migrants. A closed Europe would be a meaner, poorer, weaker, older Europe. An open Europe will be a fairer, richer, stronger, younger Europe – provided you manage migration well.<sup>96</sup>

#### **II.4 Music, Identity and Place**

From ancient Greece to the present day, music has always been considered a potential source of power.

According to the famous philosopher Plato, the social role of music was to organize and reunite society: it was a fundamental element in making society move as an inseparable body, as a unique identity which offered people the necessary discipline to face wars.

Moreover, music also plays an important role in the education of children as it transmits belonging and social cohesion to them.

On the contrary, the role of popular music is different because «it gives a reassuring feeling to individuals by binding them through common emotions that are stable over time».<sup>97</sup>

Music also gives individuals a sense of belonging to a group; in other words, it is a process through which some groups negotiate their identity with other groups.

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<sup>96</sup> R. Munck, *Globalisation and Migration: New Issues, New Politics*, London: Routledge, 2009, p.24.

<sup>97</sup> Martiniello, Lafleur, *Ethnic Minorities' Cultural and Artistic Practices as Forms of Political Expression: A Review of the Literature and a Theoretical Discussion on Music* in "Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies", p.1194.

Martin Stokes<sup>98</sup> states that «music in modern societies is often used to fill the gaps of silence left by the working day and provides means by which people recognise identities and places, and the boundaries which separate them».<sup>99</sup>

In brief, art and music are not only a way to identify and insert ourselves in a certain context, but also instruments that enable us to get to know other people and other places.

#### **II.4.1 Music and migration: from *Blues* to *Jazz***

The *blues* is a genre that in the last seventy years has developed from a music played mainly by uneducated, middle-aged, and elderly African Americans descendants of forced deportations from Africa: born as an outlet for a group of slaves and their submission, it turned into a cry of struggle and identity key of a new American population. As a matter of fact,

African-American culture was born as a vivid experience and historical development of the African-American people, a people of the Western hemisphere, whose history and heritage depend as much on Africa as on America. By the nineteenth century, this new people had consolidated to such an extent that the "return to Africa" ceased to represent an escape route for prisoners and was replaced by the psychological and political submission of a small part of the African American population and by the more widespread ideology of "staying and fighting".<sup>100</sup>

In relation to the *blues*, Amiri Baraka, one of the greatest scholars of this genre, maintains:

The blues originates from the late nineteenth-century thrust of the secularized African American musical culture, whose oldest lyrical and musical heritage was African, but whose most recent changeable form summed up life and history in the West. The blues reflects both the initial stages of an African American language and musical experience, and new forms that developed after the Civil War, when African American culture was no longer strictly

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98 Martin Stokes is the King Edward Professor of Music. He studied first music, then social anthropology at Oxford. He taught at The Queen's University of Belfast, The University of Chicago and Oxford University. He was a Howard Foundation Fellow at the Chicago Humanities Institute in 2002-3.

King's College London, <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/people/professor-martin-stokes>, [14 May 2020].

99 Martiniello, Lafleur, *Ethnic Minorities' Cultural and Artistic Practices as Forms of Political Expression: A Review of the Literature and a Theoretical Discussion on Music* in "Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies", p.1199.

100 *The people of the blues (extracts)*, <http://www.shake.it/index.php?id=179>, [14 May 2020].

limited to religious references or the social restrictions of slavery. The blues is profane, but also post-slavery.<sup>101</sup>

Therefore, the blues was born as an outlet of pain, but soon it turned into something bigger and unstoppable, becoming a symbol of struggle. It is no coincidence that the fight against black segregation was born even politically in symbiosis with the artistic movements themselves. In fact, according to Martiniello and Lafleur, when Blacks were completely excluded from conventional political participation during segregation in USA, they turned to music as one of the few means to express, most often indirectly, political opinions and to show community solidarity.

Even the song *Strange Fruit* written in 1939 by Abel Meeropol, a Jewish schoolteacher and communist sympathizer, and interpreted by the jazz singer Billie Holiday, became an expedient and a resource in the struggle for racial equality in the United States. In fact, it is considered the first significant song of the civil rights movement and the first direct musical assault upon racial lynching<sup>102</sup> in the South.

The "strange fruit" mentioned in the song is the body of a Black person hanging from a tree. The symbolic and emotional power of the text derives from the contrast between the evoked image of a rural and traditional South and the brutal reality of lynching and racism.

Southern trees bear a strange fruit,  
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root,  
Black body swinging in the Southern breeze,  
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees.

Pastoral scene of the gallant South,  
The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth,

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101 *Ibidem*.

102 During the period between the Civil War and the Second World War, thousands of African Americans were lynched in the United States. The lynchings were public and violent acts of torture that terrified and shocked black people all over the country. The aim was to impose white supremacy and intimidate black people through racial terrorism. According to an estimate by the *Tuskegee Institute*, in the years between 1882 and 1968, 4.743 people were lynched in the United States. Equal Justice Initiative, *Lynching in America: Confronting the legacy of Racial Terror (Third Edition)*, <https://web.archive.org/web/20180510151602/https://lynchinginamerica.eji.org/report/>, [18 May 2020].



Scent of magnolia sweet and fresh,  
And the sudden smell of burning flesh!

Here is a fruit for the crows to pluck,  
For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck,  
For the sun to rot, for a tree to drop,  
Here is a strange and bitter crop.<sup>103</sup>

Thus, born of pain, both the blues and jazz genres became a cry and manifestation of a social need and they supported a political claim.

In addition, the evolution of blues and jazz encompasses many important concepts that can also be applied to modernity: on the one hand, we have the evolution that migration brings to the societies of arrival, for this reason defined "post-migration multicultural societies"; on the other hand, we have the evolution of the identity of those who arrive, people with projects and expectations, who begin to "negotiate" their identity with the new society, influencing it and being influenced by it.

Therefore, both blues and jazz represent a bridge between generations, a form of expression that creates a new people along a process that spans different generations.

#### **II.4.2 A musical project: *Refugees for refugees***

Music as an inclusive tool, is a practice used in the migration context only recently. It was first adopted by the Anglo-Saxon world, and then it spread to the rest of Europe. Many studies inside the centers for asylum seekers and refugees have shown how music is a widely used practice which allows migrants and, in this case, refugees, to express themselves.

The *Refugees for Refugees* project, as one example, was born in Belgium, following the "refugee crisis" of 2015, and was launched by the non-profit organization *Muziekpublique*<sup>104</sup> which promoted the creation of a music album followed by a subsequent concert tour involving refugee musicians

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103 D. Margolick, *Strange Fruit, Billie Holiday, Café Society, and on Early Cry for Civil Rights*, Philadelphia and London: Running Press, 2000, p. 15.

104 *Muziekpublique* is a not-for-profit association which defends and promotes world music and also keeps music and dance traditions alive in Brussels through an ambitious program of concerts, courses and projects. In addition, it organizes concerts and produces CDs. *Muziekpublique*, <https://muziekpublique.be/>, [18 May 2020].

living in Belgium. Despite the various administrative, musical, and ethnic difficulties, the project was such a great success that three years after their exordium, the musicians are still performing in Europe.

The project was called *Refugees for Refugees* because parts of the proceeds from the sales of the CDs were donated to support the artistic practices of other refugees. The support was provided through *Globe Aroma*, which dealt with artistic expression in reference to refugees and asylum seekers, and *Synergie 14*, which provided underage migrants with a reception facility, psychosocial and legal assistance, sports and cultural activities.

The purpose of the project was and still is artistic, social, political, and symbolic; it helped refugee musicians to make their voices heard and to rebuild their lives in Belgium.

Relating to this, Peter Van Rompaey, director of Muziekpubliek, noted:

The purpose of our label is to support artists to develop their careers from A to Z. Here, the initial aim was to show that among refugees there are very good musicians, to show an image of refugee artists as a metaphor that they are also doctors, chemists... All refugees have talents, they are not items to reject.<sup>105</sup>

Initially, participants were asked to contribute songs or musical elements characteristic of their country of origin so that through music they would be able to re-enact their origin, their own past belongings, and, therefore, a part of their identity.

A month later, a very heterogeneous group was formed, made up of about twenty musicians coming from different countries and who spoke different languages. The obstacle that arose was how to unite and combine different musical scenarios, various repertoires, music systems, and languages.

Even before finding a theoretical solution, art took over and the union took place through a negotiation of the different elements and among the participants themselves.

Hussein Rassim<sup>106</sup>, one of the participants who later founded his own band, declared: «On stage, we break down [religious, linguistic] barriers, while

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<sup>105</sup>M. Martiniello, *Arts and Refugees: Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, Basel, Switzerland: MDPI AG, 2019, p. 33.

there are wars at these borders. [ ... ] It costs nothing, it's the cheapest solution. I hope we can replace wars with music, because it's more effective».<sup>107</sup>



**Figure 14–** *Refugees for Refugees* during the CD release concert (Muziekpubliek, Brussels, 13 May 2016). On stage: 17 musicians from 8 countries playing 15 different types of musical instruments and singing in 3 languages. Among them: 5 asylum seekers waiting for a decision, 8 having obtained the administrative “refugee” status, 3 Belgians, 1 stateless person.

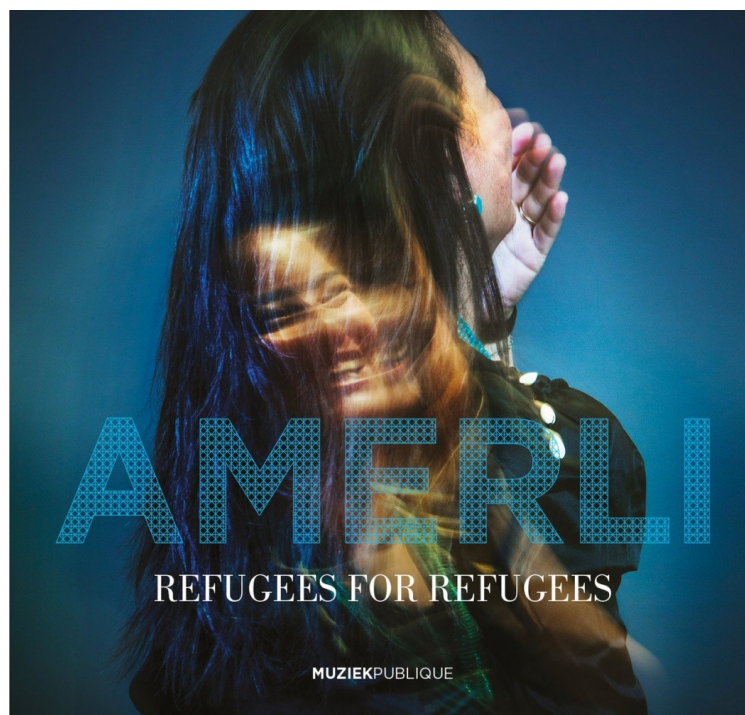
Source: H el ene Sechehaye and Marco Martiniello, 2019.

In the song that gave the title to the album, Hussein Rassim pays tribute to *Amerli*, a city north of Baghdad, which, thanks to the determination of its fighters, many of whom just teenagers, managed to hold out against the forces of ISIL until it was freed by the Iraqi and the American armies.

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106 Hussein Rassim is a young Iraqi musician and player of the oud (Eastern lute), who studied at Iraq’s best music schools. He has recorded an album titled *Amerli* with *Refugees for Refugees*, and *Migration* with *Nawaris*. He currently lives in Belgium. *Hussein Rassim – Musician*, <http://husseinrassim.com/>, [20 May 2020].

107 Martiniello, *Arts and Refugees: Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, p.35.



**Figure 15**– The cover of the album shows the Tibetan singer Dolma Renqingi.  
Source: H el ene Sechehaye and Marco Martiniello, 2019.

The album's release concert took place in Brussels on 13 May 2016, in the Moli re theatre, the home of Muziekpublique. Many people passionate about world music and many associations supporting migrants attended the concert. In two years, the band *Refugees for Refugees* gave about sixty concerts and the album sold more than 2,500 copies. Although some tension between the musicians still exists, they have become used to each other's musical languages and want to continue working together. As a matter of fact,

a balance was found between the different repertoires, but the main focus is still on the bridges created between them. The description of the project now highlights the message of hope and resilience conveyed by the project, as well as the album turns a new page, symbolizing reconstruction.<sup>108</sup>

The project coordinator Lynn Dewitte added: «The moments of exchange between the repertoires are what people [from the audience] appreciate most».<sup>109</sup>

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108 *Ivi*, p.38.

109 *Ibidem*.

