Athens Journal of Social Sciences

Front Pages

Athens Journal of Social Sciences

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The current issue is the fourth of the tenth volume of the *Athens Journal of Social Sciences* (AJSS), **published by the Social Sciences Division of ATINER.**

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18th Annual International Conference on Sociology
6-9 May 2024, Athens, Greece

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Important Dates
- Abstract Submission: **3 October 2023**
- Acceptance of Abstract: 4 Weeks after Submission
- Submission of Paper: **8 April 2024**

Academic Member Responsible for the Conference
- **Dr. Domenico Maddaloni,** Head, Sociology Research Unit, ATINER & Associate Professor, University of Salerno, Italy.
- **Dr. Philip G. Cerny**, Director, Social Sciences Division, ATINER & Professor Emeritus, University of Manchester (UK) and Rutgers University (USA).
- **Dr. George S. Tsagaris,** Associate Professor, Cleveland State University, USA.
- **Dr. Sharon Claire Bolton**, Head, Management Research Unit, ATINER & Professor, The Management School, University of Stirling, Scotland.

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Escaping the Crisis, Seeking a Better Future, Living Global Lives: Recent Italians Migrants in Athens, Madrid and Bogota

By Domenico Maddaloni[*]

Current literature on international migration has focused mainly on flows from the South to the North of the global system. Recently, however, flows from more developed countries have also gained scholarly attention. In this context, the recent wave of migration from Italy may be of particular interest for several reasons. Research already conducted on these issues has shown that the recent upswing in Italian emigration is not solely due to and a sign of the growing integration of Italian society into the global system. It is also one of the consequences of a series of important social and cultural transformations, ranging from Italy's changing position in the international division of labor to the individual search for a better quality of life. In this article, we will draw on the results of some research on Italian emigrants in three major urban centers – Athens, Madrid and Bogota – to identify the factors and mechanisms that trigger these new migration paths. Although each of the research works was conducted independently, using qualitative techniques of social analysis, particularly through semi-structured interviews, we believe that a comparison of the results obtained in these three research experiences may be useful in clarifying the rapidly evolving picture of the new Italian emigration.

Keywords: *Italy, crisis, globalization, migration, qualitative research*

Introduction

Given its economic and political importance, international migration can be considered one of the most relevant research topics in the social sciences. This is particularly true of South-North flows. However, scholars in the field of migration studies are well aware that, in these times of globalization, there are mobility flows among all countries in the world. Almost all of them are both source and destination areas of international mobility.

This is also the case of Italy. Since the 1970s, Italy has become a destination area for migration from less developed countries, especially from Eastern Europe, the Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa. But since the 1990s, and especially after the 2008 economic crisis, Italy has turned to be a source of migration flows.

The purpose of this article is to discuss some of the results obtained from three surveys conducted in the last few years on recently emigrated Italians. This research focused on Italians who emigrated to Athens, Madrid and Bogota, three major cities which are also capitals of their countries – the first two in southern Europe, the last in Latin America. This research was conducted primarily with qualitative survey techniques, which imposes several limitations on our ability to

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obtain knowledge pertinent to the entire field of migration studies, or even just to southern European migration. However, comparing the results of this research may suggest new hypotheses for an adequate understanding of this recent wave of migration from Italy.

Therefore, in the next section we will describe the object and purpose of the paper, which offers a comparative insight into some recent migration flows from Italy, also producing an inventory of the factors and mechanisms at work in these migration paths. The third section will be devoted to the methodology employed in the above-mentioned research paths, which are mainly based on qualitative techniques. In addition, some of the main characteristics of the survey participants shall be described. The fourth section will discuss the main results obtained in each research, with particular reference to the reasons for migration. Finally, in the conclusion we will try to outline some implications of this comparison for further research on migration from Italy and other developed countries.

The New Migration from Italy

Recent reviews on Italian emigration (Audenino and Tirabassi 2008, Fondazione Migrantes 2011, Bonifazi 2013, Pugliese 2018) point out that Italy produced at least three waves of migration in contemporary times. The first, which reached its greatest intensity in the years leading up to World War I, was mainly directed toward the Americas. Young men left the countryside of an overpopulated, poor and backward country in search of work and life opportunities in sparsely populated countries which, albeit challenging to live in, offered many options and alternatives. They moved from a country that did not give them hope to other lands that did, regardless of their distance. Sometimes the migrants returned home, someone defeated, someone else victorious. Other times they called their wives, girlfriends, relatives, or even just their fellow villagers to share their good fortune.

The second wave of emigration began with the reconstruction following World War II and ended with the crisis of the mid-1970s. Again, the main role in emigration was played by young men, who left the countryside of the poorest and most backward regions of a country which was nevertheless experiencing an era of tremendous growth and modernization. Similarly, alongside many emigrants who returned to their villages at the end of their careers, there were many others who – again – called wives, girlfriends, relatives and friends to themselves, thus creating strong chains of migration. The main difference with the first wave of emigration concerns the destination areas, which this time were mainly Western European countries. Another difference pertains to the social climate in which the migration processes took place. The Italy of the 1950s and 1960s was a country conquering records of growth and modernization in the world. In this context, it was not so much the lack of prospects as the growth of expectations that drove people to migrate to other countries. Rather than escaping a fate of poverty, second-wave migrants sought to shorten the path that would lead them to wealth, or at least to moderate but respectable prosperity.

While the first and second waves of migration had some common features, the third wave seems very different from the previous ones. First, it includes new Italians, that is, foreigners who had taken up residence or even citizenship in Italy and then decided to change countries. Second, it includes many women who have taken an active role in the migration process (Moffa 2014). Third, it includes individuals from all regions, including metropolitan and more developed areas of the country. Fourth, it affects people at every stage of the life cycle, including the elderly (Cristaldi and Leonardi 2018). Finally, many new migrants from Italy are highly skilled individuals seeking professional gratification abroad (Beltrame 2007, Gjergji 2015, Minneci 2015, Tomei 2017).

Alongside changes in the demographic features of Italian migration, there are also changes in the conditions and constraints, channels and mediators of migration – changes common to many other migration flows. For example, the process of economic and political integration of the European Union has generated a space in which the experience of international migration is much closer to that of internal mobility within the country of origin (Recchi 2015). The availability of low-cost flights and superfast trains has radically changed the perception of distance between the places of origin and destination of migration (Grieco and Urry 2011). Social media make early socialization to the migration experience possible, enabling the accumulation of information and personal contacts outside the usual network of relatives, neighbors, and childhood friends (Dekker and Engbersen 2014). In addition, new means of transportation and communication make the experience of transnationality accessible to recent Italian migrants (Vertovec 2009). Like other mobile people from more developed countries, new Italian migrants can choose whether or not (or to what extent) to maintain ties with their home society.

The new Italian emigration also differs from previous ones in terms of destination areas. In accordance with more general trends prevailing in the "age of migration" (Castles et al. 2013), Italians are moving to all countries of the world. The traditional destinations of Italian emigration still attract many people. This is as true for major Western European countries as it is for the United States, Canada, Australia, Argentina and Brazil. Alongside these mobility flows, however, there are others heading to many other countries, some of which seem to be less developed than Italy (Fondazione Migrantes 2020). For this reason, our research work focused on flows that are still little known, such as those heading to Greece, Spain or Colombia, that is, countries where Italian migration was very limited until recent years[1].

Finally, recent Italian emigration presents different features from those of the past in terms of the structural factors and personal motivations behind individual migration choices. Among the structural factors, an important role is certainly played by Italy's economic stagnation and the increasingly evident crisis of the development model followed by the country after World War II (Maddaloni

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[1]Specifically, according to the Fondazione Migrantes, Spain was home to 192,036 Italians on consular registers, Colombia 21,038 and Greece 12,260 as of January 1, 2020. This is of particular significance since none of these countries had been affected by previous waves of Italian emigration (Fondazione Migrantes 2020).

2016). Alongside this, the modernization of Italian society and its increasing permeability to globalization has allowed many Italians, especially young people, to become part of international networks of work and leisure. This has generated opportunities for mobility unthinkable in the recent past, both in terms of numbers and variety. Therefore, many Italians, especially young workers and professionals, see their migration choice as dictated essentially by the lack of career opportunities in their home country. Many others, however, tend to experience it more in terms of a lifestyle choice (Benson and O'Reilly 2009, Torkington 2010, Benson and Osbaldiston 2014, Benson and O'Reilly 2016), prompted by interest in the world outside Italy. A debate ensued between those who argue that the new Italian emigration is essentially a flight from a country in crisis and those who see Italians primarily as globalized individuals, capable of seizing opportunities to improve their living conditions wherever they are created (Pugliese 2018). As is obvious, both positions capture a peculiar aspect of an emerging and complex social reality, which can never be explained by reference to a single theoretical principle (King 2012). But how representative are they of new migration flows such as those from Italy to Athens, Madrid or Bogota? The lines of research we will discuss in this paper seek to address this issue.

Italians in Madrid, Athens, and Bogota: Research Methodology

All research focused on people between 20 and 39 years of age[2]. People in this stage of the life cycle are perhaps the most interesting ones from the point of view of migration studies. As shown by the sociology of the life cycle (Clausen 1986), individual projects concerning job placement, career opportunities and household patterns are mostly defined and mainly realized at this stage of personal life. Therefore, deciding to answer these questions through a migration project seems of great relevance because of the sociological implications of this choice, both in terms of causes and consequences.

The choice of destination areas on which to investigate was mainly induced by reasons related to professional opportunities (research mobility programs that involved someone in the research group). This made empirical research in the urban areas of Athens (2017-2018), Madrid (2018-2019), and Bogota (2020) relatively inexpensive[3]. Alongside this, it is worth noting that none of the previously mentioned cities had been home to significant migration flows from Italy before the 1990s or the first decade of the new century. Therefore, most of the Italians interviewed in these cities are first-generation migrants – people who decided not long ago to (1) leave Italy and (2) settle in Athens, Madrid, or Bogota[4].

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[2]However, research in Athens and Bogota also included people over the age of 39, as well as some participant observation exercises, both online and in-person.

[3]Due to the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic during 2020, the research conducted on Italians in Bogota was completed through video interviews.

[4]The interviews were conducted in Italian, either by myself or by another member of the research team (as in the case of Madrid).

Regarding the sampling process, in each research a first approach to Italian migrants was made through social media (more specifically, through blogs, Facebook pages, WhatsApp groups, etc.) (De Rosa and Maddaloni 2020, Maddaloni and Moffa 2021, Maddaloni 2022). Starting from these contacts, we used the snowball sampling technique and carried out several semi-structured interviews with Italians living in the target areas. We tried to balance the group of interviewees by gender, age, and regional origin in order to get a broader view of these recent migrant communities and provide a degree of saturation of the internal variability within the target population. We preferred to conduct a qualitative survey rather than a quantitative one, not only because of the technical difficulties arising from the absence of an adequate sampling list, but also because we think that qualitative research is better suited to capture the novelties inherent in emerging social phenomena (Zapata-Barrero and Yalaz 2018), such as migration in the era of neoliberal globalization, the creation of a common European space, and the economic and social crisis that has affected Southern European countries (Maddaloni 2021).

Therefore, we chose to use the semi-structured interview technique, based on the principles of the hermeneutic approach, which allows the interviewer to be more flexible when conducting the interview, conforming to the interviewee's verbal and nonverbal language (Montesperelli 1998). In addition, this research approach involves a specific recording, transcription, and coding process (Diana and Montesperelli 2005, see also Silverman 2010, 2015). The procedure makes it possible to analyze respondents' behaviors, attitudes, and opinions around certain semantic areas, considered relevant by the research team. In our case, these dimensions include: the respondents' educational background and work experience in Italy or abroad, prior to their arrival in the destination area; their current position in the labor market and local society; opinions on the economic and social situation in both the areas of origin and destination; plans for the future; and, finally, their social identity.

There were 43 respondents between the ages of 20 and 39, including 12 in Madrid, 17 in Athens, and 14 in Bogota. 23 women (6 in Madrid, 9 in Athens, 8 in Bogota) and 20 men (6 in Madrid, 8 in Athens, 6 in Bogota) were interviewed. However, it is worth noting that the average age of the respondents was 31 in Madrid, 32 in Athens, and 36 in Bogota. This probably reflects the greater difficulties associated with emigrating to a country as distant and different from Italy as Colombia. Such a choice perhaps requires more experience and resources than mobility to a large city in Southern Europe.

As for the geographic origin of our respondents, 18 were from northern regions (4 in Madrid, 7 in Athens, 7 in Bogotá), 9 from central regions (4 in Madrid, 3 in Athens, 2 in Bogotá), and 16 from southern regions (4 in Madrid, 7 in Athens, 5 in Bogotá). This is an expected outcome, as the selection of respondents was controlled with regard to this variable.

All of them arrived in the destination areas in the last decade, so they can be considered part of the so-called new Italian migration. All of them had a level of education equal to, or higher than, a high school diploma. In particular, 11 respondents in Madrid (out of 12), 8 in Athens (out of 17) and 10 in Bogota (out of

14) had a master's degree or even higher degrees. However, only a portion of this emigration can be understood as a true "brain drain". In fact, most of the Italian population in this age group attended university (Bonifazi and Livi Bacci 2014). Moreover, high levels of education are a factor that favors emigration (Pugliese 2018). Highly educated people, in fact, are more open to work and life experiences in contexts other than their origin.

In addition, many of them (though not all) participated in the Erasmus program or similar experiences abroad, which led them to an early positive attitude toward international mobility. The role played by these events in creating both a fund of personal confidence (in one's ability to cope abroad) and a capital of knowledge and social contacts that strengthen the individual propensity to emigrate is now well recognized in the literature (see for instance King et al. 2016).

The biggest differences among the three groups of interviewees concern their employment status. In fact, Italians in Bogota are employed as entrepreneurs, managers, academics, professionals, even teachers in Italian schools. In contrast, the occupational profile of Italians interviewed in Madrid and Athens is more heterogeneous (Maddaloni 2019a, De Rosa and Maddaloni 2020, Maddaloni and Moffa 2021). It includes not only many of the professional roles mentioned above, but also cooks, pizza makers, people coming from Italy for an international internship, and (in Athens) employees of transnational service companies and people currently looking for a job opportunity.

These differences seem to reflect the economic and social specificities of the areas which ultimately provide the setting for our research. Madrid and Athens are both located in countries whose economic and social conditions appear, at least at first glance, similar to those in Italy. Bogota is a city in Latin America, an area still lagging behind Europe in development and with significant problems of poverty and deviance. However, even between Madrid and Athens there are some differences, which produce some consequences in the migratory flows directed towards these cities.

Italians in Madrid, Athens, and Bogota: Research Findings

A comparison of the results obtained by our research group on young Italians who recently emigrated to Madrid, Athens and Bogota can show many aspects of these migratory flows that can be of great use for a better understanding of both some recent international migration dynamics and the changes taking place in Italian society. In these notes we will limit ourselves to discussing a few findings that appear perhaps most significant. We will focus, therefore, on two main questions, the first concerning the reasons for choosing to leave Italy, the second concerning the motives behind the choice of Athens, Madrid or Bogota as a destination[5].

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[5]As is customary in qualitative research, the choice of the quotes to be included in the article was made according to criteria of representativeness and authenticity. They have been chosen basically because they reflect the strongest patterns in the collected data and may be helpful in

As to the first issue, two fundamental attitudes towards migration emerge among the respondents, with no significant differences in terms of gender or regional origin. For some interviewees, migration is a highly relevant episode in a *proactive*, self-centered strategy of individual fulfillment. For other respondents, on the other hand, it is an aspect of a *reactive* strategy imposed by the current conditions of the Italian labor market and, more generally, of Italian society. Some live their career and mobility path in terms of a sequence of challenges to be overcome, which may have the whole world as a scenario. On the other hand, others live the experience of migration as a somewhat bitter but necessary remedy, allowing them to escape from a stagnant life in their homeland.

Some new migrants from Italy, therefore, have been thinking about living abroad since their student years.

> *I always say that in a year I have known all the phases of Erasmus and that it has given me the desire to experience myself outside for two reasons. On the one hand, the exaltation of the pleasure you have in doing new things, the sensitivity you acquire. But also the melancholy, the hard part, also I consider it fundamental, the certainty that even if now it's a difficult phase then the time will come when I will meet someone and I will have a lot of fun. If you stay in Italy, in your place, you don't have the sensitivity* (F, 33, Madrid)

> *As far as I understand my life, the priority is to choose the place to live. Work comes next* (M, 33, Athens)

> *I would have liked to carry out a first experience abroad and for a series of coincidences ... I could say thanks to Facebook in a very indirect way. [...] A family friend of one of my current partners, who is very well positioned here in Bogota, had found her best friend from university, the mother of my friend, through Facebook. She realized that her friend had a son and invited him to vacation in Bogotá. He became convinced that the country had great potential. He managed to persuade me and another friend to follow him in this adventure and that's why I'm here, basically* (M, 37, Bogota)

Others have come to define the emigration project as a difficult trade-off between aspirations and opportunities, chosen when there is no viable alternative.

> *After* [my graduation] *I tried to get back on my own by opening a publishing house, a website, trying to make use of my academic skills. I started to work and I loved that job, but when I began to see that a huge amount of my income was to be spent on taxes and services that were not worth paying for, I was discouraged and I felt that I was making a sacrifice that I did not have to make and was not worth making. So, instead of investing time and spending on something I didn't believe in, I preferred to experience abroad* (M, 32, Madrid).

