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Ai sacrifici di mio padre.

Alla forza di mia madre.

A voi dedico ogni mio traguardo.

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Introduction

Understanding the complex dynamics of racism, the sociology of memory and reflections on tragic events is crucial to promoting a more inclusive and just society. Human history is marked by incidents of discrimination and violence, which continue to profoundly influence our contemporary societies. Examining these interconnected issues not only helps us understand the roots of current problems, but also provides us with tools to address and overcome them. In this context, it is crucial to take a multidisciplinary approach that integrates sociological, historical and cultural analyses to provide a comprehensive and articulate view.

In the first chapter, we will examine the intricate facets of racism, starting with an exploration of the meaning of race and racism. Racism is not a static phenomenon; it evolves and adapts to social and cultural changes. We will analyse the structure, dynamics and various forms of racism, exploring the causes and social implications that fuel discriminatory attitudes. This chapter will focus on cultural racism and neo-racism, examining how culture is often used as a surrogate for race to justify discrimination.

We will delve into xenophobia as fear of the 'other', making precise distinctions between xenophobia and xenoracism, concepts that are often confused but distinct in their manifestations and implications. The analysis of the phenomenon of anti-Semitism will be approached from an intersectional perspective, examining how this ancient prejudice manifests itself in modern societies and how it intersects with other forms of oppression. This discussion will allow us to better understand the complexities of racism and its various forms, providing a solid foundation for subsequent discussions.

In the second chapter, we will dive into the sociology of memory, exploring the concept of critical memory and its intricate relationship with the present. Critical memory plays a fundamental role in shaping social identity and the process of collective representation. We will examine how memory is not just a passive archive of the past, but a dynamic activity that influences our present and future perspectives.

The analysis of critical memory will allow us to understand how official historical narratives are often questioned and redefined through the prism of collective experience. This process is essential for dealing with past traumas and using them as a basis for building a

more just and inclusive society. Collective memory, in this context, becomes a powerful tool for social change, capable of promoting historical awareness and responsibility.

In the last chapter, the focus will shift to reflections and perspectives on the 3 October massacre, a tragic event that deeply marked the collective consciousness. The significance of remembrance in the current social context will be contemplated, considering the impact of memory on a broader narrative. Through an interview with young Erasmus students visiting Milan, we will investigate how critical memory can challenge indifference and the dehumanization of migrants.

These interviews will provide a lively and diverse picture of how young people perceive and relate to the memory of the massacre, highlighting the importance of a transcultural and intergenerational perspective in the construction of collective memory. The chapter will conclude with a reflection on the significance of memory in the search for a more just society.

This exploration of the dynamics of racism, the sociology of memory and reflections on tragic events underlines the importance of addressing the past in order to build a more inclusive future. By analysing the forms and causes of racism, understanding the role of critical memory, and reflecting on specific events such as the 3 October massacre, we can develop a deeper understanding of contemporary social challenges and promote the social change needed for a more equitable society.

Chapter 1. Racism

In this first part, the context of discrimination and racism is explored in depth from a theoretical perspective. A detailed analysis of the term “racism” will be the starting point, with the aim of gaining a deeper understanding of this complex issue. Subsequently, we will proceed to examine racism as a specific form of discrimination, delving into the conceptual nuances and analysing the dynamics intrinsic to this social manifestation. This approach aims to provide a robust theoretical basis for the critical understanding of issues related to discrimination and racism, laying the groundwork for subsequent analysis and discussion within the context of this thesis.

1.1 The meaning of race and racism

We can only refer to race in full recognition of the fact that it remains a salient term only because racism continues to exist. *Despite the agreement among most social scientists that race is a social construct that has no scientific value, it persists because of the political power of racism* and the fact that, despite proclamations to the contrary, it has become institutionalised in the structures of our societies. Referring to race in descriptive terms can only be of value if it takes account of racialisation. Racialisation is the process through which the supposed inferiority of black, colonised, non-whites and non-western people is constructed (Lentin, 2008, p. 12)

If race is not a biological fact, then one wonders why groups of people are still distinguished with the help of this concept. The answer to this question is that race is not a biological concept, but a cultural and historical fact. Race (in relation to people) is a discursive construct (cf. Hall 2018, p. 56) and becomes an “usher” in society. Through the concept of race, a hierarchy within society is enacted. "In this sense, race constitutes the core of a hierarchical system that produces differences and those [...] that tacitly but decisively divided people into groups" (Hall 2018, p. 57).

Stuart Hall (2018, p. 69) states that the principle of race and related racial discourse is one of the most enduring systems of classifying people. This form of classification system can be seen throughout human history. People have long used the concept of race to distinguish themselves from one another, designating the “other” as part of an “inferior” race.

People labelled as “racially inferior”¹ are denied certain resources, whereas those labelled as belonging are granted these resources, for example, even in difficult times, such as in war situations. These resources include, among others, the right to vote or the right to work and housing (cf. Miles, 1994, p. 212).

"That is, the result and often the intention of racist discourse is to deny a group constructed as a 'race' certain rights and resources, often all rights and resources (including the right to life), that others in the same society possess. Because of the differences attributed, this type of exclusion does not allow the possibility of equality at other levels" (Miles, 1994, p. 211).

Racism is “the generalised and absolutized evaluation of real or fictitious differences to the advantage of the accuser and to the disadvantage of the victim, aimed at justifying his privileges or aggression” (Memmi, 1992, p.103).

The history of racism is very old and is not limited to Europe. Historically, racism is closely linked to colonialism, but in general it is associated with the most diverse forms of domination and oppression.

Racial classification systems are embedded in history and therefore have a history themselves. They began when Europeans first came into contact with other “peoples”. This is related to the discovery of other continents, i.e. to the processes of imperialist expansion and thus to the fact that the borders of Europe physically expanded. One wondered whether the “others” were real people and whether they belonged to the same species. Differentiation and the resulting hierarchisation could already be consolidated by such questions without knowing the answers (Hall 2018, p. 75).

Goldberg (in Lentin, 2008, p. 42) iterates two types of racism that continue to coexist and define the nature of racism from the dawn of the modern era to the present day. The two forms of racism defined by Goldberg are:

1. Differentialist (or cultural) racism: This form of racism is based on the idea that cultural differences are fundamental and insurmountable. It is manifested through the belief that different

¹ This is not necessarily the biological interpretation of race, but these “racial inferiors” can also include peasants or the working class, because they too are denied many resources in a society and are considered low members of society (cf. Miles 1994, p. 212).

groups have incompatible cultures that justify separation and inequality. In this context, discrimination is justified by the preservation of distinct cultural identities and the fear that integration may lead to the loss of unique cultural values.

2. Hierarchical (or biological) racism: This form of racism is based on the belief in innate differences between racial groups, often considered biological or genetic in nature. This hierarchical view positions some groups as inherently superior to others and justifies discrimination and oppression on the basis of these supposed natural differences. Despite criticism and the apparent decline of this form of racism, its traces still persist in many societies today.

These two forms, although apparently incompatible, are the key for conceiving of how racism continues to function despite the prevalently held idea that it has been in decline since the mid-twentieth century. Understanding how they operate will in turn help us to understand how racism is experienced [...] as the humdrum of racial stereotyping, criminalisation, and discrimination.

Robert Miles, on the other hand, reports that “the word "racism" is now widely used in the English language in political and public debates. This gives the impression that it is a universal or at least an established term. In reality, the usage is more recent. The word did not exist in the 18th and 19th centuries. This was the period when the ideology we now call racism was formulated and systematised in European thought. The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) of 1910 has no entry for it. The 1982 OED Supplement suggests that racism first appeared in English in the 1930s' (Miles, 1994, p. 190).

Racist constructions first emerged with the formation of the nation state and colonialism (Miles 1994, p. 41). Likewise, Miles states that racism began with colonisation and slavery as a trade resource. The limiting factor in this case was the medium of skin colour. In this context, colonial conquest can be seen as a prototype of racism. In this case, differences were seen as natural.

Racism first emerged to understand the differences between groups of people and was used as a means of legitimisation to justify colonial expansion and slavery. In order to consolidate this attribution, people used an ideology that “others” should be civilised by them.

Over time, it has been used to declare European cultural supremacy and ultimately to present this supremacy as a national achievement.

Below, I would like to report some opinions of different scholars on this issue:

"Racism exemplifies and symbolises oppression. It is defined as one of the best justifications, one of the best symbols of oppression" (Memmi, 1992, p. 60).

Race is integral to the emergence, development, and transformations (conceptually, philosophically, materially) of the modern nation state" (Goldberg 2002, p. 234). With this, "making possible the denial of racism as a real experience ensures the de facto persistence of discrimination against those who in fact cannot be whitened" (Lentin 2008, p. 438).

The behaviour of foreign groups portrayed as "inferior" is linked to negative characteristics, as they are seen as a threat.

"One can speak of the existence of a racist attitude or ideology when differences otherwise considered ethnocultural are declared to be innate, ineradicable and immutable" (Fridrickson, 2002, p. 13).

"Race" is a political idea, Lentin writes, that relies on the ideological and methodological framework that the Enlightenment created to uphold the principles and goals of the nation (Lentin, 2008, p. 430). With this use of the concept of race, population groups were identified with their common ancestry or origin.

The historical concept of race presupposes the existence of connections between people's biological, moral and intellectual capacities. These capacities are evaluated and listed hierarchically. The emphasis is that this is a naturally given and immutable hierarchy. In order for it to remain immutable, this form of order must be repeatedly affirmed and confirmed (Miles 1994, p. 42).

1.2 Structure, dynamics and forms of racism

The concept of racism does not manifest itself as long as the individual from a different background maintains his foreignness. Its materialisation begins at the moment when the other is perceived as different, that is, when he or she approaches in a potentially threatening way. It is at this moment that one begins to pay attention so that such an individual is kept at a distance. It follows from this that racism is one of the forms of expression of human aggression and a particular form of war.

In reality, the accusation of racism is sometimes based on a biological difference and sometimes on a cultural difference. Once it starts from biology, then again from culture, and then draws general conclusions about the totality of the accused's personality, life and group. Sometimes the biological characteristic is only vaguely pronounced or is missing altogether. The racist argument is thus characterised by the effort to generalise, to absolutize: with time, the victim's entire personality becomes characterised in this way; it is all the members of his social group (Memmi, 1992, p. 165).

In her definition of racism, Colette Guillaumin², a French feminist sociologist and anti-racist activist, explains the manifestations of racism in contemporary societies (Guillaumin, 2017, p. 133).

According to Guillaumin, racism is:

- A practical attitude that intervenes daily in social relations in everyday life
- A political project in the programmes of parties fighting for a “society of family, national purity and order”
- A legal structure that is reflected in the legislation and its implementation
- The practical horizon of the state in the form of the production of a “pure race” or a cut between “racist” groups

"Racism only begins with the interpretation of differences; from there, the image of the other is constructed, and from there, attacks are also made" (Guillaumin, 2017, p. 154).

Albert Memmi instead analyses a racist attitude in four levels:

² The reflection of sociologist Guillaumin (Racism, Sexism, Power and Ideology, 2017) is taken up by Frisina in Contemporary Racisms (2020).

- "Differences (real or fictitious) between people (racist and victim) are established as the first level.
- Difference is maximised by the racist (to the advantage of the racist and to the detriment of his victim). Difference is maximised by the racist. In fact, the smaller his victim is, the larger he himself appears, the more he values the difference to the disadvantage of his victim, the more he values it in his favour.
- Next, generalisation is applied. The differences assessed are generalised and declared final.
- Ultimately, this difference is used to one's advantage. The different, the outsider is eventually perceived as a disturbing factor, as a nuisance, so much so that one must try to make him disappear.

“The racist argument is thus characterised by the effort to generalise, to absolutize over time, the victim's entire personality is thus characterised; it is all the members of his social group that collapse under the accusation” (Memmi, 1992, p. 37).

The term racism is often used inaccurately and without thought. It is used to describe the negative or hostile feelings of one ethnic group or people towards another group and the actions that result from this attitude. (Friedrickson, 2004, p.9)

The term racism denotes discourses and practices of exclusion, contempt, humiliation, exploitation, persecution and annihilation of other outsiders conceived and imagined as a collective, whose otherness is affirmed as inequality based on natural or quasi-natural - essentialised differences.

Racism is expressed in a clear distinction between an imagined “we” and an equally constructed “other”. Usually, the "us" is assigned positive prejudices, while the "other" is assigned negative prejudices. While the racist “we” are seen as clean, hardworking, dignified, “the other” is seen as threatening, lazy, dirty, etc.

These prejudices have nothing to do with the actual behaviour of immigrants. They are rather projections that arise from the psyche of the racist himself. This is why it is very difficult, if not impossible, to dissuade convinced racists from their attitude with arguments. After all, they are not caused by a real problem or circumstance, but by a psychological problem.

Racism generates serious form of discrimination and violation of human rights that endangers the ability to integrate into society. As long as it is not understood as a socio-political issue, different population groups may continue to be disadvantaged, thereby also damaging society as a whole. Migrant women and minorities visible through certain body characteristics or dress codes are particularly affected. Multiple intersections and discrimination also often occur. The forms of expression of racism are very diverse and range from individual acts that attack human dignity to stigmatising exclusion and structural unequal treatment.

The nature of racism is seen from the following perspectives:

1. Racism as an ideology is reproduced, absorbed, constructed and reconstructed in many ways in the context of material and cultural circumstances.
2. The mode of action of racism is linked to political-economic conditions and other ideologies. Subjects and objects of racism are thus embedded in a global network of social conditions.
3. The multidimensionality and historical specificity of racism become visible in theoretical generalisations. Racism has consequences in economics, politics and representation and is not historically constant.

Racism can be understood by focusing on both the material aspect (racism of inequalities) and the symbolic aspect (racism of differences). These two forms are complementary and cannot exist without each other. The first form exists only as long as the “other” is seen as an inferior being in society, always creating opportunities to exploit these individuals. The second form perceives the “other” as inherently different and argues that these people have no place in society or should stay away from it. The “other” is considered a danger to be removed or destroyed. Therefore, it can be said that cultural racism is the real racism, as both forms support and reinforce each other, perpetuating discrimination and marginalization.

In the case of racism, racist behaviour manifests itself in two forms, in which 'others' feel discriminated against and rejected and the “self” is praised and affirmed. "Racism only begins with the interpretation of differences; from there, the image of the other is constructed and the attacks are also conducted from there." (Memmi, 1992, p.160)

How and through what do racism and racist attitudes arise? What is their background? What are the causes?

1.3 The causes of racism

In general, prejudice, aggression, discrimination and racist attitudes towards foreigners are a major problem throughout Europe. This problem affects many people, such as immigrants and immigrant families, who are perceived in society as being defined as “foreigners”.

The issue of “discrimination, xenophobia and racism” has gained importance with migration. It is now an everyday and serious problem. However, racism cannot be equated with xenophobia or heterophobia. Miles (1994, p. 43) hypothesises that racism, unlike xenophobia or heterophobia, goes further by taking the form of “social engineering”. This means that racism not only differentiates people, but also forms a social order and thus contributes to shaping society. However, it is an artificial order that is shaped by those who benefit from it. For the latter, it represents something desirable because it fulfils their vision of an ideal image of society.

According to Albert Memmi, the reasons that increase these attitudes and behaviours are psychological (education, family, anxiety, frustration, etc.), political (such as policies on foreigners and immigration), social (low contacts) and economic (unemployment). An escalation of xenophobic attitudes certainly has many causes and reasons that lie in politics, especially in an unclear or suppressed immigration policy. The consequence is that the number of immigrants has not been limited and immigrants have not been integrated consistently.

The quantitative increase of immigrants (increase in the number of immigrants): the one according to which the increase in racist violence is linked to the greater number of immigrants. Every country accepts foreigners to a certain extent, but too many foreigners lead to social discontent. Those who defend this thesis do not consider it important that the disputes are cultural and economic.

- Economic crisis:
the economy of a country is presented as a factor that fuels xenophobia and therefore racism and racist violence are disproportionately dependent on socioeconomic factors. According to this view, right-wing radicalism is a path that many people take to avoid having to share the country's resources with foreigners during economic crises. In crisis situations, this path is taken by right-wing groups and parties as an argument to stir up the population's hatred of foreigners.

Racism has deep historical roots, rooted in the colonial era, and manifests itself as a structural phenomenon in modern society. This colonial legacy has created racial hierarchies that persist to this day, influencing economic, social and political inequalities. Racism, then, is not just individual prejudice, but a complex web of practices and institutions that perpetuate discrimination and marginalization of racialized communities.

Other causes that further strengthen this are:

- Right-wing extremist parties.

Although the police and numerous civil organisations provide security in Europe, minorities and migrants live under the threat of right-wing extremists from time to time, which can even escalate into attacks. In recent years, threats and attacks by right-wing extremists have increased in Europe, forcing the state to react and introduce new legal measures.

It is noticeable how, especially with the waves of migration towards Europe, the topics of discrimination, racism and xenophobia are increasingly present in everyday life and in discussions on people's conditions, including in the media. Therefore, the topic is increasing its visibility and remains topical.

There is more and more classification, based on culture, religious affiliation, language. This classification is associated with certain images. This classification and the alienation of people play an important role as causes for the development of xenophobia. As a result, prejudices and hostile attitudes are formed in society, whereby foreigners are treated as groups in a racist manner and discriminated against.

Today, we are confronted with the issue of racism on a daily basis, where discrimination and xenophobic policies grow stronger by the day.

1.5 On cultural racism and neo-racism

The concept of racism has changed throughout history from its original 19th century, one dimensional, biology-based and strictly ideological form to a new form of racism. It has changed its focus again and again.

Initially, racism was directed externally against the black population. Later, it played a role in the oppression of the working class and women. During World War II, Jews became the target of racist attacks. Today, it is immigrants and minorities, especially those who have achieved a certain standard of living, who are targeted. However, historically one form of racism has not replaced the other. Anti-black racism has always existed alongside antisemitism, and contemporary xenoracism does not eliminate but adds to pre-existing forms of racism.

In academic debates on developments in immigration and asylum policies in recent years, there has been repeated talk of a “neo-racism”, a “racism without race”, a “differentialist racism” or a “culturalist racism”.

Memmi describes foreigners and says they have “many other negative characteristics to accuse them of psychology, culture, customs, racist institutions, now detest Arabs not because of their sunburnt skin or Levantine features, but because – “let's not kid ourselves” - they adhere to a ridiculous religion, treat their women badly, are cruel or simply backward” (Memmi, 1992, p.101).

Today, the term “race” tends to be replaced. Rather, one speaks of “cultures” when it comes to dividing population groups into politically relevant and supposedly homogeneous units. That the category of “culture” now represents a “substitute for race” and that the new racism is characterised by “culturalism” - sociological research shows how biological racism never really disappeared (Morning & Maneri, 2011, p. 217) - is one of the central theses of current racism research.

After the Second World War, racism in Europe was completely transformed by the arrival of migrants in the old continent, because it became a machine to spread xenophobia in order to put a stop to migration. The real motive was to exclude the foreigner, to integrate their people into the system and to declare a theory emphasising the superiority of Western civilisation as the goal.

The characteristics of the so called “new racism” are:

1. The central term of neo-racism is culture instead of “race”.
2. Neo-racism addresses differences instead of inequalities and renounces the hierarchisation of population groups according to origin-related characteristics.

Neo-racism describes racist behaviour as a natural reaction to excessively large and culturally conditioned differences that occur between non-European immigrant or refugee groups and the majority population.

1.5.1 Culture instead of race?

In the context of a rapidly developing European society, the existence of a new concentrated 'European racism' is becoming increasingly evident. This is understood as the racism that has taken root in today's Europe.

The new form of racism, also referred to as “modern racism”, emerged with the migration phase and manifests itself against the individual because of his or her national, ethnic, cultural and traditional identity, as well as religious and linguistic affiliation. It can be said that hostility has changed in size and intent and the points of attack have shifted.