However, it is also true that some prejudices have emerged in the audience because some people cannot separate the image of the musician from that of the refugee. In fact, Hussein Rassim revealed how often some event organizers were surprised that there were also Belgian musicians in his band, while they would have preferred only “refugees”.

This epistemological violence shows how refugees are still considered only at the group level, without an individual agency.

Thus, music turns out to be just one of those tools of re-appropriation of the voice to those from whom it was removed; a manifestation of people’s identity, and a symbolic vehicle showing that refugee musicians are nothing but musicians.

Therefore, the project *Refugees for Refugees* wanted to create a high caliber album that would help refugee-musicians enter the music world as professionals and, as a consequence, accompany them in a career equal to any other artist. Despite the difficulties highlighted and the strong prejudices that permeate the society, this intent, in its small way, has been accomplished. Like this, many other projects are flourishing in Europe, all with their own peculiarities and approaches, showing the validity and importance of the arts as an instrument of inclusion.

## **II.5 Cinema and migration**

Migrant cinema has played a fundamental cultural role in the context of the conflicting transformations of European society. Nowadays it examines the broader socio-political processes related to colonial legacies and new forms of colonialism, and it has also become a form of activism in the fight against racism.

When we talk about migrant cinema, we may refer to two different types:

1. films made by non- European filmmakers;
2. European films dealing with themes, characters, and problems of migrants.

One of the first to experience cinema on migration was the migrant filmmaker Alvaro Bizzarri, who emigrated from Italy to Switzerland in the seventies. (Frisina, 2016). He was a worker and cultural animator of a film club of the *Federation of Italian Free Colonies in Switzerland*,<sup>110</sup> and as he began making films, he realized that, like other migrants, he was considered a member of an «underdeveloped people».<sup>111</sup>

As Annalisa Frisina wrote in her article *Studi migratori e ricerca visuale. Per una prospettiva postcoloniale e pubblica*:

Alvaro Bizzarri, like other citizens of foreign origin, lived with suffering the rampant racism at that time [...]. His cinematic stories were aimed at denouncing the dehumanization of migrants and their children, making migrants aware of their condition, setting self-organization and solidarity in motion (first of all class).<sup>112</sup>

Therefore, Bizzarri used the video camera not only to document the sad condition of migrants, but also to make statements about reality.

His two films are *Il Treno del Sud (The Train from the South, 1970)* and *Lo Stagionale (The Seasonal Worker, 1971)*.

In the first one, the protagonist, Paolo, is an Italian trade unionist migrated to Switzerland who tries to organize his fellow villagers into a local union and to fight for the dignity of all workers; he, however, encounters some difficulties because he clashes with a land that appeared arid towards ideals and sick of xenophobia. In addition, to make things worse, at that time the Swiss deputy James Schwarzenbach launched a referendum against the "invasion" of (Italian) migrants, which aimed to "reduce immigration to 10%" which then represented 17% of the population. The referendum, however,

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110 The *Federation of Italian Free Colonies in Switzerland* is the most important organization of Italian migration in Europe and was founded in 1943 by anti-fascist refugees. In the sixties, in addition to promoting the social rights of workers of Italian origin, he developed a policy that aimed to emancipate migrants through cinema, making them aware of their social condition.

A. Frisina, *Studi migratori e ricerca visuale. Per una prospettiva postcoloniale e pubblica* in "Mondi migranti", n. 2, 2016, p.1

111 M. La Barba M., *Alvaro Bizzarri: migration, militance et cinéma* in "Décadrages", n. 14, 2009, p. 85.

112 A. Frisina, *Studi migratori e ricerca visuale. Per una prospettiva postcoloniale e pubblica*, 2016, p. 44.



was rejected, as well as two other subsequent anti-foreign initiatives in 1974 and 1977.

Thus, in order not to live as a "second-class citizen", Paolo took the *train from the South*, returns to Italy, and joins internationalist movements protesting against first of all the war in Vietnam.



**Figure 16–** *Il Treno del Sud* (*The Train from the South*, 1970).

Source: *My Movies.it*, <https://www.mymovies.it/film/1969/il-treno-del-sud/>.

In the second film, Giuseppe, an Italian migrant, his clandestine son, and his companions of the *Federation of Italian Free Colonies in Switzerland*, choose to protest against the *Statute of seasonal workers* that prevented them from renting a house, changing their employer, and reuniting with their family. According to the statute, those rights were granted only after forty- five months of uninterrupted work and presence on the territory. However, the absurdity was that seasonal worker permit was issued only for nine months a year with the obligation to return home for three months.



**Figure 17–** Seasonal workers’ demonstration for the right to family reunification in *Lo Stagionale* (*The Seasonal Worker*, 1971).

Source: *My Movies.it*, <https://www.mymovies.it/film/1972/lo-stagionale/>.

In addition, during an interview concerning his second movie, Alvaro Bizzarri remarked:

I thought that this film could give us Italians the chance to clearly see our condition: a mirror in which we could observe our reflected image and take consciousness of how unjust the conditions we lived in were, exploited day and night, separated from our families.<sup>113</sup>

### II.5.1 Participatory Cinema

In her article, *Ten Years of Participatory Cinema as a Form of Political Solidarity with Refugees in Italy. From ZaLab and Archivio Memorie Migranti to 4CaniperStrada*, Annalisa Frisina wrote:

The origin of participatory cinema is linked to the activity of the “Challenge for Change/Société Nouvelle” (CFC/SN) of the National Film Board of Canada (NFBC), which was born from the 1960s civil rights movement, to denounce and address the roots of poverty and social exclusion, to give voice to those who were marginalized by society and to prevent minorities from becoming victims of government and media stereotypes.<sup>114</sup>

113 *SWI swissinfo.ch*, <https://www.swissinfo.ch/ita/con-gli-occhi-di-alvaro-bizzarri--il-regista-operaio/410812>, [12 June 2020].

114 A. Frisina, S. Muresu, *Ten Years of Participatory Cinema as a Form of Political Solidarity with Refugees in Italy. From ZaLab and Archivio Memorie Migranti to 4CaniperStrada* in “Arts and Refugees: Multidisciplinary Perspectives”, 7 (4), 101, December 2018, p. 19.



The main goal of this program was to promote social change and inclusion by involving citizens and supporting communication between governments and local communities.

According to Stefano Collizzoli<sup>115</sup>, in participatory cinema there are three important "circuits of feedback":

1. *internal feedback loop*: the film is projected in the local communities and the protagonists can control the editing, indicating what should be maintained or modified;
2. *horizontal feedback loop*: the film is shown to people who have a certain affinity with the protagonists, who live similar situations in order to create alliances between citizens;
3. *external and vertical feedback loop*: the film is shown to external people and attempts are made to communicate with experts and decision-makers.

Over the past ten years, participatory cinema has spread in Italy in order to restore the "dignity of the story", giving asylum seekers and refugees the opportunity to tell their story firsthand.

The next paragraph will deal in more detail with the *Zalab* association and the film, *Like a man on earth*.

### **II.5.2 Participatory Cinema with *Zalab*: *Like a man on earth***

*ZaLab* is an association dealing with the production, distribution, and promotion of social documentaries and cultural projects. It is made up of six filmmakers and social workers whose names are Michele Aiello, Matteo Calore, Davide Crudetti, Stefano Collizzoli, Andrea Segre, and Sara Zavarise.

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<sup>115</sup> Stefano Collizzoli, Ph.D. in Social Sciences, is a Participatory Video (PV) practitioner and a documentary film-maker. He worked as a project designer and field trainer in PV workshops in Italy (Padova, Bologna, Roma, Eolian Islands), Spain, Palestine, Tunisia and Dominican Republic. He's a documentary film director and editor. As a lecturer in Sociology of Communication at Padua and Bologna Universities, his main research interest are visual methodologies and migrations.

Stefano Collizzoli, <https://stefanocollizzoli.wordpress.com/universita/>, [12 June 2020].

The name of the *Zalab* association (*Za* for Zavattini, *Lab* for laboratories) is a tribute to the great screenwriter Cesare Zavattini. He was also one of the first theorists and proponents of the Neorealist movement in Italian cinema, who dedicated his research to experimentation within a "free" social video production process. It is a new type of cinema and a new method of dissemination via the web arising from the participatory process of collecting and collective processing of video micro-stories of everyday life by non-accredited eyes. That is what in the Anglo-Saxon area is called *participatory video*.

The purpose of *Zalab's* participatory video laboratories is to give voice to those who are marginalized, by allowing them to tell their reality by becoming authors of their own stories and documentaries.

Since 2006, *Zalab* has produced and distributed many important social documentaries concerning Mediterranean migrations and migrants in Italy and Europe. From *Zalab's* point of view, it is very important to promote and make known in depth the stories about migration through participatory cinema.

According to the writer and film critic Sonia Cincinelli, participatory cinema with refugees in Italy has produced not only works that are «cinematic in all respects, but above all ethical [...]. Just as Primo Levi asked himself if a man could be treated like that, so the directors of *Like a man on earth* ask themselves the same».<sup>116</sup>

*Like a man on earth*, directed by Andrea Segre, Dagmawi Yimer and the film maker Riccardo Biadene, is the first film produced by *ZaLab* that enacts political solidarity with refugees and ends the silence over the tragic consequences, established by an agreement between Italy and Libya, whose purpose was to contrast illegal migrations, but that, instead, provided for lucrative business contracts between the two countries.

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<sup>116</sup> Cincinelli S., *I migranti nel cinema italiano*, Bologna: Edizioni Kappa, 2009, p. 278.



Figure 18– *Like a man on earth* movie poster.

Soure: Andrea Segre, <http://andrasegre.blogspot.com/2008/10/come-un-uomo-sulla-terra.html>.

Dagmawi Yimer is a documentary filmmaker, with an Ethiopian background, who has resided in Italy as a refugee since 2006. He studied law in Addis Abeba, and because of the strong political repression in his country, in 2005 he decided to emigrate by crossing the desert between Sudan and Libya by land.

In Libya, however, he came across a series of misadventures related not only to the violence of the smugglers who had managed the trip to the Mediterranean, but also and above all to the abuse and violence suffered at the hands of the Libyan police, responsible for indiscriminate arrests and inhuman deportations.

In spite of it all, however, he managed to survive and to arrive by sea to Italy and then go to Rome, where he started attending the *Asinitas Onlus Italian school*, a meeting point for many African immigrants. There, he learned not only Italian, but also the language of the documentary video; consequently, he

decided to collect the testimonies of all those who had to face the same terrible journey.



**Figure 19**— Dagmawi Yimer in a scene from the movie *Like a man on earth*.

Source: *Zalab*, <http://www.zalab.org/projects/come-un-uomo-sulla-terra/>.

In fact, this film collects, for the first time, the direct testimony of African migrants who reveal Libya's ways to control migratory flows from Africa, on behalf of and "thanks to" the funding from Italy and Europe.

In the movie, Dagmawi Yimer interviews, in Amharic, eight young Ethiopians who had fled their country by crossing the desert from Sudan to Libya stuck in metal containers, without food, and only with a single bottle of water they had to use both for drinking and washing.

In Libya they were sold for 30 dinars to a series of brutal officials and prison guards who jailed them in overcrowded prison cells without reason for months and years. In addition, women reported the many abuses and sexual violence that they were forced to suffer. «The video camera focuses on their faces, listening to their silences and capturing their emotions through close-ups». <sup>117</sup>

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117 Frisina, Muresu, *Ten Years of Participatory Cinema as a Form of Political Solidarity with Refugees in Italy. From ZaLab and Archivio Memorie Migranti to 4CaniperStrada*, p. 21.

Relating to this, here are some scenes from the movie *Like a man on earth*.



**Figure 20**– Source: *Zalab*, <http://www.zalab.org/projects/come-un-uomo-sulla-terra/>.



**Figure 21**– Source: *Andrea Segre*, <http://andrasegre.blogspot.com/2008/10/come-un-uomo-sulla-terra.html>.

Since 2008, the movie *Like a man on earth* has been shown in 86 Italian public squares and has travelled throughout Italy for ten years thanks to the

requests from many associations, cinemas, theatres, schools, universities, parishes, and cultural and social centers.

Since each projection was an opportunity to raise awareness on the subject, numerous activists have used the film to involve other citizens in direct actions of solidarity and inclusion with refugees.

Films can inform, inspire and promote inclusion. They have the power to show different facets of life, which in turn can help viewers to cultivate a deeper empathy for migrants and a better understanding of their realities, needs, perspectives, and abilities.