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illustrating them to the reader (Corden and Sainsbury 2006, Lingard 2019, Eldh et al. 2020). Also, it should be noted that the colloquial nature of the interviews inevitably results in a somewhat imprecise language. Finally, it should be noted that some quotes have appeared in previous works (Maddaloni 2019b, De Rosa and Maddaloni 2020, Maddaloni and Moffa 2021, Delli Paoli and Maddaloni 2021, Maddaloni 2022).

I finished my studies with high hopes [laughs]. *I had a good final grade, the highest grade, so I still hoped to find a job, to enter the job market even with an internship, to have at least an expense reimbursement and depend less on my parents. But I couldn't find anything. So, I started looking for jobs that were not related to my education. You get to a certain point and say, "I want to work no matter what!"* (F, 33, Athens)

[...] *I graduated in March, from March to August I had a job search period in which absolutely nothing came. In August I reached the peak of endurance, in the sense that... "I don't want to live a home life with my parents, I don't want to be dependent on them", plus I started to have some problems, now I think it's a bit of an exaggeration to use this term, but I think it was a beginning of depression, in the sense that I didn't feel...*
You felt sad.
That's right, the fact that I didn't have a job. More than sad and discouraged I felt tied down. It was a feeling that I had... More than pulling outward, more than having my wrists tied to the wall, I felt tied inward, in the sense that I had a chain around my body and this chain with two huge weights. [So] *in ten days I made the decision, made the passport, the ticket, and arrived here in Bogota, fourteen hours from home* (M, 27, Bogota)

This variance can be found also as regards the idea of coming back to Italy. Those who have developed an active approach to life abroad have no intention of returning to their country of origin, unless they find favorable working and/or life conditions.

I'm not going back to Italy, it's like taking a step backwards. I have a sense of guilt because I wish other people had this advancement that I had, but you understand well that getting ideas like feminism and integration understood would be a losing battle. I see it even with just Facebook posts, who makes me do it? I'm sorry, but it's a losing battle (F, 34, Madrid)

I would like to return to Italy, and I would like to return to [the Italian city] *where I studied, but with* [an adequate] *salary. In Italy, it is clear that you must have at least above 1000 euros to live.* […] *This same job can also be done in Rome, with 1000 euros in Rome, but just one bedroom... it costs 3-400 euro* [there] (M, 37, Athens)

Well, it also depends on what kind of return, in the sense that we would have some difficulties. First, I would return to Italy only and exclusively if they would offer me a job equal or superior to the one I am doing here, so they would have to let me return to an Italian university in a permanent role (M, 33, Bogota)

On the other hand, there are some Italian migrants who do not stop dreaming or even actively planning to return home. Those who have felt forced to emigrate often experience this state of mind.

I would come back very gladly, because with all the flaws in the world that we have in our country, it is my home. In a way I was kicked out. For the time being I cannot come back, but if I wanted to come back, even if I was kicked out of this country, I would come back. I live in a small town of 40000 inhabitants [in Italy], *but when I*

come back and I see myself looking out the window I embrace the mountain, the hill and the sea, I am in the most beautiful place in the world for me and I say, "I don't have this in Madrid (M, 34, Madrid)

Sure, absolutely yes [I'd come back to Italy]. *I liked living in Italy even before, I like living in Italy. I miss Rome very much, even Milan, where I studied for a few years, although the costs are much higher, not to compare with the rents, the cost of living, all different things* [from here] (M, 29, Athens)

Overall, are you satisfied with the experience? If you went back, would you do it again as it is?
Honestly, no. [...] *I wouldn't do it again* [...] *I wouldn't ... immigrate to a country, in this case Colombia, to settle down and work, okay? For all the experiences I've had* [here] *it's very positive. But if I had to decide again whether to move to Colombia, I wouldn't.*
Would you prefer Italy then?
I would prefer Italy (M, 37, Bogota)

Moving on to considering the motives for choosing to emigrate to a particular place in the world, these usually refer to two dimensions which are crucial in most individual life plans. The first dimension is economic achievement, the second one being self-actualization. As for economic achievement, it should be noted, however, that Italian migrants see it in three distinct ways.

The first way is the search for suitable opportunities to start a business – for example in the field of made-in-Italy catering.

We are opening a ... Initially the idea was for a pasteria[6], *we wanted to open a classic Italian* pasteria *that would work only as a delivery, take away. Then, unfortunately, we had some problems with the venue, and all these things, and a space we had found near here* [Athens neighborhood], *we didn't get the permit because it was an archaeological area and so on. Now we are opening a space in* [another Athens neighborhood] *that will still be a* pasteria, *but it will be a little bit more of a restaurant, so we will also have Italian cutting boards, Italian wines. I would like to... I would like to bring here the classic Italian* aperitivo, *which does not exist in Greece* (M, 33, Athens)

The second way is the attempt to gain a specific job role in a particular sector of economic life – for example in school or university.

[...] *in the third year of my primary education degree program... no, sorry in the fourth year, they gave me the opportunity to go to Madrid for internship* [...]. [This was in] *2015. I took a project to the elementary school, a project to the preschool. Then I continued this project the following year, so in the fifth year, and there I did all the thesis work in the Madrid school, which is a bilingual public school, Spanish and English* [...] *I did a project on new technologies, on augmented reality at the preschool and elementary school.* [...] *After that, I wanted to have an experience outside Europe, and so, almost as a joke at the beginning, I sent four CVs ...*

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[6]The name *pasteria* usually refers to a workshop selling home-made pasta.

throughout the world, practically [...] *because I sent one to Argentina, one to Beijing, one to Australia, and the last one to Colombia* [...] *and I got answers from Colombia and Beijing.* [...] *I had to go through the whole process, they hired me both here and there. Let's say on the basis of economic balance ... I would be in Beijing today* [...] *But you also have to live.* [...] *Let's say Colombians have a culture more like ours.* [...] *I left, giving up everything: the permanent job, the house, the family, everything... and now I've been here for four years* (F, 34, Bogota)

The third way is the search for a decent and relatively stable job – for example in transnational consumer services.

The duration [of the contract] *can vary, from a minimum of three* [months] *to a maximum of one year, even two years in special cases, when you go up in rank so there is a little promotion* [...] *It is also a job, yes, not very productive. It is nothing that you do all your life, at least those who* [...] *had a previous job and want to resume,. It works because it gives some help, it gives a certain stability, it allows you to be a little covered, then if you can* [...] *Unless one is so good that one becomes a manager as well. But that takes years. It takes at least six, seven years to climb that much* (M, 29, Athens)

As we mentioned before, the second motivational dimension for these migration paths is personal fulfilment. The latter can be pursued first and foremost through a couple's life project, in which the partner is a national of the country or even of the city chosen as destination.

At some point you met this Colombian guy...
Yes, in [Italian city].
What was he doing?
He was doing animation, animated drawing, at the Art Institute [in this city*], he was doing animated drawing and in the meantime he was working as a photographer and also as a goldsmith. Then he took part in a project of the Region* [...], *they took him on, he was chosen among some cartoonists, and he took part in a theatre show with animations* [...].
But at a certain point he decided to come back ... or did you decide together?
He no longer had a visa. The Art Institute had helped him a lot for several years but then, after six years, he already had duties here in Colombia (F, 36, Bogota)

Sometimes the couple bond arises as a result of work migration, and may also involve non-natives of the country. This is particularly true for those who work for international organizations or transnational companies, regardless of their position in the internal hierarchy.

Do you and your brother live together? Or do you have different homes?
We lived together at the beginning and then he met a girl and went to live with her and there is my boyfriend here with me, because actually we were three at the beginning, then it was just me and my boyfriend who is a French guy and came here with me (F, 33, Athens)

In terms of personal fulfillment, another possibility – often practiced by those under the age of 30 – is that the city was chosen because it offered the opportunity to stay abroad, thus living an experience that many young Italians (and not only Italians) greatly appreciate. In our opinion, in this case one can speak of nomadic migration (Delli Paoli and Maddaloni 2021), in the sense that Madrid, Athens or Bogota can be seen as stages in a process of enriching one's life experiences.

I can't stand staying in one place. When I start to feel ok, I have my home, my friends, my things, I get anxious, I feel sick. Then I need to move again. I need [...] *not to have these things* (F, 24, Athens)

Moreover, below the motivations related to economic opportunities or life plans, one often finds the search for a quality of life that Italy no longer seems to offer. The cost of living is lower in these cities than in Italy and makes it possible to accept wages that would be considered relatively low at home.

Eh no, actually it's the cost of living that attracted me [to Greece]*, because doing two calculations, being a translator, it's clear that I would also like to go back* [to the northern European country where I was before] *because I had a very good time but life is very expensive and so* [...] *Greece is one of those destinations that is very ideal, where you spend very little and you can manage* (M, 37, Athens)

The ability to freely choose a lifestyle that might be objectionable in Italy is also considered an important reason to continue living in the destination city.

Why don't I want to go back to Italy? Here in Madrid if you see a gay couple on the street, do you see someone making a comment or looking at them badly? No. That is a difference that would never make me go back. On the feminist side, también. *Here you can even go naked on the street, nobody will say "A" to you, and if something happens to you nobody will say "It's your fault". It's a different mentality, I can't go back to Italy. Can you tell me why these things don't exist in Madrid? Yes, maybe* [they occur sometimes]*, but public opinion is different. Italy... the more time passes, the less I want to go back* (F, 34, Madrid).

Other reasons supporting the main ones are more related to local circumstances. For example, Madrid and Athens are valued for the closeness between the Italian and local lifestyles. In another article, we talked about Mediterranean migration to capture this widespread attitude (Delli Paoli and Maddaloni 2021). In contrast, life in Bogota is criticized because of urban congestion, huge inequalities, and risks related to petty crime.

[Bogotá is] *a very big city, okay? A very big city with a lot of possibilities, okay? Despite the fact that many times it is difficult, right? to breathe, but really to breathe, not only from the biological point of view but also from the human point of view... It is a city that gives many possibilities, right?* [...] *From this point of view I find it a positive aspect. The thing I find most negative in this city, apart from what you just said, as you well know, is the traffic, the congestion, the chaos. It's not easy to get used to, for goodness sake* (M, 37, Bogota)

Concluding Remarks

We cannot begin these concluding remarks without mentioning that in this paper we have discussed only some of the research results obtained from working on recent Italian emigration to Madrid, Athens and Bogota. However, this comparative exercise has made it possible to point out that both theories of new Italian emigration (see section 2 above) capture some features of this rather new phenomenon.

Many young Italians leave Italy mainly because they want to escape the crisis the country has been going through for many years (Maddaloni 2016). For them, therefore, expatriation can be seen as an exit solution (Maddaloni 2017) to the persistent problems of economic stagnation and cultural backwardness of Italian society, problems now shared as much by the South as by the North of the country.

In this search for a better future for themselves, they meet other Italians, motivated to expatriate primarily for reasons of self-realization, in both economic and personal terms. They may be seen as the other pole of this recent migratory flow: individuals who see themselves as active agents in a path of labor and personal mobility that is conceived from the outset as a path of international migration. Some of them set out to live authentic global lives – an attitude we can find both among younger people, who are oriented primarily toward accumulating life and work experiences abroad (Delli Paoli and Maddaloni 2021), and among those in their thirties who choose a career as a manager in an international organization or transnational company, or even set out to find even relatively de-skilled employment in the transnational segment of the labor market (Maddaloni and Moffa 2021). We leave it to future research to ascertain the extent to which ongoing disruptions in the international order – in particular, the persistence of the COVID-19 epidemic and war events in Eastern Europe – are producing changes in this complex migration pattern.

From a more general point of view, we believe that these research findings on recent migration from Italy can highlight the increasingly composite character assumed by international migration in the era of neoliberal globalization. Usually, migration to the core of the global system is seen as the most important, while migration to countries with different economic or cultural qualities is less highlighted. However, Italians from different backgrounds (economic or social) have been involved in migrations not only to the Great North, but also to countries commonly perceived as semi-peripheral, such as those in Southern Europe, or even peripheral, "failed" or "corrupt", like Colombia. Moreover, while there is no doubt that purely economic factors continue to explain a preponderant part of migration processes, the role played by other possible drivers should no longer be overlooked. Nor should the individual aspiration for professional and social mobility be considered only in terms of income. Contemporary migration research should no longer neglect the non-economic, social and cultural motivations behind many migration choices: which, therefore, should always be seen also as individual lifestyle choices (Benson and O'Reilly 2016).

Acknowledgments

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The Reterritorialisation of Pontic Greeks in Germany and the Modernisation of Tradition

By Eleni Tseligka[*]

Greeks have a long diasporic history that demonstrates significant examples of all major diaspora classifications. Pontic Greeks of the Black Sea in particular, represent an excellent example of non-static diasporic typology. Starting as an imperial diaspora they were transformed to a victim diaspora, when forcefully expelled from their native lands in north-eastern Anatolia, seeking refuge in Greece and in areas of central Asia that were later annexed by the Soviet Union. Greece's socioeconomic environment, during the better part of the twentieth century, was proven insufficient to support the full integration of refugees, while those Pontic Greeks who found themselves behind the Iron Curtain, were subjected to further victimization. In 1960 Greece signed a bilateral agreement with West Germany, allowing its citizens to seek Gastarbeiter employment, resulting in the formation of a Greek labour diaspora in the country, of which an estimated one third self-identifies as culturally Pontic. After Greece's induction in the European Communities, but especially in the post-Maastricht era, the migratory regime for Greeks in Germany changed to that of European-expatriation, therefore progressively transforming their labour diaspora to a cultural one. From imperial, to victim, to labour, to cultural, Pontic Diaspora underwent a long process of reterritorialisation, in their journey from Anatolia to Germany.

Introduction

This paper examines Pontic Greek migration in Germany, by focusing on the background of Pontic Greeks in the mountainous areas of Anatolia and the Black Sea. The reasons that lead to their original uprooting from their ancestral lands, but also the socioeconomic conditions that brought them to Germany, as well as their integration and establishment in the German society and the adaptation of their traditions, towards a Western European cultural paradigm. Further, this paper examines how their experience, shaped their diasporic typology, arguing that Pontic Greeks represent a rare, if not unique, case in migration studies, or a community that entails all five types of Diaspora.

Methodology

The interview segments featured in this article, as well as the narratives analysed here, come from thirty-one semi-structured interviews, with outstanding individuals of the Greek communities in Germany; such as academics, diplomats and leading figures, persons in pastoral and parental roles. In all cases, it was made

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certain that each of the interviewees combine as many of the attributes, of a good informant, as possible and all interviewees were selected due to their significant experience on issues of the Greek Diaspora in Germany. The total of interviewees was carefully selected from fourteen locations in Germany, in particular Berlin, Bielefeld, Bonn, Cologne, Darmstadt, Dortmund, Düsseldorf, Erfurt, Jena, Munich, Rüsselsheim, Siegen, Stuttgart and Weimar. The selection of places was not random, as locations were chosen for the size of their communities and their importance in the history of Greek migration and establishment in Germany.

Interviews were conducted between December 2012 and May 2013, as part of a larger qualitative research project that examines the sociopolitical integration of Greeks in Germany before and after the Maastricht Treaty, based on participant observation and semi-structured interviews. The research, titled "From Gastarbeiter to European Expatriates" was conducted under the auspices of Staffordshire University and the bulk of its findings were released in a monograph in December 2019, under the same title. The book is an in-depth study of Greek emigration in Germany and offers insights on the process of European Integration from the sociopolitical perspective of intra-European migration before and after the Maastricht Treaty, highlighting the transformation that migratory and diasporic typologies have undergone between 1960 and 2016 (Tseligka 2019).

Greek Diasporas

People are mobile and so is culture; thus, facilitating the formation of a sense of coherence that is independent from spatial demarcation *per se*. That is obvious in Diasporas where the reference to space has been distorted by geographical distance, resulting in the deterritorialisation of culture (Papastergiadis 2000, p. 115-116) and creating the need for new spatial references and narratives, hence the need for cultural reterritorialisation.

In fact, the term Diaspora is a Greek one, it derives from the verb *σπείρω* (*speiro*, to sow) and the preposition *δια* (*dia*, over), and it originally referred to colonization through migration. However, the word also means 'to scatter', implying a forceful dispersal of people away from their homelands; it was that second meaning of the world that linked it to the Jewish experience. There are five distinct types of Diasporas: Victim, also referred to as Refugee, Diasporas are created by involuntary migration, from people fleeing persecution, ethnic cleansing, genocide, etc., as was the case with the Armenians, Jews, Pontic and Minor Asia Greeks. Imperial, also referred to as Colonial, Diasporas are formed during a process of colonisation, as in the case of Ancient Greeks, British, Spanish, Dutch and Portuguese. Labour, also referred to as Service, Diasporas are created by voluntary migration of workers, as for example in the case of Indians in the UK or Italians and Greeks in the US. Trade, or Business and Professional, Diasporas refer to communities of merchants or businesspeople who live away from their homeland in associated networks, as for example contemporary Indians and Chinese, but also in the past the Venetians or the Greeks in cities like Odessa, Vienna and Leipzig. Finally, there are the Cultural, also referred to as Hybrid or

Postmodern, Diasporas, which result as a fusion of two or more of the above; a term that describes most current Diasporas, such as the Caribbean, Chinese, Indian and of course Greek. It must be emphasised however that the nature of each Diaspora depends on circumstances and as circumstances change, so do the Diasporas. Thus, the taxonomy of Diasporas is not an exact science; as the case of the Jewish Diaspora indicates, it has been regarded as victim, labour, trade and cultural (Cohen 2002, ix p. 177-179).