Now, especially foreign immigrants who create problems and their lifestyle are taken as points of attack. Biological differences thus lose their importance and the focus is on culture. In the new racism, there are no races, but crowds and cultures. It does not aim at biological domination, but at cultural separation.

There are also numerous acts of racist violence that have occurred but have not attracted national or international attention. Racist violence varies from country to country in terms of the ethnic group chosen and the manner in which it is perpetrated.

Robert Miles defines hierarchy as a basic concept of racism and states that this basic concept has turned into a systematic ideology. The conceptualisation of the “other”, especially in Europe, is based on the definition of a hierarchical top and bottom, whereby this very condition developed historically due to racial segregation. He argues that the racism experienced in the 19th and 20th centuries sought to combine biological and cultural characteristics and thus eradicate the “other”. Today's racism, on the other hand, exclusively addresses culture, degradation, and is increasingly becoming an ideology, as the very definition of the term is perceived as racist.

Culture instead of race is the central for neo-racism. Racism only starts with the interpretation of differences. The image of the other is constructed and from there the attacks against the other also start.

Neo-racism is a “cultural differentialist racism” that uses the cultural - rather than genetic – “difference” of national majorities and certain immigrant groups, particularly those from so-called Third World countries, to justify unequal treatment or exclusion. It can be said that biological inequality, then called “racial racism”, has been replaced by “cultural difference” in modern-day neo-racism.

In recent years, the concept of culture has emerged as an escape route from the stigmatised discourse on “race”. Culture has assumed the role of a surrogate for race, both in the scientific and political spheres. Often, when people are questioned on the issue of foreigners in the country, the recurring response attributes the problems to a clash of cultures. This perspective of cultural conflict tends to conceive of cultures as immutable, almost natural entities in the characteristics of people, neglecting any possibility of evolution in response to current living conditions. The idea of 'living between two cultures' is overly schematic, assuming the coexistence of different cultures in a society without mutual influence.

The new cultural racism that has emerged today presents foreigners, as opposed to citizens, as second-class people and the lowest stratum of society. In this context, the argument is also put forward that those who have come from outside can continue to exist in European society and claim rights, as long as they continue to work under any conditions and do not make demands or rebel. The totality, the offenders and foreigners, the discrim-

inatory attitude, which can be observed at European border crossings, in television stations, social, educational and state systems, is described below. European “racism”, so-called “cultural racism”, has been absorbed.

By looking at racism, we can understand how this negative development came about.

Periods in which foreigners were disadvantaged in their social life and far-right political parties gained votes only emerged in the early 1980s in the wake of economic crises, when minimum wages were deeply affected by difficult living conditions. Some groups of people in Europe, fearful of losing their social identity, do not blame politicians, but groups of foreigners who, like them, have been affected by these changes. In this way, they support the growth of racism and populist nationalism by opposing minorities and immigrants who are themselves negatively affected by the changes in their daily lives.

Culture is defined as a focal point of contemporary racism, where people are seen as the biggest enemy groups. To this day, the term culture can be used to wage war. However, the definition of culture and cultural differences is itself a particular form of classification warfare.

1.6 Racial Discrimination

Discrimination is a social problem of our time, which we encounter at all levels of society, especially when there are many cultural, linguistic, traditional and sometimes ethnic differences. Both as a witness and sometimes as a personally affected person, I have come across discrimination several times.

"Discrimination occurs when individuals or groups of people are denied the equal treatment they desire. When measures are taken to keep members of foreign groups out of neighbourhoods, schools, professions or the country, discrimination occurs. Immigration restrictions, boycotts, housing restrictions, legal segregation in some states, are all cover names for discrimination." (Allport, 1979, p. 74)

Racial discrimination usually has more immediate and severe social consequences than prejudice. Hostile acts vary from the weakest to the strongest in the following degrees (ibid):

- Slander: most prejudiced people talk about it. With like-minded people and occasionally with strangers, they give free rein to their hostile feelings. But many people never go beyond this relatively mild level of hostility.
- Avoidance: If prejudice has a stronger effect on a person, he/she will avoid contact with members of the rejected group, even at the cost of enduring considerable discomfort. In this case, the person with prejudice does not directly harm the rejected group. He bears the burden of adaptation, of withdrawal alone.
- Discrimination: in this case, the prejudiced person actively makes harmful distinctions. It wants to keep all members of the rejected group away from certain professions, neighbourhoods, political rights, educational and recreational opportunities, churches, hospitals and other social institutions. Racial segregation is the institutionalised form of racial discrimination, whether imposed by law or the result of general custom.
- Physical use of violence: in a highly emotional condition, prejudice leads to different types of use of violence.
- Extermination: mass murder and Hitler's programme of genocide indicates the highest degree of violence with which prejudice is expressed.

In summary, we can say that hostility intensifies in stages and turns into racial discrimination. The different dimensions assigned show us the severity of the problem.

“The wider anti-race project meant to erase the word “race” from European constitutions should be defeated, as without this legal category, anti-racism efforts will be largely hampered, rendering the application of race-based anti-discrimination legislation difficult when proxies such as religion are used (e.g. International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination). The recourse to “race” as a category also helps counter the effects of false compartmentalisation leading to hierarchies within the wider group of people affected by racial discrimination.”³

"The introduction of the EU Anti-Racism Plan comes at a key moment for reviewing the effectiveness of the mechanisms established to address racism in all of its forms.

³ Intersectional discrimination in Europe: relevance, challenges and ways forward (2020). A report by the Center for Intersectional Justice (CIJ): <https://www.enar-eu.org/intersectional-discrimination-in-europe-relevance-challenges-and-ways-forward/> p. 32

The challenge(...) will be for that review to take place in the context of rising anti-migrant sentiment and hate speech, and to result in more robust protections in practice as well as, importantly, ensuring the full participation of racialised minorities in their implementation and monitoring."⁴

1.7 Xenophobia - the fear of the “other”

Fear is an emotion that involuntarily causes apprehension. Fear makes people agitated. Why is one afraid of an individual one does not know?

“One is afraid of the unknown, one is afraid of being overwhelmed by it, one is afraid of being robbed of some material or symbolic good by it” (Memmi, 1992, p. 106).

The scientific definition of xenophobia appears to be terminologically controversial. It does not fully meet the demand for unambiguity and bindingness that a scientific term should possess. Fear of “others” is called xenophobia; it can also be defined as fear of foreigners.

The term is sometimes used as a synonym for related terms such as racism, ethnocentrism, right-wing extremism or xenophobia. When talking about racism, it is important not only to refer to sociological factors, but also to consider the human psyche, especially with its weaknesses. Numerous psychoanalytic interpretations on the subject of racism emphasise that the fear factor plays a very important role and that it is necessary to understand that the reasons for a racist identity may also lie in the psyche.

"The racist is a person who is afraid; he is afraid because he is the aggressor and attacks because he is afraid; a person who is afraid of a potential attack or believes he will be attacked; who finally attacks in order to drive away his fear". (Memmi, 1992, p. 106)

Although migrants are a target group of hostile tendencies, the construction of the foreigner is based on certain social characteristics. The term “foreigner”, on the other hand, is subject to legal categorisation. However, the prejudice or defensive behaviour openly displayed towards foreigners does not derive exclusively from the citizenship rights of

⁴ Enar (European Network Against Racism) Shadow Report 2016-2021 on Racial Discrimination in Europe, https://www.enar-eu.org/wp-content/uploads/ShadowReport-2016-2021_FINAL.pdf, p. 6

these groups, but from the presence of certain characteristics that are perceived by “natives” as “foreign”.

Discrimination is rather related to cultural group, skin colour and religion. For this reason, the relatively open but nevertheless more precise term xenophobia will be used. As in its everyday meaning, the term xenophobia in the academic context is by definition related to negative attitudes and behaviour towards certain foreign groups.

In social research, ethnocentrism describes the tendency to always perceive one's own ethnic group as the centre of thought and to judge all other groups by it. Unlike xenophobia, which manifests itself exclusively in the devaluation of the other group, the concept of ethnocentrism also includes the revaluation or overvaluation of one's own group.

The term right-wing extremism is broadly understood as ideology. Since the mid-1970s, the term has replaced “right-wing radicalism”. However, it is not possible to find a binding definition for this phenomenon. Rather, the term functions as a collective term for various social manifestations that are considered right-wing, anti-democratic and inhuman. The terms xenophobia and right-wing extremism are confused not only in public discourse, but also in academic publications.

On the other hand, it is sometimes wrongly claimed that only right-wing extremists can be xenophobic. Although xenophobia is a partial aspect of right-wing extremist ideologies, people can be xenophobic even without having a tendency towards right-wing extremism.

After the attempt to delimit partially related phenomena, the focus is now on a more precise definition of the term xenophobia. A selection of explicit definitions will be used to show the different areas and characteristics to which the concept is applied:

Léon Poliakov (1910), a French historian and philosopher, best known for his work on the Jewish genocide and anti-Semitism, considers the psychological factor in relation to racism to be important, in his writings he attributes an important role to the fear of “being different”. According to him, it is society in the first place that deludes individuals. He also argues that the feelings of hatred in the racist individual are directly proportional to the individual himself, to his “weakness of ego”. The interest aroused by the foreigner is

ignored at this point and the focus shifts to fear to produce negative judgements about the foreign individual.

In his view, the racist is a neurotic who fears losing the unity in his own ethnic group. He defines the racist as an “obsessive”.

The man who does not want to perceive his own subconscious, who accepts the ideals of a power class as his own and who wants to have power in his hands.

According to Léon Poliakov (1910), we can clearly see the mechanism of the scapegoat theory in the emergence of racist thoughts. According to him, the individual, in his search for a scapegoat, exploits the tensions present in society. In addition, in a projection phase, the individual tries to make it appear that the ethnic minority is to blame. In this way, the racist transfers his aggression onto the victim.

One of the authors who explains the definition of racism very broadly, giving an important place to fear, is Albert Memmi, according to whom racism is fear-based aggression. The racist act finds expression in two attitudes that complement each other: on the one hand, excluding the different and, on the other, giving the ego's consent to this first attitude. In his view, racism leads to the individual and collective strengthening of the ego. Not only fear, but also self-interest contributes to the machine of racism. Memmi, however, links racism to the biological recipient. Even in practices of exclusion and humiliation, where there are no biological recipients, fear and aggression play a decisive role. Fear provokes the attack, this attack in turn provokes further aggression in the recipient, and this in turn provokes further fear in the first aggressor (Memmi, 1992, p. 100).

According to Albert Memmi, hostile initiative and fear are linked. Fear accompanies aggression. Hostile feelings that arise dissolve into aggression. It is usually directed at people one does not know or who are foreigners. With the other culture, ethnicity, lifestyle, traditions or language, this attitude intensifies. Fear and the resulting aggression and hostility are constantly repeated.

Therefore, this component rather encompasses “mental behaviour”. Xenophobic attitudes include what people know and feel about certain groups and how they would behave towards them.

In this context, the terms stereotype and prejudice are used, which are basic elements of xenophobic attitudes. The component of xenophobic attitudes is called stereotyping or also ethnic stereotyping.

Despite the multiplicity of definitions of both terms, there is consensus that stereotypes are cognitive concepts that represent generalisations about other people and groups of people and can have both positive and negative connotations.

"While stereotypes may have originated in social reality, they are constantly transformed and eventually take on a life of their own no matter how far from reality they depart" (Lentin, 2008, p. 72).

Prejudice, on the other hand, has an explicitly negative connotation. While most studies focus mainly on judgements about groups and their members, studies on actual negative actions are relatively rare.

Like xenophobic attitudes, behaviour towards foreigners can also be placed on different levels. There are direct or indirect actions against foreigners that are referred to as discrimination. The term refers to the discrimination of a person on the basis of group membership.

Discriminatory behaviour on a direct level starts with the verbal expression of prejudice and is described as the softest form of discrimination. Acts of group violence, on the other hand, are characterised as the most extreme form.

Indirect discriminatory behaviour towards foreigners is sometimes summarised by the term social distancing, which includes the avoidance of contact with members of foreign groups.

The reasons for rejecting strangers are manifold. The basic explanations for this phenomenon can be derived essentially from two scientific disciplines: the biological anthropological research approach and the social-scientific-psychological approach. Since the discussion of xenophobia is a complex phenomenon, the role of xenophobia will also be discussed.

In the first perspective, distrust of strangers is understood as a basic human characteristic. Xenophobia is understood as a universal and immutable instinct that human beings naturally carry with them. Meanwhile, there is no longer any doubt that experiences with foreignness and conflicts with foreign groups can only be explained to a small extent by biological concepts.

Xenophobic attitudes can mainly be explained by social and group-specific factors.

One theory that examines the influence of direct experiences with outsiders and comes from the field of prejudice research is the contact hypothesis. The basic assumption of this approach is that experiences of direct contact between ethnic groups reduce the extent of rejection of the other group. On the contrary, this means that prejudice is stronger the less contact there is with members of the other group. Xenophobic attitudes and behaviour should therefore be greater among those who have little or no contact with outsiders.

An important factor in the rejection of foreign groups is the perception of competition with one's own group. The link between xenophobia and personal economic situation is mainly the subject of sociological work. According to this approach, xenophobic tendencies are greater among those who are dissatisfied with their personal economic situation.

Social identity theory, which assumes that a particular identification with one's own group correlates with a greater devaluation of the foreign group, is also used to explain xenophobia. According to this theory, the rejection of foreigners, for example, should depend on how much individuals feel they belong to the preferred group.

1.8 Xenoracism

Xenoracism represents a form of discrimination, prejudice and manifestation of hostile attitudes inherently linked to negative conceptions and prejudices in con-front of individuals or groups on the basis of their national or ethnic origin. This type of racism is accentuated by the phenomenon known as the "migration crisis," characterized by a steady increase in people seeking refuge in the European Union. It is a form of discrimination that focuses on foreign status or membership in specific ethnic groups.

This term is often used to describe hostile attitudes toward foreigners or those who are considered "different" based on ethnicity; they may be rooted in preconceived and culturally transmitted ideas that contribute to a hostile climate toward foreigners.

Xeno-racism is racism, but "xeno" in form. "It is a racism that is not just directed at those with darker skin, from the former colonial territories, but at the newer categories of the displaced, the dispossessed and the up-rooted, who are beating at western Europe's door" (Fekete, 2001, p. 3).

The racism associated with xenoracism manifests itself not only in the absence of welcoming immigrants, but also in the insensitivity and discrimination of those from different parts of the world who seek protection and better quality of life in new sociocultural contexts.

Effectively addressing this problem requires a deep analysis of the complexity of migration. It is essential to recognize the facets of the migration crisis, considering the social, political and economic dynamics involved. In addition, it is critical to promote the understanding and practice of social inclusion and global citizenship, addressing systemic discrimination present in different parts of the world, especially in areas of significant poverty and inequality.

The solution requires a concerted effort by the international community to address the roots of discrimination, promoting social justice and equality. The fight against xenoracism is crucial not only for the well-being of those affected, but also for building a more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable world. This challenge has significant impacts on the ecological transition, as it is intrinsically linked to the need to build a new social paradigm based on equity and responsibility towards the environment.

Some key elements of the concept of xenoracism include:

- Discrimination based on national or ethnic origin: xenoracism manifests itself through discrimination and prejudice against individuals or groups on the basis of their national or ethnic origin. This may include negative stereotyping, hostile attitudes, and discriminatory behaviour.

- Exclusion of foreigners: a central feature of xenoracism is exclusion or hostility toward foreigners. This can result in discriminatory policies, workplace discrimination, social segregation, and other types of discrimination based on national or ethnic origin.
- Negative stereotyping: often based on negative stereotypes about specific nationalities or ethnic groups. These stereotypes can fuel hatred and contribute to the perpetuation of discrimination.
- Institutional manifestations: can also be present at the institutional level, with government policies, laws or regulations that encourage discrimination based on national or ethnic origin.
- Violence and aggression: in some cases, xenoracism may result in physical or verbal violence against individuals or groups considered foreign or diverse. These acts can be motivated by racial hatred and can have devastating consequences for those involved.
- Discriminatory policies and legislation: in some cases, government policies may reflect xenoracism through laws and regulations that discriminate against specific ethnic groups or nationalities. These policies can affect access to civil, political, and economic rights.
- Globalization and migration: xenoracism can be fuelled by phenomena related to globalization and migration. Fear of cultural, economic, or social change may contribute to the spread of anti-foreigner sentiments.
- Role of the media and dominant narratives: the media can play a significant role in shaping public opinions about foreigners. Biased or stereotyped narratives in the media can amplify xenoracist attitudes.
- Reaction and combat: society can respond to xenoracism through anti-racist movements, human rights organizations, and educational efforts to promote cross-cultural awareness and understanding.

It is important to note that the term "xenoracism" is used to emphasize the connection between discrimination and prejudice based on national or ethnic origin, thus emphasizing the racial component of discrimination against foreigners or individuals from specific ethnic groups.

In conclusion, xenoracism represents a complex and multifactorial phenomenon involving multiple dimensions of society, from culture to institutions, from laws to interpersonal relationships. Its in-depth understanding is essential to effectively address the underlying causes and promote a more inclusive and tolerant social environment.

1.9 Similarities and differences between xenoracism and xenophobia

Although they may sound like similar terms, they actually represent two different forms of discrimination. In this section, we explore the difference between xenoracism and xenophobia and try to understand how these forms of hatred and prejudice affect people.

Xenophobia, as previously reported, is often associated with fear or hatred of foreigners and manifests itself through exclusionary and discriminatory behaviour. Those suffering from xenophobia tend to judge and despise individuals from other countries or different cultures.

On the other hand, the concept of xenoracism goes beyond xenophobia. It refers to the discrimination of people not only on the basis of their geographical origin, but also their race, ethnicity or cultural identity. Xenoracism breeds harmful stereotypes, prejudice and violence based on racial hatred.

Understanding the difference between xenoracism and xenophobia is crucial to countering these forms of discrimination and promoting equality. Only through knowledge and empathy can we create a more inclusive and tolerant world, where everyone is respected for who they are, regardless of their cultural background.

By exploring these issues, we examine the root causes of xenoracism and xenophobia and discover how we can work to overcome these social challenges.

Xenoracism is a form of racism that also includes the element of xenophobia. This type of discrimination can have a significant impact on the lives of those affected, limiting employment opportunities, access to education and participation in society.

It is important to stress that xenoracism is not only an individual problem, but also a broader social problem. It is rooted in systems of power and social structures that privilege some groups over others. Combating xenoracism requires a collective effort to break down these barriers and promote equality for all.

Xenoracism and xenophobia share some similarities. Both are based on fear and hatred of 'others', who may be foreigners or people from different cultures. Both can lead to discriminatory behaviour, prejudice and negative stereotypes.

Moreover, both xenoracism and xenophobia can have detrimental effects on those affected. They can limit employment opportunities, access to services and social integration. Both forms of discrimination run counter to the fundamental principles of equality and human dignity.

However, it is important to recognise that xenoracism introduces an additional element of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, or cultural identity. This makes it an even more complex and damaging problem to tackle.

The main difference between xenoracism and xenophobia lies in the element of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, or cultural identity. While xenophobia focuses mainly on fear or hatred of foreigners, xenoracism goes further, targeting a specific group of people based on their racial or cultural characteristics.

Xenoracism can manifest itself through racial stereotyping, prejudice, and systematic discrimination. It can affect access to education, employment, housing, and other areas of life of those affected (Sivanandan, 2001, pp. 87-91).

It is a complex problem that requires a comprehensive approach to be tackled effectively.

On the other hand, xenophobia may be more general and aimed at all foreigners, without focusing specifically on a particular race or ethnicity. Xenophobia can lead to feelings of hostility, fear and rejection of individuals from other countries or cultures.