According to sociologist Emmanuel Ethis and film critic Pierre Sorlin:

cinema not only reveals fragments of the real that the public can accept and recognize, but it enlarges the domain of the visible and offers new interpretive frames on a reality. Cinema can have a social impact in different ways: offering alternative values to the mainstream; allowing spectators to identify with people and situations that they are not familiar with; and finally enthusing and drawing on people's emotions to motivate them to take action.<sup>118</sup>

## II.6 Theatre, Migration and Racism

The migratory movements have initiated a cultural transformation whose traces are even visible in the European theatre landscape.

Nowadays, in almost all western European countries there is an increasing number of professionally active immigrant theatre operators; in fact, "artists of color"<sup>119</sup> and "Post migrant theatre" play a remarkable role on the structural and aesthetic level of the contemporary theatre scene.

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118 Ivi, p. 27.

119 «The term *people of colour* was coined in the United States during the emergence of the Black Power movement in the late sixties. As an anti-racist self-definition, it became a political term which was intended to mobilise and connect racially marginalised groups and their members beyond the boundaries of their "own" ethnic, national, cultural and religious group membership. It does not describe persons based on an ethnic classification but according to racism as it is experienced in its everyday and institutional forms. [...] The term *people of colour* refers to all racialised persons who, to varying degrees, are of African, Asian, Latin American, Pacific, Arab, Jewish or indigenous origin or background. It connects those who are marginalised by the culture of white dominance and collectively degraded by the force of colonial traditions and presence».

A. Sharifi, *Theatre and Migration Documentation, Influences and Perspectives in European Theatre: Structures - Aesthetics - Cultural Policy* in "Independent Theatre in Contemporary Europe", January 2017, p. 328.



On the contrary, in the past and for a long time, artists of color have not been present in the national and European theatre landscapes.

In the context of theatre and migration, in fact, a very important topic concerns racism and exclusion of artists of color from the European theatre.

Accordingly, Stuart Hall<sup>120</sup> defines racism as the social practice of exclusion which is not based on any distinct theory of “race”:

Racism is a social practice whereby the physical characteristics of certain groups in the population are used for the purpose of classification, e.g. if the population is not divided into rich and poor but, for instance, into white and black. In short, in racist discourses physical characteristics function as signifiers, or conveyors of meanings, as signs within a discourse on difference.<sup>121</sup>

In Hall’s view, the consequence is a racist classification system and society in which a social group opposes another group subordinated to it. Hall describes this process as a construction of the *Other*. He claims that racist ideologies always arise «when the production of significance is linked to power strategies, and these are used to exclude certain groups from cultural and symbolic resources».<sup>122</sup>

Therefore, the concept of race is intended as a social construct whose pseudo-biological classification structure is based on the color of the skin and other external characteristics such as body shape, hair structure, and so on.

Racism has, therefore, strongly influenced the topic of theatre and migration both from structural and aesthetic points of view: just think about the European and highly criticized practice of "blackface", whereby white actors used black theatrical makeup or the practice of merging actors of color into ethnic roles and characters, but also the practice of contracting artists of color only for "migrants" theatrical productions.

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120 Stuart Hall was a Jamaican-born British sociologist, cultural theorist and academic. Resident in the United Kingdom since 1951, Hall, together with Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams, was one of the leading figures of the Birmingham school of Cultural studies. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Stuart-McPhail-Hall>, [29 June 2020].

121 S. Hall, “Rassismus als ideologischer Diskurs”, in *Das Argument* 178, 1989, p.919.

122 *Ibidem*.

Nowadays, both sociologist Maurizio Ambrosini and Professor Stefano Solari claim there is ample evidence that immigrants are becoming an increasingly important part of our society in terms of numbers. In fact, although many studies have verified the numerous benefits immigrants bring to the economy and the labor market, they are still neither desired nor well welcomed by society; indeed, they are very often excluded and denigrated.

[Myria](#) Georgiou<sup>123</sup> and [Rafal](#) Zaborowski<sup>124</sup> claim that migrants and refugees are, in fact, portrayed as strangers and different from Europeans: either as vulnerable strangers or dangerous outsiders, they are considered as people to be feared. Nothing, however, could be far from the truth, for the reality is that migrants and refugees are the only ones who are afraid: they are afraid of being rejected. This notion contributes to creating an unfavorable environment both for the reception and for the social inclusion of migrants within society.

Thus, if migrants and asylum seekers are labeled as vulnerable victims or dangerous strangers, how can we challenge the opposition between us (citizens) and them (non-citizens)? How is it possible to get rid of this hostility towards refugees and migrants?

«How can we reconceptualize theatricality as a potential and unique moral force able to construct bridges, rather than borders, between citizens and non-citizens at imaginary levels?»<sup>125</sup>

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123 [Myria](#) Georgiou is a Professor who teaches at the Department of Media and Communications at the London School of Economics. She mainly deals with cultural and media politics of migration and the city. *Academia*, <https://lse.academia.edu/MyriaGeorgiou>, [29 June 2020].

124 [Rafal](#) Zaborowski is now Lecturer in Digital Culture in the Department of Digital Humanities at the King's College London. His main research focuses on the intersection of media and society, co-evolution of media audiences and media institutions, as well as on innovative, critical, qualitative methods of academic inquiry. He also deals with media and crisis, paying particular attention to the representation of migrants and refugees in the media. *LSE – The London School of Economics and Political Science*, <http://www.lse.ac.uk/media-and-communications/alumni/phd-alumni/rafal-zaborowski>, [29 June 2020].

125 P. Musarò, *Performing metaphors into a physical space. The role of participatory theater in promoting social coexistence between citizens and newcomers*, in "Media@LSE Working Paper #52", London: LSE Media and Communications, 2018, p.10.



The next paragraph, will develop the theme of theatre intended as an instrument of social inclusion; it will deal in particular with the concept of participatory theatre and the *Cantieri Meticci* theatre company.

### II.6.1 Participatory Theatre with *Cantieri Meticci*

Since the tragic dramas of classical Athens, which exposed citizens to shows of suffering that encouraged reflection, theatre has always been considered a pedagogical institution.

Starting from the classical conception of Greek tragedy as a dramatic action that seeks to evoke "pity and fear" among those who look at the vulnerability of others, according to Lilie Chouliaraki<sup>126</sup>, the way we relate to distant others depends on our imaginative ability to feel, think and act for distant others; often observing ourselves as actors in their suffering.

The theatrical performance mobilizes the faculty of imagination by distancing the spectator from the spectacle of the vulnerable other through the objective space of the stage (or any other framing device) whilst, at the same time, enabling proximity between the two through narrative and visual resources that invite our empathetic judgment towards the spectacle.<sup>127</sup>

In addition, according to Pierluigi Musarò:<sup>128</sup>

imagination extends communities of solidarity beyond the nation and encompasses the world. Inviting participants to imagine the humanity of themselves and of others, theatrical performances can be considered to be normative resources for ethical thinking.<sup>129</sup>

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126 Lilie Chouliaraki is a Chair Professor in Media and Communications in the Department of Media and Communications at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). Her main interest is in media ethics and in particular in the relationship between mediation, social action and cosmopolitan citizenship.

LSE- *The London School of Economics and Political Science*, <http://www.lse.ac.uk/media-and-communications/people/academic-staff/lilie-chouliaraki>, [30 June 2020].

127 Chouliaraki L., *The Ironic Spectator: Solidarity in the Age of Post-Humanitarianism*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012, p. 22.

128 Pierluigi Musarò is an Associate Professor of Sociology at the Department of Sociology and Business Law at the University of Bologna in Italy. He is also Research Fellow at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), at the Institute for Public Knowledge at the New York University and at the Monash University in Melbourne. He wrote several and numerous publications in the field of migration, media communication, cultural sociology, and sustainable tourism. *Alma Mater Studiorum, Università di Bologna*, <https://www.unibo.it/sitoweb/pierluigi.musaro/>, [30 June 2020].

129 Musarò, *Performing metaphors into a physical space. The role of participatory theater in promoting social coexistence between citizens and newcomers*, p.9

In the nineties a new type of theatre emerged: it was the *Participatory theatre*.

It belongs to the wide and multifaceted panorama of the Performing Arts and it is a practice capable of redefining the role of spectators, overcoming the rigid distinction between those who act and those who attend the scenic event through the active involvement of the public within the performance dynamics. In fact, the protagonists of the story become protagonists of the scene and the need to remember and dream is collectively rebuilt.

Thanks to its ability to actively act on reality, *Participatory Theatre* demonstrates to be able to awaken the community as a whole. The theatre functions as the place of the other, in which a new space is founded, that of the possible. Its aim is to spread the values of solidarity and participation.

*Participatory theatre* is experienced by *Cantieri Meticci*, a theatre company based in Bologna that for years has found its distinctive feature in the "cross-breeding" between arts and people. Founded in April 2014 on the initiative of the director and playwright Pietro Florida, it was created to gather and mix the most diverse people, all united by a passion for theatre and a strong political vocation for artistic action.

Through the theatre, in fact, *Cantieri Meticci* organizes numerous projects involving asylum seekers, refugees, migrants, and Italian citizens such as young artists, activist citizens, university students, researchers, teachers and musicians, thereby giving rise to numerous artistic events open to the local community.



**Figure 22**— The director and playwright Pietro Florida and some participants of the *Cantieri Meticci* theatre company. Source: *Centro Interculturale Zonarelli*, <https://centrozonarelli.wordpress.com/2015/09/17/titanic-e-cantieri-meticci-al-terra-di-tutti-art-festival-a-bologna-dal-7-all11-ottobre-2015/>.

Thanks to the collaboration with various non-profit organizations, the activities of *Cantieri Meticci* have the power to reach citizens and inspire a large-scale debate on the issues of intercultural migration and dialogue in Europe.

In addition, through a participatory methodology, *Cantieri Meticci* aims to improve the artistic and cultural education of local societies and to support a community of professional and non professional actors coming from over twenty countries around the world and whose performances focus on issues such as border control, human rights, solidarity, and citizenship.



**Figure 23**— A *Cantieri Meticci* workshop.

Source: *Culture teatrali*, <https://cultureteatrali.dar.unibo.it/cantieri-meticci-dove-migranti-rifugiati-e-italiani-diventano-professionisti-delle-arti/>.

*Cantieri Meticci* uses the stage to rebuild a sense of community and moral commitment. In so doing, it wants to give voice to those who do not have it, such as newcomers, commonly portrayed by our media as victims or threats. This is why the participatory theatre of *Cantieri Meticci* challenges people's opinions by going beyond the stereotypes repeated daily.

It adopts theatre as a simple and accessible tool for self-expression that can be quickly learned by newcomers. Therefore, *participatory theatre* is considered a very useful means of promoting cooperation between citizens and new arrivals, and of contributing to create a sense of solidarity within communities.

Citing Professor Musarò: «Cantieri Meticci uses participatory theater to resist, rework, or disrupt the lines between possible and 'impossible citizens', while fostering inclusion through new communicative spaces and alternative social relations»<sup>130</sup>.

The company aims to reduce the separation between the spectator and the actor, through a rearrangement of the theatre as an open, playful and social event. Inspired by the works of theatre and film director Peter Brook and the educator and theorist Paulo Freire, as well as by the revolutionary priest Don Lorenzo Milani, *Cantieri Meticci* uses theatre as a means of promoting and facilitating inclusion as well as social and political change.

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130 L. Iannelli, P. Musarò, *Performative Citizenship: Public art, urban design, and political participation*, Milano: Mimesis International, 2017, p. 95.



**Figure 24**– A *Cantieri Meticci* theatrical production in Senigallia.

Source: *Senigallia Notizie*, <https://www.senigallianotizie.it/1327429052/nuovo-spettacolo-a-senigallia-dei-cantieri-meticci>.

The dialogue and interaction between the public and the performer emerge above all within the workshops and performances. In fact, workshop participants and other spectators get involved in the conversation as part of the play, and they become active as they explore, show, analyze and transform the reality in which they are living.



**Figure 25**– *Cantieri Meticci* in Poland to participate in the first edition of the *Atlas Festival*.

Source: *Bologna UNESCO City of Music*, <http://cittadellamusica.comune.bologna.it/cantieri-meticci-polonia/>.

Although most of the refugees participating in the *Cantieri Meticci* laboratories experience marginalization in their daily lives, the theatrical platforms offer them the opportunity to practice being part of a community and experiencing a sense of belonging; that is, to be a citizen of *Cantieri Meticci*.

According to Pietro Florida, the main purpose of the project is «to establish a sustainable, international, community-based theater and social development program, based upon the principles of *El Sistema*, a music education program founded in 1975 by Abreu»<sup>131</sup>.