What makes the Greek Diaspora such an interesting case study is the fact that its history clearly entails all five typologies. It has been Imperial, for example during the Hellenistic era, but also in medieval Byzantine times. During the Ottoman period the Greek communities in Europe were almost exclusively structured around trade. In fact, it can be argued that the case of the Greek Diaspora is the only one in European history which so clearly involves all five typologies. In the beginning of the twentieth century, the Pontic genocide and the Greek Catastrophe created a massive wave of refugees, while after the Second World War many of them, along with mainland Greeks, became labour migrants in various European states and the US, to eventually become part of the Cultural Greek Diaspora. It is also notable how the change of circumstances can entirely transform the nature, and the self-perception, of one diasporic community. A significant portion of Greek migrants in Germany originally descended from refugees of the Greek Catastrophe; they come therefore from the initial imperial Greek Diaspora, which only recently in history became associated with modern immigration. For example, the Pontic Greeks were originally an Imperial Diaspora, which later became a Victim Diaspora and through their mass migration to Germany a Labour Diaspora, and finally through the social mobility of modern Europe they integrated into a Cultural Diaspora.

The Modern Greek state is a construction that could not have existed in the past, as the Greek world was not territorially confined. The spread of Greeks in the world and subsequently of their culture, reached a peak very early in history; during a period that was consequently recorded as the Hellenistic era. Stretching throughout most of the known world, from Sicily and Southern Italy to Persia and parts of India, and from southern Gaul to North Africa and throughout the Black Sea, the Greek ways lost their original association with citizenship and ancestry (Makrides 2009, p. 10). Under that very premature version of globalisation, Hellenism was transformed and from being exclusive was rendered an inclusive culture. That view of Greekness as a culture by default deterritorialised and global, led during the Byzantine era to the concept of a religion that transcends national boundaries and is universal, or as the Greeks would say it, it is *ecumenical*. The concept of internationalised Greekness is so old that it has become almost endemic to Greeks, especially given that the present Greek State and subsequently the concept of a territorially focused national body, is less than two hundred years old. Hellenism has been by default Diasporic and for such a long period in history that it can be expected of contemporary Greek Diasporas to reproduce the same patterns of cultural inclusion, traditionally found in classic Greek Diasporic communities.

Greeks of the Black Sea

The Greek presence in the region of Pontos can be traced as far back as the eighth century BCE, with the establishment of the city of Sinope on the Black Sea. Their distance from the Greek mainland and their isolation in the mountainous regions of Anatolia, resulted in the development of their distinct traditions, culture and dialect, which is a variation of the Greek language (Bouteneff 2003, p. 292). According to the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, before the outbreak of the First World War, there were around 700,000 Greeks receding in the Pontic lands. More than half of them did not survive the period from 1914 to 1924; during which the *Pontic Genocide*, commonly known as the Greek Genocide, and the Greek Catastrophe took place. Those who survived followed the road to exile, with their majority fleeing mainly to Greece and the Soviet Union (Vergeti 1991, p. 382).

The history of their downfall begins with the decline of the Ottoman Empire and the antipathy of the Muslim masses towards the Christian subjects of the Empire that was aggravated by a series of reforms advocated by the Great Powers, which took place between 1839 and 1876, known as the *Tanzimat*. As parts of a broader attempt towards the westernisation of the Empire, the reforms aimed, among other things, to the protection of Christian populations against systemic maladministration and injustice, including over-taxation; however, part of the Muslim populations perceived the reforms as the end of their own privileges and the destruction of the traditional economic ethos. In their eyes, the changing attitude of the Sultan towards minorities did not signify progress, but failure to use the 'legendary Turkish scimitar'. The novelist Ahmed Midhat, who represented the class of the *esnaf* (craftsmen), wrote about the reforms: "*the real community is made up of those pure Turks whose hands in peacetime are still on their scimitars*" (Cicek 2010, p. 20-21).

During a period of eleven years, which started in September 1911 with the Italian invasion of Ottoman Libya, commonly known as the Italo-Turkish war, Anatolia lost most of its Christian inhabitants. The First Balkan War in 1912 brought ethnic Greek populations in the epicentre of animosity from the Ottoman Empire and signified the beginning of a period of mass migration of Anatolian Greeks, which was caused by the anti-Greek sentiment and the violence against Christian hellenophones that resulted from it. In 1914 the Ottoman-Russian war was followed by the Armenian revolt, supported by other minorities in the region, like the Nestorian Christians in the city of Van (DiCarlo 2008, p. 46). The above event signified the orchestrated extermination of the majority of Christian populations of the Ottoman Empire, which often is mistakenly viewed as a series of individual incidents, such as the Armenian Genocide, the Pontic Genocide (also known as the Greek Genocide), the Assyrian Genocide and the Greek Catastrophe (DiCarlo 2008, p. 53).

Christians and Muslims had coexisted for centuries as subjects of the Ottoman Empire and even though they always had separate roles in the life of the Empire, they were all Ottoman subjects nonetheless; however from September 1911 onwards, Christians were treated by Turks as a separatist threat and became

the object of hostility, of both the authorities of the state and their Muslim neighbours.; at the same time religion and ethnicity became more important than the shared Ottoman citizenship (Akçam 2012, p. 111-113).

The aftermath of the defeat of the Greek forces in Asia Minor, often mentioned in the relevant bibliography as the *Greek Catastrophe*, brought the forced migration of more than a million civilian refugees from Turkey. Their exact number is difficult to estimate; their hasty displacement did not allow them to be registered upon arrival, however according to the general population census, in 5 May 1928 the total number of refugees in Greece was 1,221,849 persons, in a total population of approximately five million. According to the League of Nations the number of refugees who entered Greece at the time was much higher, but between 1922 and 1928, seventy-five thousand had died due to impoverishment and a further sixty-six thousand managed to emigrate to Egypt, parts of Western Europe and the United States (Kontogiorgi 2006, p. 73-74).

Despite the fact that the majority of refugees nourished a keen desire for full social and economic integration, their expectations were shattered by the harsh socioeconomic reality of life in Greece. The scarcity of land for agricultural purposes, paired with the industrial underdevelopment of the country, inhibited their financial independence. To access the limited state funds, the newcomers had to go through rigorous bureaucratic procedures, which often resulted in exclusion from even the essential means required for their survival (Dragostinova 2011, p. 162).

The inefficiency of agriculture had been a constant problem in Greece, since the founding of the Modern State, and hindered economic development. Despite the main land reform legislation of 1917, mostly designed to relieve the refugee problem by bringing a significant expansion of the total cultivatable area through policies of land reclamation and state funded irrigation projects, the cropland median per person remained very low and the average production of grain per acre, varied between half and one third of that of Western Europe. Regardless of the predominantly agrarian nature of the Greek economy, many essential foods had to be imported. In fact one third of all imports in the 1930s were edibles, demonstrating further the inefficiency of Greek agriculture. Under those harsh financial circumstances, the majority of refugees remained destitute, sheltered in slums which soon increased in numbers and created whole shanty towns on the outskirts of cities (Aldcroft 2006, p. 148-149).

Equally harsh with the housing conditions, were the social conditions those refugees had to face and despite their often shared ethnicity with the locals, they were perceived as competition in the struggle for scarce resources. Stereotypes for Pontic Greeks were created, perceived as a distinct kind of Greek, one rather unpolished compared to mainland Greeks (DiCarlo 2008, p. 116). The initial hospitality with which the authorities and the locals welcomed the refugees, was soon withdrawn and replaced with worries about hygiene, adequacy of provisions and fears of potential rise in crime rates (Kontogiorgi 2006, p. 75). Despite the shared ethnic, religious and linguistic background between the vast majority of the refugees and the locals, the historical development of Hellenic communities in Asia Minor was different than that of mainland Greeks, and had been shaped

under fundamentally different social conditions; therefore, each group had evolved to an individual cultural body within the broader Hellenic world and had a distinct way of life and sense of aesthetics. Regardless of the fact that the refugees were perceived by the state authorities and local population, not as outlanders on foreign shores, but as Greeks exercising their birthright to return to their historic homeland, the minor differences in customs, dress and speech were enough to cultivate prejudice and facilitate conflict especially in the form of competition for state resources, like land and livelihood. The social integration of the newcomers was inhibited by the above matters, and it is now commonly accepted, that the actual and social surroundings were generally sorrowful and inhospitable (Kontogiorgi 2006, p. 166).

Pontic Greeks faced additional obstructions to integration; their dialect was incomprehensible for mainland Greeks, while their customs seemed alien and their native dress outlandish. Most importantly Greece's nation building policies of the time, focused on homogenisation, promoting an assimilationist agenda, under which all Greeks of refugee background were discouraged from publicly discussing their particular roots, but instead they were urged to assimilate fully in the Greek mainstream culture (Bouteneff 2003, p. 293).

Things were far worse for those Greeks who searched for refuge in the Soviet Union, in some cases joining the former Trade Greek Diaspora in those regions, which already included many Pontic Greeks. In October 1937 the Stalinist regime started persecuting ethnic Greeks, with arrests, executions and pogroms, from which not even party members were excluded. Labelled as *'enemies of the people'*, an estimated of 50,000 Pontic Greeks were executed or sent to concentration camps in Siberia. During and after the Second World War, the Greeks of Crimea were deported to Northern Kazakhstan and Siberia, while the Pontic Greeks in the Caucasus were deported to Central Asia (Agtzidis 1991, p. 374, 377).

Greek Emigration to Germany

After the end of the Second World War, Germany stood in rubbles and was divided into two separate states. The regime in the East took every measure possible to prevent immigration to the West. The *Wirtschaftswunder*, West Germany's economic miracle of the 1950s, solidified the country's position among the world's richest states, but that unprecedented economic development risked coming to a halt due to a decline in the flexibility of labour supply. By the late 1950s, the flow of workers from East to West Germany saw a dramatic decrease, until the building of the Berlin Wall in August 1961 ceased it altogether. To overcome the problem of a rising labour deficiency, the West German government signed bilateral agreements allowing foreign individuals to join its labour force. The newcomers were identified as guest-workers, *Gastarbeiter*, a term describing their ephemeral and temporary position in the German society (Braun 1990, p. 165–169).

On the other hand, the 1950s was a gruesome period for Greece, following two successive wars that took place the previous decade. The defeat of the

communists in the summer of 1949 brought the Civil War to an end and solidified Greece's place in the Western bloc, while at the same time it signified the beginning of the postwar period for the country (Koliopoulos and Veremis 2009, p. 127). The devastating effect of the two wars extended far beyond the thousands of civilian casualties, as, in a total population of 7.5 million, one million were left with no shelter and nearly ten percent of the population became internally displaced. One quarter of all buildings in Greece had been partly damaged or completely destroyed, and the available farming land has been reduced by a quarter. In addition to the above, transportation and communication was left shuttered and so was the county's economy. Compared to pre-war levels exports have halved while imports have almost ceased (Shrader 1999, p. 252–253).

Greece was yet again unable to feed its population, relaying almost entirely on international help and emigration. It must not come as a surprise that it was among the first to sign the guest-worker agreement with Germany, on the 30th of March 1960. The German Committee in Greece opened two recruitment offices, the first in Athens, at Viktoros Ougko Street, near Omonoia Square, and the second in Thessaloniki at Dodekanisou Street (Rimpa 2010, p. 4), creating a very efficient system to link employers to foreign employees. First, the employers had to apply to their local employment office, declaring how many workers were needed and the skills those individuals should have. Then the employment office would search for workers that were already registered with them in the country, and if they could not find any, they would contact German officials in one of the cosignatory countries. Until 1973, the recruitment of foreign workers bore no restrictions, except for the 1967–1968 period, marked by a recession, during which the German government refused to extend work permits (Meyers 2004, p. 127). While the agreement was active, Greece encouraged its workforce to leave and advertised immigration as the solution to individual poverty. In what was probably the biggest wave of emigration Greece has ever seen, more than two million, or approximately one fifth of the country's 1974 population left (Charalambis et al. 2004, p. 165, 174), with three quarters of them moving to Germany and of those, the majority, namely fifty-eight per cent, were women (Detsch 2012).

In 2008, according to the *Ausländerzentralregister* (AZR), the German Central Register of Foreigners, the number of Greek nationals living in Germany was 287,187, while the total number of ethnic Greeks, regardless of their nationality, was approximately 384,000 based on data from the German Microcensus of 2007 (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees 2016); and according to the *Verbund Griechischer Gemeinden* (Association of Greek Communities in Germany, OEK 2014) more than one quarter of them are of Pontic descent.

From *Gastarbeiter* to European Expatriates

On the 1st of January 1981 Greece became a full member of the European Communities (ECs), including the European Economic Community (EEC), the predecessor of the 1993 formation of the European Union. The changes brought forth by that agreement would progressively bring into legislation the free

movement of goods and the free movement of persons, services and capital, but also the common customs tariff between Member States. In addition, that agreement introduced Greece to free movement of workers by the 1st of January 1988, the liberalisation of direct investments from 31st of December 1985 onwards, and from the 1st of January 1981 the unblocking of funds and the increase of tourist allowance, to no less than 400 European Units (European Union. Publications Office. Official Journal 1979).

The common European market placed a lot of focus on entrepreneurship, which in the case of the Greeks was greatly enhanced by the liberalisation of investments in 1985; but even before that, the 1981 unblocking of funds, gave them the opportunity to transfer savings they previously kept in Greek banks and invest them into the German economy. Quite often those funds were remittances previously sent home, due to feelings of uncertainty brought forth by German immigration laws, or funds invested in the Greek banking system. I. P. in Düsseldorf, a senior cleric of the Greek Orthodox Church, mentioned that *"those who wanted to break free from work in the factories were helped (by the ECs legislations), as they made use of the new conditions in creating their own businesses"* (I.P. Cleric, 2013). The above development also promoted social mobility, as people gave up their old jobs in factories to start their own businesses. That increased social mobility, cleared the air from the negative stereotypes of the past such as that of the poor Greek *Gastarbeiter* who is a manual labourer, allowing the Greek community to be seen under new light by the German public, enhancing thus the concept of European identity.

Such developments led the Greeks in Germany to feel closer to the society of the receiving state and facilitated their social integration. Indicative example is the segment from the interview of A.G., headmaster in one of the many Greek schools of North Rhine-Westphalia, pointed out the role of European multiculturalism in the integration of Greeks and commented that *"many Greeks were integrated here (in Germany) because they found high ranking jobs and were well accepted (by the German society) [...], showing that (joining the European Communities) was a positive development"* (A.G. Teacher, 2013). The EU created a legal frame that empowers European minorities living in Germany, some of which felt previously ignored. *"The federal state of Germany in the mid or late 1990s – that is after the Treaty of Maastricht –, came to the sudden realisation that it had foreign European nationals living in Germany since 1960; they have been here for more than thirty years and they are not going anywhere, therefore something has to be done [...]. The European Union gave us a voice, it helped us gain political rights since we could vote in the local elections. That was as important as the free movement of people and it helped tremendously in the establishment of Greeks in Germany"* (M. F1. Unionist 2013).

Reterritorialising Culture and Modernising Tradition

The free movement of people and the political empowerment of European nationals contributed to a general feeling of safety. The unprecedented example of

the European Communities, which linked different states under the same laws and policies, but without the hegemonic presence of an empirical power, provided an excellent opportunity for Greeks to reterritorialise their culture in their newly established communities in Germany.

The monastery of *Panagia Soumela,* the Virgin Mary of Soumela in English, or *Sümela Manastırı* as it is called by the Turks, hangs on the rock of the Pontic Mountains chain in the region of Trebizond in the Black Sea, once home to Pontic Greeks (Kévorkian 2011, p. 467). Bielefeld is a city in North-Rhine Westphalia in Germany, home to a sizeable Greek community, mostly consisting of former *Gastarbeiter* settling there after 1960, and their descendants. The epicentre of the community's social life, can be found at the local parish of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Germany and Exarchate of Central Europe, the church of Apostle Paul; an impressive building within walking distance from the local stadium. Inside the church, on display in a prominent position, is an icon of *Panagia Soumela* adorned with a collection of donated jewellery which appears old enough to be heirlooms. The local priest, who was my guide during my visit, explained to me that the icon was donated by a local Greek family which descends from survivals of the Pontic Genocide. It took a very long, cross-generational journey, but finally the owners of that icon were feeling safe enough, to be able to donate their heirloom to their local parish, maintaining the tradition of votives.

The word tradition comes from the Latin *traditio*, which indicates something that is transferred hand-to-hand, passed from one generation to the next for safekeeping. Etymologically it is suggested that any alterations to the transferred object should be avoided, as that would be an act of tradition-breaking. Therefore, in that sense, tradition is something, which, by nature abhors change and resists modernity. Tradition is a process of doing things in a certain way and at the same time it is the knowledge resource of how to do things in that certain way, therefore tradition is both a process and a resource (Cashman et al. 2011, p. 3). It is the processes and means by which humans form and replicate their social bonds and cultural identities. Therefore, the concept of tradition can also be defined as an intergenerational process of transmission of social institutions, which regulate behaviour. Tradition is a message from the past generation to the present, instructions from the dead to the living; however, as the dead do not actually speak, the importance of their message is restricted by its interpretation by the living (Despland 2012, p. 19). The Greek word for tradition is *paradosis* (*παράδοσις*), which can be defined as *traditio*, but most commonly it refers to the act of surrendering, perhaps suggesting the limited control the previous generations have over the present.