Xenoracism and xenophobia have a significant impact on the lives of those affected. These forms of discrimination can cause emotional, psychological, and social damage. Some of the effects that xenoracism and xenophobia can have are:

- Social isolation: people affected by xenoracism and xenophobia may feel isolated and excluded from society. Discrimination and prejudice can make it difficult for them to create social ties and meaningful relationships.

- Low self-esteem: they can undermine the confidence and self-esteem of those affected. Being the object of discrimination and prejudice can make people feel that they are worth less or that they are not accepted for who they are.

Combating these forms of discrimination requires a collective effort to promote equality and tolerance. Here are some strategies that can be adopted to counter these forms of discrimination:

1. Education and empathy: promoting education about different cultures and traditions can help combat stereotypes and prejudices. Empathy and mutual understanding are key to creating a more inclusive society.
2. Anti-discrimination legislation and policies: promoting and supporting laws and policies that prohibit discrimination based on race, ethnicity or cultural identity can help create a more equal environment for all.
3. Awareness - raising and information campaigns: raising public awareness of xenoracism and xenophobia can help combat these forms of discrimination. Information campaigns can help challenge stereotypes and promote respect and acceptance of differences.
4. Promoting social inclusion: promoting social inclusion and equal opportunities can help reduce xenoracism and xenophobia. Providing employment opportunities, access to education and fair services for all can help create a more just society.

Supporting victims of discrimination: providing support and resources to people affected by xenoracism and xenophobia is crucial. Individuals and organisations can offer emotional support, counselling, and legal defence to help victims overcome the effects of discrimination.

Fighting xenoracism and xenophobia requires a collective effort to promote equality, education, and empathy. Only through mutual knowledge and understanding can a more inclusive society be created, where everyone is respected for who they are.

1.10 Anti-semitism

Anti-Semitism focuses on the persecution of people of Jewish descent. "From the Spanish Inquisition to the Holocaust during World War II, Jews were persecuted, marginalised and murdered because of their religious beliefs" (Goldstein, 2011, p. 92).

These persecutions have left an indelible mark on history and remind us of the importance of combating anti-Semitism in all its forms.

Anti-Jewish arguments clash with an analysis of Jewish conditions. "Anti-semitism is particularly identified, among other things, with a conspiratorial worldview, and Marxist accounts of it posit that anti-Semitism sees the figure of the Jew as the falsely personalised embodiment of the abstract dimensions of capitalist power" (Yuval-Davis, 2023, pp. 4-5).

Those who promote anti-Semitism agree that distancing oneself from reality, engaging in commercial matters, and being excluded from one's own land are harmful not only to Jews, but also to the entire world.

According to Hannah Arendt, a German historian and philosopher naturalised in the US, "emancipation would simultaneously liberate, along with the educated Jews, the 'backward' masses, and equality would erase that precious distinction on which their social position was manifestly based" (1973, p.76)

Karl Marx, on the other hand, a German philosopher, sociologist, economist and political theorist, explored the presence of the Jews as agents of modernity and admiration, although at the same time he had mixed feelings towards them. In his 1844 work, 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts', he expresses this concept, stating: 'In the form of the subversive power described here, money then also presents itself in opposition to the individual and social bonds, etc., which claim to be entities in their own right. Money changes loyalty into infidelity, love into hatred, virtue into vice, vice into virtue, servant into master, master into servant, stupidity into intelligence, intelligence into stupidity. For money, being the existing and ongoing concept of value, confuses and reverses everything, the confusion and reversal of all natural and human qualities. He who can buy courage is courageous even if he is cowardly. Since money is exchanged not for a particular quality, nor for a particular thing, nor for any of man's essential forces, but for the

entire objective, human and natural world, it is therefore, considered from the point of view of its possessor, exchanging characteristics and objects for one another, even if they contradict each other (...) If you love without arousing a loving correspondence, that is, if your love as love does not produce a loving correspondence, if in your vital manifestation as a loving man you do not make of yourself a beloved man, your love is impotent, it is unhappiness' (Marx, 2023, p.62).

Greed, therefore, reduced the authenticity of people, as money depersonalised them. Consequently, according to the Conservatives, Jews were considered 'inauthentic' individuals.

"Manifestations of anti-semitism delineate dynamics between the majority and the minority, between a host community and a smaller group residing within it, while maintaining a distinct identity" (Beller, 2015, p.56).

The status of the Jew is characterised as that of a 'stranger in his own land,' also related to the phenomenon of the Diaspora. The latter differs from other global migratory flows in its intense historical and temporal scale and in how, despite centuries, 'foreign' individuals have managed to preserve their integrity, distinguishing themselves from the rest of the host nation.

1.10.1 Anti-semitism in an intersectional perspective

Introducing the concept of 'intersectionality' is crucial to fully understanding the complex fabric of discrimination. Intersectionality recognises that people can be subjected to different forms of oppression simultaneously, and therefore, anti-semitism can be intertwined with other manifestations of discrimination such as racism, sexism, homophobia and more. This approach contextualises anti-Semitism within a broader framework, highlighting how different forms of oppression are interconnected and interdependent. Considering intersectionality in the fight against anti-semitism not only broadens the understanding of the phenomenon, but also contributes to a more inclusive and inclusive fight against all forms of discrimination, promoting justice and equality for all.

Intersectionality is an analytical approach that recognises and studies the multiple dimensions of oppression and discrimination that can intersect in an individual's life. In the

context of anti-Semitism, intersectionality is key to understanding how this form of hatred can intertwine with other identities and manifestations of discrimination.

"This dialogical epistemology of intersectionality is one of the outcomes of the mobilisation and proliferation of different identity groups' struggles for recognition. However, it is also, especially in some interpretations of it, like in situated intersectionality, an alternative to it. It avoids some of its pitfalls, such as relativism, conflating social categories and social groupings, individuals and collectives. It rejects homogenising and reifying social categories and thus avoids suppressing the visibility of intra-group power relations and plural voices who share social positionings but differ in their emotional identifications and normative values. Identity politics tends to do all this for the sake of raising the visibility of the social grouping/social category they mobilise and/or campaign for" (Yuval-Davis, 2023, p.17).

Jewish women, for example, might be subject to specific forms of discrimination that intersect anti-Semitism with sexism. Similarly, a black Jewish individual might face discrimination related to both anti-semitism and racism.

Intersectionality is important because it recognises the complexity of human identities and experiences of discrimination. In combating anti-Semitism, it is crucial to adopt an approach that considers these intersections. This means understanding that people can be affected by multiple forms of oppression simultaneously and that struggles against discrimination must inclusively address all dimensions of individuals' identities.

In the broader context, intersectionality prompts us to examine how different forms of discrimination can feed off each other, contributing to a complex picture of social injustice. Addressing anti-semitism through an intersectional lens not only broadens our understanding of the phenomenon, but also contributes to building a more comprehensive and supportive struggle against all manifestations of discrimination.

1.10.2 Forms of anti-semitism in modern society

Anti-Semitism has not disappeared with the passage of time but has adapted to new social dynamics. Today, anti-Semitism can manifest itself through stereotypes, hate speech and underhand discrimination. One must be alert to these manifestations and combat them

firmly in order to create a society in which Jews can live free from the fear of being discriminated against or persecuted because of their faith.

But what are the causes of these prejudiced ideologies? And what are the consequences for the victims and society as a whole? To answer these questions, we will explore the historical roots of these forms of discrimination, analyse the devastating effects they have on social coexistence and discuss possible solutions to counter and eradicate such harmful attitudes.

This comprehensive and in-depth guide invites you to learn more about an issue that is often underestimated but fundamental to understanding the problems of integration and coexistence. Through an in-depth analysis based on data and statistics, one is able to understand the extent of the problem and the role each of us can play in the fight against xenoracism and anti-Semitism.

Anti-semitism has deep roots in Jewish history and European culture. Since ancient times, Jews have been subjected to discrimination, persecution and violence. Anti-Semitism reached its peak during the Holocaust, when millions of Jews were exterminated in a systematic attempt to annihilate the Jewish people.

Anti-Semitism did not disappear with the end of the Second World War. Even today, Jews are still subject to prejudice, discrimination and acts of violence. Anti-Semitism can manifest itself through negative stereotypes, conspiracy theories and propaganda aimed at demonising Jews. It is a form of hatred that must be fought with determination and commitment.

It is important to understand that anti-Semitism not only harms the direct victims, but also society as a whole. This form of discrimination undermines the social fabric, fuelling divisions and tensions. Peaceful and harmonious coexistence requires respecting and accepting differences, as well as condemning and combating all forms of discrimination.

Anti-semitism can have devastating impacts on both direct victims and affected communities. Social isolation and marginalisation can negatively affect the quality of life and well-being of those affected. Affected communities may suffer internal divisions and tensions, undermining social cohesion and solidarity. Discrimination and hatred can create a climate of fear and mistrust that hinders peaceful coexistence.

Senator Liliana Segre highlights the importance of commemorating ‘the choices of the righteous’ on Holocaust Remembrance Day, starting from the recognition that being anti-racist, both in the past and in the present, means being in the minority and taking a firm stand. It is not a matter of extolling isolated heroic acts, but of considering Article 3 of the Italian Constitution as a guiding light, which according to Segre represents “the antithesis of indifference”. The Republic in Italy has the responsibility to remove the economic and social barriers that limit the freedom and equality of citizens, thus preventing the full development of the person and the active participation of all workers in the political, economic and social life of the country. Liliana Segre emphasises the collective task of removing these obstacles to make equal dignity a concrete reality. (Frisina, Farina, Surian, 2021, p. 104)

Chapter 2. Sociology of Memory

Memory goes beyond the mere mental reproduction of the past, as evidenced by the fact that we do not retain every single detail of past events. A significant part of these experiences is modelled in a highly structured way, influencing what we actually recall in our minds. Commonly, we perceive past events as episodes in a story, and it is the different narratives that give them historical significance. The fundamental elements associated with memory include the perceived 'density' in history, the 'construction' of historical narratives, the social structure of genealogical 'descent', the mental subdivision of places, the categorisation of historical features into discrete 'periods', and highly structured collective mnemonic alterations in relation to actual historical distance, and so on.

In this chapter, I focus on the concept of memory and its inherent relationship to both the individual and the community. The sociology of memory constitutes a rich and complex field of study through which scholars explore the dynamic and social nature of the mnemonic process. A fundamental premise of this approach is that memory is not an isolated or individual phenomenon, but is shaped and influenced by the social, cultural and historical dynamics of a community or society. This social context of memory highlights how the representation of the past is subject to constant negotiation within the public sphere.

The definition of memory, inherently complex and systematic, immediately evokes the archives of our experiences, images and notions that accumulate over the course of a lifetime and, in part, are dispersed. The fundamental role played by memory in the construction of identity manifests itself on both levels, individual and social. In this framework, it acts as a distinctive element and of belonging to a community (Halbwachs, 1997), using language and traditions to maintain ties beyond direct interactions. It is crucial to emphasise the relational dynamic between the present and the past, considering these dimensions as an integral part of a single entity. Efforts to preserve the unity between the present and the past are driven by human interactions, which act as bridges connecting groups of individuals and allow them to experience temporal continuity.

"This is the essence of Halbwachs' contribution: (...) Memory is dynamic, with continuous reformulations. Its function is not so much that of providing faithful images of the past, but to preserve the elements that provide subjects with a sense of their continuity and identity" (Hassan, 2021, p. 13).

The historical narrative in textbooks represents only a tiny fraction of the events, not a complete record of everything that happened. Rather, it is the part of events that we have chosen to preserve as 'collective memory'. The idea that memory is not a mere reproduction of objective facts does not imply that it is completely subjective. In contrast to psychology, sociology pays considerable attention to the social context in which we gain access to the past. It shows us that most of our memories concern actions performed as members of specific communities. Being part of a society implies the ability to experience events that occurred before our existence and to incorporate them as if they were part of our individual past.

The deep interconnection between personal history and the history of the communities to which they belong helps to explain the persistent legacy of pain and suffering among American descendants of African slaves, as well as the sense of personal shame experienced by many Germans for the atrocities of a regime that ended long before they were born. Indeed, the assimilation of a group's memories and identification with its collective past is an integral part of the process of constructing any social identity, and the act of making such memories familiar to members represents a community's main effort in the assimilation process. The memories examined are clearly collective in nature, shared by ethnic communities, nations and other mnemonic groups. As demonstrated on memorial occasions, these communities often remember the past together, thus emphasising that our social environment not only influences what to remember, but also when to do it. The social nature of human memory manifests itself not only in the actual content of memories, but also in the way we mentally structure these memories. Indeed, recollection involves more than simply summarising events and involves various cognitive filters that act independently of the events themselves, but nevertheless influence our mental perception of them. The absorption of these cognitive structures is generally part of the process by which we learn to memorise in a way that conforms to social norms.

A key element of the sociology of memory is the analysis of social practices, i.e. of "socially visible and observable actions of the processes of organising and communicating memory in everyday life and, more generally, in social relations" (Agazzi - Fortunati 2007, p. 60) linked to the production, transmission and contestation of memory. Narratives of the past emerge through a series of social processes, such as official commemoration, the ritualisation of historical events, the production of documents and the sharing of personal narratives. These mechanisms not only influence the construction of memory, but also the selection of what becomes memorable and the representation of such events. Contrary to what one might imagine, the process of memorisation is not entirely spontaneous, but is also guided by mnemonic rules, clearly of a social nature, that tell us what we should keep in mind and what we should forget. Language, in particular, is what emancipates human memory from being confined exclusively to the brains of each individual.

Collective memory is the complex of social representations of the past that develop and are transmitted through interaction within a group. (Jedlowski, 2001, p. 33) Research on collective memory focuses on the substance of what we remember together as a whole, with the main aim of identifying formal traits that underlie this recollection. The social significance of past events depends on their structural arrangement in our minds in relation to other events. Memory is not merely a mental reproduction of the past, but it is important to emphasise that it is not a completely random process. One of the most crucial features of the human mind is its ability to transform sequences of events into coherent historical narratives. We commonly perceive past events as episodes in a story, and it is these different stories that give historical significance to the events. An essential aspect of historical narration is its connection to progress, which leads to considering what came after as a better time. While progress suggests a seemingly ideal future, nostalgia implies a romantic idealisation of the past.

Understanding the past requires the analysis of the socio-temporal textures woven by mnemonic communities, as collective memory goes beyond the sum of individual memories. This perspective suggests that to gain a comprehensive view of the past, it is essential to explore the shared dynamics and collective representations created by the interaction of memories within communities. Historical narratives do not always prelude change, as both the present and the past are not conceived as substitutes for each other, but rather

as essential elements of an interconnected totality. This perspective suggests that some narratives may not be oriented towards imminent change, emphasising the coexistence and integration of temporal dimensions in the overall understanding of history. The present moment represents the uninterrupted accumulation of numerous fragments of the past, sedimented through an evolving cultural process. This perspective emphasises that the past cannot be neglected but should be considered as an essential element in the formation of present identities, contributing significantly to the current cultural and social context.

A crucial concept in the sociology of memory is that of 'places of memory'. These places are physical or symbolic spaces that serve as repositories of collective meanings and help to consolidate historical memory. Monuments, museums and other symbolic places become nodes through which society establishes a connection with its past. The analysis of these places provides insights into power dynamics, the construction of official narratives and the management of contested memories. The ordinariness of a space offers us the possibility to virtually imagine the people who, in the distant past, occupied the same place that is now before us. The centrality of place proves fundamental in the construction of our identity, serving as a prominent element in identity rhetoric. Some mnemonic ties can "be distanced from specific spatial contexts, as in the case of small memories or symbolic objects linked to memorable events" (Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, Levy, 2011, p. 275).

Despite their physical separation from their place of origin, the material significance of such portable relics helps to maintain a sense of physical continuity for individuals. These relics allow one to experience the present while maintaining a tangible link to the past; their portability allows one to recall events without the need to be physically in the places they evoke. In this way, the materiality of the relics facilitates remembrance and enables a bridge between the present and the past, offering a unique perspective on the connection between our present experience and past events.

When reflecting on the concept of the place of memory, its close connection with the evolution of contemporary society and its complex relationship with history clearly emerges. The decision to physically preserve these sites of memory proves to be a crucial political and cultural choice in this context. The preservation of such sites is not merely

an act of preservation but becomes an authentic vehicle for the transmission of history, enabling future generations to deeply understand the tragedies and mistakes of the past.

Woven into the fabric of Western nations are a variety of memories, symbols and monuments, which together shape a common fabric of memory. These symbolic places take on the role of fundamental spatio-temporal reference points for society. In addition to commemorating events and people, they are often steeped in painful episodes that resulted in the loss of numerous lives. This memorial practice, rooted in history, has contributed greatly to the construction of national identities and the promotion of shared values.

Contemporary times offer us a heightened awareness of the relativism of memory. The ethnic and cultural complexity of the modern world, global interconnections and the multiplicity of memories themselves delineate a society in which memory is now the heritage not only of entire communities, but also of smaller groups and individuals. This spread is clearly reflected in the ever-increasing tourist interest in places of recent tragedies and their monuments.

The practice of memorialisation today is not limited to traditional art forms such as painting and sculpture, but also extends to documentaries, museums and national events. This kind of design seeks to meet the multiple and complex needs and expectations of society, taking the form of a mechanism that, through material and immaterial expressions, aims not only to commemorate the past, but also to actively involve visitors in the present (Young, 1994, pp. 163-165).

In recent decades, monuments and memorials have emerged as vital fabrics of memory culture in cities all over the world, especially in relation to the dramatic events of the last century. The word 'monument', originating in Latin and often associated with authoritarian regimes, underwent a significant transformation in the post-war period, evolving towards the concept of memorial. This linguistic change reflects social and cultural changes, opening up a new perspective on this artistic form.

Memory, the witness of memories and reflection on our collective identity, plays a fundamental role not only in individual experience, but also in the construction of personal and social identity. The identity of an individual or a group is based on the feeling of continuity in time and space, sustained by memory. The distinction between historical

memory, learned through written history, and individual and autobiographical memory, based on personal experiences, highlights the complexity of memory as a subjective and shared phenomenon.

"The interconnection between individual and collective memory is clearly outlined, emphasising the crucial role of individual memory in the formation of the social sphere and collective memory" (Barash, 2020, p. 87).

Memorials, far from being mere monuments, become places imbued with meaning and spaces that elevate objects or concepts. Their importance may derive from the authenticity of the site or the attribution of a symbolic value.

Sensory experience and connection to these places prove to be powerful tools for activating memory, overcoming the limitations of traditional memory objects. Involving the body and senses in an experience makes it easier to remember and give substance to an event, counteracting the challenges of memorisation in modernity.

A tangible example of this dynamic is represented by Holocaust memorials. Many visitors have a distant knowledge of this past through films, photographs, books, museums, making the active involvement of the viewer crucial in the process of memorisation.

Moreover, historical revisionism, which tends to minimise or deny historical responsibility, requires a response through existing documentation, testimonies and in-depth knowledge of historical reality. Authentic understanding of history is crucial to counter the manipulation of memory, emphasising the importance of involving new generations in rewriting values, addressing racism, defending human rights and promoting civil co-existence as key elements for the future of societies.

In order to establish a closer link between past and present, the concept of 'tradition' manifests itself through various rituals intended to integrate our present reality with the imitation of the collective heritage of the past. The element that links the present to the past in a tangible way is represented by the essence of annual anniversaries. The primary function of the calendar lies in periodically consolidating the fusion with the past through an annual cycle of commemorative celebrations. This process emphasises the synchronicity between what was 'then' and our experience of life 'now', highlighting the continuous

relevance and connection between the past and the present through the use of commemorative events that are repeated cyclically throughout the year. In this way, tradition and the calendar actively work together to promote an understanding and continuity of time, facilitating a sense of connection to the historical roots of society.

The intricate relationship between memory and social identity constitutes one of the central cores of investigation within the sociology of memory. Shared memories act as key elements in the construction of collective identities, playing a crucial role in shaping the collective understanding of the past within a community or society. This dynamic is fundamental to the sense of belonging, as shared memories create a common ground on which people can construct and share their identities.