In 1975, José Antonio Abreu, a Venezuelan musician and activist, founded a free classical music project in order to help poor Venezuelan kids learn to play a musical instrument and be part of an orchestra. In doing so, he created over 400 music centers and favored 700,000 young musicians. In his words:

Music has to be recognized as an agent of social development, in the highest sense because it transmits the highest values — solidarity, harmony, mutual compassion. And it has the ability to unite an entire community, and to express sublime feelings.<sup>132</sup>

Therefore, following Abreu's work, Florida began to create a series of theatrical projects involving people inside schools, refugee centers, kitchens, dormitories, mosques, churches and community centers, through a cooperative approach aimed at strengthening communities and developing a new generation of creative, committed and responsible citizens.

Two very important projects carried out by *Cantieri Meticci* seem particularly relevant for understanding the importance of theatre in the social inclusion of migrants.

The first project is titled *I listen to your heart, city. (Artistic explorations of a changing city)* and was funded by the Municipality of Bologna and the Valdese Church.

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131 Musarò, *Performing metaphors into a physical space. The role of participatory theater in promoting social coexistence between citizens and newcomers*, p.12.

132 *Ibidem*.

The project planned several artistic explorations of some districts of Bologna and finally there was a final party on 20 June 2016, World Refugee Day, with ethnic food, music and dancing in the park of Villa Aldini, a historic building on the Bologna hills where about 90 asylum seekers currently live.

By inviting the inhabitants to explore the city from the perspective of "new citizens", the project desired to consider the possibilities for changes and solutions in public spaces in order to make it more open to dialogue and coexistence between citizens and new arrivals.

In fact, the purpose of the project was to create a "new agora", that is a space for reflection on how the organization of the living space in the city influences our way of life, our thoughts of others, and our participation in the public debate.

Relating to this, the director Pietro Florida stated:

we strongly feel that the notion of agora, and the sense of community and human solidarity is being lost in our city societies — we lack safe spaces for a common reflection where the voice of everyone could be heard and we lack the ability to discuss, reflect and take into consideration voices of those who live in the margins of our cities, but who would like to be considered in the discussion - migrants, refugees, asylum seekers.<sup>133</sup>

Therefore, inviting Italian citizens in contexts of migrants (as it happens, for example, when seminars are held in mosques and refugee centers) and, on the contrary, non-citizens in Italian contexts (such as when workshops bring refugees to the public libraries, schools and universities) gives voice to migrants and refugees who live in local contexts, while promoting tolerance, intercultural dialogue and peaceful coexistence between the cohabitants of the city.

According to this perspective,

theater becomes a physical multicultural space and a social process that not only promotes 'conviviality', but it also gives birth to deep interpersonal relationships of cooperation on the basis of the same passion (theater, music kitchen, tailoring, poetry, computer, reading club, dance).<sup>134</sup>

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133 *Ivi*, pp. 13-14.

134 *Ivi*, p.14.



The second project is titled *The City Ghettos of Today* and involved 24 partner organizations whose purpose was to combine artistic creation with sociological research concerning the memory and reality of migrant communities in seven European cities.

The project, in fact, was funded with support of the European Commission and was carried out in Paris, Helsinki, Bologna, Milan, Berlin, Warsaw, and Antwerp, in 2014. Each city based on its different social, cultural and historical contexts has presented a different interpretation of the term "ghetto".

Through this project, the intent was to understand how ghettos influence individual and collective reactions to difference, how individuals build an image of the "the self" through their encounters with "the other", and how meetings with someone different contribute to the creation of "auto-stereotypes".

*The City Ghettos of Today* has created a series of workshops open to local communities, making migrants and refugees the main protagonists of the cultural scenes in the European cities involved, while at the same time creating a bridge with European citizens. In each of the seven European cities, at the end of every workshop there was an artistic installation and a public debate on the themes of the project.





**Figure 26—** *The City Ghettos of Today* project.

Source: *The City Ghettos of Today*, [http://cityghettos.com/cities/bologna/?l=it\\_IT](http://cityghettos.com/cities/bologna/?l=it_IT).

In addition, the spaces used for the workshops and the process for the creation of the final performance are all fundamental elements that emphasize the importance and the power of the theatre, both as a space of physical proximity in which different people can experience conviviality, as well as a metaphor for an alternative society in which differences (of cultural backgrounds, personal stories, needs, aspirations, etc.) can help to improve the final result.

During the first two weeks spent in Bologna, the first meetings focused on various forms of "camps" for migrants and refugees situated in Italy, Europe and Africa; in particular, the camp was discussed as government technology in the domain of migration control. Then, the asylum seekers were interviewed in depth and they talked about the experiences they lived in different contexts, as for example a refugee camp on the border of Sierra Leone, an Afghan camp in Patras, a prison in Libya and so on. The workshops were held in Italian, with translation into English and French, and they involved almost 100 participants experimenting with writing, video, theatre, illustration, and dance practices.



**Figure 27—** *The City Ghettos of Today* project.

Source: *The City Ghettos of Today*, [http://cityghettos.com/cities/bologna/?l=it\\_IT](http://cityghettos.com/cities/bologna/?l=it_IT).

The final performance whose title was *The Island is Full of Noises*, a verse from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, involved about fifty "actors" from fourteen different countries.

In many respects, *The Tempest* recalls the destabilizing sense of loss suffered by migrants: being exiled from one's home, arriving in a foreign place, but at the same time nurturing the hope of being able to improve one's life are all central themes in Shakespeare's play. Thus, using Shakespeare's drama as a starting point for artistic exploration makes the participants' stories more engaging and convincing. Moreover, according to the artistic director, «viewed through the Shakespearean lens, the "camp" or the "ghetto" signaled a form of isolation whilst simultaneously emphasizing a richness of possible voices and interpretive keys».<sup>135</sup>

The ghettos are, in fact, the suburbs, marginalized and abandoned urban areas, islands forgotten by local institutions. At the same time, however, these islands are full of noise, as Caliban says in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

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<sup>135</sup> Ivi, p. 18.

This noise is caused by their emerging voices of protest and resistance, but also of conflict.

Ultimately, it becomes possible to transform the reality into poetry; consequently, the audience becomes more emotionally and morally involved. In relation to the above, according to Jeffrey C Alexander<sup>136</sup>:

drama required a plausibility that needed to be conveyed by the actors' ability to make the audience 'believe in' their speech, movements, thoughts, and feelings. The plausibility of this *mise-en-scène* is based on the connection between the impression made by the actors and the preconceptions of the auditors, who perceive the performance as authentic and real.<sup>137</sup>

### **II.6.2 The Process Drama in the *Cultura e accoglienza* project**

In 2016, an important project was born at the University of Padua in order to encourage inclusion and give thirty asylum seekers the opportunity to become "guest students" and be welcomed within a personalized training course for a year.

The project, known as *Cultura e accoglienza*, was managed by the Student Services Office in collaboration with the University Language Centre. Its aim was to encourage about thirty asylum seekers to take courses at the university level. The students would be given the identification badge and access to all the services of the University of Padua, such as libraries, laboratories, and study rooms; moreover, they could take courses of Italian and get access to any other courses.

Alessandra Biscaro, head of the Student Services Office, underlined the importance of *peer tutoring*, that is, «to support these people with tutors, who are in all respects the students enrolled, in order to help them better in the

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136 Jeffrey C. Alexander is the Lillian Chavenson Saden Professor of Sociology at Yale University. His main interests concern theory, culture and politics and he is also considered an exponent of the "strong program" in cultural sociology since he studied the codes and cultural narratives that inform the different areas of social life. *Yale University– Sociology*, <https://sociology.yale.edu/people/jeffrey-alexander>, [8 July 2020].

137 Musarò, *Performing metaphors into a physical space. The role of participatory theater in promoting social coexistence between citizens and newcomers*, p. 18.

training activities, providing them with a personalized path and also motivating them in learning the language».<sup>138</sup>

The University Language Centre played a very important role within this project. The thirty asylum seekers who were included in the project in the first semester of their academic year participated in lessons to learn Italian as a second language. Relating to this, Fiona Dalziel<sup>139</sup>, the University Language Centre Coordinator for this project, stated: «This is one of the most beautiful aspects because uniting the thirty guest students with Erasmus and non-Erasmus students is the best way to create inclusion».<sup>140</sup>

After the first semester, the asylum seekers, always supported by their tutors, (there were ten tutors for thirty participants in the project) could participate in single university courses. Alessandra Biscaro also claimed: «The objectives are that they can acquire refugee status, so as to regularize their situation and, if there is the possibility, to have them enrolled at the end of the year in a degree course».<sup>141</sup>

However, the activities included in the *Cultura e accoglienza* project did not stop at individual language courses. In fact, in addition to being able to access laboratories, study rooms, and libraries of the University and attend Italian courses at the University Language Centre, the thirty asylum seekers were given the opportunity to participate in meetings of "Process Drama".

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138 *Il BO Live- Università di Padova*, <https://ilbolive.unipd.it/it/rifugiati-laccoglienza-passa-unipd>, [10 July 2020].

139 Fiona Dalziel is a university lecturer in English Language and Translation at the University of Padova, Italy, where she teaches on the BA program in Language, Literature and Cultural Mediation and the MA in Modern Languages for International Communication and Collaboration. Her research interests include: promoting learner autonomy; academic writing; the use of drama in language learning, including that of adult migrants. She has been the coordinator of the university English drama group for 20 years. "It comes from you": Agency in adult asylum seekers' language learning through Process Drama in "Language Learning in Higher Education", vol. 9. n. 1, 2019, pp. 7-32, <https://doi.org/10.1515/cercles-2019-0001>, [10 July 2020].

140 *Il BO Live- Università di Padova*, <https://ilbolive.unipd.it/it/rifugiati-laccoglienza-passa-unipd>, [10 July 2020].

141 *Ibidem*.

The "Process Drama" is a method of teaching the language through theatre, which does not aim to stage a real theatrical piece, but rather to improve the oral production and the sociolinguistic skills of the participants: what matters, in fact, is the process, and not the final product. Rather than focusing on acting, the "Process Drama" encourages improvisation, since it does not aim to create a script or a show; also, it does not include the memorization of texts, or an external audience. On the contrary, the participants are both actors and audience, artists and spectators.

From a historical point of view, the "Process Drama" is a branch of educational theatre that originated in the 1960s in England and was started by Dorothy Heathcote. An educator and a visionary, she began to work in English secondary schools, between the lower and middle classes and with difficult pupils, inventing a series of theatrical strategies, initially known as "Drama for Learning" and then "Drama in Education", to involve children in learning and achieving remarkable results.

In the early 1990s, the term "Process Drama" emerged in the context of *Drama in Education*, which was initially used and spread by two Australian authors named John O'Toole and Bradley C. Haseman. In his very first article on Process Drama, *Improvisation, Process Drama and Dramatic Art*, Haseman describes it as a form of theatrical improvisation that aims to involve the participants on an emotional, cognitive and aesthetic level. Furthermore, the research carried out by many scholars confirmed that the "Process Drama" positively affects the development of the communicative competence of learners in L2 contexts: it stimulates motivation, facilitates the acquisition of the lexicon, and works on intercultural awareness and cognitive meta-reflection.

Moreover, the 'Process Drama' involves the whole group in different ways: sometimes the group-class improvises all together, other times small groups improvise simultaneously, or a single group performs for the rest of the group-class.

Participation is therefore always active, both when improvising and when observing improvisation of others. It depends on the type of activity, closely linked to the sensitivity of the teacher in understanding when participants are ready to perform in front of others and when it is more appropriate to let the group-class community protect them. The roles and functions of the teacher in "Process Drama" are different: the facilitator alternates in the roles of actor, director, screenwriter and teacher, improvising with students who, in turn, reveal themselves actors, directors, writers and learners, immersed in the collective history that they create. According to Haseman and O'Toole, the teacher who uses the Process Drama needs to pay attention to the interests of the students, and to choose topics that can be motivating to their linguistic needs, to the group dynamics, to the story that is gradually being created, and to creative inputs and dramatic elements.

Between activities, the teacher offers moments of reflection: metacognitive reflections on language learning, intercultural reflections on the content of the laboratory, sociological reflections, analysis of the characters, linguistic reflection, or other, depending on the educational objective that the teacher needs to have well in mind from the beginning. The final phase of the Process Drama involves a linguistic revision, where the lexicon that emerged from the various improvisations is taken up, as well as the idiomatic expressions and grammatical forms. Therefore, grammar is not ignored but emerges from the context and is then addressed in the revision phase.