During the eighteen months of filed research in the Greek communities in Germany, I witness time and again the interruption of old deep-rooted customs, not for the sake of abandoning tradition, but in an attempt to maintain it. In Darmstadt I witnessed a group of female dancers performing the Greek Pontic *Pyrrhichios* (*Πυρρίχιος*, Pyrrhic dance), a traditionally male dance associated with battle and warfare. In other words, a custom was interrupted, since in contemporary society rigor gender roles have become irrelevant, and that minor change allowed for a very old tradition to be preserved. Being able to distinguish between those

elements of tradition that should carry on, and the ones that should be left in the past, has created space for the modernisation of tradition. Instead of denying modernity, they incorporated tradition in the modern concept. Therefore, diasporic Greeks have the ability to maintain their cultural particularities without turning their backs to mainstream society. Tradition is something they do in their social gatherings, it is part of their Greekness and allows them to connect and belong in the group, but it is not something that segregates them from the host society. Serving like practices of cultural cohesion, the particularities of Greek tradition adapted to the modern socio-political environment of Germany. Therefore, Greekness does not act as an inherent hindrance that prevents them from integrating, but as an excuse for further social mingling. Within the above-stated context, Greek communities have the autonomy to follow modernity in their own way and at the same time express their cultural traits freely, and in their own individualistic way (Tseligka and Trantas 2013).

The Pontic Greeks of the Soviet Union

The fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 signified a period of international socio-political transformations. For Greece, as well as the Greek Diaspora, among other things, it signified the arrival of thousands of repatriates from former communist states. In the era following *Perestroika*, as well as after the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, the rise of nationalism and the revival of the pan-Turkish movement in parts of central Asia, created yet another wave of Pontic refugees and yet another refugee problem for Greece (Agtzidis 1991, p. 380). Namely, over 160,000 Pontic Greeks from the former Soviet Union, descendants of the original survivors of the Pontic genocide, entered Greece in the aftermath of the Soviet collapse. To exempt the diasporic repatriates from the restrictions on work and residency, imposed by law to immigrants of foreign descent, they were acknowledged with the term *omogeneis* and thus differentiated by the *allogeneis*, under a law passed in 1991 (Venturas 2009, p. 129). The term omogeneis in Greek means people of the same lineage and is also the root word for the English word 'homogenous', while allogeneis means people of different lineage. The distinction between the two had to be made because after the fall of communism Greece had also become a country of immigration rather than emigration. The 1991 law therefore was also necessary in order to regulate the influx of foreign migrants coming into Greece (Official Government Gazette 1991).

As was the case with Pontic Greeks entering Greece in the beginning of the twentieth century, flying from the former Ottoman Empire, Pontic Greeks of the former Soviet Union where not particularly welcomed by the local population. Quickly branded as outsiders, they were referred to as Russian-Pontics (*Ρωσοπόντιοι* in Greek), a derogatory and pejorative term, coined by popular media in an effort to separate the newcomers from their counterparts repatriated in Greece around the time of the Greek Catastrophe, but resulting in questioning their ancestry and Greek lineage. The old and forgotten stereotypes that tormented Pontic refugees in the first half of the twentieth century were resurfaced in the Greek public sphere

after the Soviet Union dissolved and reinforced by xenophobic attitudes towards migrants from former communist states.

Roughly a decade from the fall of communism and less than a decade from the Maastricht Treaty and the formation of the European Union, the Euro currency was launched in circulation. Following the collapse of the Lehman Brothers in 2008 and the Dubai sovereign debt crisis near the end of 2009, Greece that has been previously instructed to reduce its budget deficit, came to acknowledge a national debt almost double to the Eurozone's limit, a proclamation which brought forth a series of downgrades of the state's credit rating and a further increase on its national debt and budget deficit (*BBC News*, June 13, 2012).

In collaboration with the European Union, strict fiscal measures were introduced in an effort to rectify the issue, deeply impacting the living conditions in Greece for the worse. The loss of income to salary cuts, the rising cost of living as well as the increase of unemployment, which by the end of 2013 had reached 27 percent (Sotiropoulos and Bourikos 2014), had a profound socioeconomic impact on the emigration rate, analogous to that experienced in Greece in the 1960s. In reference to the new wave of Greek emigration, the Greek press colloquially used the term *neo-migrants* to describe post 2010 crisis-driven emigrants. However, despite its colloquial origin, the term is useful to distinguish crisis-driven emigrants from the established Greek Diaspora, as well as from Greek European expatriates in a temporal manner, but also in terms of motives, relocation patterns and integration opportunities (Tseligka 2022, p. 55).

Being amongst the most financially vulnerable, many Pontic Greeks of the Soviet Union took the same decision with their counterparts in the 1960s and relocated to Germany. Of course, under the auspices of the European Union their relocation took place within a more permissive migratory regime than that of guest-workers, however during the field research I conducted for my 2019 book, mentioned earlier in the article, I encountered many testimonies of Pontic Greeks of the Soviet Union, having recently relocated in Germany, often supported by immigrant associations of the established Pontic Greek Diaspora in the country. Indicative is the following interview extract from the headmaster of one of the Greek lyceums in Bavaria: "*I am aware of families offering accommodation to fellow Pontics (of the former Soviet Union). Generally speaking, I do not think they have acquired average living standards yet and I am aware that they live in poor conditions and crowed accommodations; however they really support each other*" (Dr T.K. Teacher 2013).

In most of the interviews were Pontic Greeks of the Soviet Union have been brought up, a narrative describing extreme poverty and poor living conditions have also been reported. Not in few occasions, second generation members of the Greek Diaspora in Germany, mentioned how the living conditions of the former Soviet Pontic Greeks, reminded them of their childhood, as children of guest-workers in the 1960s or the stories they heard from their parents about their living conditions when they first moved to Germany as *Gastarbeiter*.

Finally, there was yet a third theme in the narratives about former Soviet Pontic Greeks in Germany that reflected the distrust and intolerance by which they have been first met during their repatriation in Greece in the 1990s. Indicative of

those hostile narratives is the 2013 interview extract below, by a Greek European expatriate, which I have chosen to completely anonymise, therefore I will not disclose any other information, such as the location where the interview was taken or the exact date when it was conducted: *"We have too many Rusian-Pontics, who based on my own experience […], I would say that they are opportunistic. What I mean by that is that they took advantage of all the good things offered to them by the Greek state (referring to Greek nationality), but (instead of staying in Greece) they seized the opportunity to migrate in Germany. They do that because they have nothing to lose; they are allowed to take their Greek passports with them and as Greek citizens, through the European Union, they relocate to Germany"* (Anonymous 2013).

The above extract and others similar analysed for the sake of this article, focus on Greek and by extension European citizenship, as a privilege rather than a right. This brings to mind the narratives of social hierarchy and exclusion by which Pontic Greeks and other refuges of the Greek Catastrophe were faced, by the Greek mainland population in the beginning of the twentieth century. As previously discussed in this article, the original survivals of the 1915 Pontic genocide, who entered Greece as refugees, had recently undergone the transformation of an Imperial Diaspora to a Victim Diaspora. The current wave of Greek emigration, including that of Pontic Greeks of the Soviet Union, to Germany is ongoing and therefore it cannot be fully studied, let alone permit any conclusions to be reached regarding its results and outcomes. However, the historic example of Pontic Greek residence and ultimately integration, in Germany and elsewhere, allows space for optimism.

Conclusion

Starting their journey in space and time as an Imperial Diaspora in the mountainous areas of Anatolia, Pontic Greeks have a long history that dates back to the millennia. Due to their geographic isolation, their language and culture, though both undoubtedly Greek, developed differently from the common paradigm of mainland Greeks. In the beginning of the twentieth century, the socio-political tensions within the declining Ottoman Empire, brought them, as well as the other Christian minorities within the Empire, in the epicentre of animosity, hostility and ultimately persecution. Subjected to ethnic cleansing and genocide, Pontic Greeks were violently expelled from their ancestral lands and fleeing for their lives, started their journey as refugees. During that journey, their population was divided into two main bodies. The first was comprised of those who managed to flee towards the west and entered the newly founded Modern Greek state. The second body of Pontic Greek refugees, cut off from the rest by the Turkish army, continued their perilous journey towards the east and found refuge in parts of the Soviet Union, in some cases merging with the existing Greek Trade Diaspora in those regions, which already included many Pontic Greek families. However, instead of safety, they were faced with further persecution by the communist regime. Regardless

though of their geographic location, both bodies of the Pontic Greek population became established as a Victim (Refugee) Diaspora.

The harsh economic conditions in Greece, as well as the further decline of the Greek economy due to the Second World War and the subsequent Civil War, left little space for the integration of refugees. Therefore, a significant part of the Pontic Greeks, descendants of the original refugees, immigrated to Germany as *Gastarbeiter* in the 1960s, becoming a Labour Diaspora. After Greece's full induction to the European Communities in 1981 and the founding of the European Union in the decade that followed, Greeks in Germany found the space to fully integrate and departing from their guest-worker past, they evolved to a Cultural Diaspora, with modernised traditions. At the same time, their counterparts from the former Soviet Union, could also join them in Germany, following their footsteps from the 1960s, but as European Expatriates, rather than *Gastarbeiter*, joining the Pontic Greek Diaspora in Germany.

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Male Shaming, Social Representations and Discriminations of Masculinity: A Socio-psychological Research

By Giuseppe Masullo[*], Marianna Coppola[±] & Miriam Matteo[°]

The shaming process represents the process of marginalization, de-humanization and derision against a person or a group of people for their anthropometric, psychological, social and cultural characteristics (Pacilli 2014). This contribution aims to study the male shaming process, trying to outline psychological, social and cultural characteristics around the construction of the male identity, analyzing the social representations of masculinity and the main discrimination suffered by men within their in-groups, both in development and in adulthood, between hate speech (Di Rosa 2020) and shaming processes. To this end, we asked ourselves the following research questions:

- *What are the main reasons for discrimination for adolescent males?*
- *Is there continuity and historical evolution of the discrimination suffered in adolescence with any discrimination and shaming processes in adulthood?*
- *What are the main contexts where discrimination and harassment are exercised? What are the protective factors that push the subject to "proactive" responses?*

In order to answer the questions posed, a mix methods research design was used, with an anonymous online questionnaire, administered to 150 men aged 18 and 45 years old and a semi-structured biographical interview, submitted to 40 men selected through online questionnaires.

Keywords: *male shaming, masculinity, homosexuality, body shaming, heteronormativity*

Introduction

In May 2020, during the COVID-19 health emergency, the news on the new Coronavirus pandemic formed the 'Infodemic' and an all-encompassing background of a heated debate regarding a culturally transversal and customary fact. It was the episode of body shaming of Giovanna Botteri, the RAI journalist sent to China. She was mocked by the satirical Tg Striscia la Notizia for her way

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[1]The paper was devised and written jointly by the authors. However, for the sake of authorship, the sections 1, 2 and 2.2 are attributed to Giuseppe Masullo, the section 2.1 is attributed to Miriam Matteo and the section 3 is attributed to Marianna Coppola. The authors co-wrote the conclusions.

of presenting herself during live broadcasts, always wearing the same clothing and having messy hair.

This case of body shaming, which immediately became viral, has divided Italian and international public opinion, focusing attention on the related issues of bullying, cyberbullying and gender discrimination processes.

The shaming process; the process of marginalisation, dehumanisation, and derision to the detriment of a person or a group of people, is attributable to certain anthropometric, psychological, social, and cultural characteristics (Pacilli 2014). Concerning this process, over the last few years, scientific literature has matured an interesting production of contributions and research on the analysis and study of shaming processes; particularly in the field of feminist studies on body shaming against women (Simone 2012, Mattucci 2017).

This contribution, on the other hand, aims to study the processes of shaming to the detriment of man (male shaming), starting from the psychological and socio-cultural characteristics that contribute to the construction of male identity.

The theoretical reference exposition is divided into two sections, which represent the conceptual frame of orientation and anchoring of the empirical data proposed in the section dedicated to research.

The first part will define the concepts of social groups, reference groups, and processes of social marginalisation of which, specifically, the concepts of hate speech, online hate speech, the shaming process, and male shaming will be explained (Bandura 1997, Volpato 2012, Pacilli 2014, Bennato 2011, Di Rosa 2020). In the second part, the concept of masculinity will be addressed within a broader theoretical framework, through the analysis of the construction and representation of male identity, gender, and gender expressiveness, taking into consideration the contributions and theories of Men's Studies.

The analysis of this reference literature will focus on the contributions and research of its main exponents, including Connell (1995), Brod (2014), and Kimmel et al. (2004), through which the complexity of the treatment of male identity will be highlighted, considered mostly normative and hegemonic, to which non-conforming masculine identities are considered out-group by the reference heteronormative group.

In the final part, the results of the research conducted with mixed methods will be presented and discussed, consisting of a quantitative phase of mapping the processes of male shaming, through the administration of an online questionnaire to 150 men and a subsequent qualitative phase of semi-interviews (structured, aimed at 40 men selected from among the 150 participants in the questionnaire). The answers they adduced contribute on the one hand to orient the understanding of the processes of dehumanisation, discrimination, and derision to the detriment of certain men. On the other hand, they highlight the need to construct positive narratives of non-conforming masculinity, promoted by social policies, major socio-educational agencies, social network communities, and the State.

Social Groups between Identification Processes and Social Discrimination Processes

In order to understand the processes of discrimination and social exclusion, it is necessary to clarify the concepts of social group and reference group.

By social group, we mean a set of people who interact habitually, aware of their respective social status within the group. Conventionally, in sociology and the human sciences, there are two types of social groups: The Primary group and The Secondary group.

By Primary group we mean a set of people who establish regular interpersonal contacts, lasting and with a significant emotional and relational bond: they are influential socialization agencies, which regulate most of the value systems and social norms of reference (Ghisleni and Moscati 2001).

By Secondary group, we mean a social context in which people act in a relatively impersonal way, generally for the achievement of a common goal or goal. There is a lesser degree of intimacy and emotional involvement and, consequently, the group exerts less influence on the internalisation of the value and moral system. However, the globalisation of social systems and their collapse within the web and social media has led to a less clear-cut and rigid distinction between primary and secondary groups: in fact, a 'Primatisation' of secondary and social contexts is created. A 'Secondaryisation' of primary social contexts (Rogers 2012).

In the processes of socialisation and formation of the Self, mirroring with the other and with the members of social groups constitutes a fundamental evolutionary stage, aimed at defining the reference group - that is the group or all groups - with which the individual decides to measure himself and to mirror himself. Target groups can be family members, circle of friends, work colleagues, and social categories of reference. In the construction of gender identity, for example, the processes of gender mirroring and sexual role constitute a fundamental dividing line for the typical process. Conversely, the lack of internalization or mirroring process leads to the formation of non-normative and non-binary forms of identity (Lingiardi 2014).

According to Tajfel (1971), each social group creates its own coherent identity construction, with specific reference parameters and expressive methods, to identify "non-compliant" profiles and identities within itself, progressively eliminating them in order to maintain internal coherence 'stable' and 'durable'. In the theory of social identity, with regard to the identification paths of non-homogeneous profiles, the author notes three processes:

- Categorisation: the members of a social group construct functional and discriminative 'categories' of belonging to the reference group, based on a multiplicity of factors (age, sex, social or working position, religion, political affiliation, etc.), with the tendency to maximize the similarities between the subjects within the category, while discriminating the differences with the opposing categories;

- Identification: group memberships describe the psychological and social basis for the construction of one's social identity. Social identity is, in effect, made up of a hierarchy of multiple affiliations.
- Social comparison: the members of a reference group with a well-constituted social identity, continuously compare their in-group with the out-group, activating conduct of evaluation, selection, and social discrimination to maintain the coherent and cohesive social identity of their own group.

Expanding on Tajfel's contribution, Marques et al. (1998) formulate the concept of the Black sheep effect. The Black Sheep effect considers the pressure and social criticism exerted by members of a particular group, considered as a reference, towards individuals who do not have the prototypical connotations of the group; the latter tends to evaluate each of its members severely, maximizing their errors and applying exemplary punishments.

The Black Sheep effect performs three main functions:

- preserves the positive identity of the group and ensures internal consistency in the reference group;
- explicit membership rules and sanctions for violators of the rules and reference parameters;
- distracts members from other problems within the group.

These psycho-social processes are the basis of the main antisocial behaviours such as racism, homophobia, bullying, misogyny, and social exclusion: these are processes attributable to the more general conduct of hate speech, whose common denominator, of a heterophobic and/or devaluing type, coincides with "the negation of the humanity of the other" (Di Rosa 2020, p. 71).

Hate Speech, the Shaming Process, and Male Shaming: Towards a Performative Definition

The anti-social phenomenon known as 'hate speech', has been the subject of international debate on human rights and freedom of expression since the Second World War, a period in which, in the aftermath of Nazi fascists hate crimes to the detriment of entire peoples - Jews, Roma, Poles, etc. - and of social categories considered inferior, useless, in-human, there was the urgency of the reaffirmation of a humanity that started precisely from the fight against racism and anti-Semitism. However, the widening of the anti-discriminatory horizon, consequent to the progressive claim of human rights by socially vulnerable categories, especially women and LGBT, characterized the entire second half of the twentieth century, allowing to build an increasingly articulated definition of hate speech.