Shared memories act as social glue, providing a shared basis for cohesion within groups or communities. These memories become an integral part of a group's identity narrative, helping to define who they are and where they come from. The sense of historical continuity derived from shared memories helps to establish a connection between the past, present and future, providing a temporal frame of reference that reinforces the social fabric.

However, the management of traumatic or conflicting memories can complicate this relationship. When shared memories involve painful or contested events, society is confronted with a battleground where tensions and conflicts emerge. The struggle for control and interpretation of these memories can lead to divisions within society, highlighting different perspectives and interpretations of the past. These conflicts can undermine the sense of unity and social cohesion, challenging the construction of a shared collective identity.

In addition, the management of traumatic memories can be complicated by memory politics, which can influence the selection, interpretation and commemoration of past events. Social institutions, such as the state or other influential actors, can shape the official narrative of the past, thus influencing public perception and the construction of social identities.

The sociology of memory offers a rich perspective on the complex interplay between memory and social identity. Shared memories play a vital role in the construction of collective identities, but the management of traumatic or conflicting memories can become a delicate terrain, highlighting the inherent tensions and challenges in trying to balance social cohesion with the diversity of perspectives and interpretations of the past.

The analysis of mnemonic dynamics explores the role played by institutions in the production and management of memory. States, organisations and cultural institutions actively participate in the creation of official narratives, influencing the definition of what is worthy of being remembered or forgotten within society. This process revealed by institutional involvement implies a constant dynamic of negotiation and reinterpretation of the past, reflecting the complex dynamics present in the social structure.

The influence of institutions in the production of memory is evident in the construction of official narratives that can shape public perceptions of past events. Institutions, through memory policies and other strategies, exercise a significant role in shaping which version of the past is promoted and consolidated within the community.

This process is not only an act of selecting and presenting historical facts, but also involves the definition of cultural and identity meanings through the lens of institutions. The constant process of negotiation and reinterpretation of the past, orchestrated by institutions, reflects the changing dynamics in society. Memory becomes a terrain of clash and confrontation, with different actors seeking to influence the collective perception of the past to fit their ideological visions or power interests. Institutions emerge as key agents in this process, helping to shape the context in which collective memory is constructed and managed.

Socially, the processes of remembering and forgetting refer to each other, where what a person remembers corresponds to what he has not forgotten and what he forgets is equivalent to what he has not remembered. This statement, seemingly trivial from a theoretical point of view, takes on empirical relevance, placing memory and forgetting on an equal footing. Forgetfulness becomes as much a field of empirical investigation as memory. The analysis of memorial processes requires specific attention to antagonistic dimensions, sometimes reflected in real ambivalence at the institutional level.

Whenever a political or cultural institution engages in the commemoration of an event, it is called upon to formulate or confirm an assessment. Commemoration always implies a choice about what to commemorate and what to forget, as well as how and to what extent to do so. Competing for a social definition of an event becomes an integral part of the commemorative process.

The analysis of commemorative processes reveals conflicting tensions, and the management of these tensions during the process can influence the ambivalent definition of the event. This ambivalence manifests itself through commemorative artefacts such as monuments, statues, flags and diaries. Artifacts, such as places, objects and texts, materialise the commemorative process. They speak in a cultural language, maintaining a cultural nature even when they are part of the commemorative process.

There is an expressive code of memory, which varies culturally like the expressive codes of mourning, joy and emotions. Memory objectifies itself in socially and culturally defined ways, making certain memories possible over others. These codes are not neutral, and if memories have a poetic structure with predefined limits, the way we remember becomes a political act of reconstructing meaning.

In every society, institutions sanction legitimate and illegitimate forms of remembrance, which may be political, cultural or artistic. The question of the appropriateness of the expressive code in relation to the event to be remembered is fundamental. The canonisation of memorial forms and the decision as to what is appropriate and what is not become crucial, especially when considering the evolution of genres of commemoration over time.

Reflection on the formation of television canons, particularly in relation to the articulation of individual and collective memories, is less developed than that of literary, musical and artistic canons. The media, usually studied as agents of socialisation, need more attention as agencies of memorisation.

In conclusion, the sociology of memory, through a critical and profound approach, provides a key to understanding the complexity of the relationships between memory, society and history.

The analysis of social practices, memory sites and power dynamics highlights the central role of institutions in defining the mnemonic landscape of a society, thus contributing to a deeper understanding of how the past is shaped, negotiated and represented in human communities. (Hobsbawm, Ranger, 2002, p.210-211)

Evaluating recollection, according to Yerushalmi, does not imply avoiding forgetting. Forgetting, for him, is an integral part, if not in the strict sense of memory (which already implies internal choices), of reminiscence or anamnesis. The latter represents the 'recollection of what has been forgotten' and forms a fundamental basis for much of knowledge. Recently, this polarity between memory and forgetting has given way to a more radical oxymoron, considering the distorted accelerations of temporality. On the one hand, there is a late-modern memory perceived as weak, almost intermittent, emptied of its identity content, and oriented towards fleeting and changeable communication. On the other hand, there is a memory that is maximally expanded, pervasive and overflowing, often oppressed by a tendency to turn into something museum-like, perpetuating a narcissistically complacent and self-indulgent commemorative practice. In other words, there is a morbid and inauthentic propensity to canonise memory. For instance, the memory of the Shoah seems to escape this tendency, increasingly subject to a kind of memory industry, as evidenced by the numerous Holocaust museums that in some cases seem to focus on the edifying spectacularization of suffering. This 'excess of memory', pathologically turned in on itself, could be interpreted as a sign of a declining future project, a resigned and extinguished withdrawal from political action, raising concern.

The abundance of words in remembering, according to the scholar, does not confirm the new distinction in the forms of memory, which oscillates between fall and excess. Amnesia and remembrance per se are not sufficient to protect us from the experience of Auschwitz. The mystique of memory, which leans towards spectacular forms, conceals the human side of the crime of Auschwitz. Here, memory can become dangerous, rising up against history. This is especially likely to happen when some present the Holocaust as an inevitable tribute to the ancient elements of our history, rather than as the most violent result of our entire historical modernity, as Bauman argues in 'Modernity and the Holocaust'. Bauman highlights the bureaucratic and technocratic nature of the Holocaust, emphasising its composition of rationality, planning and systematic organisation of crime as a process of production.

Separating extermination from its history, which is inherently human and characterised by techniques in the service of planning, leads the memory of the camps to become a form of guilty forgetting. Focusing only on pity and compassion for the victims without reflecting on the conditions that allowed the extermination to take place, as Bensoussan warns, does not protect us from the risk that the delirium of genocide may be repeated. The greatest danger lies in this form of relativism that unites all the victims of history in the worship of a 'consensus' memory. This is more dangerous than the attacks and distortions of denialism.

2.1 Collective memory

The social configuration of memory, both at the individual and collective level, manifests itself as an intricate process that draws on the resources of a specific social space and expresses itself through a shared language. Memory, being based on a process of rational construction, reveals its capacity to reinterpret the past using the contemporary intellectual models of the collective or the individual, acting as a dynamic and fluid resource that responds to the changes and demands of the present.

The perspective advances the idea that the past, both on an individual and societal level, is configured as a reworking inherently influenced by past interests. In this context, memory is not seen as a mere bondage to the past, but rather as a flexible tool at the disposal of human freedom in confronting and dealing with the challenges of the present. The focus on the conception of collective memory, examining its past, leads to current reflections on it by various prominent authors, including Bergson and Halbwachs.

According to the view of Bergson, the 20th century French philosopher, the human essence is stored in pure memory, a kind of repository of past duration that shapes memory through the incorporation of past experiences, images, sensations and impressions inherent in each individual.

Halbwachs (1997), another eminent French sociologist and philosopher, further developed Bergson's ideas on collective memory. He proposes that memory is influenced by the social context, arguing that memories are shaped and reformed by the society in which

we are immersed. He distinguishes individual memory from collective memory, emphasising the importance of the social dimension in the construction of memories. On the one hand, one identifies a memory linked to unpredictable experience, in which images and perceptions merge, and on the other a controlled thought that has a close relationship with the present. In addition to this, Halbwachs introduces the idea of a memory anchored in the notion of reality, thus allowing access to both present thought and the image of the past.

Halbwachs brings out a further innovative perspective on the links between collective memory and freedom. Alongside the reconstruction of the past in relation to the interests of the present, another form of collective memory takes shape, which draws its inspiration from currents of thought independent of specific groups. This memory, with its social dynamism, emphasises that the past does not disappear completely, but leaves traces that enable reconstruction.

The philosopher argues that reconstructing the past implies starting from specific traces and virtualities, which a group can transform from the virtual into the present, thus realising an act of collective freedom. Within collective memory, it is the group itself that actively participates in the reconstruction of its own past, transforming itself into a current of memory on a social level, as a living testimony of a past that continues to exert its influence in the present. These traces, or currents of memory, emerge as potential for re-actualisation for the group in its evolutionary process, giving depth and meaning to its evolving identity.

In the context of sociological analysis of collective memory, it is essential to give credit for the emanation of the sociology of memory, as a specific disciplinary branch, to the illustrious Auguste Comte.

A 19th century philosopher and sociologist, he played a fundamental role in the development of the discipline of sociology, making a significant contribution to our understanding of the mechanisms of collective memory formation. Comte, known for his three-stage theory, also applied his evolutionary perspective to the analysis of social memory. He conceived memory as an intrinsic component of social progress, arguing that society went through stages of theological, metaphysical and finally scientific thought. In his view, collective memory evolves in parallel with these stages, reflecting the transition from a

divine and mystical understanding of reality to a perspective based on scientific laws and principles. Comte recognised the analysis of commemoration as a key element in understanding the relationship between the past and the present, highlighting the affinity between memory and religious rituals. His sociology of memory emphasised the need to consider the weight of past events on the living and historical determinism. Through his reflections, Comte instilled a critical awareness of the central role of memory in the construction of society and provided a valuable theoretical foundation for subsequent generations of scholars interested in the connection between collective memory and social development.

Frequently, the idea of collective memory is confined to mainly political and media interpretations, neglecting its vastness and geographical complexity. This limitation hinders a full understanding of the global memorial conflict triggered by the changes of modernity. The advent of globalisation has introduced a considerable challenge in the way we deal with the past. Since the Second World War, particularly since the 1960s, there has been a need for a new approach by historians, namely to make collective memory accessible and participatory for all.

This process, besides contributing to civic education, becomes crucial in the way we deal with the modern era. Local memorial conflicts become part of a broader context, linked to the tragic events of the past. This reflection extends beyond national borders, involving global realities and highlighting the complexity of this memorial challenge. It is essential to embrace this complexity for a comprehensive understanding of the meaning of collective memory and the impact of modernity on it. This approach requires a broad and global vision, thus offering an opportunity for a deeper and more inclusive reflection on our relationship with the past.

What we now identify as collective memory constitutes a set of commemorative practices, including monuments and media, that facilitate the construction of a group's identity (Jedlowski, 2017, p. 34). Over the centuries, the intertwining of society and history has given rise to an intricate process of collective memory formation, a phenomenon of social and political significance that still shapes the way we perceive the past.

The ever-increasing interest in past eras, the construction of a selective memory based on historical knowledge, the strategic mobilisation of the past for both partisan and commercial purposes, coupled with the relevant centrality of history in shaping national and group identities, constitute the fundamental pillars that have progressively shaped collective memory over the centuries. This process has recently witnessed the emergence of historical tourism, the spread of identity movements in Europe since the 1970s and the formulation of a new vocabulary in which concepts such as heritage, roots and identity dominate. The evolution of this construction of collective memory provides a clear view of how our entanglement with the past has defined the structure of our society and shaped our understanding of history. This dynamic takes the form of an ongoing challenge to the democratisation of social memory, a challenge that continues to exert a tangible influence on our present and future (Gillis, 1994; Kammen, 1993). This intricate weaving of revelatory elements, reinforced by the current history-oriented tourist fervour and the proliferation of identity movements, underlines the crucial importance of collective memory in guiding the course of our existence and the way we narrate the past.

It is essential to highlight how the vast landscape of collective memories, in an attempt to define a shared narrative and in the delicate balance between communities, collides with a global perspective, where each nation aspires to shape its own historical texture, generating far-reaching impacts. This process aims to geographically delineate the past, influencing textbooks, educational curricula and political discussions. This inclination takes the form of political claims and demands for the revision of historical narratives, catalysing international tensions and turning history into a battleground between sovereign entities. In this context, historical memory undergoes a major transformation, emerging as a central theme in the social texture, both on a local and global scale.

The history of the past, now a topic of great social importance, presents ample possibilities for education and is a fertile ground for examining stereotypes, inaccuracies and instrumental distortions of past reality. This process contributes to the formation of historical awareness, intertwined with a sound understanding of previous events. The ultimate goal is to foster a genuine interest in history and cultivate a critical sense that can counter the abuse and manipulation of memories, involving not only history experts, but society as a whole. The debate on the abuse of historical memory emerges as a vitally important issue in the current era, especially in the context of the reinterpretation and manipulation

of shared history. The commercial use of memory through the mass media raises serious questions concerning national cultural identity (Wolf, 1992, pp. 187-194).

In the light of the in-depth exploration of the various facets of the concept of collective memory, including its intertwining with symbolic places, an intrinsic complexity emerges in this process of historical and identity reflection. The exploration of these issues not only emphasises the important role of the media in the transmission of historical events, but also warns of the danger associated with potential informational bias and selectivity that undermines the formation of an authentic and complete memory. The presence of distorted narratives, often influenced by ideological interests, constitutes a threat to the search for historical truth and the coherence of memory.

A key aspect in this context is the need to address the issue of media bias, which can contribute to the creation of a distorted historical memory through biased interpretations of the past. This requires a critical and conscious approach on the part of society so that it can discern and contextualise the information conveyed by the media and promote a balanced and objective understanding of history.

Furthermore, the debate on the removal of historical sculptures and monuments linked to episodes considered negative raises profound questions about the management of historical heritage. While recognising the just condemnation of nefarious aspects of the past, the erasure of historical symbols could deprive future generations of crucial opportunities for learning and reflection.

The complexity involved in the construction of a collective memory requires an ongoing commitment to the promotion of an authentic and comprehensive historical narrative. It is crucial to encourage a thoughtful and balanced approach by the media, supporting an open and inclusive dialogue on the management of memory sites. Only through a collective effort for a shared and informed historical memory will it be possible to address current challenges and shape a future that fully embraces the complexity of our history.

2.2 Critical Memory

Critical memory' presents itself as a dynamic and reflective approach to the preservation and recollection of historical events and past experiences. In addition to storing facts, this

form of memory involves a continuous process of questioning, analysing and interpreting the preserved information. It moves away from the passive attitude of accepting what has been handed down, actively involving itself in questioning perspectives, contextualising events in their social, political and cultural context and interrogating prevailing narratives.

Critical memory is closely linked to an awareness of historical complexity and recognition of the multiple voices and perspectives that contribute to the construction of the past. It encourages critical analysis of official narratives and dominant discourses, seeking to identify marginalised and often ignored voices in conventional history. This approach promotes active participation in the construction of collective memory, challenging stereotypes, preconceptions and simplifications and fostering a more comprehensive and multifaceted understanding of past events.

Critical memory reflects on the implications of such memories in the present context, realising that narratives of the past have a direct impact on individual and collective identity formation. Critical memory awareness can nurture deeper social engagement, inspiring action in favour of justice, equality and respect for diversity. In this way, critical memory is not only an intellectual exercise, but also a powerful tool for building a conscious and responsible society.

"...a growing responsibility on the need to free oneself from the legacies of ethnocentric visions inherited from the past and a renewed awareness of the need to support, with one's own tools, knowledge practices capable of facilitating the emancipatory instances of social groups that claim their own place in history and society" (Massari, 2020, p. 51).

This type of memory challenges the traditional idea of memory as a mere store of information. Instead, it proposes an approach that recognises the subjectivity and social construction of memory. This implies a constant dialogue between past and present, a continuous process of negotiation between individual interpretations and collective narrative. In this context, critical memory seeks to overcome the risk of a one-sided view of history, prompting consideration of the multiple perspectives woven into the historical fabric. This is not only about remembering specific events, but also about recognising the interpretations and perceptions that have shaped our understanding of the past over time.

Furthermore, critical memory embraces the fluidity of memory, recognising that it is susceptible to change and reinterpretation over time. This implies an awareness that our understanding of the past is influenced by culture, politics and changing social dynamics. Critical memory, therefore, manifests itself as a dynamic process of continuous reflection, not settling for conventional narratives, but engaging in exploring the contradictions and tensions that underlie the construction of historical meaning. It recognises that history is not static, but rather a fertile ground for critical analysis and constant re-examination.

A key element is the ability to identify and challenge dominant narratives that may reflect prejudice and bias. This approach seeks to bring to the forefront marginalised voices that are often overlooked in conventional memory networks, thus promoting "an equity of representation in collective memory" (Assmann, 1997, p. 8).

Equally relevant is its role in the present context. Critical memory does not merely examine the past; it questions how historical narratives influence the present. Aware that past memories may perpetuate injustices or contribute to the construction of more just societies, it actively engages in the construction of a narrative that inspires positive and conscious action.

The fundamental aspect of critical memory, often overlooked, is its impact on individual and collective identity. It recognises that the construction of memory is not a neutral process, but directly influences how individuals and communities perceive themselves in the historical context. It challenges the idea of a monolithic and unquestionable past, highlighting how memory is permeated by subjective perspectives and interpretations. This approach allows for a more nuanced and articulated understanding of history, avoiding simplifications and stereotypes that can fuel prejudice. It also recognises the power of narratives in shaping collective identity. Communities that share a critical memory participate in a form of identity construction that is conscious and open to dialogue. Instead of relying on static concepts, such as 'us' and 'them', it strives to foster a more multifaceted understanding of diversity and the interconnectedness of human experiences.

Critically analysing historical events recognises the potential to guide concrete actions in contemporary society. When people are aware of the implications of memory on social dynamics, they are more inclined to promote justice, equality and respect for diversity.

In conclusion, exploring different interpretations of the past is not only a tool for advanced historical reflection, but a driving force for building a world in which the complexity of our history is embraced and understood.

Critical memory is distinguished by its ability to contextualise historical narratives. In this context, the understanding of past events is not isolated, but is developed by considering the social, political and cultural context in which they occurred. The critical approach encourages one to examine the influences and forces that shaped dominant narratives, bringing to light perspectives that are often overlooked or neglected.

2.2.1 The Current Influence of Critical Memory in Social Engagement

A fundamental aspect of critical memory is its impact in the present. It recognises that the narrative of the past contributes significantly to the formation of individual and collective identity. This critical awareness stimulates the individual and society to reflect on the consequences of shared memories and to take responsible action. It thus highlights the power of critical memory in shaping social engagement that promotes justice, equality and respect for diversity.

Critical memory goes beyond the intellectual realm, becoming an instrument of social action. Critical awareness of historical narratives can inspire concrete actions to address present injustices. In this way, critical memory acts as a catalyst for social change, motivating individuals and communities to actively participate in building a more equitable society. Assessing the implications of memories in the present represents a beacon in the exploration of the past, illuminating not only historical events, but also the way they are narrated and received. Its ability to contextualise, recognise the present impact and guide social action makes it a crucial element in building a conscious and responsible society. Critical memory reminds us that the past is not a static place, but a fertile ground for reflection and transformation.

2.3 Memory as the foundation of collective identity: reflections on the Shoah

The concept of memory emerges clearly through the selection of a term that strives to give it a specific identity. Consider, for example, the term 'Shoah', which not only recalls a Jewish context, but also seems to implicitly relegate to the background the fact that the victims involved were not only of Jewish origin, but also belonged to different categories such as homosexuals, ethnic minorities, and gypsies. On the contrary, the term 'Holocaust' not only embraces the diversity of the victims, but also reveals the original meaning associated with sacrifice (Alexander, 2003, p.6).