In the *Cultura e accoglienza* project, a series of process drama sessions for participants have been proposed by Fiona Dalziel and Erika Piazzoli<sup>142</sup>.

The sessions were six to four hours each and took place from April to June 2017.

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142 Erika Piazzoli is an Assistant Professor in Arts Education at Trinity College Dublin. She is international coordinator of the School of Education, and teaches on the Master's programme in Language Education and Drama in Education. Her research interests are within the areas of drama in education; embodiment and aesthetic learning; applied linguistics; performative language pedagogy and research. *Trinity College Dublin*, <https://www.tcd.ie/research/profiles/?profile=piazzole>, [11 July 2020].

The participants, originally from Cameroon, Egypt, Gambia, Nigeria (5 students) and Syria, were aged between 20 and 28 and had different levels of proficiency in Italian, from almost total beginner to A2. During the first meeting, some of the main characteristics of the theatrical approach to learning (of the language) such as vocal training, theatre of images, and storytelling were presented and explained to the participants. At the end of the meeting, the participants were invited to share their first impressions of Italy. This process certainly brought some benefits but also some problems because,

[...] within the context of arts-based work, especially theatre, personal testimony is often seen as a key means of empowering newly arrived individuals through the sharing of subaltern experience with a wider audience. However, as Jeffers (2008) warns, these stories can also be interpreted as problematic representations of victimhood.<sup>143</sup>

Concerning the theatre of images, a series of activities were carried out: in fact, together with the participants a wide range of emotions were conceived and chosen which the participants then represented through the body, first individually, and then in a group. For example, one participant chose the emotion of surprise, while another opted for the emotion of fear.

The Process drama scenarios were four: *Street Artists*, *Iceland Migration*, *The Restaurant* and *The Sardinian Myth*.

Among these, *The Iceland Migration* was the participants' favorite session. It was held on May 18, 2017 and was attended by five students.

In order to protect and empower migrants and not cause them further suffering during the telling of their stories, it was decided to adopt a series of spacing measures. Quoting Stig. A. Eriksson's<sup>144</sup> words: «It is important to sustain distance, as a safeguard against blurring the boundaries between

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143 M. Balfour, P. Bundy, B. Burton, J. Dunn, N. Woodrow, *Applied theatre: Resettlement: Drama, refugees and resilience*, London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015, p.5.

144 Stig. A. Eriksson is a Professor Emeritus in drama education at Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Campus Bergen, Institute of Arts, Centre for Arts, Communication and Culture. *Academia*, <https://hvl-no.academia.edu/SAEriksson>, [15 July 2020].



fiction and reality. If distance is not observed, there is a danger that the playing becomes private, therapeutic or simply mundane».<sup>145</sup>

For this reason, the first elements of distance were the place and the time.

The drama, in fact, would take place ten years into the future, in 2027, and although the place was to be Padua, the migratory flows in question were from north to south. Students were informed that due to environmental problems, a large number of migrants had started arriving in Italy from countries such as Iceland.

Another very important distance technique consisted in role reversal. Students were instructed to take on the roles of the members of an association dealing with the reception of migrants in Padua; therefore, they were immersed in a situation familiar to them, but this time they were empowered with the task to provide help and information. This technique allowed the students to «explore material that is (was) relevant to them but that contains (contained) a degree of distance».<sup>146</sup>

Subsequently, the students had to discuss and decide who should have held the role of President, Coordinator, Secretary, Communications Officer and Treasurer of the association. Next, they proceeded to create a logo for the association, to prepare a list of rules and regulations, to plan a welcome protocol, and to elaborate some interview questions for new arrivals.

The successive phase called *Experiential Phase* concerned the professor Fiona Dalziel as Teacher-in-Role, playing the part of Freya, a newly arrived refugee from Iceland. She was interviewed by the participants in their roles as members of the Association. They had a discussion about her status and the dream she wanted to make come true in this new country, which was to start her own farm business.

Therefore, a very effective and productive intercultural exchange between Freya and the students followed: she told them some stories about her native

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145 Stig. A. Eriksson, *Distance and awareness of fiction- Exploring the concepts* in "NJ Drama Australia Journal" Vol. 31, Issue 1, 2007, p. 13.

146 Balfour, Bundy, Burton, Dunn, Woodrow, *Applied theatre: Resettlement: Drama, refugees and resilience*, p. 54.



country and they provided her with useful information about Italy, such as buying a bus ticket, as an example. The participants then explained their rules, finally declaring that the Association must be informed if refugees left the city for more than 3 days. At some point, however, it was announced that Freya had been missing for 5 days and that it was their job to find her and convince her to return.

Next, the participants were divided into two groups (one also including the Professor Erika Piazzoli) and the story was told by means of a *tableau vivant*<sup>147</sup>; finally, there was a short improvisation (both with and without verbal communication).

Relating to this, Erika Piazzoli describes the process as a successful one:

the scene was played twice, once with movements only and once with movement and dialogue. After the first sequence (movement only) we tried to guess what the story was, but we couldn't: it took a second go, with dialogue, to put the pieces together. This was particularly insightful, I thought, as it gave the actors the power and satisfaction of having used verbal communication successfully, to be understood.<sup>148</sup>

Finally, a Focus Group (FG) discussion was organized during the last meeting, and the participants used the English language to describe their experience through the help of the Video-Stimulated Recall (VSR). Two of them, Max and Adam<sup>149</sup>, said that the theatre sessions were especially useful and effective as they helped them with language issues. In particular, Max stated:

I mean lessons, ordinary lessons, you always speak when the teacher gives you the opportunity to speak... while in the theatre ... it comes from you! [...] Yes, give the opportunity to speak, ask question, to play, to make rules everything, yes.<sup>150</sup>

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147 The term *tableau vivant* derives from French and its meaning is "living picture" It is a type of representation in which a group of actors or dancers arrange themselves on the scene, remaining silent, in order to recreate or evoke a famous picture or image. They are usually in costume and can be theatrically illuminated. Aspects of theater and visual arts are therefore united. *Treccani*, <http://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/tableau-vivant/>, [15 July 2020].

148 F. Dalziel , E. Piazzoli, *It comes from you*": *Agency in adult asylum seekers' language learning through Process Drama* in "Language Learning in Higher Education", vol.9. n. 1, p.21.

149 Max and Adam are two pseudonyms.

150 *Ivi*, p.22.

In addition, the four students who participated in the Focus Group demonstrated a high degree of meta-linguistic awareness as L2 students:

Fiona: If you're thinking about your Italian, do you feel confident about speaking Italian?

Adam: For me I think sometimes you feel confident. It depends on who you are speaking with, sometimes you lose your self-confidence, and you forget some words.

Max: For me it depends on the context and the topic.<sup>151</sup>

Furthermore, Adam also stressed that non-verbal aspects of communication are essential elements in language learning:

I think this class is quite different from normal classes because here we use everything, both body language and writing and speaking to learn so many new things unlike the normal class where they only teach the verbs and you do assignments and class work.<sup>152</sup>

It is interesting to note how Adam considered and included body language in the same category as writing and speaking. Relating to this, Max added:

I think you improve. It helps you to improve your Italian without realizing it. So you improve without even knowing you are improving. After a certain time you realize that your Italian becomes better and better.<sup>153</sup>

Later, in the Video-Stimulated Recall (VSR), the participants watched a small excerpt of the Process Drama, the episode *Teacher-in-role*, with Fiona in the role of newly arrived migrant, and the participants in the role of members of the Association. In, fact, the *teacher in role* is a supporting technique of the "Process Drama" according to which the teacher enters the shoes of a character to engage the group in improvisation and dramatization of a story. Therefore, the VSR, which has been used widely in educational research, is considered to be a very effective strategy for understanding what participants think and believe. In this regard, the students were asked what they were thinking at the time, that is, 5 weeks earlier, and one of them, Max, responded by stating that he felt a "drop of confidence":

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151 *Ibidem*.

152 *Ivi*, p.23.

153 *Ibidem*.

It was in my case here there is a lack of confidence. Sometimes you even know the word but sometimes you don't have the confidence to express the words you feel in you. When you feel the words and another person who knows the word in your place you realize that, was what you wanted to say. So there is a little bit the drop of confidence.<sup>154</sup>

On the other hand, Stephen<sup>155</sup>, another participant, said that at the time he was happy that his Italian was improving: «I was happy, I'm improving».<sup>156</sup>

Both Max's and Stephen's comments were very helpful and meaningful because they represented two students who were going through two different stages of learning the language. Furthermore, a very important element that indicated a high level of meta cognitive awareness was the fact that when the students were shown the replay of their performance, they committed themselves to making critical observations about their learning, rather than focusing on their appearance on the screen, as it often happens in these cases.

However, as mentioned earlier, the participants' favorite session was *Iceland migration*. Max explained to us the reason by saying: «Yes, because I recognize myself in that story. There's a little bit of my case in Italy... in that story».<sup>157</sup>

The participants stated that the drama offered them an imaginary space that allowed them to return the hospitality they had received upon their arrival. Moreover, always through the drama they could actively contribute to society by abandoning the position of passive recipients:

Max: This was the first occasion to give what we received.

Adam: Yes. This was the first occasion to give back what we received.

Moreover, the drama provided them with a series of productive and creative tools to reinvent themselves and be able to treasure a unique experience. In her Reflective Journal, Erika Piazzoli wrote:

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154 *Ivi*, p. 24.

155 Stephen is another pseudonym since all participants were given pseudonyms.

156 F. Dalziel, E. Piazzoli, *It comes from you*: *Agency in adult asylum seekers' language learning through Process Drama* in "Language Learning in Higher Education", p. 24.

157 *Ibidem*.

The cunning thing about today's workshop is that it was so simple, yet so powerful. We managed to find enough distance for them to feel comfortable to live through some of the experiences related to welcoming migrants, re-settling, and cultural misunderstanding – but from the opposite perspective, that is, from the receiver's end.<sup>158</sup>

During an interview on *RadioBue.it*, the university web radio of Padua, Erika Piazzoli was asked if it is easier to learn a second language through theatre. She replied positively stating that:

the idea was to use dramatization techniques to help these guys express themselves in Italian to communicate using non-verbal techniques, working with stories, working with the body, with imagination and I have to say that we had a lot of fun.<sup>159</sup>

The goal of a theatrical workshop of this kind is to forget that you are communicating in a foreign language that can generate anxiety, frustration, etc. and focus on a story that is created together with the teachers to get involved in communication for the pure communicative purpose not simply for an exercise.

Participants confirmed that it was easier to study Italian through the Process Drama, and that they would recommend it to other people who don't know Italian very well.

The next and last chapter will continue to elaborate on theatre and deal with the specific case of my thesis in detail: *The PASAR* project.

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158 *Ivi*, p. 26.

159 *RadioBue.it* on *Youtube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=74dqjBHberg>, [24 July 2020].

## CHAPTER III

### THE *PASAR* PROJECT: A CASE STUDY

«Theatre is a form of knowledge: It should and can also be a means of transforming society. Theatre can help us build our future, rather than just waiting for it.»<sup>160</sup>  
(Augusto Boal<sup>161</sup>)

#### III.1 Introduction of the *PASAR* project

The *PASAR* project, or "Participation Arts and Social Action in Research" was born in London in order to research and to analyze

how participatory theatre and walking methods help to understand the ways in which migrant families, some of whom with limited English language knowledge, construct their sense of belonging and social participation as a citizenship practice.<sup>162</sup>

It was funded by the National Centre for Research Methods/ Economic and Social Research Council for the purpose of exploring how participatory theatre and walking methods could successfully and efficiently help some migrant families, and in particular some migrant women to be included in a new society.

The *PASAR* project welcomed people of diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds such as Polish, Congolese, Somali, Turkish, Kurdish and Lithuanian, and in particular Black African, refugees, or Muslim mothers. Initially, the intention of the project founders was to enroll 15 participants, but then 20 women showed up during the first session of a series of

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160 Search for Common Ground, *Participatory Theatre for Conflict Transformation – Training Manual*, <http://dmeforpeace.org/sites/default/files/Participatory-Theatre-Manual-EN.pdf>, 2012, p. 6.

161 Augusto Boal was a Brazilian dramatist, director, thinker, educator, founder of the *Theater of the Oppressed*, an educational methodology and a tool for social transformation, used all over the world in many areas and which includes different techniques. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Augusto-Boal>, [12 September 2020].