In the European context one of the first steps towards the inclusion of the socially vulnerable category of LGBT, in the Community anti-discriminatory guidelines, was taken by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe with Recommendation 20/97, where "hate speech must be understood as any form

of expression that spreads, incites, promotes or justifies racial hatred, xenophobia or other forms of hatred based on intolerance" (Di Rosa 2020, p. 47). The consideration of the discriminatory phenomenon is evident as an open question in which, in the years immediately following, "measures to combat discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity" were also included (Di Rosa 2020, p. 53). Therefore, in 2005 the same Committee, with Recommendation no. 5, "establishes the need to recall the principle that no cultural, traditional or religious value, nor any rule or dominant culture can be invoked to justify hate speech or other forms of discrimination, including those based on sexual orientation or gender identity" (Di Rosa 2020, p. 53). In 2015, the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) arrived at the construction of an overall and almost exhaustive framework, concerning what must be understood by hate speech. In the General Recommendation no.15 / 2015, he argues that:

> "By hate speech we mean behaviour that consists in fomenting, promoting or encouraging, in any form, the denigration, hatred or defamation of a person or group, as well as subjecting to abuse, insults, negative stereotypes, stigmatising or threatening a person or group and the justification of all these forms or expressions of hatred just mentioned, based on race, skin colour, ancestry, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, language, religion or belief, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other personal characteristics or status" (Di Rosa 2020, p. 58; emphasis added).

Starting from this definition, it is possible to consider hate speech in performative terms, assuming it as a linguistic act which, overcoming the Cartesian dualism between thought and action - res cogitans and res extensa - does not have a mere locutory value, but rather illocutionary and is able to have consequences on the listener, both in individual terms and in social terms, both in psychological terms and in material terms (see: Di Rosa 2020, pp. 115–151). "It almost seems possible to say, therefore, that every speech act actually consists of an action" (Di Rosa 2020, p. 118). At this point, we can better understand what the performative value that Di Rosa attributes to hate speech and discrimination consists of. Specifically, "hate speech performatively creates this - discriminatory - reality in the collective consciousness, constituting its victims in a position of inferiority that ends up becoming part of a prejudice, a commonplace, which lurks in the lower layers of social consciousness" (Di Rosa 2020, p. 15).

For the purposes of this work, the significance that hate speech assumes with respect to the characteristics of the individual or group it intends to strike is fundamental. This hatred "can be identified in the denial of the other as a subject of human rights, which is expressed in deplore for his very existence, in the reproach for his belonging to a category conceptualised as" the Other." In this sense, therefore, in order for there to be hatred, it is necessary that the conduct is aimed at certain persons by virtue of their belonging to a group in a situation of vulnerability, on the basis of the prohibited grounds of discrimination" (Di Rosa 2020, p. 72).

It is precisely within such conduct that the shaming process is revealed, and specifically the phenomenon of evil shaming, the subject of this work. Male shaming means the process of discrimination, marginalisation, derision and

progressive exclusion from the dominant reference group of non-conforming males, through bullying, body shaming, media pillory and verbal and physical aggression.

Before delving into the processes of male shaming, given the increasingly massive interpenetration, in post-modern societies, of the "virtual world" in the world of the "real world", it is necessary to dwell briefly on the online drifts of the same which, together with the more general just analysed hate speech and shaming process phenomena converge in the online anti-social behaviour of trolling (Bennato 2011) or online hate speech. According to Bennato, in order for online hate speech to manifest itself, it is necessary that those who implement it - hater - possess a system of values which, on the one hand, underlie a certain degree of intolerance towards an individual and/or his group to which he belongs. On the other hand, they must necessarily be shared with the group in which the hater feels an active part, both from an ideological and cultural point of view. This sharing, mixed with a sense of belonging, leads the latter to have the perception that their values are legitimised and justified by the reality in which he finds himself immersed.

However, the aspect for which it is plausible to speak of online drift of hate speech and shaming processes concerns the reinforcement that online hate speech can receive from internet algorithms and, specifically, from social networks. In particular, Bennato identifies three mechanisms through which online hate speech can be reinforced:

1. 'Filter bubble effect:' people consolidate their values through social media personalisation algorithms. In other words, social networks tend to offer their users the contents they search for and view more often;
2. 'Homophilia:' users of social networks tend to establish virtual social bonds with the people with whom they share their values;
3. 'Spiral of silence:' the more the hater has the perception of having an attitude of legitimacy around him, the more he will express himself in a violent way. As will be seen below, each of these mechanisms must correspond to an adequate contrastive strategy of online counter speech.

Male Identity: Anthropometric, Psychological and Socio-cultural Parameters

To understand the processes of male shaming it is necessary to frame the anthropometric, psychological, and socio-cultural parameters of the dominant male identity so that it is possible to observe that dividing line below which non-conforming masculinity is susceptible to dehumanisation, discrimination, and derision.

While the female gender identity, starting from the last century, has been the subject of numerous contributions, reflections, and theoretical reformulations, for which the successive generations of feminists have questioned its connotations on several occasions, the identity of the male gender is mostly crystallised and resolved within the mono-descriptive characters of the typing 'alpha.'

This construction of the identity of the male is centred on a dominant model, which connotes it as the reference sex, which derives its raison d'etre from the comparison with the female gender, which in this sense assumes the traits of the negative of the masculine, of the male otherness (Kauland et al. 2018, Rinaldi 2017).

Bourdieu (1998) speaks of male domination, highlighting the different forms of manifestation of man's power, over women, over other men, and in different spheres and social fields.

The binary distinction between the male gender and the female gender, which continued in Western culture until the second half of the last century, led to a radical consolidation of the psychological, social, and cultural differences between men and women, which are detectable in all the social dimensions: from family to work, from education to social participation.

Subsequently, in the United States of the late sixties, as part of a more general process of socio-cultural innovation, with the birth of Men's Studies - in synergy with the movements as will be seen below (see par. 4.3), each of these mechanisms must correspond to an adequate contrastive strategy of online counter speech.

Feminists and pacifists no-Vietnam - a process of deconstructing the models of masculinity imposed by the Fordist and capitalist, patriarchal, and anti-feminist system begins (Vedovati 2007, Ruspini 2012, Fidolini 2017).

Starting from the nineties, through the study of emotions, relationships, perceptions, lifestyles, and sexuality of men, there is a growing interest, on the part of social sciences, in the mechanisms of construction of male identity of reference, considered normative above all of the ruling class, which saw in the white, western, upper-middle-class and heterosexual the category considered elite, dominant and normative.

Badinter (1995), in his essay L'identity male, describes the two phases of the crisis of masculinity in the course of modern history: the first, which took place in France and England between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, is linked to the movement of French précieuses and the claims of the proto-feminists of the English area for dignity, education, equality and the right of non-abandonment in the event of pregnancy. The second phase, on the other hand, took place in the United States and post-colonial Europe of the twentieth century, following the economic and social contrasts generated by industrialisation and the spread of democracy, phenomena that proposed a new identity of the female gender, with a new type of woman who fought for the right to education, participation in public life and a fair wage.

In his famous Masculinities, Raewyn Connell (1995) formulates the theory of hegemonic masculinity and proposes a historical, philosophical, and sociological excursus on the pre-modern and modern ages, during which certain salient features of men and women crystallised as archetypes of genres up to the contemporary age.

Connell traces in historical, social, and cultural differences, before biological ones, the differences between male and female identities, with a matrix of subordination to the detriment of the latter which, over the centuries, has been

strengthened, rooted, and institutionalized in the collective imagination of Western societies.

The scholar, overcoming the limits of the functionalist theory of social roles, proposes an identity vision of masculinity in terms of how social practices are structured, which allows us to look at masculinity in relation to race, social class, skills, and body construction (Rinaldi 2017).

In such an identity construction, the gender order, that is the set of social models that regulate the relationships between masculinity and femininity, is represented by a sexual differentiation of the different psychological and social spheres (family, work, power, authority, social life) and each context is characterised by a gender regime in which to identify a hierarchy. Connell, therefore, identifies different types of masculinity:

- Hegemon: it is configured as the standard that most men try to embody and outlines the in-group and out-group processes. Built and consolidated through social, value, and media representations, it is a dominant identity construction compared to other types of masculinity and femininity;
- Subordinate: corresponds to the identity construction of the male who does not present the prototypical form of the hegemonic male, from which he undergoes forms of social pressure and discrimination (for example homosexuals, males of different ethnicity);
- Accomplice: it represents the most widespread form of identity construction, which, not being able to rise to a dominant position, allies itself with the dominant profiles, drawing benefits from them;
- Marginal: this is the male belonging to different social categories, unable to become dominant in the social context as he lives a double social role. On the one hand, recognised and authorised in his own subcultural social group, on the other marginal and discriminated against in the social group of reference (e.g., immigrant males).

The concept of hegemonic masculinity has been widely criticised by the sociological scientific community. Collier (1998) and Petersen (1998), for example, consider the typologies of masculinity proposed by Connell to be static and deterministic, as they do not consider the typologies of masculinity of the non-binary and non-conforming genders.

However, the theory of hegemonic masculinity, although subjected to several revisions, describes a very clear and representative construction of the identity of the male.

In the context of gender studies, sociologists and anthropologists have tried to typify the characteristics of the male, mapping the traits associated with the male identity of reference and the related beliefs, expectations, and social representations.

Butler (1990, 2017) talks about gender unity as the result of a complex regulatory process, which aims at the stability and uniformity of sexual genders through compulsory heterosexuality, which is a cultural, social, and symbolic hegemonic model, which exercises a system of exclusion and repression of identities considered 'deviant'. According to the author, it is possible to identify

different anthropometric, psychological, and socio-cultural parameters that allow us to live in the norm with respect to the social and value constructions of the Western world. In particular:

- Masculinity is heteronormative: according to the models proposed by Scientia Sexualis, based on a naturalistic and normative matrix, sexuality is expressed by a binary gender model (male/female) with a functional reproductive orientation (heterosexual);
- Masculinity is virile: the psychological and relational norm is explained by a series of constructions and beliefs around the figure of the male, which differentiate 'being a man' from 'not being a man' (for example: man does not cry, man is a hunter, man betrays by nature);
- Masculinity is healthy and strong corporeality: the physical norm of man refers to very clear anthropometric parameters, which delineate the boundary between in-group and out-group of the male reference group. The man must be attractive, sexually attractive, thin: otherwise, his access to the reference group of hegemonic masculinity must take place through other social, economic and cultural vestments;
- Masculinity is power and success: the social and cultural norm of the hegemonic male is represented by the social and economic power, which he exercises in society and over other categories and social classes; the man must be able to support himself economically, must be able to support the family and must have a higher social status than the woman.

Badinter (1995) instead considers contemporary male identity as a mutilated masculinity, severely tested by socio-cultural changes triggered by feminist movements and by LGBT and queer movements. According to this view, the male is anachronistic, the bearer of values and beliefs that do not correspond to the needs of the contemporary age. In other words, the progressive emancipation of women and the processes of self-determination of non-conforming and non-binary identities have led to an obsolescence of the hegemonic male described by Connell.

Petersen (1998), however, criticizes Badinter's position as it does not analyse in-depth contemporary society, in which a model of masculinity based on a construction of identity persists, in a rooted and conservative way, which derives its power from social asymmetry; establishing in a clear and identifying way the anthropometric, psychological, and socio-cultural vestments of the male and, consequently, delineating the normative boundary within which subjects can activate processes of discrimination, dehumanisation, and male shaming.

Research Objectives and Methodological Aspects

The purpose of this research is to analyse the social representations of masculinity and the main discrimination suffered by men within their reference groups, both in development and in adulthood.

To this end, the following research questions have been set as an empirical guiding thread:

- What are the main reasons behind discrimination for adolescent males?
- There is continuity and historical evolution between the discrimination suffered in adolescence and any discrimination and shaming processes in adulthood?
- What are the main contexts where discrimination and harassment are exercised? Which can they represent protective factors that push the subject to "proactive" responses?

To answer these questions, a mixed methods research design was used, through the administration of an anonymous online questionnaire (with the aim of creating a "mapping" of discriminatory and shaming phenomena) to 150 men aged between 18 and 45 years old through an "avalanche" sampling procedure. Subsequently, a semi-structured interview was constructed (to investigate qualitative and content aspects), subjected to 40 men selected from the online questionnaires, based on the results that emerged.

Specifically, the semi-structured interview investigated the following dimensions:

- Evolutionary history of discrimination and shaming processes, in terms of biographical reconstruction in developmental age (6-18 years), in an attempt to outline the salient features, the emotions experienced, the coping processes and the protective factors activated for well-being psycho-physical in the historical-evolutionary period;
- Discrimination and shaming processes in adulthood: qualitative analysis of discrimination and processes of marginalization and denigration in adulthood, aimed at identifying factors of continuity or of discontinuity with childhood and adolescence, highlighting the characteristics and aspects that can define the social representations of masculinity;
- Male shaming online: analysis of the peculiarities and implementation methods of online shaming and discrimination phenomena and comparison of discriminatory and face-to-face shaming processes.

The research participants were selected in Italy in the period May-July 2020.

Analysis and Discussion of Data

The Online Questionnaire: The Mapping of Male Shaming

150 men aged 18-45 completed the online questionnaire, with the distribution by cohort shown in Table 1.

Table 1. *Distribution by Age*

Age range	Percentage
18 – 25 years	22.2 %
26 – 35 years	44.4%
36 – 45 years	33.3%

As regards the geographical distribution, men residing in the regions of Campania (40%), Lazio (20%), Tuscany (10%), Lombardy (10%), Emilia-Romagna (10%), and Sicily (10%), participated in the research.

The first block of the questionnaire (three questions in sequence) asked the research participants if they had suffered discrimination, harassment, and bullying at school age (6-18 years) and, if so, to indicate in which teaching cycle and for which motivation.

The results show that 40% of the participants suffered bullying, discrimination, and shaming at school, identifying the period most exposed to such antisocial behaviours in the lower secondary school (Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1. *Discrimination and Bullyng During School Years*
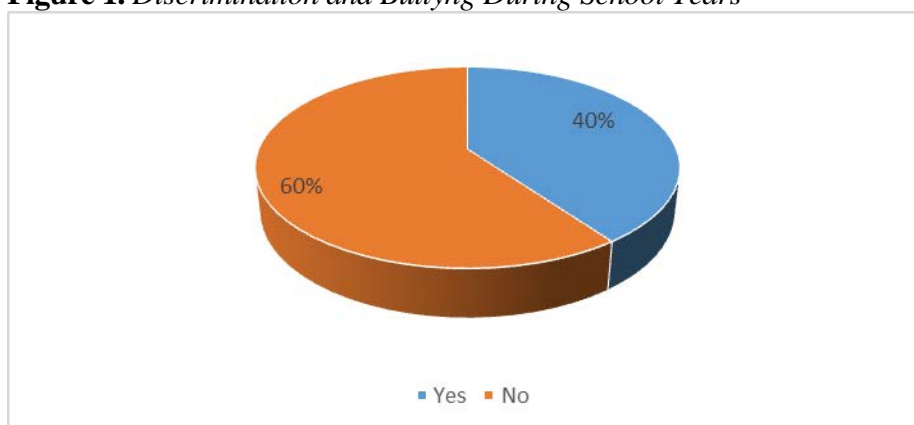
Figure 2. *Discrimination and Bullying in Schools - Degree of Education*
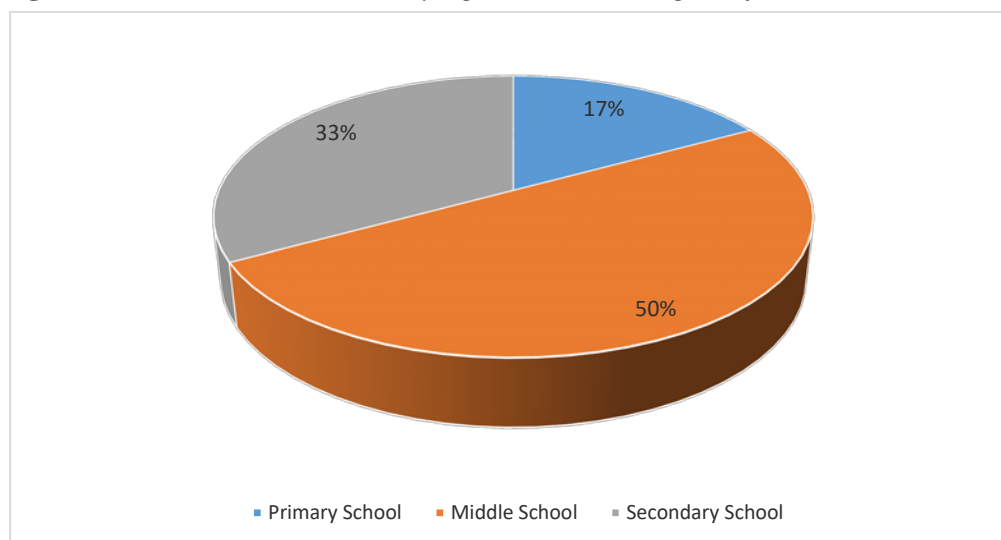
The motivations and aspects characterising discrimination, bullying, and shaming for males of developmental age, are important for the construction of the social representation of masculinity. Specifically, the constructions of non-conforming males in developmental age would concern two important aspects. On the one hand, these constructions concern identity and sexual orientation: since in line with the studies in the literature on hegemonic and heteronormative masculinity (Connell 1955, Rinaldi 2017, Fidolini 2017, Masullo and Coppola 2020a), the male who does not manifest security and does not reflect the expressiveness of heteronormative gender is discriminated against, harassed and marginalised. On the other hand, weight and build represent the second demonised and stigmatised aspect, as the male body must be agile, slender, and handsome, otherwise, it does not find the possibility of inclusion in the in-groups that count in the evolutionary phase (sportsmen, game).

Starting from these first aspects that emerged, it is clear that the male body image is already outlined in the evolutionary phase and is able to communicate heteronormativity and physical agreeableness, both in terms of incidence and in terms of usability in social activities. As can be seen from Figure 3, the aesthetic aspects - especially body weight (31%) - represent the main reason for discrimination, while gender identity and sexual orientation represent the other important expression object of possible behaviours of shaming and bullying.