A critical question therefore arises concerning the choice of the most appropriate term, giving rise to a kind of conceptual game in transforming historical facts into a myth. This process, going beyond the event itself, takes the form of an argument capable of building social bonds. This transformation manifests itself through a symbolic mutation that is implemented in concrete participation in celebratory rites, pilgrimages and commemorations.

Through the practice of a public ritual, a kind of European civil religion could develop, based on a shared memory that becomes a fundamental source of solidarity. This approach is capable of delineating a collective identity through the recognition of what should no longer occur. Thus, an extremely important concept emerges, dealing with the link between European identity and civil religion, while denying that the wishes of intellectuals can immediately become reality.

The concept of European memory addresses three fundamental issues. The first focuses on the inherent complexity of the concept of memory itself, highlighting the ambivalence between remembering and forgetting, involving the construction of any memory and the need to consider counter-memories. The second issue concerns the school teaching of history, while the third addresses the processes of commemoration that characterise recent years. In the construction of identity, the role played by heritage and the creation of memorial sites is becoming increasingly important. The transfiguration through these historical sites, celebrations and monuments gives rise to a process of transformation of historical facts, placing them at the service of the construction of collective identities, giving them a fundamental symbolic value as a point of reference. This phenomenon is evident in the case of the Shoah and in the construction of European identity. Importantly, some individuals recognise the Shoah as Europe's most significant and painful common past,

while only a minority see the memory of the Shoah as a possible nucleus of a shared European memory.

According to Bidussa (2014, pp.1-13), examining the 'Day of Remembrance' as a form of 'politics of history' raises several important questions, opening up a discourse articulated on several fronts. Firstly, the challenges of contrasting different experiences of deportation emerge, an intricate issue that requires deep reflection. The historiographic practice that develops around the link between identity and memory constitutes an aspect of interest that brings to light complex issues concerning the representation of the past and the construction of our historical identity.

By analysing 'memory journeys' and their expressive nature, we need to understand how this practice is shaped and what meanings it conveys, becoming a crucial element in the discussion on the role of memory in contemporary society. This raises the need to explore the intricate relationship between memory and responsibility, questioning how much the past contributes to defining public ethics and how we should deal with responsibilities related to tragic historical events.

It is important to consider how historical memory has the effect of changing our overall perception of history. This implies an in-depth study of the changing meanings of key words that are part of public language, such as 'identity', 'violence', 'power' and more. The fluidity and evolution of such concepts, sometimes accentuated by historical memory, delineate the context in which history itself develops and is interpreted by the community.

For a long time, the existence of racist violence was ignored, partly due to the lack of critical reflection on colonial violence (Siebert, 2014, pp. 292-304). Superimposed on this panorama of issues are the challenges emerging from the juxtaposition of different memories. The established ritualisation of 27 January, the 'Day of Remembrance', has contributed to the increasingly pronounced delineation of a conflict between the memory of political and Jewish deportation. An obvious symbolic example of this contrast is manifested in the uncertain fate of the Memorial, which becomes a ground for critical reflection on the way society handles and interprets the painful past.

If we take a closer look at the fundamental place of 20th century memory that is Auschwitz, we realise that it is a place that has represented an epochal separation in the forms

of remembering. It has so profoundly affected the meaning of words that previously had a literary and philosophical dignity, resetting their ethical content. Memory thus emerges as an absolute and imperative human duty, as it emerged after the horrors of extermination. However, at the same time, 'memory presents itself as a silent, wordless duty after the trauma of what has been seen' (Alexander, 2018, p. 189).

Sight, in the midst of such an incomprehensible experience, suppressed speech and generated that cold memory of someone who witnessed something abnormal, beyond their capacity to comprehend, thus losing the possibility of communicating it, of finding the words to make themselves understood. At the heart of the tragic memories of the twentieth century is the paradox of abundance and fall, of non-experience and non-processable experience and at the same time of impotence, i.e. the loss of meaning to transmit and communicate that characterises our complex process of remembering.

This changing condition, the loss of speech and the inability to name the extermination are reflected in recent studies by authors concerned with the Shoah. For example, the book 'Memory Art in the Contemporary World' by Andreas Huyssen focuses on the impossibility of representing that experience, its unspeakability and the approximation of the many linguistic formulas often improperly used to describe the event: genocide, Holocaust, Auschwitz. According to the author, only the expression 'Shoah', precisely because of its nature as a semantically uncertain word, could be the only way to give a name to something so difficult to express in words, almost as if it were an enigma beyond language.

Moreover, a figure connected to the polarity between seeing and speaking, almost as if they were opposite experiences, occupies a central role in the memory of the Shoah: the witness. It is no coincidence that, emblematically, 'The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness' is the title of an important book by the Austrian writer Simon Wiesenthal. The witness becomes the key character in the original paradigm of our memory. He offers a series of stories based on his experiences of survival and his search for justice for the victims of the Holocaust.

2.4 The Role of Memory in the Construction of Social Identity

Memory plays a crucial role in shaping not only the individual, but also the perception and formation of social identity within a community. Collective memories, which are the result of shared experiences and historical narratives, become fundamental to the fabric of society. They not only inform our understanding of the past, but also how we interpret the present and imagine the future.

Through reflection on our collective past, shared memories intertwine with social structures, helping to define and reaffirm the identity of groups and communities. These shared experiences and historical narratives influence the internal dynamics of society, shaping relationships between individuals and groups, as well as perspectives on social, political and ethical issues.

To reiterate how shared memories not only influence social identity, but also how they shape power structures and hierarchies within the community; the mechanisms through which historical narratives are constructed, contested and reinterpreted in the social context. We need to examine the role they play in promoting or challenging values, ideologies and cultural norms within society.

In addition, the way in which collective memories can be instrumentalised or manipulated by individuals or power groups to support certain narratives or to justify political or social actions plays an important role.

Memory is not just a static remembrance of the past, but a dynamic process that links the past to the present and orients the future. Through remembrance and reflection on significant events and challenges faced as a collective, a sense of continuity is built across generations. This process not only allows us to keep the experiences and traditions of the past alive, but also to interpret them meaningfully in the present context. Memory plays an important role in shaping our perspectives and actions in the present. The memory of past mistakes and tragedies warns us of the dangers of injustice and discrimination, encouraging us to strive for a better world. At the same time, the memory of past successes and achievements inspires us to pursue ambitious goals and overcome current challenges.

Ultimately, memory is an essential element in the construction and maintenance of social identity, helping to define who we are as individuals and as a community. Its importance

lies not only in the memory of the past, but also in the way it influences our perceptions, relationships and actions in the present and future.

Memory is a dynamic phenomenon that evolves over time, influencing and reflecting changes in social identity. New interpretations of the past, historical revisions and contemporary challenges contribute to continuously redefining social identity. (Rossi, 2013, p. 192)

The adaptability of memory to the changing society plays a key role in shaping the collective understanding of who we are and who we can become.

Looking to the future, it becomes crucial to explore how memory will continue to shape social identity. In a rapidly changing world, new forms of communication and shared experiences will influence how we perceive and construct our collective history. Awareness of the dynamic nature of memory will pave the way for critical reflection on how we can use our shared past to face future challenges and build a more resilient social identity.

Memory acts as a guardian of social values and norms, transmitting through the generations the ideals that shape a society's identity. The stories handed down become a kind of moral manual, helping to define what is accepted and deemed important. Through the narration of significant events, memory plays a role in the construction and preservation of the fundamental principles that guide social behaviour.

Belonging to a community is largely based on the sharing of common memories. Experiences lived together, challenges overcome and goals achieved become bonds that unite individuals in a deep sense of belonging. Through the creation of a shared history, memory becomes a key element in building the social fabric that binds individuals into a network of meaningful relationships.

It is important to recognise that memory is not monolithic but is shaped by different perspectives and interpretations. The plurality of voices within a society influences the construction of social identity and memory, embracing different experiences and points of view, becomes an inclusive tool reflecting the complexity of collective history.

Beyond preserving the past, memory can act as an engine for social innovation. A critical and dynamic memory can inspire new ideas and approaches to address contemporary challenges; the critical examination of past memories can provide the basis for developing

innovative and sustainable solutions that contribute to societal progress. Awareness of the lessons learned from history, combined with creativity and innovation, can transform memory into a proactive tool for addressing future challenges, ensuring the continued relevance of social identity and becoming a catalyst for community evolution and continuous improvement.

Chapter 3. Remembering the 3 October Massacre.

An exploratory research in Milan

The tragic shipwreck of 3 October 2013, which occurred off the coast of Lampedusa, stands as a painful monument to the human tragedy behind migration in the Mediterranean and Italy. The immense number of lives lost in that event remains an open wound in the global consciousness, a palpable testimony to the unimaginable challenges faced by those who undertake the journey towards a better future.

Migrations, far from being mere geographical displacements, represent an intricate web of hope, despair and survival. People who leave their homelands often do so in extreme conditions, driven by conflict, poverty, persecution or climate change. This human aspect, often overlooked in political and media discourse, is the beating heart of a phenomenon that, in an increasingly interconnected world, takes on global dimensions.

To fully understand the migration phenomenon, it is crucial to trace its historical and contextual roots. Migration is not a new phenomenon, but has taken different forms over the centuries, shaped by geopolitical, economic and social factors. The colonial past of many countries, including Italy, has a significant impact on today's migration dynamics, especially in relation to former colonies such as Eritrea.

The shipwreck of 3 October 2013 was not only the tragic epilogue of a desperate journey, but also the most striking manifestation of a change in migration routes in the Mediterranean. Italy, with its strategic geographic location, has become a key crossroads for thousands of people fleeing conflict, poverty and oppression. The increase in migration flows is a global phenomenon, reflecting the growing instability in many regions of the world.

According to UNHCR estimates⁵, in 2012 more than 23,000 people per day left their countries of origin, a number that is constantly increasing compared to the recent past. This migratory flow is not just an Italian or European problem, but a challenge that involves the entire international community. Effectively tackling this crisis requires a multilateral and cooperative approach that goes beyond ad hoc solutions and addresses the root causes of migratory movements.

The shipwreck of 3 October 2013 represents a crucial moment in the history of migration in the Mediterranean and in Italy, a tragic testimony to the human and political challenges that characterise this phenomenon. In order to find lasting solutions, the deep roots of migration must be tackled with determination, working together as a global community to build a safer and more inclusive future for all.

In the current context of the European Union we witness a recurrence of the sense of erasure. Thousands of migrants meet a tragic end at the continent's borders, silently disappearing into oblivion without leaving any tangible trace of their existence. This stark reality raises a number of questions that go beyond the purely political or legal.

The island of Lampedusa, which has become a sad symbol of this tragedy, is the focal point where history, pain and indifference intertwine.

Reflecting on this situation, fundamental questions arise concerning the values and principles on which the European Union is founded, as well as the ethical and legal responsibilities of its members. It is essential to move beyond political rhetoric and address the human reality behind each lost life. Only through a more compassionate and supportive approach can we hope to end this humanitarian tragedy.

What is manifested on the border is the concept of 'the power to expose to death'. (Khosvari, 2010, p.29). The bodies of migrants who died at sea become tangible indicators of the border itself, testifying to both the sovereign power and political violence of a "maritime space considered exceptional" (Perera, 2006, p. 637).

⁵ The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees or UN refugee agency is dedicated to protecting and helping refugees, offering legal and material support, as well as seeking long-term solutions to improve their plight.

The bodies of migrants, whether missing or recovered, are unequivocal testimonies of those who were brutally obstructed in their attempt to cross the border. For a long time, tragic deaths in the Mediterranean have been treated with indifference and neglected, classifying them at the rank of non-events. Journalists and intellectuals often described them evasively, using metaphors such as “lost in mystery”, “spectres” or “on limbo”. These deaths embodied the sad end of lives reduced to their most elemental essence: worthless and unrecognised existences that quickly faded into the obscurity of public oblivion. However, when the bodies or their remains become visible, as happened in Lampedusa, they become eloquent symbols of the political violence operating on the border. These obvious traces denounce in no uncertain terms the lethal power that the border wields, forcing society to confront a politically untenable reality and demand an adequate response. A complex political and social process is thus initiated to interpret these deaths, proposing different narratives and addressing the crucial question of their understanding and evaluation in the cognitive and political landscape.

The island of Lampedusa, protagonist of tragedies that have shaken the world, offers a penetrating look at the danger of Mediterranean crossings. Here, the rawness of irregular migration manifests itself in all its drama, bringing to light what remains hidden elsewhere (Cuttitta, 2012, pp. 99-115).

The disappearance of migrants at sea represents a total darkness, in which their identity and existence dissolve without a trace. Reduced to numbers, these individuals have long been ignored and minimised, deprived of their humanity and transformed into beings without history or future. (Dal Lago, 2005, pp. 72-89)

But Lampedusa is also the place where death leaves its clear footprints. It is here that the bodies snatched from the sea, the personal belongings recovered from the boats and the grief of the few survivors arrive. In the shipwreck on 3 October 2013, when the island's shores turned into a theatre of tragedy, with its 150 missing, 366 bodies recovered and 148 survivors, most from Eritrea, with others from Somalia and Sudan, all fleeing political violence.

This event marked a turning point in the stories of shipwrecks in the Mediterranean. More than any other, it was amplified by the media and instrumentalised for political purposes, bringing the issue of border deaths to the centre of public debate. However, despite the

attention it has received, it has had limited impact on migration management policies, highlighting the gap between public awareness and concrete political action. This chapter aims to explore in depth how the latest tragic shipwreck marked a significant turning point. The shipwreck that occurred on 3 October has forced everyone to confront the need to interpret the unbearable reality of these now visible deaths, opening a breach in our ability to make sense of what is happening, as it cruelly highlights the violence, ignominy and emotion that follow. This leads us to a process of interpretation that aims to create new conceptual paradigms regarding death along the European Union's maritime borders.

Initially, it is the media that shapes the way we see, depicting drowned migrants as mere bodies whose treatment triggers an intense emotional reaction. Such crude exposure of death brings the human drama before everyone's eyes, highlighting the cruelty of the event. With the intervention of institutions, the interpretative framework shifts: now the dead are also seen as matters of public policy. Instead of remaining invisible, the dead become instruments of pressure in disputes over responsibility for border management between Italy and the European Union.

At the same time, an attempt is made to make sense of these deaths from a political and ethical perspective of the right to migration, without focusing too much on the event of the shipwreck itself.

The victims are not only seen as tangible evidence of the political brutality that permeates the borders, but are also recognised as individuals with inalienable human rights. Increasingly, demonstrations and protests seek to aim to influence government policies, highlighting what would otherwise remain hidden from the eyes of the public. Through a series of symbolic actions, an attempt is made to transform the invisible into the visible, giving victims a presence and dignity that is often denied them. This process also involves returning victims to the public sphere through the re-enactment of their personal stories, faces and unique identities. Furthermore, mourning and commemoration ceremonies serve to celebrate the memory of victims and recognise their intrinsic value as human beings, thus emphasising the urgency of protecting the rights of all those who find themselves vulnerable along migration routes.

In the past, the Mediterranean has seen a number of vessels sink without this provoking any significant reaction. Events of this magnitude have remained almost completely neglected in public opinion. However, on 3 October 2013 in Lampedusa, the circumstances were completely different: the shipwreck occurred in the immediate vicinity of the island itself. This time, the immediate and universal scope of the disaster led to instant and extensive media coverage. The island was the scene of signs of death that were as obvious as they were harrowing. The media repeatedly showed coffins, corpses, objects washed ashore by the currents, mortuary coffins and survivors wrapped in thermal blankets, while rescuers wore protective masks and some people wept in despair.

In this poorly organised and unprepared environment, the authorities were faced with the difficult challenge of managing the large number of victims. The large number of drowned bodies had exceeded the available space and resources to register, transport and respectfully bury them. This stark reality highlighted the urgent need for immediate and coordinated responses to address the problem of migration and the tragedies that occur along the migration routes in the Mediterranean.

The vision of the death of these people did not allow any interpretative alternatives to the tragedy that unfolded. This initial methodology, focused on the visual impact of the event, pushed the media to prioritise mourning, grief, indignation, empathy and shame. The image, in this tragic and recurring narrative, has become the main focus, propagating the violence of the event and arousing the intense emotions that accompany it. This first picture helps shape the public perception of the tragedy, emphasising its human and emotional impact and generating reactions of compassion and revulsion.

In the wake of the tragic shipwreck, a particularly disconcerting aspect emerges, namely the absence of an immediate procedure for identifying the bodies. These individuals, already victims of an unprecedented tragedy, are reduced to a deplorable and erasable anonymity. Most of them are buried with only serial numbers, reducing their identity to a cursory description. It is found that half of the bodies go unidentified. Almost a year after the shipwreck, an identification process is finally initiated for the families of the victims.

The dead on Lampedusa remain largely unknown, as the relative visibility of their disappearance, highlighted by images of the bodies, is obscured by the anonymity of their bur-

ials. It becomes a morally unacceptable situation that required immediate political intervention. The event is quickly manipulated by the media, by representatives of the institutions, trying to involve themselves in the ritual of censorship and in the attempt to reinterpret the tragedy in a political key.

It is important to stress that the Lampedusa massacre cannot and must not be forgotten or minimised. It represents a cry of pain in the face of the indifference and lack of humanity that too often characterise migration and reception policies. Immediate awareness and concrete action are indispensable to ensure that the victims of this tragedy are not reduced to numbers or forgotten in the incessant flow of news. Only through genuine commitment and solidarity can we honour the memory of those who lost their lives in search of hope and dignity.

The political leaders in charge of border supervision, representatives of the Italian government and the European Commission, enter the debate to interpret events according to their perspectives. This happens through two complementary avenues: on the one hand, there is the condemnation and announcement of measures of considerable symbolic resonance; on the other, there is the exposure of conflicting political positions and the emergence of controversies. These actors rely on the constant argument of emergency, which has become a constant in the context of immigration. This allows them to delineate a crisis situation and demand a sharing of responsibility with other political realities, both national and European. The dead thus become an object of public policy interest. The victims, bodies and identities of people are readily translated into the language of action, i.e. protecting from death, combating human trafficking, denouncing those responsible for the tragedy and managing survivors. These categories become resources in the context of the political debate on the management of migrants, both living and dead: thus, victims enter the mainstream of institutional discussions. Moreover, this political representation of the events contributes to shaping public opinion and influencing the political agenda, also determining public perception and approach towards the migration issue. The direct involvement of institutions in shaping perceptions of the event underlines the importance of immediate and decisive political intervention to address the complex humanitarian and political challenges related to migration.

The shipwreck of 3 October 2013 in Lampedusa left an indelible mark on European history. This tragic event revealed the stark reality of forced migration, highlighting the urgent need for concrete humanitarian and political responses. Political leaders, both Italian and European, have tried to shape the interpretation of the event, adopting ambiguous positions. On the one hand, there was the condemnation of human tragedies at sea and the announcement of symbolic measures. On the other, controversies and debates on competing political issues emerged. This duality has avoided a real reflection on European migration policies and their human implications. Despite the emphasis on emergency and the need for relief, the human cost of border control, where security measures often translate into mortal risks for migrants, has been overlooked. This political conundrum raises fundamental questions about migration management and international solidarity.

The Lampedusa tragedy draws attention to the humanitarian and political challenges of migration, raising the need for immediate political and humanitarian action. The protests, organised after the shipwreck, are based solely on the desire to make visible the victims, who disappeared twice: first in the disaster at sea and then in the oblivion of official speeches. The demonstrations aspire to unveil what lies behind these losses: it is imperative to bring out the victims through commemoration ceremonies and restitution actions.