162 M. O'Neill, U. Erel, E. Kaptani, T. Reynolds, *Participatory Theatre and Walking as Social Research Methods – A Toolkit*, <https://fass.open.ac.uk/sites/fass.open.ac.uk/files/files/PASAR/Toolkit%20PASAR%20Final%2030%20Jan%2018.pdf>, 2018, p. 1.

workshops and continued to participate constantly in the subsequent 8 weekly meetings. For each session, mothers were reimbursed vouchers worth £ 20.

### **III.2 The founders of the project**

The main founders of the *PASAR* project are four women: Umut Erel, Erene Kaptani, Maggie O'Neill, and Tracey Reynolds. Each of them has performed a different task contributing in the best way to develop and implement the project.

Umut Erel is a Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the Open University, UK. Her publications are mainly based on gender, racism and participatory creative research methods. She is the Principal Investigator on this project and has a keen interest in how migrant women's mothering work can be considered as a citizenship practice. For this reason, she started a research with Erene Kaptani and Tracey Reynolds relating to several participatory theatre methods in order to analyze the care and cultural work of migrant mothers as an intervention into citizenship.

Erene Kaptani is an anthropologist, participatory theatre artist and drama therapist with experience in applied theatre/arts for social research, community building and public impact. She is the Research Fellow on this project and also a component of "Playback South Theatre" Company. In addition, she created and acted in *Suspended Lives*, a play with refugee groups relating to social research practice.

Maggie O'Neill is chair in Sociology and Criminology at the University of York and is part of the Centre for Women's Studies. She is a Co-investigator on the *PASAR* research project. She has a lot of experience in participatory research concerning asylum, migration and gender, and has worked with artists and communities for a long time using biographical and art-based methods both visual and performative.

Tracey Reynolds is a Research Professor and Professor of Social Sciences at the University of Greenwich. Her role within the *PASAR* research project is that of Co-investigator. She is very interested in social practices and has carried out numerous researches about Black and minority families living in disadvantaged communities.

As already mentioned, she also initiated some important and interesting studies using participatory theatre methods together with Umut Erel and Erene Kaptani.

### **III.3 The research**

The *PASAR* project used participatory arts and participatory action research to better study the reason for social exclusion suffered by migrant mothers, girls and families without recourse to public funds.

All the participants were constantly monitored by numerous academics and an artistic professional and this made collaboration between art and participants more effective. Indeed, the *PASAR* project has created a model for bringing together professionals, policy makers and marginalized groups to interact with each other through creative methods. For example, Erene Kaptani, the Research Fellow and principal artistic collaborator of the project, has combined theatre-based arts and research together with Maggie O'Neill's participatory arts research practice, and in particular the *Walking Methods* that will be further explained and elaborated in the following paragraphs.

Relating to this, the project focused on and developed methods and methodological knowledge of participatory theatre and walking methods through two very important strands.

In the first strand, which started in April and ended in June 2016, the *PASAR* project team held weekly participatory theatre and walking workshops with a group of mothers alongside a group of eight-year-old girls considering and examining what it means to be a migrant mother or a girl from a migrant family in London.

Eleven weeks later, the two groups participated together in an intergenerational day showing each other the scenes on which they had



worked and then realized. This intergenerational day was very useful for both groups as both mothers and girls needed to confront each other and share an intergenerational dialogue.

As a participant from the Intergenerational Mothers Group claimed: «Expressing, sharing and acting out the stories we share was powerful.»<sup>163</sup>

In the second strand, which began in November 2016 and ended in March 2017, the *PASAR* project team worked weekly with a group of mothers affected by the "No Recourse to Public Funds' Policy", the so-called *NRPF* group. These women were living a difficult situation and needed to be supported in order to share their stories and express them theatrically.

They wanted to talk about their experiences with policy makers and practitioners and for this reason a one-day policy workshop was designated to allow the group of mothers to start a dialogue with them on the *No Recourse to Public Funds'* policy.

To this effect, Rosalind Edwards<sup>164</sup> claims:

It is so important that researchers, policymakers and practitioners hear the voices of marginalized people, and that we build researchers' capacities to work with methods that enable their participation in social change. The *PASAR* project has advanced a methodological model involving creative participatory theatre and walking methods that enables the exploration, sharing and documentation of the experiences of people who are marginalized within society.<sup>165</sup>

### III.4 Participatory Theatre in the *PASAR* project

As already mentioned in the previous chapter, *participatory theatre* is

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163 O'Neill, Erel, Kaptani, Reynolds, *Participatory Theatre and Walking as Social Research Methods – A Toolkit*, <https://fass.open.ac.uk/sites/fass.open.ac.uk/files/files/PASAR/Toolkit%20PASAR%20Final%2030%20Jan%2018.pdf>, p. 22.

164 Rosalind Edwards is Professor of Sociology, Social Policy and Criminology at the University of Southampton. She is also Social Sciences Director of Research and Enterprise, Co-director, ESRC National Centre for Research Methods. *University of Southampton*, <https://www.southampton.ac.uk/sociology/about/staff/rse1u09.page>, [20 September 2020].

165 O'Neill, Erel, Kaptani, Reynolds, *Participatory Theatre and Walking as Social Research Methods – A Toolkit*, <https://fass.open.ac.uk/sites/fass.open.ac.uk/files/files/PASAR/Toolkit%20PASAR%20Final%2030%20Jan%2018.pdf>, p. 2.

«an approach in which the actors interact with the public, based on a real problem. Throughout the participatory event, the public participates to adapt, change or correct a situation, an attitude or a behavior that is developed during the show.»<sup>166</sup>

Used as a research method, *participatory theatre* highlights how marginalized groups can engage in social transformations. Erene Kaptani and Nira Yuval-Davis <sup>167</sup> show how it helps the participants to create spaces where they can enact social and personal conflicts.

Furthermore, *participatory theatre* methods allow social researchers to experiment with a performative method in order to gather and record the experiences, opinions and knowledge of all participants. In fact, according to the sociologist Umut Erel this is really useful when working with participants who are not yet very fluent in the English language.

Another very important aspect of *participatory theatre* is that it constitutes a liminal space, that is, a space where social reality is suspended.

To this effect, according to Erene Kaptani,

when participants play out scenes from their everyday life in this liminal space these experiences can be de-familiarized and this de-familiarization allows participants and researchers to observe, analyze and theorize these experiences together.<sup>168</sup>

Consequently, this form of action research allows both participants and researchers to reflect together on behaviors related to the social world.

The participatory and performative methods used and adopted in the *PASAR* project are an original and innovative combination of *Playback*, *Image* and

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166 Search for Common Ground, *Participatory Theatre for Conflict Transformation – Training Manual*, <http://dmeforpeace.org/sites/default/files/Participatory-Theatre-Manual-EN.pdf>, p.5.

167 Nira Yuval-Davis is Professor Emeritus, Honorary Director of the Research Centre on Migration, Refugees and Belonging (CMRB) at the University of East London. University of East London, <https://www.uel.ac.uk/staff/y/nira-yuval-davis>, [25 September 2020].

168 U. Erel , E. Kaptani , *Participatory theatre as a research method*, National Centre for Research Methods online learning resource. Available at [https://www.ncrm.ac.uk/resources/online/participatory\\_theatre\\_research\\_method/](https://www.ncrm.ac.uk/resources/online/participatory_theatre_research_method/), [25 September 2020].

*Forum Theatre*, Physical Theatre exercises, visualization, mapping and walking which will be better explained in the following paragraphs.

### **III.4.1 Playback Theatre**

*Playback Theatre* is a particular form of theatrical improvisation on personal stories, conceived by the American psycho dramatist Jonathan Fox and developed by Jo Salas in the mid-seventies in the United States.

The main components of the *Playback Theatre* are a conductor, a staff of actors and a musician, an audience (community) and narrators (tellers).

The task of the conductor is to use the spontaneity of the actors to warm the audience and translate into scenic action the emotions and stories that will emerge.

The actors and the musician, specifically trained at the *Playback Theatre*, have the task of representing the stories told by the audience, collaborating with each other in a harmonious way. Their purpose is to "give dignity to history" by promoting a process of sharing and identification.

The narrators are members of the public who wish to tell a fragment of their experience that will be shared with the entire audience.

Therefore, the conductor invites a person from the audience on stage to tell a personal story while the actors and the audience listen carefully. Thereafter, the actors play the history of the person who remains on stage by adopting the techniques of improvisation, music, singing, and movement.

At the end, the person who has previously told the story is asked what he/she thinks of the theatrical scene just played.

The first workshops of the PASAR project were two Playback Theatre sessions, whose technique provides a forum and ensures emotional safety to those telling their stories as well as to the actors re-enacting them under the conductor's guidance.

Thanks to *Playback Theatre*, it was possible to start social research as the actors and researchers first shared their stories with the mothers. As the actors

took on the responsibility of acting and improvising a story on stage, they inspired the rest of the audience to do it themselves in subsequent sessions as well.

In addition, *Playback Theatre* is a very useful tool to create dialogue and collective reflection between the participants, the actors and the conductor; moreover, it facilitates the development of spontaneity and expressiveness, of communication skills, and of body language. It addresses not only the experiences lived by the participants but also social issues.

Here are two examples of *Playback Theatre* from the *PASAR* project:

1) Clip: "Good Morning!"

Source: <https://fass.open.ac.uk/research/projects/pasar/videos/playback-theatre>.

A participant of this session shares her story about the lack of sociability she noticed in her London neighborhood and compares it to her experience in Africa. She says that when she goes out to the park, for example, she always stops to talk to people and to greet them as she did when living in Africa, but they almost ignore her, responding minimally to her greeting.

After listening carefully to her story, the actors on stage perform what she had told the audience.

At the end of the performance, she is very happy and all the participants seem quite amused.



**Figure 28**– A scene from the clip "Good morning!"

Source: <https://fass.open.ac.uk/research/projects/pasar/videos/playback-theatre>.

## 2) Clip: "Moving Around with an Autistic Son"

Source: <https://fass.open.ac.uk/research/projects/pasar/videos/playback-theatre>.

A participant from the NRPF mothers' group shares her personal story. She is homeless as a consequence of being excluded from the *No Recourse to Public Funds* policy. She lives at some friends' house in a cramped space with her autistic son who suffers frequent bouts of disruptive behavior. The problem is that the homeowners complain as they do not understand the behavior of her autistic son, and reproach the woman telling her she should have educated him better.

While telling the story, the woman becomes emotional, prompting another participant to offer her a handkerchief to wipe away her tears. What makes an impact is the humanity and sensitivity felt not only by one participant, but also by the entire audience who at the end of the performance empathizes with the woman's pain.



**Figure 29**– The performance from the clip "Moving Around with an Autistic Son".

Source: <https://fass.open.ac.uk/research/projects/pasar/videos/playback-theatre>.



**Figure 30**– A scene from the clip "Moving Around with an Autistic Son".

Source: <https://fass.open.ac.uk/research/projects/pasar/videos/playback-theatre>.



### III.4.2 Image Theatre

The *Image Theatre* technique was developed by the Brazilian director and activist Augusto Boal.

In *Image Theatre* "still images" are used to explore various realistic situations, emotions and relationships; in fact, through theirs or each others' bodies the participants create sculptures and shapes to express a message, a feeling or a problem.

Therefore, in a circle, the participants give life to images in relation to a specific theme. This has to happen quickly without thinking or preparing first. These images are then merged and staged.

Through images it is possible to manifest and give life to emotions that words could hide.

As the drama therapist Roger Grainger states, «when we immerse ourselves in the experience of being alive in the body then meaning becomes something lived rather than examined».<sup>169</sup>

In addition, according to Erene Kaptani and Nira Yuval-Davis, *Image Theatre* affords participants the opportunity to think about and understand the ideas and the messages of the images created by their bodies.

Furthermore, *Image Theatre* body performances provide a platform that enables participants to consider, analyze, and tackle not only personal experiences, but also problems and social relationships.

As a valid and proven tool utilized in social research, image theatre methods frequently identify and examine inner or outer dejection, clueless thoughts and feelings harbored by groups, or individuals who may be either comfortable with or being new to drama.

Here is an example of *Image Theatre*:

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<sup>169</sup> R. Grainger, *Drama and healing: the roots of drama therapy*, London: J. Kingsley, 1990, p.169.



Clip: "Morphing between 'Friendly' and 'Scary' Neighbourhoods"

Source: <https://fass.open.ac.uk/research/projects/pasar/videos/image-theatre>.

This clip is an example of employing *Image Theatre techniques* with the group of young girls from migrant families in North London.

First, they develop and stage images of what they call "friendly" and "scary hoods". Later, they are asked to transform the image of the "friendly neighborhood" into the one of the "scary neighborhood".