Figure 3. *Motivation and Characteristics of Discrimination and Acts of Bullying*
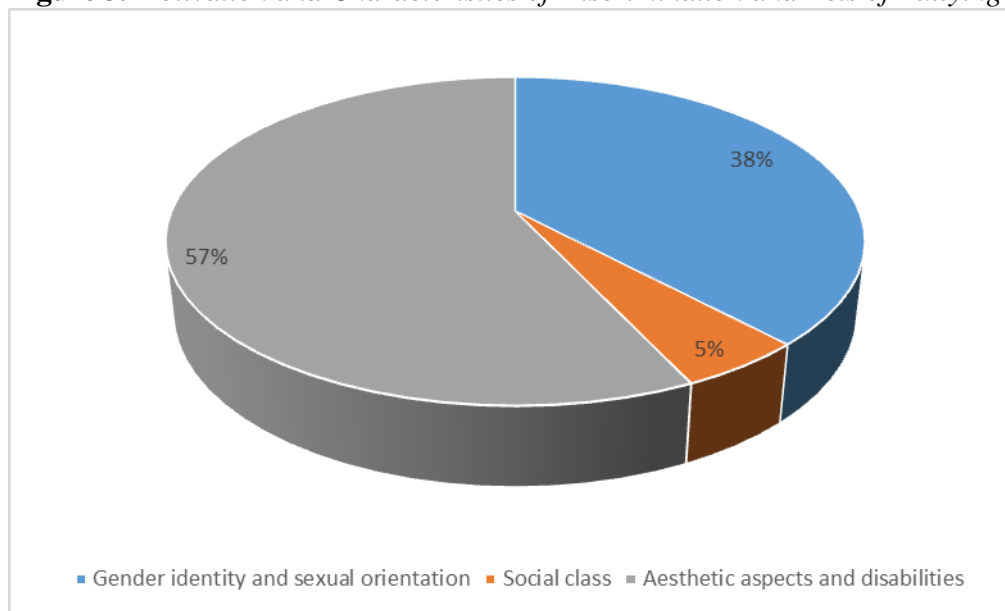
The second block of the questionnaire (three questions in sequence) presents the same questions (in terms of frequency, social context, and motivations) declined in adulthood, to identify elements of continuity/ discontinuity and social and contextual areas in which discrimination and shaming processes are implemented.

The results show that, in terms of frequency, the percentage of subjects who have undergone discrimination and shaming processes is 40% (in line with the

data reported in the evolutionary phase); of this percentage, 25% also answered affirmatively to the first block of questions, while 15% had not suffered discrimination in the school context, but in adulthood.

On the other hand, as regards the analysis of the social contexts and areas in which discriminatory and shaming behaviours take place, school is replaced by University (23%) and work context (34%), areas in which episodes of marginalisation and social pressure intensifies. The data relating to discrimination and shaming processes within the social network of reference is interesting: 18% of respondents said they were discriminated against by their friends, 9% by their family members.

The data relating to the reasons for discrimination and shaming processes confirm the results that emerged from the two macro-areas identified in developmental age (Gender Identity/Sexual Orientation and weight/build), compared to a construction of masculinity focused on virility/heterosexuality and prowess physics (Figure 4). However, a new motivation behind discrimination and shaming processes emerges, namely geographic origin and political ideologies (12%). This data would highlight how, based on a more articulated and complex social network, in-group and out-group processes involve multiple aspects of identity and of the Self.

Figure 4. *Reasons for Male Shaming Discrimination in Adulthood*
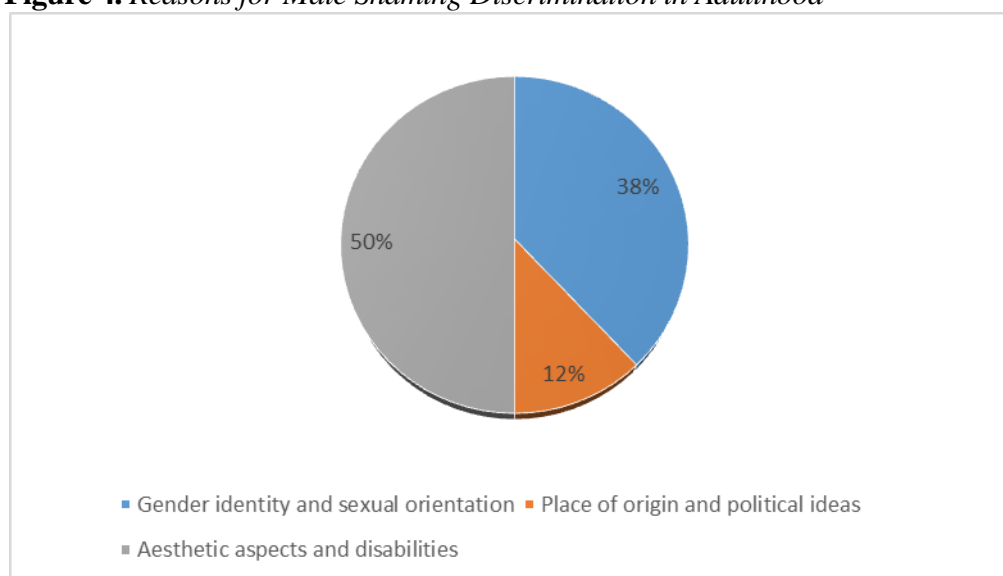
Figure 5. *Social Contexts in which Discriminatory Episodes and Processes of Male Shaming have occurred*
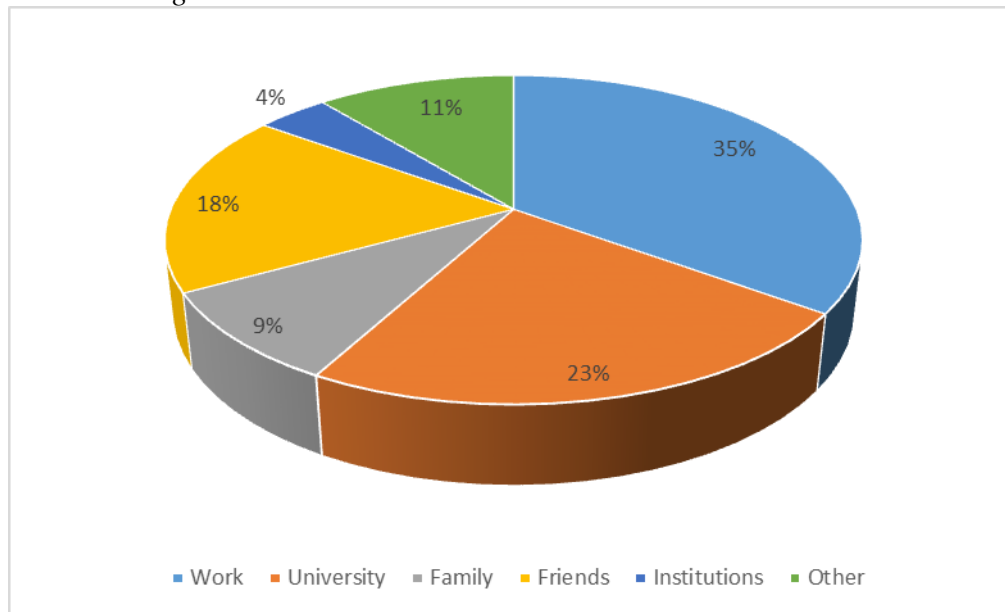
Finally, the third block of questions (three questions in sequence) examines the frequency and implementation methods of discrimination and male shaming processes on the web and social networks.

In-depth Interviews: Between Heteronormative and Corporeality

To outline the qualitative and peculiar aspects of male shaming, semi-structured and in-depth interviews were carried out with 40 participants in the online questionnaire. Twenty subjects declared that they had suffered discrimination and shaming on their gender identity and/or sexual orientation, and twenty subjects identified the reasons underlying the episodes of discrimination in weight and body size.

The dimensions investigated in the questionnaire refer to the onset and developmental history of discrimination and male shaming phenomena, to the continuity/discontinuity between developmental age and adulthood, and episodes of online male shaming.

Heteronormativity in the Male Shaming Process

From the qualitative interviews carried out on the 20 subjects participating in the online questionnaire who had indicated gender identity and/or sexual orientation as the cause of the discrimination suffered, a clear picture emerges for how heterosexuality (declared or underlying) constitutes one of the main characteristics that male conforming must possess, in order not to be stigmatised and marginalised by one's reference group.

In line with the studies on heteronormativity (Connell 1995, Fidolini 2017) the male, to exercise dominance within his social category, must possess a series

of criteria and characteristics in terms of virility, predation, strength, and power. These characteristics are essential to finding a safe, recognised, and stable position within the social group of reference.

From the analysis of the interviews, it emerged that the identification, by the group of males, of male non-conforming profiles occurs early and the dynamics of stigmatisation and marginalisation follow a very clear and recognisable evolutionary trajectory.

At the base of the process of discrimination and male shaming, by heteronormative masculinity, there is a specific episode, which acts as a watershed on the social identity of the subject, for example: choosing a certain hairstyle, following a certain television program, having a diary, wearing certain clothes and accessories not clearly circumscribable to the gender they belong to all constitute events that "inform" the other members of the group, of the non-conformity of the subject in question to the heterosexual male ideal.

> "It all started immediately after the beginning of middle school. A few weeks later one of my school friends started saying I looked like a girl because I had long hair. After a few months, hell began. I had terrible anxiety about going to school." (Giovanni, 33 years old).

The specific start-up episode is followed by an exponential growth in episodes of discrimination, bullying, and shaming by a large part of the group of males in the class, up to the peak of marginalisation, which can represent an act of physical violence or total isolation of the subject from the category of 'males of the class'.

Any coping and resilience strategies to cope with psycho-social malaise during the developmental age can be traced back to three main categories: escape, defence, or social relocation to another target group.

Many children who are marginalised and discriminated against for their gender identity and/or non-conforming sexual orientation, after numerous harassments and humiliations, implement a resolutive strategy of escape from the problem: they leave school, avoid the places they frequent and, slowly, isolate themselves maintaining few social and interpersonal relationships. As is the case of an interviewee who declares himself to be heterosexual, that he had to resort to these resilience strategies due to discrimination suffered due to his gender expressiveness.

> "My adolescence was not a simple one. After high school where I was accused of being homosexual, in high school I thought I was out of it. Instead, a classmate of mine was the brother of a former schoolmate of mine who obviously told everything to his brother. It was hell again, even worse than before. If in middle school, the discrimination was verbal in high school some guys wanted to force me to have sexual performances with them. It was very bad. I left school and got a diploma in a Paritaria." (Angelo, 32 years old).

A second, possible reaction to discriminatory and bullying acts consists of self-defence through the use of force. Some young people reported that they

enrolled in the gym or self-defence courses to be able to defend themselves, safeguarding their psychophysical well-being.

> "I enrolled in martial arts. Not to be more manly but to defend myself. At school and on the street, I had no respite, for them I was not a boy. I learned to hit and not trust anyone." (Luca, 33 years old).

Finally, a third reaction to exposure to the malaise of discrimination and social stigmatisation consists of social relocation to another target group. Some boys reported the need to forge friendships, relationships, and interpersonal relationships with girls (mainly chosen by boys with a homosexual sexual orientation) or with other boys marginalised for different reasons (weight and build, physical defects, geographical origin or ethnicity, etc.), establishing an alliance as an active minority.

> "Well, it was obvious to me that I was gay. I have always been very 'effeminate'. I suffered a lot of discrimination and bullying, but I didn't give much weight. Towards the beginning of the eighth grade, I had only one male friend, with dental braces and discriminated against, and many female friends." (Giulio, 29 years old).

As regards the continuity/discontinuity of discrimination and male shaming from developmental age to adulthood, there is a conspicuous continuum, of which gender identity or a non-conforming sexual orientation constitute the main discriminatory target in the processes of social marginalisation.

Basically, from the interviews carried out, a double channelling of discriminatory processes emerged, in which social capital and coming-out act as the tiebreaker, in particular for those boys with a homosexual orientation.

The respondents who came out early in their life contexts (family, friends and proximal social network) reported greater security in secondary social contexts (e.g., work and institutional settings). The authenticity expressed with emotionally significant people constitutes a significant protection and social empowerment factor, such as perceiving discrimination in a reduced form in life contexts.

> "I declared myself gay at 18. I couldn't continue the charade. Yes, I had a couple of episodes of discrimination at university, the usual jokes, but few things. I have always had the support of my family and friends. Even at work, I don't say it openly, but if you find out it's not a problem!" (Davide, 35 years old).

On the other hand, the interviewees who have not made their sexual identity or orientation explicit; not conforming even with emotionally significant persons, report a greater 'concern' of judgment and suffer discriminatory and shaming acts in many contexts of life, even primary, highlighting how inauthenticity and lack of trust create communication and interpersonal barriers.

> "Nobody knows about me, in the sense many imagine because I am aware that some of my attitudes suggest that I may be homosexual, but it is always my word against theirs! Yes, at work and among friends there are jokes, but I am always careful, and then the keyword is 'deny'. Always deny!" (Gino, 33 years old).

In the world of the web, however, the visibility filtered by a screen and the ability to exhibit an image different from the actual reality are the main protective factors against discrimination and the male shaming phenomena.

In this sense, almost all of the interviewees reported that they have never received attacks and discrimination on social networks and the web, as they are very careful not to publish and post content that could become a target.

Even in this case, however, there is greater pressure and concern from the 'closeted' homosexual subjects who are particularly concerned about appearing 'wrong', so they categorically avoid sharing potentially equivocal content, such as to feed doubts or uncertainties about their sexual identity and/or non-conforming orientation.

> "I have never suffered from hater attacks or discriminators on the web. I am very careful not to be photographed by my gay friends and not to appear compromising, for a moment you can become the laughing stock at work." (Giovanni, 43 years old).

But as emerged above, male shaming is not only related to people who, from the point of view of sexual identity, declare themselves 'homosexual' but also concerns people who, on the contrary, although declaring themselves to be heterosexual are still subject to discrimination and hate speech, in reason for their gender expressiveness, and their personal and social interests. As evidence of what Connell (1995) affirms in believing that the gender order constitutes a burden not only for 'non-hegemonic' male identities, but also for those who refer to this model, in the constant concern of these to self-represent themselves as adhering to the dominant male model.

> "I was discriminated against for my passion for classical music and for my artistic ability... Yet I am heterosexual, I have always been out with girls." (Aldo, 33 years old).

Corporeity in Male Shaming

The other 'pillar' on which hegemonic masculinity is based is the gendered expressiveness of the masculine, which assigns to man virtues and characteristics of strength, physical prowess, and expression of power. From the quantitative analysis of this research it emerged that, after heteronormativity and the model of hegemonic masculinity, the second element of discrimination is the physical aspect.

In particular, weight and build represent an important 'pass' for entry into the reference in-group. From the interviews in which 20 of the participants in the online questionnaire reported weight and build as the reason for the bad shaming suffered, it emerged that the evolutionary history of this discriminatory process is articulated on a double path: weight and build as a central problem of their life; weight and build as a problem in a phase of life that has been and gone, but which has nevertheless conditioned their construction of identity.

As for the subjects in which weight and build still represent the central problem in their life, they report an early onset of a 'discriminated' career and a

continuity in the discrimination between developmental age and adulthood. The subjects tell, for example, of a process of continuous social marginalisation, transversal to all the social contexts to which they belong, such that their placement in the reference groups was never clear and explicit.

"I've always been fat. By the time I was 8, I weighed twice as much as my friends. My schoolmates always made fun of me about my weight, they called me 'Mammoth'. They never called me to play football, they said I couldn't fit through the door, I felt so alone." (Mimmo, 33 years old).

Coping and resilience strategies would be limited as the body is perceived as a central aspect of the individual's life. However, some interviewees reported that during the developmental age they diverted their social relocation resources to psychological and intellectual aspects, within a different target group.

"My drawing and my maths skills saved me. In high school, I was obviously discriminated against by the most vulgar part of the class, but I was a point of reference for girls and boys who did well in school and who had goals. Yes, it was my revenge!" (Fabio, 34 years old).

The subjects interviewed in whom the problem of weight and build is central, show an important continuity of discrimination and male shaming between developmental age and adulthood. They report discrimination at work, in the contexts of daily life, and in secondary social groups (institutions, contexts of the tertiary sector), confirming how the lack of physical prowess and aesthetic pleasantness is a problem for the standards and the canons imposed by the reference society.

"Weight is still a problem today. I have a hard time getting a girlfriend, finding someone who accepts me for who I am, even when I go for a medical visit I hear giggles and jokes. For many I do not exist, indeed perhaps I exist too much but not in the way they want!" (Nico, 39 years old).

The interviewees who instead had a childhood/adolescence with weight problems, but who reached a healthy weight in adulthood, report a significant decrease in the episodes of discrimination and male shaming compared to their childhood and adolescence. However, early exposure to continuous and repeated stigmatisations has radically changed their perception, their anxieties, and their concerns about the dimensions of corporeality.

Some interviewees admitted that, since they have reached a healthy weight and a body in line with the standards set by society, they have shown attention/ concern for possible weight gain, practicing a sort of 'cult of the body and healthy life'. Many of them embrace alternative lifestyles and are projected towards new generation philosophies, such as new age, vegan and probiotic.

"Look, I am currently a health worker. I go to the gym, I am vegan and I do not skip a workout. It took me a long time to get to the body I have. My life has changed considerably, and even with girls, it's much better. Let's face it, women look at the

body first and then focus on who you are. The dress makes the monk!" (Luigi, 38 years old).