The people working to restore an identity to the disappeared are part of an advocacy association that works to change the narrative on irregular migration and related policies. Through direct demands for reform of European policies and indirect efforts to raise public awareness, these activists fight for the human rights of migrants, trying to give them back some form of human visibility: through stories, faces, identities. Their interpretations do not depend exclusively on the event itself, as they were similarly expressed before and continue to be so after the event. They differ from institutional discourses, oriented towards government action, presenting themselves instead as advocates of human rights and using these values to criticise current policies and claim migrants' rights. These interpretations take place in a different temporal context, i.e. those who support them have been active for years on the issue of deaths at borders, watching over media information and political actors, and continue to be so even after the Lampedusa tragedy, in order to ensure that the memory of the victims is not erased, playing the role of memory keepers.

These people actively engage with the issue, either by profession, such as journalists and photographers, or out of a sense of moral responsibility, such as some artists or residents of the island of Lampedusa. These individuals feel a profound obligation to preserve the memory of the victims, both in the atrocious tragedy of the shipwreck and in the telling of their daily lives. For professional witnesses, such as journalists and photographers, this mission becomes an absolute priority, as it is they who are responsible for making visible what really happens during these tragedies. It is they who, through their work, bring to light the reality of what happened, ensuring that no one can ignore or forget the fate of the migrants who lose their lives on their journeys across the sea. There are several examples such as the short film '*Asmat - Names*'⁶ in memory of the victims of the shipwreck of 3 October 2013.

On 3 October is of significant importance as it marks the beginning of a series of both physical and symbolic changes in Lampedusa. In particular, a dedicated committee, known as the '3 October Committee', will be set up with the stated aim of commemorating those who have lost their lives in the Mediterranean Sea due to migration, while at the same time raising awareness, especially among young people, on migration issues. This will be achieved through projects specifically designed to engage the local population through workshops on the island, enabling them to gain a critical understanding of the migration phenomenon and interact directly with many of the institutional figures involved.

The day of 3 October seems to have broadened the number of supporters and activists, as well as the participation of intellectuals and artists; and the consensus on the issue, with a stronger and more diverse defence of migrants' human rights within the coalition. Since 2013, there has been an increased visibility of the sinkings and deaths at sea, and the issue has become the subject of a wider debate than in the past.

With the tragic shipwreck and its multiple interpretations, it is possible to analyse the mechanisms that contribute to the acceptance of a state of emergency at sea. This acceptance depends on the evident manifestation of death, which varies according to cir-

⁶ The video investigation by Antonino Maggiore can be viewed at this address <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0HjMRcMIG9E>

cumstances. In this complex context, three distinct perspectives intertwine: drowned migrants can be considered simply as lifeless bodies, as public policy issues or as individuals with inalienable rights. It is the resurfacing of the drowned migrants' bodies that defines the event, i.e. the brutality of the act elicits intense emotional reactions, but these do not receive adequate responses in the political context. The interpretations of those responsible for border management reduce the visibility of the deaths to their established patterns of interpretation. They use euphemisms to turn deaths into useful arguments in conflicts between different levels of government over border control. The only interpretations that challenge the framework of European border policies are those that defend the human rights of migrants, trying to make their humanity as evident as possible. These efforts are part of a prolonged work, which proceeds slowly and constantly seeks political alliances within the institutions. Despite efforts to make them visible and respected, migrants who have died at sea remain on the margins of political discourse, almost ignored by reactions of moral outrage. Their presence, though evident through numerous tragedies, continues to be overlooked and underestimated. However, a subtle but significant shift is taking place in people's attitudes towards these tragedies, reflected in the increase of individuals and groups taking the side of migrants. These new advocates bring new energy and awareness to the fight for human rights, amplifying the voices demanding justice and protection for those seeking a better life through the perilous sea journey. As the political debate evolves, it is clear that the issue of migration and its humanitarian consequences can no longer be ignored or treated with indifference. A radical change in policies and practices regarding migrants is needed so that they are treated with dignity and respect, and so that tragedies such as the Lampedusa shipwreck become a thing of the past, not a present reality.

The tragedy has raised a number of critical questions that call attention to the conduct of European migration policies, raising doubts about both their effectiveness and morality. It has highlighted a profound reflection on the predominant security-centred approach, questioning its adequacy and suggesting the need for a rethinking of laws and regulations in order to ensure not only the safety of migrants but also the respect of their fundamental human rights.

In this context, the crucial role of non-governmental organisations and civil society in providing assistance to migrants and educating the public about the challenges faced by

this vulnerable population became clear. The shipwreck thus highlighted the crucial importance of solidarity and collaboration between governments and civil society organisations to address the root causes of forced migration and to ensure effective and humanitarian responses in the face of emergencies.

This tragic event catalysed international attention on the humanitarian crisis in the Mediterranean, offering an insightful look at the desperation of thousands of individuals seeking refuge from violence, persecution and poverty in their home countries. It also highlighted the complexity of migration routes and the involvement of a multitude of actors globally, including unscrupulous traffickers who exploit migrants' desperate need for safety. Consequently, the shipwreck has raised fundamental questions about the responsibility and solidarity of the international community in providing assistance and protection to migrants in distress, underlining the need for concrete and coordinated efforts by countries of origin, transit and destination. Calls by the United Nations and other international organisations to strengthen efforts to prevent similar tragedies and ensure decent treatment of migrants have become more pressing than ever.

In addition, the event highlighted the importance of addressing the root causes of migration, including poverty, climate change, conflict and human rights violations, emphasising the need for a long-term commitment to promote sustainable development, peace and stability in affected regions. Only through a comprehensive and multidimensional approach will it be possible to reduce the need for forced migration and ensure a more secure and prosperous future for all.

In recent years, increased social mobility has highlighted significant changes in traditional patterns of migration. The main change concerns the motivations that drive people to leave their country of origin; often, these moves are not driven by a single reason, but by a complex combination of interconnected factors. In addition, there has been a significant change in the direction and destination of migration flows, and the gender composition has also changed over time. All these changes have contributed to an evolution of global migration dynamics. However, the effects of these new trends are difficult to fully assess, and some observers believe that we are witnessing the beginning of a new phase of globalisation, characterised by many uncertainties.

One peculiarity between the factors that caused migration movements in past eras and those of today should be noted: the different impact of wars after 1945. In the recent seventy years, wars have had a more significant impact on migration flows than in the past. Currently, fleeing conflict zones is one of the main reasons behind emigration. In addition to the migrant motivated by the search for economic opportunities, a new figure has been added: the refugee. After a steady increase up to the peak in 1990, the number of refugees remained more or less stable, but today it is growing rapidly again. Wars are increasingly linked to the crisis of state sovereignty in post-colonial territories. These countries are marked by fragile institutions, which, especially in economically disadvantaged contexts, favour the emergence of authoritarian regimes and practices such as clientelism and corruption. This situation often paves the way for armed clashes and internal conflicts. This phenomenon is clearly evident in the dynamics of the most recent conflicts, most of which have occurred in Asia, Africa and the Middle East, often as a result of the fragmentation of states born out of decolonisation processes.

3.1 Portrait of the Lampedusa Shipwrecked: Interrupted Lives in the Mediterranean Sea

The shipwrecked people of 3 October 2013, in the waters off Lampedusa, mainly came from Eritrea, with 360 of the 366 victims belonging to this nationality. These individuals were fleeing their homeland, travelling through Sudan before reaching Libyan shores, many two years after their journey began. The question of the exodus of Eritreans, despite the absence of a current armed conflict, raises several questions, especially in relation to Italy.

Eritrea, having been an Italian colony, is steeped in our country's "imperial" past. However, this historical link has never achieved full awareness in Italian society, nor has it generated a collective memory capable of raising public awareness of the events.

In Italy, there is a sizeable Eritrean community formed since the 1960s, when the link with our country was still rooted in Asmara's colonial past. However, with the wars against Ethiopia, which caused around 100,000 deaths, the migratory flow of Eritreans was influenced by both economic motivations and the flight from war. Although they

represent the majority of migrants arriving in Italy, only a small percentage of Eritreans apply for asylum in our country. For most of the approximately 4-5,000 Eritreans who flee to Europe each month, Italy is only one stage in a broader migration path, with destinations such as Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland attracting many of them. In 2014, the majority of Eritreans were seeking asylum in Germany, with 13,255 applications filed, accounting for 36% of all asylum applications in the European Union.

Eritreans are escaping a severe political crisis and dictatorial regime, as well as famine. The 2015 Freedom House report ranks Eritrea among the 12 worst countries in the world for civil and political rights and freedoms. There is no freedom of the press in Eritrea, and the government has imposed increasingly severe political restrictions on society. Many, especially young people between the ages of 17 and 34, cross the Mediterranean to escape the indefinite compulsory military service instituted in 1995, although, according to Amnesty International, many of them actually do it for an indefinite period of time. This military service, introduced because of the constant border wars with Ethiopia, has prevented the young people from planning their future, prompting them to seek refuge elsewhere.

In the local context of Lampedusa, the implementation of the concept 'protect people not borders' plays a major role, i.e. it is one of the mantras promoted by the 3 October Committee. However, it is crucial to understand that borders are a political construction and not a natural reality, and therefore do not necessarily entail fixed or permanent procedures. A critique and reformulation of such borders can take on multiple meanings: the very idea of breaking down borders, when viewed from a capitalist and globalist perspective, takes on radically different connotations that are not always congruent with the humanitarianism of the outside world.

In order to address migration issues more effectively, it is crucial to focus on two main aspects, namely the causes that drive people to leave their country of origin and the need to regularise migration flows for all, without discrimination. The implementation of this last point could significantly contribute to reducing emergencies and Lampedusa remains a symbolic place, not only as a centre of production of the contemporary collective myth, but also as a place where the dominant narrative has been subverted. Indeed, the island is

not so much an oasis of welcome as an outpost in the NATO, controlled Mediterranean, militarised and guarded by radar and military posts.

On 3 October 2013 marks a pivotal moment that highlights Lampedusa's key role in the global context. The history of the island, however, is intrinsically linked to the intricate social and political contexts on a global level. Preserving the memory of such events is of utmost importance, even if it must be recognised that such efforts are conditioned by the selection, inclusion and exclusion of facts, documents and discourses. Historical reconstruction is strongly influenced by the power that controls the narrative, which is able to manipulate historical facts and mould them into a shared collective memory. This principle is not limited to 3 October 2013 alone, but extends to numerous other historical events accepted as incontrovertible truths in official history.

3.2 The Shoah Memorial Foundation of Milan and the exhibition “The memory of objects”

In 2015-2016, the Shoah Memorial Foundation and the Community of Sant' Egidio organised a reception for several thousand refugees in transit to Milan, on their way to Northern Europe, in the spaces of the Memorial, located in the basement of Binario 21 in Milan's Central Station. For many of them, especially young people, the experience at the Memorial and the encounter with the refugees played a formative role, provoking reflection among education experts on the Shoah. The Memorial's initiative also stands out because it stands out in a general context of silence on the part of museums on migration and places of memory in the face of the flow of refugees to Europe.

The action taken by the Milan Memorial, which revived memory through a critique of the present, is striking because it stands out in the midst of a general silence found in European migration museums and memory sites in the face of the arrival of refugees in Europe from 2013 until today. The value attributed to this action of the Milan Memorial in the panorama of migration museums can also be found in the reflection on the didactics of the Shoah and the educational intentionality it has been able to arouse. This memory of horror was not a mere sterile or archaeological memory, but was a generator of solidarity, opening up the space of memory in the direction of hospitality. It was a community educating in memory and solidarity, which found a lively space open to the future. In a certain sense, history passed through Milan once again, with those fleeing from Isis, from areas

of armed conflict, political instability, dictatorships, environmental crises and poverty; tragedies to which European and Western political choices are not extraneous, indeed in some cases they bear the responsibility. The importance of increasing knowledge, preserving memory and pushing teachers and students to question morality is clear. In this context, the formative task of memory sites is not just about teaching raw history or counting numbers, nor is it about sacralisation, where the suffering of the victims becomes a way of affecting the emotions of those who listen or read, with sometimes unforeseen consequences. How can we address, then, the need to rediscover the true meaning of education about the Shoah through a strong connection with current events, bringing spontaneous emotion to action, from emotional reactions to the transformation of social relations and the rejection of preconceived and racist attitudes. An approach to teaching about the Shoah is proposed based on three phases: in the first, subjective and personal experience, listening to stories and testimonies, i.e. the dimension of memory; in the second, the spatio-temporal contextualisation of the events, i.e. history; and in the third, the analysis and evaluation of the parties involved, the social mechanisms and processes that made the events possible, a critical dimension. Finally, the ability to read and project historical events onto the present and the future in order to make meanings current, promoting a commitment to human rights, tolerance and peace.

Educational projects on the memory of the Holocaust also address the ways in which processes of moral exclusion are constructed and articulated, and also develop issues on the level of moral responsibility, where the ability to see the other and the possibility of including others from one's own view is meant (Santerini 2008; 2011). The history of anti-semitism shows the consequences of the moral exclusion of individuals or groups by "a social community within which only relations and obligations are established, as a society that promotes exclusivism, i.e. a sense of foreignness, a lack of respect for others, fear" (Staub 1989; Blumenthal 1998, 401). The dichotomy between strangers, "us" and "you", facilitates the mission of evil. Indeed, moral exclusion explains the plan to alienate some people from the community and above all, to absolve the majority of society from responsibility for them.

Many spoke of the risks of dwelling on memories of the Holocaust, wondering, for example, whether it would make sense to continue celebrating Holocaust Memorial Day, which commemorates the liberation of Auschwitz. The reception of refugees, combined

with the testimony of Liliana Segre⁷, shows how this message can be prevented from disappearing, and how educational practices that are consistent with one's own history but rooted in the present, extroverted and courageous, can avert this risk. The death toll in the Mediterranean has never been so high in recent decades, with more than 5,000 confirmed deaths in 2016, accounting for 75.8 per cent of migrants killed on all migration routes worldwide.⁸

The Shoah Memorial Museum has been a crossroads on migration routes, enabling many young and old to follow an educational path. Nothing can compensate for the damage done to the Jewish community, but by welcoming refugees, it interrupts, at least for a while, a chain of complicity and indifference that can potentially be repeated indefinitely. The opening of memorials to Eritrean teenagers on the run, to Afghans, to Syrians in Aleppo, to Somali women raped in Libya make clear their preciousness. Preserving and disseminating the memory of the Holocaust in our time.

3.3 Remembering the 3 October Massacre. An exploratory research with young Erasmus students visiting the Shoah Memorial foundation of Milan

The exploration of collective memory takes on a particular depth and complexity when considering the voices and perspectives of young Erasmus students who venture into the heart of the Shoah Memorial in Milan. These young people from different parts of the Europe bring with them not only their individual perceptions and reflections, but also the influences of their cultures and national contexts, thus offering a wide range of perspectives through which to analyse the meaning and impact of historical memory. For many of them, the visit to the Memorial represents a moment of direct confrontation with one of the darkest pages of human history, an opportunity to reflect on the atrocities of the past and the importance of preserving the memory of the victims of the Holocaust and the massacre of 3 October 2013. During the Contemporary Racisms course with Prof. Frisina, a visit was organised on 07/10/2023, led by Alessandra Jarach from the Milan Memorial. I was privileged to participate in this experience and through interview, dialogue and exchange of ideas, these young students actively engage in the process of elaborating the

⁷ Italian activist and politician, Holocaust survivor and active witness of the Shoah.

⁸ An up-to-date data source: Open Migration website (<http://openmigration.org/>)

meaning of collective memory, questioning how memory influences contemporary societies and what is the role of young people in keeping this memory alive.

For the qualitative interviews conducted, the dialogical methodological approach was followed, which explores the interview as a ritual in which a relationship is established through dialogue. This approach sees the interviewer and interviewee moving together to explore and understand shared experiences, opinions and meanings (La Mendola, 2009, p. 22).

Their conversations and reflections within the Memorial create a space for learning and personal growth, where emotions, questions and reflections intertwine to create a complex and articulated picture of historical memory and its impact on the present. Moreover, the Memorial experience stimulates young students' critical awareness of issues of tolerance, diversity and human rights, encouraging them to become active agents of change in their communities and the world. Based on the construction of memory from a psychosocial and socio-cultural perspective, an overview of violence and violations at the European borders (in this case, the southern border) is provided.

Ultimately, the exploration of collective memory by these young Erasmus students at the Shoah Memorial in Milan results in an emotional and deeply meaningful journey that offers valuable lessons on the importance of historical memory and the individual and collective responsibility to preserve it for future generations.

To conduct the interviews, I chose to use the Zoom platform for its convenience and accessibility. Given the context, Zoom offered a safe and effective way to conduct the interviews remotely, allowing participants to participate from the comfort of their homes.

Twelve students participated in the exhibition, four of whom agreed to be interviewed. These students came from different countries: Norway, Spain, France and Netherlands, respectively, in the order of the interviews. This was achieved to obtain a variety of cultural backgrounds and personal experiences in order to gain a rich and diverse perspective on the topic at hand.

The participants visited the Milan Memorial in the trip with prof. Frisina. I involved Erasmus students in my research dialogues to explore how the exhibition offered an oppor-

tunity to know the massacre of the 3rd October reflecting on the process of the dehumanization of migrants in a place where there are objects which help to build a memory of the Shoah.

European states, including Italy, play a crucial role in xenoracism through restrictive migration policies, divisive political discourses and ineffective integration policies. These political choices not only create marginalisation but also directly contribute to humanitarian tragedies, such as the deaths in the Mediterranean Sea, which are consequences of specific political decisions. During the fascist regime, Italy enacted racial laws in 1938 that discriminated against Jews, leading to deportations and immense suffering. Today, Italy is criticised for harsh migration policies and xenophobic rhetoric that fuels hostility and discrimination. Critical remembrance requires recognition of historical responsibility for anti-Semitism and the consequences of current xenoracist policies. The deaths in the Mediterranean are outcomes of specific political choices that must be reconsidered and changed. Italy must decisively address its historical and contemporary responsibilities, promoting more inclusive policies and a more responsible public discourse to prevent further humanitarian tragedies and overcome xenoracist divisions.

The exhibition "The memory of objects: Lampedusa. 3 October 2013, Lampedusa 10 years later", conceived by Valerio Cataldi, Rai journalist and immigration expert, was held at the Holocaust Memorial in Milan.⁹

It commemorates the tragic shipwreck of 3 October 2013 off Lampedusa, where many Eritreans died in an attempt to reach Europe. The bodies of the shipwreck became visible to the whole world, radically changing the perception of shipwrecks and arousing a strong emotional reaction at the political, media and social level. The exhibition, presented at the Holocaust Memorial, a symbol of memory, includes objects and photographs that belonged to migrants and draws inspiration from them, collected at the time as evidence of crimes.

The students linked memories of the Shoah with the dehumanisation of migrants, revealing common mechanisms of exclusion and dehumanisation. During the Shoah, Jews were dehumanised and stigmatised, similar to the way migrants are often considered threats

⁹ <https://www.memorialeshoah.it/notizia/dal-26-settembre-in-mostra-al-memoriale-la-memoria-degli-oggetti-3-ottobre-2013-lampedusa-10-anni-dopo/>

today. Using critical memory involves educating about the consequences of hatred and dehumanisation, commemorating the victims and promoting inclusiveness. Through political accountability, it is essential to critically analyse past and present policies, promoting more humane and inclusive choices.

The preparation of the questions took place through extensive research on the topic and I consulted reliable sources to develop a set of relevant and thought-provoking questions. The questions were designed to explore various dimensions of collective memory and to encourage participants to share their experiences, opinions and reflections in depth.

During the interviews, I recorded the screen and audio to fully capture the participants' interactions and responses. This approach allowed me to review and analyse each interview in detail, ensuring that I captured every nuance and gained a full understanding of the opinions and experiences shared. In addition, I transcribed in full what was said during the interviews, allowing me to examine the data in depth and identify recurring themes and emerging trends.