This exercise was very useful and effective because it allowed them to reflect and understand the different ways in which they can use their body to represent friendly and scary public spaces.



**Figure 31**– A scene from the clip "Morphing between 'Friendly' and 'Scary' Neighbourhoods" while the girls' group is representing images of a friendly neighborhood.

Source: <https://fass.open.ac.uk/research/projects/pasar/videos/image-theatre>.



**Figure 32**– A scene from the clip "Morphing between 'Friendly' and 'Scary' Neighbourhoods" while the girls' group is representing images of a scary neighborhood.

Source: <https://fass.open.ac.uk/research/projects/pasar/videos/image-theatre>.

### III.4.3 Forum Theatre

The *Forum Theatre*, introduced and pioneered by Augusto Boal as a method of the *Theatre of the Oppressed (TO)*, was born in Brazil in 1979 on the basis of the values of collective empowerment and emancipation contained in the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* written by the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire in 1970.

Boal created the *TO* in Brazil with the aim of dealing with social and political issues within communities, and used the theatre like language to talk about all all kinds of problematic human and social issues. According to Boal, the *TO* has two fundamental principles: «1) To help the spectator become a protagonist of the dramatic action so that s/he can 2) apply those actions s/he has practiced in the theater to real life».<sup>170</sup>

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170 A.Boal, S.Epstein, *The Cop in the Head: Three Hypotheses*, *TDR (1988-)*, vol. 34, n. 3, Cambridge: The MIT Press, p.36, 1990. Available at *JSTOR*, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1146067>, [10 October 2020].

In *Forum Theatre* participants share stories of problems, conflicts or dilemmas and then decide to stage a short theatrical scene which represents a negative or an oppressive situation.

Later, the scene is enacted a second time in front of an audience who is invited to intervene in order to take the place of the protagonist and suggest changes or improvements.

Thus, the *Forum Theatre* allows the spectator-actor to enter the scene and replace the Protagonist or his allies, to attempt changes, to look for valid solutions and to improve the situation initially presented; along these lines, every idea of the audience is thus experimented on the scene.

The conductor of the *Forum Theatre*, called *Jolly*, does not judge the interventions but facilitates the participation and the debate, listening to everyone's contribution.

Therefore, *Forum Theatre* renders the public active, breaking the barriers between artists and spectators and placing them on the same level.

In addition, the *Forum Theater* technique offers participants the opportunity to experiment with different forms of social action and enables both participants and researchers to reflect together on social processes and on individual and collective actions.

Here is an example of *Forum Theatre*:

Clip: "Asking for Leave from the Headteacher"

Source: <https://fass.open.ac.uk/research/projects/pasar/videos/forum-theatre>.

This is an example of participants intervening into a *Forum Theatre* scene.

The clip shows a mother asking the head teacher for special permission to visit her ill father abroad. The head teacher ignores her, doesn't listen to her or even look at her, as shown in the Figure 33 below. The only answer she gives is "No!". The woman tries to insist, reiterating that it is an important thing, since her father is sick, and she has to go, but the head teacher 's answer does not change.

Once the first performance is over, some of the women intervene and express their opinions with the help of Umut Erel, Principal Investigator of the *PASAR* project. They say that the head teacher did not even listen to the end of the woman's request and immediately gave her a negative answer.

At a certain point one of the participants intervenes giving a suggestion to the protagonist, so Dr. Erel invites her to take her place and stage a second performance.

During the second performance, the woman repeats to the head teacher the reason why she is asking for a special permission but the answer is always no, as seen in Figure 34 below.

Therefore, the woman tries again, trying to be more patient and convincing and explaining carefully that this is a very important situation for her and that if she does not give her permission, then she will resort to any other method even on appeal.

This time the head teacher listens to the woman's reason and replies that she will think about it and see what she can do.

At the end of the second performance, the audience intervenes again and one of the women says that the difference between the first and the second scene also consists in the fact that the second woman said she will appeal if the head teacher does not give her permission.

Finally, concerning the behavior of the two protagonists, the school manager looks at and listens to the woman and the latter appears more relaxed than the woman who had acted in the first performance, as we can see in Figure 35 below.



**Figure 33**– The first performance from the clip "Asking for Leave from the Headteacher".

Source: <https://fass.open.ac.uk/research/projects/pasar/videos/forum-theatre>.



**Figure 34**– The second performance from the clip "Asking for Leave from the Headteacher".

Source: <https://fass.open.ac.uk/research/projects/pasar/videos/forum-theatre>.





**Figure 35**– The last scene of the second performance from the clip "Asking for Leave from the Headteacher".

Source: <https://fass.open.ac.uk/research/projects/pasar/videos/forum-theatre>.

### III.5 The Walking Method

For a long time, *walking* has been a tradition in the ethnographic and anthropological field; however, until recently it hasn't been included in the performative, biographical, and participatory research.

According to Maggie O'Neill and Phil Hubbard<sup>171</sup>, *walking* is «an embodied research practice and process that is relational, discursive and reflective. Importantly, it is also sensory and multimodal in that multiple modalities of experience can be shared.»<sup>172</sup>

171 Phil Hubbard is a Professor of Urban Studies at the King's College London. His main fields of research are cities and social change, sexuality and space, urban consumption and legal geography. *King's College London*, <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/people/philip-hubbard>, [26 October 2020].

172 O'Neill, Erel, Kaptani, Reynolds, *Participatory Theatre and Walking as Social Research Methods – A Toolkit*, <https://fass.open.ac.uk/sites/fass.open.ac.uk/files/files/PASAR/Toolkit%20PASAR%20Final%2030%20Jan%2018.pdf>, p. 12.

Les Back<sup>173</sup> and Nirmal Puwar<sup>174</sup> define the walking methods as «creative, public and novel modes of doing imaginative and critical sociological research.»<sup>175</sup>

Within the PASAR project the theatrical methods have been integrated into the walking methods through various steps.

Migrant mothers and girls were invited to map their daily paths and were accompanied by the founders of the project who walked with them, following their maps both in pairs (mothers without recourse to public funds) and collectively (migrant mothers and migrant girls).

In particular, initially, Erene Kaptani organized some visualization exercises aiming at creating a reflective space that could allow participants to focus on the places they considered most important and meaningful to them, i.e. places that made them feel safe or not, or places they felt they belonged to or not.

After that, Maggie O'Neill asked them to draw a map of a certain place where they preferred to walk. For example, from a place that they considered home to a special place, also marking along the way the most important landmarks for them, for any reason, good or bad.

After walking in pairs, the participants described their walks to each other during the Workshop Space and shared their maps with the group describing the main places they had chosen to place on the maps.

Subsequently, they all together decided on a program for the walks to do and used the maps to plan the walks.

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173 Les Back is a Professor of Sociology at Goldsmiths, University of London. His main areas of interest are the sociology of racism, popular culture and city life. *Academia*, <https://goldsmiths.academia.edu/LeswBack>, [26 October 2020].

174 Nirmal Puwar is a senior lecturer at the department of Sociology at Goldsmiths, University of London.

*Goldsmiths, University of London*, <https://www.gold.ac.uk/sociology/staff/puwar/>, [27 October 2020].

175 Back L., Puwar, N., *Live Methods*, London: Blackwell and Editorial Board of the *Sociological Review*, 2012, p.6.



Finally, during the walks some photos were taken and short video clips were shot which were then shown in the workshops where they talked about any reflections and stories that had emerged during the walks.



**Figure 36**– A participant drawing a map of a special place for her.

Source: <https://fass.open.ac.uk/sites/fass.open.ac.uk/files/files/PASAR/Toolkit%20PASAR%20Final%2030%20Jan%2018.pdf>.



**Figure 37**– In the workshops, the participants show the photos they took during the walks.

Source: <https://fass.open.ac.uk/sites/fass.open.ac.uk/files/files/PASAR/Toolkit%20PASAR%20Final%2030%20Jan%2018.pdf>

Here is an example of the *Walking Method*:

Clip: "Girls Reflecting on Place"

Source: <https://fass.open.ac.uk/research/projects/pasar/videos/walking-methods>.

This clip is an extract from the walk with the girls' group. One of the girls shares the way in which the *Walking Method* has changed her way of experiencing places: places: before this exercise she had not paid attention to the details on her street, but now she notices which people live there a lot more than before, browses around the shops, and is much more aware of her surroundings.



**Figure 38**– The girl relating her experience from the clip "Girls Reflecting on Place".

Source: <https://fass.open.ac.uk/research/projects/pasar/videos/walking-methods>.

In addition, within the workshops, participants have also created scenes and integrated the walking methods into the various forms of theatre mentioned in the previous paragraphs.

Here is an example of the *Integrating Method*:

Clip: "From Walking to Soundscapes"

Source: <https://fass.open.ac.uk/research/projects/pasar/videos/intergrating-methods>.

This clip is an extract from a workshop where the participants recreated the sounds from their walks in the park and to the gym.

Based on the photos that were distributed to them within the workshop, the participants, divided into two groups, were asked to reproduce the sounds of the place present in the image. For example, they reproduced the sounds of the road, water, birds and the gym by using their hands, their voices (as in whistling) as well as their bodies.



**Figure 39**– An image of a pond from the clip "From Walking to Soundscapes".

Source: <https://fass.open.ac.uk/research/projects/pasar/videos/intergrating-methods>.



**Figure 40**– A scene from the clip "From Walking to Soundscapes" while participants are reproducing the sound of water by using their hands.

Source: <https://fass.open.ac.uk/research/projects/pasar/videos/intergrating-methods>.



**Figure 41**– An image of a gym from the clip "From Walking to Soundscapes".

Source: <https://fass.open.ac.uk/research/projects/pasar/videos/intergrating-methods>.





**Figure 42–** A scene from the clip "From Walking to Soundscapes" while participants are reproducing the noises of the gym by using their bodies and their voices.

Source: <https://fass.open.ac.uk/research/projects/pasar/videos/intergrating-methods>.

The *Walking Method* has allowed participants to have a shared point of view and to relate to each other also from an empathic perspective.

When we walk in the company of a friend, we tend to observe our surroundings, share our feelings, and learn a lot more; in fact, as the young girls were walking together, they were able to look at public spaces in a way that gave them more confidence about their own neighborhood and the school they attended. Walking together was a learning and harmonizing experience in contrast to a standard interview.

Finally, according to Umut Erel, Erene Kaptani, Tracey Reynolds and Maggie O'Neill, *Participatory Theatre* and *Walking Maps* in social research give life to a special space where all the voices and stories of the participants are heard.

Thus, through this research and this project, a number of creative methods have been used that are useful and efficient for social change, greater inclusiveness, and collective storytelling.

## CONCLUSION

In this dissertation I have tried to show how art in general and above all theatre can be used as a means of social inclusion for migrants. In order to do this, I have done numerous researches on art and on various artistic forms, citing and examining various projects implemented in several European countries for migrants, and finally analyzing the theatrical project that I have chosen to treat in my thesis: the PASAR project.

At the beginning of the first chapter, I explained the difference between *migration*, *immigration* and *emigration*, whose meaning can be very often misunderstood, and I also explored the different and specific types of migration, which can be internal, temporary, international, but also forced or voluntary, regular or irregular. I then proceeded to talk about the migration process which is made up of two very important and strongly linked factors, that are the so-called *push factors* and the *pull factors*, or rather the various reasons that drive people to leave their homeland and to emigrate, and the conditions attracting people who are forced to move in order to attain them.

Moving forward with the second part of the first chapter, I addressed and discussed the historical evolution of the phenomenon of migration starting from the origins up to the present day, also referring to the important increase in the number of refugees fleeing the conflicts in Syria and sub-Saharan Africa.

Finally, in the last part of the same chapter I also discussed the concept of race and racism both from a historical and sociological point of view, retracing the various unpleasant episodes linked to this theme.

Migration and racism, are, in fact, interrelated. Unfortunately, despite the various protests and demonstrations against racism throughout the world and the numerous laws enacted in favor of equality and non-discrimination, racism as well as racist behavior towards migrants and foreigners, continues to be a serious problem.

Many times, racism manifests itself by insulting Blacks and migrants with derogatory words or even worse by labeling them as criminals. In their book, *How media and conflicts make migrants*, Federico Oliveri, Kirsten Forkert, Gargi Bhattacharyya, and Janna Graham, describe the concept of *migrantification* as a process by which public institutions, media and members of society classify individuals as "migrants" rather than people, attribute to people the identity of migrants without considering the pre-eminent aspect of each individual and thus canceling other fundamental aspects of their personality and experience. Consequently, this leads to discrimination, so migrants who are always reminded that their status is precarious, are quite discouraged from developing a sense of community. Therefore, to combat racism, a series of artistic projects have been carried out in Europe for all migrants, with the aim of facilitating their entry and their inclusion into a new land unknown to them.