Concerning, however, the discrimination and the processes of male shaming suffered by the interviewees on the web or social media, they reported the almost total absence of weight and corporeality as reasons underlying the online discrimination.

This is due to the fact that anthropometrically non-compliant subjects show profile images that cannot be traced back to their own image and corporeality, preferring images of third parties or macro-categories (for example, images of flowers, animals, landscapes). They tend not to share photos of everyday life. Conversely, subjects who have overcome their problems with weight tend to publish many photos, emphasising images and characteristics that lead to a gendered expressiveness of the masculine that recall elements such as virility, physical prowess, and strength (for example: muscles, tattoos, and physical exercises).

"Yes, I have Facebook and Instagram profiles. I have never been discriminated against, and I publish photos of my cat or landscapes. I take care not to put a photo up of myself!" (Giacomo, 34 years old).

"After all the sacrifices I've made to get this body, I'm posting photos of my body! Of course for me it is like a sanctuary; it must be kept in shape and shown." (Kevin, 30 years old).

Conclusions

In the second half of the last century, the specialised scientific literature on gender identities has focused attention on the one hand to the processes of discrimination, social marginalisation, and shaming against women; and on the other hand, to the processes of social disparity, distribution of power, and social emancipation between male and female gender, in purely binary terms.

However, shaming processes also exist to the detriment of men and, specifically, towards 'types of men' and non-conforming sexuality. From this research - while considering the methodological limits corresponding to a small representativeness of the male population, recognizable in the diffidence to participate in online questionnaires and due to mechanisms of social desirability in terms of reinforcement of the hegemonic male identity, which does not come under discussion - interesting data emerge both in terms of mapping the phenomenon and in qualitative and typical terms of the processes of male shaming.

From a quantitative point of view, a photograph of male shaming emerges as a behaviour with 'early-onset,' as it is more distributed in lower secondary school, in conjunction with pubertal development and the discovery of sexual identity.

Therefore, the two main target motives of male shaming would be on the one hand the identities and non-conforming orientations, identified and stigmatized

throughout the school course as a parameter of discrimination and as the main denigrating label (terms such as fag, sissy, gay are widely used among preteens and adolescents as an offense, mockery, and denigration). On the other hand, the second discrimination parameter is represented by the anthropometric indices, which refer to a dimension of a virile and athletic body, such as height and weight.

As regards, however, the historical evolution of discrimination suffered in adolescence and the continuity of such shaming processes in adulthood, there is a carrer discrimination between gender identities and non-conforming sexual orientations and identities associated purely with anthropometric indices. Specifically, the subjects interviewed and characterised by anthropometric indices that are not acceptable to the dominant reference group (short stature, overweight), report that the processes of social discrimination decrease in adulthood and, in some cases, are eliminated through re-educational and compensatory processes (for example diets, gym and/or social mobility paths on the rise).

Conversely, for those with gender identity and non-conforming sexual orientation, discriminatory harassment tends to continue even into adulthood. Therefore, the only feasible coping strategies correspond either to the construction of social relationships in other target groups - LGBT groups or minimal groups in which coming out and authenticity are favoured - or to passing for normal processes, in which the subject omits his own non-conforming identity and creates a social avatar to conform to the identity of hegemonic masculinity (Rinaldi 2017, Masullo and Coppola 2020b).

Such coping strategies can be favoured by the wider society in which non-conforming subjects are immersed, where they equip themselves with the socio-educational tools necessary to construct positive narratives of non-conforming sexual orientation, corroborated by counter speech opposed to the hate speech and the shaming process.

Ultimately, the data collected show a poor correspondence between offline male shaming and online male shaming, as the processes of homologation and/or creation of second identity conforming on the web have the advantage of immediacy, gratuitousness, and the deconstruction of corporeality -elements that are important protective factors against discrimination and attacks by haters.

In conclusion, from the point of view of identity, contemporary man is less tied to the choice of gender expressiveness models dictated by binary canons (both gender and sexual).

It is particularly within the new generations that the adhesion to forms of expression defined as gender-fluid emerges (albeit to a lesser extent among males), in which the choice not to express oneself through visible and easily recognisable signs of one gender rather than the other constitutes aspects of the broader process of self-determination; an aspect that does not necessarily find a connection with a non-heteronormative sexual identity.

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Characteristics of Effective Interviewing:
Exploratory Factor Analysis

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Research emphasizes the importance of competency in clinicians, but little information is available regarding how to determine competency in interviewing skills. Role-playing therapy sessions can help students to develop empathy and enhance insight into client experiences (Beidas et al. 2013, Meier and Davis 2011), but an instrument which validly assesses basic interviewing skills is needed. The objective of this study is to evaluate the factor structure of the Skills in Psychological Interviewing: Clinical Evaluation Scales (SPICES) and to help determine characteristics of basic interviewing skills before and after formal training. Using SPICES, clinical psychology interns and residents evaluated 197 first year clinical psychology students' 15-minute interviews with simulated patients (SPs) before and after a four-month interviewing course. Data were collected from two cohorts of first-year students. Exploratory factor analyses revealed SPICES had two factors at pre-test and three factors at post-test. The interviewing course enhanced student competency in interviewing, and after training, the professional presentation factor split into professional presentation and interview structure. To assess and to teach basic interviewing skills, graduate educators should consider the degree to which students possess empathic communication skills prior to training and focus training on further development of interview structure and professional presentation.

Keywords: *psychological interviewing, exploratory factor analysis, interview evaluation, simulated patient, student training*

Introduction

Psychology graduate programs have often used role-playing within cohorts to teach basic interviewing skills, and research has shown that role-playing therapy sessions can help students to develop empathy and enhance insight into client experiences (Beidas et al. 2013, Meier and Davis 2011). However, students attempting to roleplay clients often do not take the practice scenarios seriously, their presentations of the cases may not be realistic, they are prone to creating problems inconsistent with the diagnosis to be portrayed, and they may not accurately convey real-world situations (Kaslow et al. 2009, Meier and Davis 2011). There is research suggesting that peer role play is ineffective, at least in

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training future psychologists in responding effectively to statements of suicidal clients (Mackelprang et al. 2014).

The American Psychological Association (APA) created the Assessment of Competency Benchmarks Work Group in 2005 in order to identify competencies for psychology graduate students at various training levels (Fouad et al. 2009). This work group established expectations for individuals to demonstrate readiness for practicum, internship, and practice. Fifteen core areas of competency were defined: 1) professional values and attitudes, 2) self-care, 3) scientific knowledge and methods, 4) relationships, 5) diversity awareness, 6) legal and ethical standards, 7) interdisciplinary knowledge, 8) assessment, 9) intervention, 10) consultation, 11) research, 12) supervision, 13) disseminating knowledge, 14) management-administration, and 15) advocacy (Fouad et al. 2009). The Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards (ASPPB) surveyed practicing psychologists in order to create a more applied, practical competency model for professional psychology (Rodolfa et al. 2013). This ASPPB paradigm was developed assuming that competency levels would differ among individuals in practicum or internship compared with those recently licensed or licensed for over four years. This ASPPB devised framework was similar to that of the APA but included only six competency domains: 1) scientific knowledge; 2) evidence-based decision-making; 3) interpersonal and cultural awareness; 4) professionalism and ethics; 5) assessment; and 6) intervention, supervision, and consultation.

The primary purposes of competency models are to determine that psychologists are equipped to provide appropriate services to those whom they serve and to ensure accountability for doing so. A key feature of the competency benchmarks is that students must be monitored by faculty and supervisors to ensure that the competencies are attained at appropriate levels in each student's training. Faculty members and supervisors are expected to discuss progress toward attaining these competencies with students on a regular basis and to provide remedial experiences and resources to students who are struggling (Fouad et al. 2009). Thus, training programs must have reliable and valid ways to measure the competencies and must determine minimal levels of attainment (MLAs) of each competency as well as tracking student progress toward attaining all the MLAs.

Literature Review

Training in Clinical Interviewing

Attention to emotional concerns and worries that patients express or signal during an initial interview is important for developing and strengthening a therapeutic alliance and can lead to improved adherence to treatment (Rimondini et al. 2010). The "basic listening sequence" defined by Ivey and Daniels (2016) refers to microskills such as attending, paraphrasing, and questioning. Attending and questioning allow a client more room to discuss their experiences further, while paraphrasing clarifies and shortens client statements in a way that allows a clinician to understand their issues more fully. The basic listening sequence

involves skills of active listening which encompass important microskills of allowing clients to feel heard, understood, and comfortable with their clinician (Ivey and Daniels 2016). Researchers have also identified the microskill of reflection of feelings as an important avenue to bring emotional tone into the clinical interview (Ivey and Daniels 2016). Together, these microskills help to ensure that interviewers grasp the key points of the interview while remaining sensitive to the emotion and concerns expressed by the client.

The importance of effective communication in clinical contexts has long been established and shown to enhance patient satisfaction and compliance with treatment, adjustment to illness, and outcomes such as emotional health (Rimondini et al. 2010). Results from studies of programs which teach communication skills are promising, showing improvement in practitioners' interpersonal and interviewing skills overall, as well as in their confidence levels, although levels of efficacy can vary, depending on the teaching method of programs (Carvalho et al. 2011). Clinical interview training assumes that the skills needed to conduct effective interviews can be taught and are not always inherent in clinicians. For example, a pre-test/post-test, quasi-experimental study of 203 medical students and residents showed a slight increase in empathy levels following a short training period (Fernandez-Olano et al. 2008). Empathy levels were assessed using the Jefferson Scale of Physician Empathy (JSPE), and the experimental group's training consisted of participation in a five-day workshop discussing general communication principles and skills. The pre-test average of the JSPE was similar in both groups. Post-test workshop scores in the experimental group increased by 5.24 point and, improved in 68.9% of participants. This suggests that clinical interviewing characteristics such as empathy, while they may be inherent in some people, can be taught and improved upon. Other research has supported this finding and expanded on it, suggesting that longer exposure to course materials and more practice (e.g., seven months compared to three months) increases clinical communication competency, even if basic communication skills are practiced within the context of more advanced skill development (Carvalho et al. 2011).

Five factors identified by Tiuraniemi et al. (2011) as determining the efficacy of training of psychology and medical students were communication skills, special communication skills, motivational interviewing, empathy and reflection, and change orientation. These researchers concluded that self-assessment can be used to help practicing professionals identify what kinds of knowledge, skills, and experiences are necessary for their continued professional development. In their study, students completed self-assessments and then attended lectures; read a book introducing the topic of communication; participated in role-plays; and discussed therapy techniques, interventions, and different mental disorders. The students' skills in communication, motivational interviewing, empathy and reflection, and change orientation were all estimated to have improved, based on their self-assessments at the end of the course. The greatest improvement was shown by the fourth-year psychology students (Tiuraniemi et al. 2011).

In a study conducted by Amini et al. (2016) in Iran, simulated patients were used to compare the performance of general practitioners in a collaborative care (CC) program to a control group of general practitioners in usual care. The results

indicated a significant difference between the collaborative care (experimental group) and the control group physicians. The CC physicians built up a better relationship with their patients and more accurately evaluated a simulated psychotic patient, although their medical management did not improve (Amini et al. 2016). And while this group was better at communication, they did not refer the simulated psychotic patients in a more timely fashion. Due to their ignoring signs of necessary emergent intervention, it was concluded that they needed more training. Nevertheless, this study seems to provide support for the use of collaborative care techniques and the use of simulated patients for mental health practitioners who rely on building rapport and making accurate evaluations rather than medical management.

Role Play as a Training Technique

In order to improve the efficacy and safety of the training of mental health professionals, research has evaluated the use of role playing to provide practice of skills prior to working with actual patients. Reading case studies and watching videos regarding working with individuals with psychological disorders can be beneficial, but interaction with people who exhibit symptoms of mental disorders are likely to provide additional learning opportunities for students (Balsis et al. 2006).

Role-playing has an advantage over other types of teaching, as it provides direct observation, offers flexibility to the supervisors in selecting situations for training purposes, and is similar to training in other disciplines (Shea and Barney 2015). Role play can also be used as a training tool between a supervisor and a trainee, and trainees may also benefit from role playing the client. Individual role playing with a supervisor facilitates assessment of student skill, builds confidence, consolidates techniques, broadens case material, helps students learn to deal with awkward moments, strengthens clinical reasoning, provides modeling, improves comfort with interviewing, and enhances videotape supervision (Shea and Barney 2015).

Virtual role playing has also been used to assess skills in clinical interviewing and to compare novice and expert clinicians (Kenny et al. 2009). Virtual standardized patients use advanced technologies that allow them to listen, to act, and to generate the appropriate verbal and non-verbal behaviors for a particular presentation of a clinical issue. Moreover, interaction with simulated patients can help to differentiate levels of competency in interviewing. For example, via interacting with virtual standardized patients programmed to portray post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), novice clinicians were not able to elicit the same amount of relevant information in a 15-minute interview as experts (Kenny et al. 2009). These role play scenarios demonstrated that there were many times when novice clinicians would leave long pauses during which they searched their minds for what they should be asking. There were also more questions in the rapport category for the novices than for the experts, which meant they were asking questions about general topics and not specific criteria to help make a differential diagnosis or to focus on the client's specific difficulties. When working with

simulated patients, trainees tend to use patient-centered skills compared to doctor-centered skills in exploring patient concerns (Rimondini et al. 2010), which suggests empathy but less effective use of interview structure. Expressions of passive listening encourage patients to go on, but they also increase the risk of a lack of control, allowing patients to talk about irrelevant things without bringing them back to the point. Overall, young clinicians tend to be good passive listeners but need to improve active listening skills which, together with emotion focusing skills, should be major learning targets in the development of effective interviewing (Rimondini et al. 2010).

Research illustrates that interview structure can be taught. For example, over the course of a four-week communication training course, second-year psychiatry residents' interviewing skills significantly improved. Controlling for practice effects, Rimondini et al. (2010) demonstrated the efficacy of using feedback on videotaped interviews as well as role play with feedback in increasing empathic patient-centered interviewing skills and decreasing doctor-centered expressions.

The literature reviewed points to three conclusions. First, effective interviewing skills can be trained. Second, the use of simulated or standardized patients/clients can facilitate the training. Third empathy for the client and effective structure of an interview, although related, are different things.

Aspects of a 'Good' Interview

To ensure effectiveness of therapy and to establish a beneficial relationship, clinicians must continually build their competence in conducting sensitive intake interviews. Solomon et al. (2017) described three characteristics of culturally competent mental health professionals: 1) they are aware of their own assumptions, values, and biases; 2) they are aware of their active attempts to understand their clients' worldviews; and 3) they diligently develop the skills and techniques necessary for working with clients of various cultural groups. The interviewer should also remain sensitive to the purpose of the interview throughout the encounter and potential differences in levels of disclosure (Davies 2019). Taking a client-centered approach encourages the clinician to follow the lead of the client and has been associated with good clinical outcomes in different situations and across different problems and diagnoses (Heaven et al. 2003). This empathic approach results in higher ratings of client satisfaction as well as increased levels of recall of what was discussed in the session compared to a more structured strategy (O'Keefe et al. 2001), although, as previously mentioned, it may result in some inefficiencies in data collection (Rimondini et al. 2010).

A clinical interview utilizes qualitative observations based on verbal and non-verbal communication. Open-ended questions are typically more beneficial because they do not suggest a particular answer, and they encourage clients to use their own words (Bredart et al. 2014). Clinicians can then reflect the same or paraphrased wording of the issues back to the clients, helping them to feel more understood and validated in their experiences. A good interviewer will use open ended questions to elicit cues and a combination of open and closed questions to clarify, to probe, and to explore empathically verbal or non-verbal cues given

(Heaven et al. 2003). Engaging in active listening, attentive silence, reflection, synthesis, and recognition of resistance demonstrate to clients that they are being heard and also aid the clinician in understanding the presenting problem from the client's perspective (Bredart et al. 2014). Knowing how the client views and experiences the problem can inform treatment and make the intervention more effective. Uncovering the client's worldview will also help to improve the clinician-client alliance, to elucidate possible beliefs related to treatment, and to increase the accuracy of critical issues such as a suicide assessment. Empathizing with clients and their spirituality can also be a key for interviewing and treatment planning (Josephson and Peteet 2007). Techniques used to elicit information should vary depending on the population being interviewed. For example, when working with children, activities such as playing and drawing may be more effective, while when interviewing elderly individuals, having a quieter environment may be more beneficial (Bredart et al., 2014).

Ethical considerations such as obtaining informed consent from the client and ensuring confidentiality are important factors to which many clinicians do not give much thought (Bredart et al. 2014). Other considerations, such as providing a choice of pronouns to the client instead of assuming gender identification, are also frequently overlooked. By including these options as a standard part of the interview, clients have the space to focus on the presenting problem or other topics being discussed, rather than being concerned about how to correct their therapist or how the therapist may react.

Therapists' comfort levels with a topic can determine how the topic is discussed in the interview, so it is important that clinicians have open minds during sessions and always present unbiased and nonjudgmental views (Josephson and Peteet 2007). Knowing de-escalation strategies for extreme situations is also important for interviewing, and clinicians should use strategies such as redirection and rational maneuvering when necessary. Being aware of potential transference that can cause negative reactions toward the therapist will also aid in limiting dangerous situations in sessions (Twemlow 2001).

Many clinicians learned to interview using a style that is laser-focused on gathering and assessing information and history about the client. They are prone to asking questions about client wellness or hobbies at the end of the session, if time allows for it. Some research has indicated that the use of positive emotions, existing strengths, and goal-directed thinking at the outset of the interview may be more beneficial (O'Brian and Schlechter 2016). Beginning the interview with what works, instead of the presenting problem, can increase rapport as well as the clinician's ability to understand the presenting problem. Directly after the positive assessment of the patient, the clinician should ask what challenges are getting in the way of the patient's ability to exercise his or her strengths, which, hopefully, have already been uncovered. By asking about the strengths and activities that elicit positive emotions, the clinician is gathering needed information while also creating a supportive and positive environment that leads to a successful interview (O'Brian and Schlechter 2016).