It is important to emphasise that the names mentioned of the interviewees are actually pseudonyms. These pseudonyms were designed and agreed upon to protect their privacy and ensure open and honest communication. This precaution was taken with respect for the sensitivities and needs of each participant, allowing them to express themselves freely and without concerns about the disclosure of their real identities. The choice to use pseudonyms reflects the importance of maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of the individuals involved, while preserving the integrity and authenticity of the interview process.

The time spent on the interviews has been shortened and summarized; consequently, a full transcript is not provided, but a summary.

The first interviewee introduces herself as *Ingrid Bjornsen*¹⁰, from Norway.

Age: 25 Gender: F

¹⁰ As previously reported, names have been replaced in order to protect the privacy of interlocutors.

Master's Degree Course: Cultural Pluralism, Social Change and Migration.

Date and recording duration: Wednesday 13 March 2024, duration 70'.

1. Please, tell me about your experience at the Shoah Memorial in Milan.

"Well...It was a very visual experience, they reconstructed things in an interesting way. I was prepared to see the exhibition about the boat refugees, but not about the part dedicated to the Jews that were sent to concentration camps. So that was a surprise for me, that it was mostly dedicated to that."

2. On entering the exhibition, what were your first feelings or thoughts?

"I was feeling a little uneasy, because of the theme and how it was built. Hearing the railway over very loud, thinking about how it would have been for the people getting there to get deported."

3. The exhibition tackled challenging issues from many angles. Tell me about the aspects that particularly challenged you.

"I think it challenged my knowledge, that I had not heard of the Lampedusa massacre before moving to Italy for example."

4. Did you have any particular emotional reaction when confronted with the exhibited objects or images?

"I think, yeah...I think that the Objects in the Jewish part with the train carriages and the info about how long they were stuck there, crushed into each other with no food, drinks and toilets really made me sick to my stomach."

5. Returning to your personal emotions, is there any object or image that particularly struck you?

"In the Lampedusa part: the pictures of people inside their wallets, children's clothes and toys really stuck with me. It makes me very sad and angry, and it is a great way of giving these people more humanity. Then just seeing a number in the media, it feels much more personal."

6. Did you have the opportunity to discuss the exhibition with other Erasmus students or local people?

"We walked through as a group discussing, having one of the students reading the tour guide, because the tour guide, we got only spoke Italian. That made the exhibition not that good, because we were looking forward to a good guide, but had to figure out everything by ourselves. There were only around 3 people in the group that spoke Italian, so they were the only ones who got the full experience. A lot of the Erasmus students complained about this."

7. What were their views? How did they experience the visit emotionally?

"It provoked in me a series of deep reflections, intense even. Watching some of the performances, I felt a mix of emotions ranging from sadness to anger, from compassion to solidarity. The portrayal of these historical events made me feel the urgency to reflect on past and present human tragedies, emphasising the importance of collective memory and raising awareness on issues of migration, violence and intolerance."

8. How these issues are or are not dealt with in the country where you live according to your experience?

"My first thought is that Italy maybe deals with it worse, but I am honestly not sure. I am from Norway, and we do take a lot of refugees, but I think the Ukrainian

war has shown that Norway is much more willing to take 'white European' refugees than people who do not fit into that category. Some municipalities have even made laws saying they will only accept refugees from Ukraine, because they are easier to integrate. These laws are now up in court for hate crime, so people did react strongly to this."

9. In particular, how is the memory of the massacres of migrants related to migration policies? Is xenoracism publicly addressed?

"The memory of the migrant massacres gives us a better understanding of how migrant policies can affect people's lives. Looking back at the massacres, we can see how political decisions can jeopardise the safety of migrants. I remember that we talked extensively about xenoracism in the course. We talk about how this kind of racism affects laws and the ways in which people behave towards migrants. It would be important to address xenoracism publicly to try to make a fairer society."

10. Besides the historical dimension, have you noticed an impact on your current perception of the migrants' situation?

"I think I have much more knowledge, especially about Italy."

11. How do you think experiences like this can contribute to greater social awareness and mutual understanding between different communities?

"I think it can give people a deeper understanding and a more visual representation of the horrible things that are happening. 'Humanising' the people who have been dehumanised by some politicians and media."

12. How do you think this experience will influence the way you approach and understand migration issues in the future?

"I think I have always been very accepting of more refugees and migrants, having grown up in a very multicultural neighbourhood, so it strengthened the thoughts I had from before."

13. Considering that you are an Erasmus student, do you think this exhibition has influenced your perception of Italian culture or the migration situation in your host country?

"It for sure gave me a lot of knowledge about this topic, and a different view on Italy regarding racism and migration laws. It made me think about some comments Italians in Padua made before and during my stay, about not choosing a house near the station, "because it is very dangerous and a lot of criminals". When I first arrived in Padua and then saw a majority of black people or other people with a different background around that area that made me think of the Italians prejudice, even before having this exhibition."

14. What personal reflections did you have about individual and collective responsibility in dealing with migration issues, especially after visiting the exhibition?

"Reflecting on voting for political parties that are more for migration. It made me feel bad about some experiences, like when I was in Puglia on a boat trip a month after the exhibition. We were having a good time and then driving past a harbour where the guide told us refugees from Libya would come. It felt kind of violating for us to have a nice boat trip in the same area where people have been struggling to survive on boats."

15. In what way do you think institutions and society can help promote greater understanding and solidarity with migrants?

"I think how media and politicians portray migrants, and their situations is one of the most important aspects. I think if people were more open to getting to know

people from different backgrounds they would have another view and a greater understanding and compassion.”

16. Coming back to the exhibition, we notice that it also has a connection with the Holocaust Memorial. How do you think the memory of historical events influences the way we deal with contemporary challenges?

"I would hope it can put things in perspective, like humans should never be this awful again. But at the same time, we see horrible things like this happening over and over again, like in Gaza right now and for many years with concentration camps and laws happening to the Uyghur Muslims in China."

From the answers of the interviewed student emerges a deep personal reflection on the visit to the Holocaust Memorial in Milan. Initially, there was a contrasting impression between the expectation of seeing an exhibition on the subject of refugees by boat and the discovery of the predominance of the part dedicated to Jews deported to concentration camps. The interviewee also reflects on the wider implications of migration policies and on the perception of Italian culture, highlighting a greater awareness of current disparities and tensions.

The second person interviewed introduced herself as *Isadora Cruz*, from Spain.

Age: 23 Gender: F

Master's Degree Course: Historical Sciences.

Date and duration of recording: Sunday 18 March, duration 74'.

1. *"The visit I think was very touching, you know. I think it was a visual experience for all of us...it also made me think deeply about the tragedy of the Holocaust. The reconstruction of the events was very interesting, down to the smallest detail, especially with the exhibition on refugees in boats; I was surprised to see how much*

space was devoted to the Jews sent to the concentration camps. It made me think about historical aspects that we now take for granted."

2. *"It was nothing like I had imagined. You find yourself in this big open space, I immediately noticed the writing in the middle. If I remember correctly it was 'in-difference', carved into this big wall. It almost acts as a shadow for the visitors inside the area. One can immediately see that it seeks to pay tribute to the victims of extermination. A place of remembrance, a place that has become symbolic."*

3. *"There were several aspects of the exhibition that struck me deeply. First of all, the depiction of human dramas related to the massacre of immigrants and Jews. I think you have to have great empathy when you think about it. Sai highlighted the urgency of addressing the issues of migration and refugee safety. Also, the part about the Shoah touched me deeply, especially when I saw the written names of Holocaust victims on the walls. These aspects of the exhibition prompted me to reflect on how important it is to keep memory alive and I believe that this is what it is all about."*

4. *"Yes, during my visit to the exhibition, I had several emotional reactions to the objects and images on display. In particular, some of the personal objects of the victims at sea, such as personal belongings shown, for example photos of their children... Looking at these objects made me reflect on the lives and stories of the people who owned them; I wondered who they were, what they were thinking at that moment. I really thought about the injustices and all that migrants still face today. We have no idea what that means. Overall, the visit to the exhibition was emotionally intense."*

5. *"As I said before, there were several pictures of children, they were someone's children. The different documents. They were people and each of them had a story behind them."*
6. *"Yes, it was interesting to compare our reactions and impressions of the exhibition, because during the independent visit, some of us spoke about different perspectives based on our own cultural knowledge. We had discussions about the themes addressed by the exhibition. You know like migration, historical memory and racism."*
7. *"During discussions with others, I discovered a variety of views and emotional reactions to the exhibition. Some expressed deep indignation, while others were deeply saddened. Some emphasised the importance of dealing openly with racism and diversity. In general, the emotional reactions were varied, but all were engaged with the themes of the exhibition."*
8. *"In my experience, issues related to migration or memory and racism are dealt with differently than in Spain. Italy has intense debates on migration management, but the historical memory of the fascist period is not always deepened. There is widespread prejudice against migrants and ethnic minorities, but there is also a growing awareness of the need to fight racism."*
9. *"Well, in Spain there is a strong link between the memory of migrants' tragedies and current migration policies. The massacres of migrants raise questions about the policies that govern the access and reception of migrants, especially considering that Spain is an important arrival point for many. On the other hand, xenoracism I think is a problem that is dealt with publicly, but with such different nuances There are tensions and prejudices, this I think happens in every society, but everyone must have a commitment so that there are no more."*

10. *"Yes, absolutely. The tragedies of the migrants made me think...seeing this exhibition made me realise the sacrifices and difficulties migrants still face today in their attempt to reach safe places."*
11. *"Experiences such as this are crucial for promoting greater social awareness and better mutual understanding between different communities and can provide opportunities for direct confrontation. These experiences can inspire concrete actions to promote human rights."*
12. *"It will make me more aware of the challenges migrants face on their journey to a better life. It will motivate me to become more informed and to support policies that promote migrants' rights, rights to which they are entitled."*
13. *"If I can be honest, I think it influenced me a bit. It made me think about the history we saw, even talking about it in class with the professor, Contemporary Racism. In general, excuse me for repeating it, migrants in Italy have to face some bureaucracy, challenges before they can fully be part of society...I mean an inclusive society."*
14. *"After seeing the exhibition, I realised that both personally and all of us have an important role to play in dealing with migration issues. Each of us can play our part in supporting them."*
15. *"I think that institutions and society can help migrants in different ways. Institutions can make laws and programmes that help them integrate better and protect their rights. Society can help to better understand migrants through education and awareness-raising, so as to reduce prejudice and promote acceptance."*

16. *"We can learn from our mistakes. For example, by remembering the Shoah, we can understand the importance of fighting racism and discrimination today. Memory helps us not to forget, without memory there can be no future..."*

From this interview emerges how conversations with other students have deepened an awareness, that is to highlight different points of view that emphasize the importance of combating racism and fostering solidarity. The responses also reflect a diversity of views on migration policies and on the historical memory between different nations, with a common call for greater understanding and action to promote more inclusive societies. Finally, a sense of individual responsibility emerges in upholding migrants' rights and in countering injustice, inspired by awareness of past tragedies.

The third person interviewed introduced himself as *Marcel Petrov*, from France.

Age: 24 Sex: M

Master's Degree Course: Cultural Pluralism, Social Change and Migration.

Date and duration of recording: Saturday 23 March 2024, duration 56'.

1. *"Okay!...I really went with pleasure...I had never been to Milan and I had never heard of this Memorial. I thought it was just another trip, you know...I'm embarrassed to say. I thought it was a memorial visit, reconstruction of the facts and the experience ends. It went a little bit like that, excluding the reconstruction of facts, because we didn't have a guide, that is, those who didn't speak Italian. But the darkness and silence of that Memorial I will never forget. We always take everything for granted, but we had no idea how much suffering there is in all this. Just hearsay...you know what I mean?"*

2. *“I imagined it differently, not like that for sure. I was surprised by the size of the Memorial space but also the "darkness." It wasn't very well illuminated...that's not a criticism... Going in, you're surrounded with this anxiety. That's all. I think that's just the feeling they want to give to get across the horror of it all.”*

3. *“We always hear the story of the Holocaust, and it struck me that it was told in one place, along with the Mediterranean massacre. There is so much to have to think about, because these are two historical events that cannot be forgotten or simply told superficially. So, you're overwhelmed by all of that. You don't know what's worse.”*

4. *“I was particularly touched by a watch. It was displayed with the other belongings of the migrants who died on the Mediterranean. Sorry if I don't remember exactly what it looked like, however, I remember wondering why a watch there. Perhaps to watch the passing of the hours or was it simply from one of his family members? It kind of made me imagine these things.”*

5. *“Pretty much, yes...we talked about the names that were projected on the walls near the train carriages. There were so many of them. We thought that each of these people definitely had family. They were all people who were gone.”*

6. *“Immigration is a very present problem. From what I see, there are significant efforts to receive migrants, with reception centers and support but I think there are too many difficulties...I often notice the conditions in centers are overcrowded; not to mention the conditions or expulsions that are there and they're without anything and it's almost normal. You know everybody has different opinions for this, how it should be handled.”*

7. *“We were all very aware what was in front of us. It was difficult to deal with it emotionally but with a distant view. I mean it touches you, it touches everyone's sensibility and it remains foreign as a feeling.”*
8. *“Thinking about the difficulties and violence these people face in seeking a better life immediately makes one more aware of the urgency of more humane and supportive migration policies, throughout Europe. This experience pushed me to see migrants not just as numbers or as the story we often hear...They're human beings with real stories and suffering.”*
9. *“I think the government tends to focus more on border security and cooperation with other countries to prevent new tragedies. But for xenoracism, it is known to be a problem recognized by everyone. There are anti-discrimination laws, it's true...yes, but in daily life there are often incidents of racism and they never end.”*
10. *“It'll make me more aware of the atrocities that migrants face and has made me more aware of what they have to go through to seek a better life, if I can call it one. I will be even more empathetic and open to migration issues...”*
11. *“Experiences like this raise awareness, understanding because they make us think about the difficulties of migrants, they bring up personal reflections, and they should really encourage discussion between different cultures...I think they can push people to participate in helping activities and to ask for more...more human policies.”*
12. *“I had never thought about that. But no...I don't think this exhibition has directly influenced my perception. I mean, I'm an Erasmus student, that is, my experience in Italy is influenced more by daily life, encounters with people from here and*

with a culture different from mine but quite similar. What I mean is that it did not influence me for this specific exhibition.”

13. *“I think we should always talk about them, understand their reasons, that is, why they leave their home to look for one distant from that condition; listen to their stories, that can...I hope and believe, that can touch people's hearts, raise awareness and be empathetic. From the news we hear every day, there is always a risk of creating stereotypes.”*

14. *“I don't know if it's an obvious answer, but talking about it certainly can be a start. Talk about it more and more but having sensitivity, otherwise then you might forget about it.”*

15. *“The Holocaust reminds us of the importance of fighting hatred...intolerance. We...have to defend human rights and the rights of all. Including migrants, we must prevent the recurrence of tragedies like those we have seen exposed.”*

16. *“It's a repeating story, different in circumstances. This affects everything else.”*

The reactions of this student highlight the impressive silent and gloomy environment of the Memorial that has aroused in him a feeling of wonder and awareness, leaving him an indelible impression. This experience made him feel urgent in having to face both past history and current challenges related to migration, leading him to consider more empathic and inclusive policies. He stressed the importance of combating racism and promoting solidarity.

The fourth person interviewed introduced herself as *Anouk Janssen*, from Netherlands.

Age: 24 Sex: F

Bachelor's degree course: Sociological Science.

Date and duration of recording: Saturday 23 March 2024, duration 56'.

1. *"I really enjoyed being there so I could talk about it in class. It was an organized visit, you know. At first, I couldn't go, luckily today I can say it was fortunate to have gone."*
2. *"Feelings were confused because I had no idea about what was going to be exhibited or shown to us (excluding the Italian guide)."*
3. *"The platform with the train carriages, I remember we went inside. It's incredible how they are the same ones that transported people. It struck me."*
4. *"There were many names and photos of dead immigrants. All personal items were displayed, symbolizing the importance of not forgetting. The photos struck me the most, the faces of the people."*
5. *"I remember seeing a passport...it was so strange for me..."*
6. *"Yeah, we were sorry not to have an English-speaking guide to communicate with us too. We were divided into groups. Everyone liked it."*
7. *"It touched everyone deeply, in different ways. There were people who experienced it more empathetically. To raise awareness about it, you understand."*
8. *"These are topics addressed with some attention. Regarding migration, the Netherlands has a history of acceptance and there are continuous political discussions about immigration. The Shoah commemorates the victims through museums and monuments."*

9. *"Xenoracism is not always publicly addressed explicitly, but where I come from there is a commitment to counteract racism, including towards migrants."*
10. *"I believe the visit made everyone reflect on what migrants have to face today and every day."*
11. *"Talking about it, discussing it, is already an additional awareness. We don't stay in the dark, so it makes us aware and conscious. It should be a normal thing."*
12. *"I think this experience broadens sensitivity and my perception, to be more supportive towards these people. People not forgotten, I want to emphasize."*
13. *"I thought about the culture and the situation of migrants here. I had already heard about it, reading articles. I thought about how Italy deals with immigration."*
14. *"We should all be aware and more supportive... You know, having a sensitivity that we should all naturally have for these people who face the unimaginable."*
15. *"They have not to be forgotten; talking about them and talking about them in the right way. I mean, not just as simple news we read on our phones or on the news."*
16. *"It reminds us of the consequences of... of the increasing racism that we find today more and more. We should act and behave better. Be more responsible for what happens and for these tragedies that never end."*

This interview shows how the impact of the visit is remarkable, especially for the mention of the railway cars used during the Shoah that strikes deeply. The exhibitions of photos and personal objects of migrants lead to intense reflections. The student, despite the lack of a guide in English, shows a strong emotional involvement and awareness of the importance of not forgetting.

So, the responses of the participants in the exhibition on the theme of migration and the Holocaust offer a rich and articulate perspective on the dynamics of critical memory and the connections between past, present, and future regarding various forms of racism, such as antisemitism and xenoracism. Several interesting elements emerge that can enrich research on critical memory:

- Personal reflections: The personal experiences of the participants highlight how the exhibition experience has influenced their perception and understanding of issues related to migration and antisemitism. These reflections provide a deeper insight into how historical memory influences our perspectives and actions in the present and future.
- Sensitivity and solidarity: The responses show a growing sensitivity and solidarity towards migrants and Holocaust victims. This suggests that the exhibition experience has raised awareness of the injustices and sufferings faced by these communities, encouraging active engagement for social justice and the promotion of human rights.
- Connections between past and present: Descriptions of the exhibits on migration and the Holocaust highlight the connections between past historical events and contemporary challenges. This underscores the importance of understanding the historical context to address current injustices and prevent the repetition of past mistakes.
- Role of education and awareness: The responses highlight the fundamental role of education and awareness in promoting critical memory of racism. Participating in exhibitions like this provides an opportunity for learning and reflection that can contribute to greater awareness and understanding of the complexities of racism and its consequences.

The feedback from students at the exhibition offers significant contributions to the study of critical remembrance concerning diverse manifestations of racism and the intersections between historical, contemporary, and prospective perspectives. These accounts reinforce

the imperative of critically examining historical narratives to foster a fairer and more encompassing trajectory forward.

3.4 Unlearning indifference? Antiracism and critical memories

“Il razzismo è innanzitutto violenza ed è una questione di vita o di morte. L’antirazzismo può quindi essere considerato una lotta per la vita. Quali vite contano? Quali vite si ritiene possano essere sacrificate? Quali morti debbono essere ricordate e quali vanno dimenticate? E ancora: chi decide chi deve vivere e chi possa essere lasciato morire?” (Frisina, 2023, p. 5)



11

The dehumanisation of Jews during the Shoah and the dehumanisation of contemporary migrants are both examples of how certain groups are reduced to a ‘less human’ condition than others. During the Shoah, Jews were dehumanised by the Nazi fascism, treated as ‘non-human’ and subjected to discriminatory policies that reduced them to objects to be

¹¹After entering the main entrance, visitors access the atrium, which houses a long wall with the word "Indifferenza" engraved in the center. According to Liliana Segre, this element represents the main reason that allowed the Shoah to happen. (<https://www.memorialeshoah.it/luogo/>)

eliminated. Similarly, today migrants are often considered 'inferior' and dehumanised, seen as threats or problems rather than as individuals with dignity and human rights.