In the second chapter, I pointed out the difference between the term "integration" and "inclusion" and I analyzed the great power that art represents in the life of all of us.

As already mentioned above, art is one of the best ways to promote social inclusion in order to combat exclusion and inequality and, to encourage the creation of new identities for immigrants within different contexts. In addition, art allows us to interact with others through a common language, the artistic one, and is configured as an important and useful means for "newcomers" to create both dialogue and interaction, to bring out their skills, and help them rediscover a full-time occupation in art.

In the same chapter I listed the various artistic forms, such as music, cinema and theatre. In relation to this, I presented and explored a different project for each artistic field.

Relating to music, I talked about The *Refugees for Refugees* project which was born in Belgium, following the "refugee crisis" of 2015, and was launched by the non-profit organization *Muziekpublique*; concerning the participatory cinema, I examined the film *Like a man on earth*, directed by Andrea Segre, Dagmawi Yimer and the film maker Riccardo Biadene, and



produced by *ZaLab* that enacts political solidarity with refugees. Finally, with regard to the field of theatre, I explored the Process Drama in the *Cultura e accoglienza* project which was born in 2016 at the University of Padua in order to encourage inclusion and give thirty asylum seekers the opportunity to become "guest students" and be welcomed within a personalized training course for a year.

Moreover, I introduced *participatory theatre* by presenting the theatre company *Cantieri Meticci* based in Bologna, which organizes numerous projects involving asylum seekers, refugees, migrants, and Italian citizens such as young artists, activist citizens, university students, researchers, teachers and musicians, thereby giving rise to numerous artistic events open to the local community.

In the third and final chapter, I analyzed the case study of my thesis that is the PASAR project or "Participation Arts and Social Action in Research". It was born in London and was funded by the National Centre for Research Methods/ Economic and Social Research Council for the purpose of exploring how participatory theatre and walking methods could successfully and efficiently help some migrant families, and in particular some migrant women to be included in a new society.

After having resumed the discourse of participatory theatre, already introduced in the previous chapter, and having explained all its functions, I continued to outline and exemplify the various techniques used within the PASAR project and, therefore, the different types of theatre; that is, *Playback Theatre*, the *Image Theatre* and the *Forum Theatre*. I also provided illustrations, links, and brief summaries of some important sessions created and staged by the participants within the project for each type of theatre.

Finally, another technique that proved to be very productive was the *Walking Method* as it allowed the participants to have a shared point of view and to relate to each other also from an empathic perspective.

Citing the words of Augusto Boal, «Theatre is a form of knowledge: It should and can also be a means of transforming society. Theatre can help us build our future, rather than just waiting for it».

As one of the participants stated, «It was important to do things practically, we got to know each other and supported each other – joining the group was really helpful». Therefore, thanks to the PASAR project and the theatre, these women had the unique opportunity to build a community in which to share their experiences, their fears and their thoughts and to support each other in the process. Moreover, thanks to the different theatrical techniques used, the founders of the project, Umut Erel, Erene Kaptani, Maggie O'Neill, and Tracey Reynolds, enabled them to stage all their emotions and as a result to feel more confident about themselves.

In conclusion, as I said initially, this decision to talk about this theme within my thesis also stems from a strong passion for theatre. In fact, during my last year in Padua, I attended a theatre course in Spanish and having experienced it firsthand, I realized the extent of theatre being a beneficial instrument from various points of view. It allows us to socialize, and thus promote social inclusion in a new context; moreover, it can be a means that helps us to learn a new language better as it encourages to communicate and express our thoughts and feelings in a more relaxed and comfortable setting.

Theatre is collaboration, we all work together: it's like an orchestra and without everyone's collaboration it can't work.

In theatre, the fact of being able to speak freely about one's life without being questioned is configured as a therapeutic function and therefore people feel motivated to work.

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## RIASSUNTO

La presente tesi ha l'obiettivo di mostrare come l'arte in generale e soprattutto il teatro possano essere utilizzati come mezzo di inclusione sociale per i migranti. Per fare ciò ho passato in rassegna numerosi studi sull'arte, le migrazioni e l'inclusione sociale, per poi soffermarmi sul progetto teatrale che ho scelto di approfondire nella mia tesi: il progetto PASAR.

La mia tesi è divisa in tre capitoli. All'inizio del primo capitolo ho spiegato la differenza tra migrazione, immigrazione ed emigrazione, il cui significato può essere molto spesso frainteso, e ho anche esplorato le diverse e specifiche tipologie di migrazione, che possono essere interne, temporanee, internazionali, ma anche forzate o volontarie, regolari o irregolari. Dopodiché ho proceduto a descrivere il processo migratorio costituito da due fattori molto importanti e fortemente legati, ovvero i cosiddetti fattori di spinta (*push factors*) e i fattori di attrazione (*pull factors*), vale a dire le varie ragioni che spingono le persone a lasciare la propria terra natia e ad emigrare e le condizioni che attraggono le persone costrette a trasferirsi per poterle soddisfare. Andando avanti con la seconda parte del primo capitolo, ho affrontato e discusso l'evoluzione storica del fenomeno migratorio dalle origini fino ai giorni nostri, facendo riferimento anche all'importante aumento del numero di profughi in fuga dai conflitti in Siria e nell'Africa subsahariana ed utilizzando anche dati statistici, grafici e tabelle al fine di offrire un quadro più completo, dettagliato e preciso della situazione migratoria.

Infine, nell'ultima parte di questo capitolo ho anche discusso il concetto di razza e razzismo sia dal punto di vista storico che sociologico. La migrazione e il razzismo, infatti, sono due argomenti correlati: non solo per i comportamenti razzisti nei confronti dei migranti da parte di singoli cittadini, ma anche per leggi discriminatorie (come quelle europee sulle migrazioni) che di fatto rendono i migranti "vite che contano meno" di quelle dei "bianchi/europei".

Un problema cruciale per contrastare il razzismo verso i migranti è quello di lavorare profondamente a livello mediatico.

Nel loro libro *How media and conflicts make migrants (Come i media e i conflitti rendono i migranti)*, Federico Oliveri, Kirsten Forkert, Gargi Bhattacharyya e Janna Graham, descrivono il concetto di *migrantificazione* (*migrantification*) come un processo mediante il quale le istituzioni pubbliche, i media e i membri della società classificano gli individui come "migranti" piuttosto che come persone, quindi attribuendo loro l'identità di migranti senza considerare l'aspetto preminente di ogni individuo e cancellando così altri aspetti fondamentali della loro personalità ed esperienza. Di conseguenza, questo porta alla discriminazione, quindi i migranti a cui viene sempre ricordato che il loro status è precario, sono piuttosto scoraggiati dallo sviluppare un senso di comunità.

Questa tesi intende quindi valorizzare il contributo che la ricerca sociale in dialogo con le arti può dare nel rendere protagonisti i/le migranti e facilitare la loro inclusione sociale.

Nel secondo capitolo ho evidenziato la differenza tra il termine "integrazione" ed "inclusione" e ho analizzato il grande potere che l'arte rappresenta nella vita di tutti noi.

Come ho già accennato in precedenza, l'arte è uno dei modi e mezzi migliori per promuovere l'inclusione sociale al fine di combattere l'esclusione e la disuguaglianza e per incoraggiare la creazione di nuove identità per gli immigrati in contesti diversi. Inoltre, essa ci permette di interagire con altre persone attraverso un linguaggio comune, quello artistico, e si configura come un mezzo importante e utile per i "nuovi arrivati" al fine di creare dialogo e interazione, per far emergere le loro capacità e aiutarli a riscoprire un'occupazione a tempo pieno nel campo artistico.

Nello stesso capitolo ho elencato poi le varie forme artistiche, come la musica, il cinema e il teatro. In relazione a questo, ho presentato ed esplorato un progetto diverso per ciascun campo artistico.

Per quanto riguarda la musica, ho parlato del progetto *Refugees for Refugees*, nato in Belgio, in seguito alla "crisi dei rifugiati" del 2015, e promosso dall'organizzazione *Muziekpublique*; in merito al cinema partecipativo, invece, ho esaminato il film *Like a man on earth* (Come un uomo sulla terra),

diretto da Andrea Segre, Dagmawi Yimer e il cineasta Riccardo Biadene, e prodotto da ZaLab avente come obiettivo la promozione della solidarietà politica con i rifugiati.

Infine, per quanto riguarda il campo del teatro, ho approfondito il *Process Drama* nel progetto *Cultura e accoglienza* nato nel 2016 presso l'Università di Padova per favorire l'inclusione e dare la possibilità a trenta richiedenti asilo di diventare "studenti ospiti" ed essere accolti all'interno di un percorso formativo personalizzato della durata di un anno.

Inoltre, ho introdotto il teatro partecipativo presentando la compagnia teatrale *Cantieri Meticci* avente sede a Bologna, la quale organizza numerosi progetti che coinvolgono richiedenti asilo, rifugiati, migranti e cittadini italiani come giovani artisti, cittadini attivisti, studenti universitari, ricercatori, insegnanti e musicisti, quindi dando vita a numerose manifestazioni artistiche aperte alla comunità locale.

Nel terzo e ultimo capitolo ho analizzato il caso di studio della mia tesi che è il progetto PASAR o "Participation Arts and Social Action in Research" ("Arti di Partecipazione e Azione Sociale nella Ricerca"). Esso è nato a Londra ed è stato finanziato dal Centro nazionale per i metodi di ricerca / Consiglio per la ricerca economica e sociale allo scopo di esplorare come il teatro partecipativo e i metodi di camminata possano aiutare con successo ed efficienza alcune famiglie di migranti ed in particolare alcune donne migranti ad essere incluse in una nuova società.

Dopo aver ripreso il discorso del teatro partecipativo, già introdotto nel capitolo precedente, e averne spiegato tutte le funzioni, ho continuato a delineare e ad esemplificare le diverse tecniche utilizzate all'interno del progetto PASAR e, quindi, le diverse tipologie di teatro; ovvero il *Teatro Playback (Playback Theatre)*, il *Teatro Immagine (Image Theatre)* e il *Teatro Forum (Forum Theatre)*.

Ho anche fornito illustrazioni, collegamenti e brevi riassunti di alcune importanti sessioni create e messe in scena dai partecipanti all'interno del progetto per ogni tipo di teatro.

Infine, un'altra tecnica che si è rivelata molto produttiva è stata il *Metodo della Camminata (Walking Method)* in quanto ha permesso ai partecipanti di avere un punto di vista condiviso e di relazionarsi tra loro anche attraverso una prospettiva empatica.

Citando le parole di Augusto Boal, «Il teatro è una forma di conoscenza: deve e può essere anche un mezzo per trasformare la società. Il teatro può aiutarci a costruire il nostro futuro, piuttosto che aspettarlo ».

Come ha affermato una delle partecipanti al progetto *PASAR*: «E' stato importante fare le cose a livello pratico, ci siamo conosciute e ci siamo sostenute a vicenda - entrare nel gruppo è stato davvero utile». Pertanto, grazie al progetto *PASAR* e al teatro, queste donne hanno avuto l'opportunità unica di costruire una comunità in cui condividere le loro esperienze, le loro paure e i loro pensieri e sostenersi a vicenda nell'intero processo. Inoltre, grazie alle diverse tecniche teatrali utilizzate, i fondatori del progetto, Umut Erel, Erene Kaptani, Maggie O'Neill e Tracey Reynolds, hanno permesso loro di mettere in scena tutte le loro emozioni e di conseguenza di sentirsi più sicure di sé e avere più fiducia nel loro futuro.

La mia tesi nasce anche da una forte passione per il teatro. Infatti, durante il mio ultimo anno a Padova, ho frequentato un corso di teatro in lingua spagnola e avendolo sperimentato in prima persona, ho capito quanto il teatro sia uno strumento benefico sotto vari punti di vista. Esso ci permette di socializzare e quindi di promuovere l'inclusione sociale in un nuovo contesto; inoltre, può essere un mezzo che ci aiuta ad apprendere meglio una nuova lingua poiché incoraggia a comunicare e ad esprimere i nostri pensieri e sentimenti in un ambiente più rilassato e confortevole. Il teatro è collaborazione, si lavora tutti insieme: è come un'orchestra che senza la collaborazione di tutti non può funzionare.