Critical Memory stands as a fight against this dehumanisation, emphasising the importance of recognising and commemorating all lives lost due to discriminatory policies. It pledges not to remain indifferent to policies that allow or even cause the death of people considered 'less human' or 'inferior' to white Europeans. It promotes the idea that every human life has intrinsic value and that policies based on discrimination and dehumanisation should not be tolerated in a society that aspires to equality and justice for all.

Lampedusa, over the years, has gone from being an unknown place on the map to a crucial borderland. This small Italian island has become a landing point for thousands of migrants crossing the Mediterranean in search of a better life. Its shores are often the first safe place they find after dangerous and often tragic journeys. This has turned Lampedusa into a symbol of the challenges and hopes associated with contemporary migration. Its importance has grown not only because of its geography, but also because of its humanitarian role in welcoming and assisting those fleeing conflict, poverty and persecution (Aime, 2018 p.89; Bartolo, 2018, pp. 123-125; Bartolo & Tilotta, 2016, p.76). At the same time, Lampedusa has been part of broader processes of globalisation that bypass international migration itself, as may be the case with the massified tourism and memory industry. Lampedusa has a very rich and articulated history, it is closer to the Tunisian and Libyan coasts than it is to the Sicilian, and therefore Italian, coasts. Geologically, it belongs to the African tectonic plate, which confers a series of 'confining' characteristics (ibid.). By virtue of its position, Lampedusa, as much informally as in the early 2000s, as much later on in a formal manner following Italian and European political indications, has been a place of reference for processes and rhetoric relating to both reception, humanity, security and threat. A sort of prism capable of channelling and accurately rendering the intersection of processes structuring contemporary societies. The island has, at various stages of its history, welcomed many people who have passed through and many of whom, as the literature notes, did not wish to remain in Italy but to move further to other states of the European Union. Moreover. Historically. none of the migrants who landed on Lampedusa stayed there longer than the time administratively and normatively deemed necessary according to historical phases. At the same time, Lampedusa as a border location and as the vanguard of the European Union has always been the gateway to Italy, but above all to

Europe and 'towards Brussels'. In recent years, the Lampedusan community has had to experience one of the most tragic aspects connected to migration and the theme around which this research revolves: that of deaths in the Mediterranean.

From the interviews, several relevant themes emerge, including the phenomenon of xenoracism, intolerance and the perception of evil as an intrinsic component of the human condition. It is highlighted that these phenomena originate in a deep root of social indifference, which, if left unchecked, implicitly allows other individuals to perpetrate acts of violence and discrimination. This concept of indifference plays a central role in the definition of what is identified as 'Just': individuals who actively oppose such social passivity and manifest an innate desire for justice, sometimes going so far as to risk their own safety to defend others or to rebel against a system that fosters hatred and injustice.

Despite the importance of learning from history and its role in making people understand past mistakes, it is evident that hatred and indifference persist in the social fabric. It is noticeable that contempt for others, particularly minorities, often serves as a mechanism to assert one's social status and to feel integrated within the dominant group.

However, current hatred seems to lack a specific direction and focus, in many cases, exclusively on the existence of certain groups. For example, Jews for Nazis, foreigners for xenophobes or blacks for racists. The 'sin' of these minorities consists simply in their natural diversity. In many contexts, contempt is directed precisely towards diversity, which should instead be considered a valuable aspect of humanity. This attitude aims to homogenise society and establish social hierarchies. It can be seen that initially it is the people who passively internalise social stereotypes, without questioning them or attempting to change their thinking, who help perpetuate this cycle of hatred and indifference.

The interviews are aimed at collecting diverse contributions that aim not only to explore disciplinary aspects related to racial discrimination, but above all to illuminate the phenomenon of racism from an interdisciplinary perspective. The aim is to raise awareness of the complex structure of racism, exploring its philosophical, social, psychological, anthropological and other roots, with a popularising approach. The aim is to prevent contributions from being confined to the academic sphere, in order to make them the subject of individual reflection and collective discussion. It is hoped that this initiative will act as a stimulus to counter the pervasive indifference to discrimination, helping to provoke action

against such accepted passivity. It is intended to deconstruct the phenomenon of racism, highlighting both its roots and its risks, and promoting the necessary solidarity between all members of the human family.

In parallel, the practice of museums in Europe is based on collecting and organising artefacts from past eras, which tell stories and convey meanings. These objects become not only repositories of meaning, but also desired narrative tools for reconstructing the past and imagining the future.

According to philosopher Remo Bodei, “redeeming objects from their banal or merely instrumental use means better understanding ourselves and the events in which we participate, because things are at the same time personal and synapses of meaning are established between the various parts of collective history, the relationship between human civilisation and nature”. (Bodei 2009, p. 117)

The need to collect, house and archive objects in order to make them meaningful, to create narratives and memories, to pass on stories of emotions and facts that we have been living for generations. Those physical repositories called museums flourished, with stories and chronicles of words and images and archives of documents.

Lampedusa, far from both Europe and Africa but closer to the latter both geologically and in distance, has over the centuries seen soldiers, traders and travellers, and various rulers who established their rule there, bringing with them symbols and objects of their civilisations. Over time, the material traces of this long history have largely decayed and dissipated, until recent tragic immigration events brought the island to world attention and turned it into a contemporary iconic stage.

During the exhibition, interviewees could see dresses and veils forming the background of the conversation, while sacred images of various kinds mingle with rows of medicine bottles, photos and documents. A showcase protects papers written in many alphabets, now dyed by sea water. The objects are arranged in an order that has meaning, organised according to categories, meaning and narrative capacity, but do not follow a classificatory system. Devoid of any labels, these arrangements provoke a strong conceptual rather than visual impact, confronting the visitor with an unprecedented and disconcerting spectacle. It is an exhibition that raises questions and stimulates reflection, offering a surplus of

meaning that only art can convey. Ordinary objects of everyday life, transformed into objects of tragedy through their journey by land and sea, become bearers of a powerful political message of opposition and acquire significant relevance in the eyes of the interviewees. Clothes, vials of drugs and cosmetics, radios, telephones and cassette players undergo an alchemical metamorphosis, becoming powerful vehicles of meaning. These fragments scattered by shipwrecks, which were part of boats, the numerous letters and photographs hidden in migrants' clothes as precious mementoes of home, are more precious as they represent living and inexhaustible cultural and political riches.

The emotion aroused by the interviewees also stems from the implication that the things exhibited require and entail. This implication leads to a kind of emotional participation in the mourning that follows the devastating loss of the shipwreck. The objects themselves, similar to human beings, survived the tragedy and bear the psychological wounds. Those who recognise and understand the mournful significance of these objects can no longer ignore it.

The experience of the exhibition dispute involving the island of Lampedusa and the Shoah highlights the central role of this as an active arena for contemporary cultural battles and as potential centres for the emergence of underlying conflicts and tensions in communities. Issues related to the role of memory and the ownership of memories and associated artefacts, as well as their use, raise crucial questions. The combination of museum and archive could foster the narration of migration experiences, facilitating the understanding of the paths and motivations behind them. An innovative and interactive museum, which is also able to accommodate intangible elements such as narration and storytelling, is an ideal environment for the promotion of dialogues and debates that would otherwise remain submerged in the silence and isolation of individualistic societies with little inclination towards true communication.

Fundamental concepts should concern the important issue of representation (Hall 1997), policies concerning location and displacement, and the relationship with the past and the present. Such concepts should be international in nature, capable of reflecting and representing, simultaneously, both aspects of the complex reality of migration.

This would become an optimal, albeit extremely difficult objective to achieve, due to the intense cultural and political tensions between the shores of the Mediterranean, and the

various regional identities involved in migration flows. Lampedusa, in particular, offers a clear demonstration of how a transit point for migrants cannot ignore the global dynamics of migration. (Abulafia, 2011, pp. 523-531)

As time went by, we saw the bodies of migrants who drowned and were washed ashore by the waves, together with their belongings, appear in increasing numbers; an orderly assortment of ordinary and extraordinary objects, visibly displayed, creating a kind of post-naufage scenario, a city abandoned by those who have gone elsewhere. These objects retain traces of human activities and passages, in an atmosphere that evokes the cemetery, while at the same time being alienating.

The increasingly widespread and recurring desire to commemorate memory through the collection of objects that, in themselves, have no commercial value, but are kept in anticipation of possible future significance, is remarkable. The distinctive style of the exhibition in Milan reflects the need to create a memorial landscape and, in a context of mourning, to perform a personal ritual that transforms lost objects into elements capable of arousing emotions and raising questions. The bodies of the shipwrecked and the abandoned objects arouse a shared feeling, as both deserve compassion and consideration, and are equally worthy of being remembered as part of history. The exhibition visited should be considered a complete redefinition, transforming it into an open space that fosters intercultural dialogue and understanding. It is conceived as a meeting place or cultural centre, open to the European and post-national dimension, in order to promote social and cultural interactions in a global context marked by migration.

The relevance of the Milan Memorial's work can be seen in the context of teaching about the Shoah and its ability to promote education. Without making historical comparisons, the warning against 'indifference' written at the entrance played a key role in provoking a reaction of solidarity towards the refugees. The decisions to open the Memorial in 2015 and subsequent years were influenced by Liliana Segre's teaching and the perpetuation of her testimony over time. This remembrance of horrors and silence promoted solidarity. Rather than being a mere monument, it has become an educational place; not just a container, but a means of dissemination, a community committed to education in memory and solidarity, embodied in a living space and projected into the future. In a way, Milan

has once again channelled History, with those fleeing ISIS, war zones, political instability, dictatorships, environmental crises and poverty, tragedies for which European and Western policies were, in some cases, complicit or even responsible.

Reducing the Shoah and the phenomenon of migration to a matter of statistics points to the need to adopt a more balanced approach that promotes personal reflection on evil and, consequently, on the present. Institutions are thus faced with the challenge of rediscovering the true meaning of remembrance education, linking it firmly to the contemporary, encouraging a shift from spontaneous emotion to committed action, from emotional reaction to the transformation of social relations and the rejection of discriminatory and racist behaviour.

The students interviewed reported wide participation and a communal interest in the topics discussed. The individual interviews conducted showed a willingness to explore the topics further. The use of qualitative methodology made it possible, on the one hand, to understand the opinions and perceptions of foreigners in a relational context regarding general topics related to immigration and, on the other hand, to delve into individual emotions through the interviews. The subjects in question repeatedly expressed the desire to have to support and guide the various aspects of reception. The request for greater willingness and attention on the part of institutions to support reception projects clearly emerges and is communicated. The concepts that emerged from the qualitative analysis serve as guiding tools, providing open frames of reference and orienting towards specific issues. The aim, therefore, was to capture individual and collective impressions and representations. In this context, the focus was on the experience of the Erasmus students who participated in the visit and the identification of as many aspects and information from individual contextual cases as possible.

We must bear in mind that the collection of information is based on individual responses to interview questions. Indeed, the peculiarity lies in the participants' reflections, which allow the relational dimension to be recovered in the opinion-forming process. In the interview, the wide range of reflections that emerge is the result of cognitive comparisons, interpersonal interactions and the creation of a confidential environment that favours the expression of opinions and feelings.

This interview made it possible to collect not only expectations, but also desires, needs, requests, priorities and wishes; they are an indispensable tool for individually exploring topics of interest, allowing access to each other's personal experience (Pistacchi, 2010, p. 156).

The subject-focused approach allows the issues to be analysed in detail and offers an opportunity to generate knowledge for both the interviewer and the interviewee.

The interviews explore the theme of remembrance related to the deaths or disappearances of undocumented migrants, also known as border-related deaths, particularly on the European borders of the Mediterranean Sea and in the Sicilian channel. More than 40,000 migrants lost their lives at global borders. The aim was to examine how practices of constructing and memorising trauma, along with personal and collective experiences of meaning-making, address the racial, colonial and violent dimensions of European politics, manifested in a conception of borders that goes beyond a simple geographical line. The account of the interviews aims to present a comprehensive and articulate view of a topic of global scope, often examined with limited perspectives that fail to fully grasp its complexity. Migration and memory is an inherently human and social phenomenon, involving a wide range of approaches that seek to understand its many facets through different perspectives. This analysis has contributed to considering migrations as human expressions that constantly transcend the interpretative categories that attempt to define them. In other words, it has reflected on the theme of migration and borders, confronting the excess of meanings they constantly generate.

Chambers states: "*Migration is interrogated as an altogether much deeper and much broader presence in the understanding of modernity. This evidently means renouncing the frameworks used so far to explain migration, thus going beyond the flat logics based on push and pull factors, to go beyond the surface to the deepest inequalities of denied economic, political and cultural justice that structure and direct our world*" (Chambers, 2018, pp. 8-11).

He concludes: "*The concept of "migration" avoids the risk of migrating from the lived and suffered processes of actual migration to a purely metaphorical exercise, repeating*

the instrumental use of the other to promote the concept. Putting critical thought in motion, making it migrate, is not simply a heuristic operation of the mind; rather, it is a response to the movements of bodies and lives that constitute modernity.” (ibid.)

Ultimately, unlearning indifference through critical anti-racist memory reveals the transformative power of recognising human dignity. The guided exhibition in Milan stood out as a unique opportunity to reaffirm the full humanity of migrants, transforming them from mere numbers to individuals with unique histories, cultures and identities.

Conclusion

“Coltivare la memoria è ancora oggi un vaccino prezioso contro l'indifferenza e ci aiuta, in un mondo così pieno di ingiustizie e di sofferenze, a ricordare che ciascuno di noi ha una coscienza e la può usare.”

- *Liliana Segre*

The Memorial in Milan has three main goals: to increase knowledge, to preserve memory, and to encourage ethical reflection. The educational importance of places like this goes beyond teaching historical facts and figures. It is not just about moving people with harrowing tales, but about stimulating personal reflection on evil, including in relation to current events. It is crucial to avoid reducing everything to mere statistics or being overwhelmed by emotion.

Education must connect to contemporary reality and help people move from emotion to concrete engagement. This means turning emotional reactions into changes in social relations and the rejection of prejudiced and racist attitudes.

Memory also requires a critical examination of how processes of moral exclusion are constructed, deepening the theme of individual and collective responsibility. It is essential to recognize the other as an integral part of our lives and to address the possibility of including or excluding people from our social horizon. The history of anti-Semitism tragically demonstrates what can happen when individuals or groups are morally excluded from the community.

This highlights how racism is first and foremost a political phenomenon, rooted in power dynamics and the construction of public policies. The creation and implementation of discriminatory or exclusionary policies, as well as the promotion of divisive political rhetoric, contribute to the marginalisation and dehumanisation of certain groups in society. This political context can fuel fear and suspicion of ‘others’, consolidating social hierarchies and justifying systemic discrimination. Therefore, addressing racism requires a critical understanding of its political roots and the promotion of inclusive policies and social justice.

This is the crucial issue facing Europe in the face of the migrant crisis that began in 2013. The historical memory of the Holocaust and the October 3 shipwreck offers us precise indications on how to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past by promoting a more open and aware society.

By analyzing the tragic October 3 2013 shipwreck in Lampedusa and the various interpretations of it, we can understand the mechanisms that lead to the implicit acceptance of a unique situation in the Mediterranean. This acceptance depends on the silent de-humanisation. Different perspectives are intertwined, as drowned migrants are seen as bodies, as public policy problems, and as individuals with rights. It is the appearance of the bodies of dead migrants that creates the event, and the visibility of the violence that generates strong emotional reactions that, however, never find a real political response.

Despite the efforts of those fighting to make the migrants who die at sea visible and respected, they remain in political limbo, barely touched by the reactions of moral outrage. As if the sea belongs to everyone only when dead, migrants continue to suffer injustice even after death, existing in a gray zone between life and nonexistence.

To seriously address the issue of migration, we must focus on the causes that drive people to leave their countries and the regularization of travel for all. The latter, if implemented, would significantly reduce emergencies.

The October 3 2013 shipwreck is a key event in understanding the global impact of what is happening in Lampedusa. However, the entire history of the island is intertwined with international social and political dynamics. Keeping the memory of these events alive is crucial, but one must be aware that this process is inherently selective, including and excluding facts, documents, and narratives.

Historical reconstruction and the exercise of memory are profoundly influenced by power, which can completely rewrite events, altering them for its own purposes and transforming them into shared collective memory. This is true of October 3 2013, as well as many other historical episodes that we have learned as "absolute truths." We need to be critical and aware of how history is told and used, recognizing the manipulations and trying to understand the real dynamics behind the events.

Riassunto

Questo studio si addentra nella complessa tematica dell'immigrazione e della memoria, investigando le intricate dinamiche dell'odio e riflettendo sui tragici eventi, aspetti fondamentali per promuovere una società più inclusiva ed equa. Nel corso della storia umana, abbiamo assistito a momenti di emarginazione e violenza che ancora oggi esercitano un profondo impatto sulle nostre società moderne. L'analisi di tali connessioni ci permette non solo di comprendere le origini dei problemi attuali, ma anche di acquisire gli strumenti necessari per affrontarli in maniera efficace.

In particolare, la tesi si sviluppa attraverso tre principali linee di indagine:

- Approfondimento delle intricate sfaccettature dell'etnocentrismo e del razzismo, partendo da una riflessione sul concetto di diversità e avversione. Il razzismo non è statico, ma si evolve in risposta ai mutamenti sociali e culturali. Saranno esaminati in dettaglio la struttura, le dinamiche e le molteplici manifestazioni dell'avversione, con un'analisi approfondita sulle cause e le conseguenze sociali che alimentano atteggiamenti discriminatori. Un particolare focus sarà rivolto alla paura del "diverso", esplorando con precisione la distinzione tra xenofobia e xenorazzismo, concetti spesso confusi ma distinti nelle loro manifestazioni e implicazioni. Inoltre, si approfondirà l'analisi dell'antisemitismo da una prospettiva intersezionale, esaminando il modo in cui questo

antico pregiudizio si manifesta nelle società moderne e interagisce con altre forme di oppressione.

- Studio della sociologia della memoria, con un'attenta esplorazione del concetto di memoria critica e del suo intricato rapporto con il presente. La memoria critica svolge un ruolo cruciale nella formazione dell'identità sociale e nella costruzione della rappresentazione collettiva. Si analizzerà la memoria non solo come un archivio passivo del passato, ma come un processo dinamico che influenza le nostre prospettive attuali e future. Si approfondirà inoltre l'analisi della memoria critica, mettendo in discussione le narrazioni storiche ufficiali e ridefinendole attraverso l'esperienza collettiva. In questo contesto, la memoria collettiva si rivela uno strumento potente di cambiamento sociale, in grado di promuovere la consapevolezza e la responsabilità storica.

- Riflessioni sul naufragio del 3 Ottobre, un evento tragico che ha lasciato un'impronta profonda nella coscienza collettiva. Si esaminerà il significato del ricordo nell'attuale contesto sociale, considerando l'impatto della memoria su una narrazione più ampia. Attraverso interviste condotte con giovani studenti Erasmus in visita a Milano, si analizzerà il ruolo della memoria e le prospettive multietniche. Queste interviste offrono una panoramica diversificata sul modo in cui i giovani percepiscono il ricordo del naufragio, sottolineando l'importanza di una prospettiva multietnica e intergenerazionale nella costruzione della memoria collettiva. Il capitolo si conclude sottolineando l'importanza di superare le prospettive limitate nel trattare il complesso fenomeno della migrazione e della memoria. Infine, si sottolinea il potere trasformativo della memoria critica anti-razzista nel riconoscere la dignità umana e nell'affermare l'individualità e la storia unica di ogni migrante, sottolineando l'importanza di un approccio inclusivo verso le sfide globali della migrazione.

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