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to present a new instrument which was developed for evaluating and monitoring interviewing competency and to explore the factor structure of that instrument, the Skills in Psychological Interviewing: Clinical Evaluation Scales (SPICES). SPICES was based on the principles of interviewing described in the literature review and was reviewed for content validity by several experts in the field of psychological interviewing. Initial piloting of the data on the instrument as a whole yielded an internal consistency coefficient of 0.778. Inter-rater reliability was also strong, r = 0.608 *p*<0.01 (Ketterer 2014). The goal of the exploratory factor analysis conducted in this study is to clarify how SPICES should be interpreted and used in clinical training. Following a review of clinical interviewing research regarding training and competency, the methodology and results of the study is discussed.

Research Questions

1. Is there a significant change in SPICES scores for participants from pre- to post-test?
2. Does the factor structure for SPICES vary between pre- and post-test?

Hypotheses

1. There will be a significant increase in SPICES scores from pre- to post-test, reflecting the results of their training in clinical interviewing and practice with simulated patients.
2. The factor structure for SPICES at pre-test will vary from the factor structure at post-test, primarily reflecting their training in the structure of clinical interviewing and a difference in constructs.

Methodology

Participants

Data were collected from first year doctoral clinical psychology students at a large university in the southeastern United States over a two-year period. One hundred ninety-seven doctoral psychology trainees participated in a four-month (one semester) interviewing course, during which they received instruction in general interviewing skills with specific modules detailing how to probe for and to respond to expressed concerns about possible suicide, violence, and abuse. In addition, they role-played 15-minute diagnostic interviews with simulated patients, observed classmates doing similar role-plays, and, along with intern and post-doctoral resident facilitators, provided feedback to classmates on their role-plays. Participants identified their gender as female (n = 159), male (n = 31), or not specified (n = 7). Ages of participants ranged as follows: 20-24 (n = 129), 25-29 (n

= 50), 30-34 (n = 11), 35-39 (n = 4), and 40-44 (n = 3), Participants reported identifying as Caucasian (n = 123), Hispanic/Latinx (n = 36), African American (n = 16), Asian (n = 10), other (n = 10), and not specified (n = 2). Among these participants, 173 identified English as their first language, 16 reported Spanish as their first language, one noted Creole as the first language, and seven specified 'other'. Twenty participants indicated being trainees in the Ph.D. clinical psychology program and 177 participants were trainees in the Psy.D. clinical psychology program. One hundred forty-seven participants reported that they began their clinical psychology program with a graduate degree and 50 began with a bachelor's degree.

Measure

The Skills in Psychological Interviewing: Clinical Evaluation Scales (SPICES, Ketterer 2014). SPICES is a 26-item measure developed by previous researchers on this project to evaluate skills in clinical interviewing. Each item includes behavioral anchors to aid the evaluator in accurately rating the student. Each item on SPICES was rated using a four-point scale, except for items seven and eight. These two items evaluated personal hygiene and attire, respectively, and were rated on a two-point scale. On the four-point scale, one corresponded with the behavior or skill not occurring and four corresponded with that behavior or skill being executed completely and well. On the two-point scale, one corresponded with poor hygiene and attire while two corresponded with being well kempt and in professional attire. Not only did this keep the measure's total score to 100 points, but it also kept personal appearance from playing too large of a role in evaluating clinical skills. Items were originally categorized into three domains based on a theoretical analysis: professionalism, relational issues, and application of training. At the time of development, SPICES was found to have good internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.778$) and inter-rater reliability ($r = 0.608$, Ketterer 2014).

Study Procedures

All first-year doctoral psychology trainees were enrolled in a required introductory pre-practicum interviewing course and received instruction in a broad variety of interviewing skills. As a part of this course, participants completed two 15-minute videotaped interviews with simulated patients. The first interview (the pre-test) took place prior to receiving any course instruction, and the second interview (the post-test) was conducted at the end of the course. Simulated patients portrayed a client with major depressive disorder (MDD) for both the pre-test and the post-test. Participants were assigned to a simulated patient at random for both the pre-test and the post-test. The videotaped interviews of the pre-test and the post-test were reviewed and evaluated by randomly assigned interns and/or post-doctoral residents using SPICES. SPICES scores for data collected in 2019 and 2020 were combined into one database to create a sample size sufficient for the analyses. This created a subject to item ratio of over 7:1, greater than the recommended minimum of 5:1 (Gorsuch 1983). All participants were present for

both pre- and post-test, and, therefore, no data were missing from the study. A more detailed description of the study procedures and measures used can be found in *Effects of Interview Training with Simulated Patients on Suicide, Threat, and Abuse Assessment*, by Osborn and Cash (2020). While interviews conducted during 2019 and the beginning of 2020 were in person, as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, interviews for post-test in 2020 were conducted using the Zoom platform.

Statistical Analyses

The data analytic strategy consisted of several steps. All analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS 27.0 (IBM 2020). To address the first research question and to evaluate the hypothesized improvement in interview skills following the training course and use of simulated patient role plays, a paired samples t-test was conducted. Two exploratory factor analyses (EFAs) were conducted on the SPICES measure, one using pre-test data and one using post-test data. EFA's were utilized instead of CFA's due to the hypothesis that training would modify the factor structure. It was hypothesized that the impact of training and exposure to role-plays would alter the constructs exhibited within the interview, not just improve interview skills, supporting the use of exploratory rather than confirmatory factor analyses. The rating scale had previously categorized and interpreted scores based on a theoretical analysis, not an empirical analysis, of how the developers postulated that the items would logically group. Due to the non-orthogonal structure of the factors, to account for item overlap, the size of factor loadings was taken into account in naming the factors. The purpose of the EFA was to determine how the items actually cluster together as well as whether or not the factors change as a result of the training received.

Results

Pre- and post-test total SPICES scores were compared utilizing a paired samples t-test. Results indicated a significant increase in scores from pre- to post-test [t (195) = -16.155, $p < 0.001$]. The mean score increased from 77.18 at pre-test to 87.81 at post-test, by 10.63 points. Additionally, based on the 197 participants, only 2.5% of students would have failed to receive a passing score of 80% at post-test as compared to 45% at pre-test.

For the pre-test data, the EFA with 26 items resulted in two factors to retain as a result of examining the eigenvalues as well as the scree plot. Although there were eight eigenvalues greater than one, the scree plot revealed a steep drop following the two eigenvalues greater than two (6.744 and 3.442), with the next highest eigenvalue being 1.691. An oblique rotation (promax) was then utilized to clarify these two factors. An oblique rotation was selected because the authors expected correlations among the factors, and this expectation was borne out. The oblique factors were moderately correlated (r = 0.296), indicating that the constructs the factors represent contained a small amount (about nine percent) of

common variance. After rotation, the two factors explained approximately 35% of the total variance of the instrument.

For the post-test data, the EFA with 26 items identified three factors to retain. Examining the eigenvalues as well as the scree plot revealed that only these three factors had eigenvalues greater than two, consistent with the pre-test output (4.530, 2.380, and 2.070). The scree plot revealed a steep drop following the top three factors (next highest eigenvalue was 1.506). The same oblique rotation (promax) was then utilized to identify these three factors more clearly. The oblique factors had small to moderate correlations (factors one and two: r = 0.159; factors one and three: r = 0.446; factors two and three: r = 0.148) indicating that factors one and three were moderately related, while factors one and two and two and three had little shared variance. After rotation, the three factors explained approximately 27% of the total variance.

The factor loading matrix for the pre-test and the post-test can be seen in Table 1. After examining which items loaded significantly on each factor, names were assigned to each. Items were allowed to cross load within pre- and post-test. Pre-test factor one represents Empathic Communication. This factor demonstrates how effectively the clinicians take into account the clients' situations and use that information to guide responses and further questioning. Pre-test factor two is named Professional Presentation. The clinicians' physical appearances and ability to make themselves understood appropriately load on this factor. Factors for Empathic Communication and Professional Presentation demonstrated strong reliability with Cronbach's Alpha levels of .858 and .810 respectively. Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted suggested that removing the items evaluating suicide assessments as well as management of interpersonal conflict would increase the alpha of Empathic Communication to 0.859 and 0.860 respectively. Removing items for threat assessment, personal hygiene, and attire would also raise alpha for Professional Presentation to 0.817, 0.826, and 0.813 respectively. Due to the alpha levels for both factors already being sufficient and the increases being minimal, researchers decided not to remove those items from the factor structure.

Table 1. *Factor Loadings Based on Exploratory Factor Analyses with Oblique Rotations for 26 Items from the SPICES Measure (N = 197)*

	Pre-Test			Post-Test	
	Empathic Communication	Professional Presentation	Empathic Communication	Appearance	Interview Structure
Informed Consent		0.50		0.30	.38
Limits of Confidentiality		0.35			
Suicide Assessment	0.31		0.33		0.34
Threat Assessment		0.36			0.41
Abuse Assessment					0.48
Personal Boundaries					

Personal Hygiene		0.75		0.90	
Attire		0.70		0.83	
Non-Judgmental Attitude	0.67	0.35	0.58		
Appreciation for Client's Life Circumstances	0.72	0.32	0.66		0.32
Compassion for the Client	0.55	0.30	0.66		
Structure of the Interview	0.48				0.37
Time Management	0.41	0.48			0.40
Diversity		0.72			
Response to Client's Feelings	0.68		0.58		0.36
Response to Client's Expressions of Concerns	0.48	0.56	0.41		
Indirect Messages/Communications	0.60	0.57			0.44
Management of Interpersonal Conflict	0.50		0.36		
Management of Ambiguity and Uncertainty	0.43	0.63	0.53		
Language in Professional Communication	0.53				
Tone of Speech	0.59				
Communication of Ideas and Information	0.63		0.45		
Nonverbal Communication	0.64		0.50	0.44	0.51
Open-Ended Questioning	0.56	0.39	0.54		0.61
Paraphrasing or Summarizing	0.60	0.42	0.38		0.42
Closure of the Session	0.33	0.36			

Note. Factor loadings <0.30 are suppressed.

Post-test factor one is very similar to pre-test Empathic Communication and has, therefore, been given the same name. Professional Presentation from pre-test appears to have split into two more distinct factors at post-test. The first, Appearance, reflects clinicians' physical appearance in addition to their ability to appear knowledgeable. The final factor, Interview Structure, includes items that revolve around the clinicians' asking the SP relevant questions, such as those regarding suicidality, abuse, and threat, while responding appropriately to client

concerns and feelings. Cronbach's Alpha for post-test Empathic Communication also demonstrated good reliability ($\alpha = 0.777$). Examining the Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted revealed that removing the item for suicide assessment would increase Cronbach's Alpha to 0.782. Due to the alpha level already being sufficient and the increase being minimal, researchers decided not to remove the item from the Empathic Communication factor. The factor for Appearance had insufficient internal consistency reliability ($\alpha = 0.377$). This is likely due to the few number of items loading onto the factor as well as the fact that two of the four items were rated using a two point scale, rather than a four point scale. The Interview Structure factor revealed a Cronbach's Alpha that approached a respectable level ($\alpha = 0.677$) indicating that factor may benefit from increasing the number of items measuring the construct of interview structure. Further research should be done to investigate how to improve these dimensions. Communalities can be found in Table 2.

Table 2. *Communalities Based on Exploratory Factor Analyses with Oblique Rotations for 26 Items from the SPICES Measure (N = 197)*

	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Informed Consent	0.45	0.37
Limits of Confidentiality	0.37	0.21
Suicide Assessment	0.30	0.31
Threat Assessment	0.26	0.29
Abuse Assessment	0.17	0.32
Personal Boundaries	0.28	0.19
Personal Hygiene	0.69	0.75
Attire	0.60	0.72
Non-Judgmental Attitude	0.51	0.54
Appreciation for Client's Life Circumstances	0.59	0.54
Compassion for the Client	0.44	0.56
Structure of the Interview	0.58	0.32
Time Management	0.51	0.29
Diversity	0.58	0.22
Response to Client's Feelings	0.53	0.42
Response to Client's Expressions of Concerns	0.56	0.29
Indirect Messages/Communications	0.57	0.37
Management of Interpersonal Conflict	0.38	0.27
Management of Ambiguity and Uncertainty	0.57	0.42
Language in Professional Communication	0.43	0.27
Tone of Speech	0.47	0.42
Communication of Ideas and Information	0.47	0.23
Nonverbal Communication	0.56	0.31
Open-Ended Questioning	0.71	0.52
Paraphrasing or Summarizing	0.64	0.52
Closure of the Session	0.67	0.37

Evaluating which items loaded onto each factor showed that not all items loaded onto a factor in both pre- and post-test. The item evaluating student's ability to maintain appropriate personal boundaries did not load onto any factors in

pre- or post-test. The item for abuse assessment did not load onto either factor during the pre-test but it loaded onto the Interview Structure factor at post-test. An additional five items did not load onto any factors at post-test: limits of confidentiality, diversity, language in professional communication, tone of speech, and closure of the session. It is possible that the time constraints of the interviews resulted in difficulty for students to demonstrate these skills sufficiently or to address all of the topics required. It is also possible that each of these items represent relatively independent skills which might be represented as separate factors if each was assessed by multiple items. Correlation matrices for both pre- and post-test can be seen in Table 3 and Table 4, respectively.

Table 3. *Correlation Matrix for Pre-Test Factors One and Two*

	Empathic Communication	Professional Presentation
Empathic Communication	1.00	0.30
Professional Presentation	0.30	1.00

Table 4. *Correlation Matrix for Post-Test Factors One, Two, and Three*

	Empathic Communication	Appearance	Interview Structure
Empathic Communication	1.00	0.16	0.45
Appearance	0.16	1.00	0.15
Interview Structure	0.45	0.15	1.00

Discussion

This study aimed to use exploratory factor analyses to identify the factor structure of the SPICES scale and to use that information to understand what students learn and need to develop further when acquiring clinical interviewing skills. After analyzing the pre-test and post-test factor analyses, separate factors emerged for each assessment point. The pre-test factor analysis indicated that there are two factors, specifically Empathic Communication and Professional Presentation. Empathic Communication consisted of items that relate to the types of student responses and therapeutic micro-skills used, such as open-ended questions, paraphrasing, communication of compassion, and others. All skills that research has shown to be foundational to good interviewing (Bredart et al. 2014, Davies 2019, Heaven et al. 2003). The variables that loaded on the pre-test factor of Professional Presentation related to both physical appearance of the clinicians and how they executed difficult parts of the interview, such as performing a risk assessment or closing the session. This suggests that prior to training specifically in conducting clinical interviews, students' interview skills are grouped into categories closely related to what the clinician says and how they say it, as well as

how they present themselves in conducting the interview. As these skills are related to building a therapeutic relationship and credibility (Bredart et al. 2014), it appears that the students have learned to value these aspects of conducting an interview by their second semester in a doctoral program.

Analysis of the post-test, however, revealed three factors instead of two. The first factor was the same as in the pre-test, Empathic Communication. In comparing scores on this factor from pre-test to post-test, there was significant improvement. Based on the 197 participants, only 2.5% of students would have not received a passing score of 80% at post-test as compared to 45% at pre-test. Practice with the simulated patients appears to have benefited the acquisition of these empathic communication skills and interviewing micro-skills. This supports prior research suggesting that role-play with simulated patients helps clinicians improve interviewing skills and connect with their clients (Shea and Barney 2015). The next two factors on post-test suggested a split in the pre-test Professional Presentation factor into Appearance and Interview Structure. The Appearance factor entails both physical appearance and apparent credibility and knowledge, while the Interview Structure relates to the students' skills in effectively addressing the important aspects of a therapeutic interview. This split signifies specificity in the scores and standardization of the interview, as the students differentiated structure of the interview from physical appearance and apparent knowledge. They apparently gained an appreciation of how to ask questions separate from how they dress and present themselves non-verbally. This specificity, combined with improvement in empathic communication from pre- to post-test, demonstrates that students did not simply regurgitate the required information (i.e., consent and suicide assessment); rather, they learned to structure their interviews while still connecting appropriately with their clients.

Examining the correlations between the factors revealed expected findings. Empathic Communication and Professional Presentation from pre-test demonstrated a small to moderate positive correlation (r = 0.30). The correlation may be weak due to the fact that the students are still learning how to communicate empathically; yet, the existence of the small but statistically significant correlation supports that the constructs are related (i.e., related to interviewing skills) as studies among professionals suggest (Bredart et al. 2014, Davies 2019, Heavan et al. 2003). Post-test factor correlations also reflected the theoretical conceptualization. Appearance had a negligible correlation with both Empathic Communication (r = 0.16) and Interview Structure (r = 0.15). This demonstrates that appearance is a separate construct from both other interview skills and likely does not have much to do with a clinician's ability to communicate empathically or to structure an interview effectively. A moderate positive correlation was obtained between Empathic Communication and Interview Structure (r = 0.45). This confirms that clinicians' structuring of their interviews in order to include all relevant topics does relate to their ability to communicate empathically. Both empathic communication and interview structure improved together.

It is noteworthy that while the 2019 class was conducted completely in person and face-to-face with the simulated patients, the 2020 class was conducted partially via Zoom due to the coronavirus pandemic. While 40% of students would

have failed if only using the Appearance factor, it may be that the limitations of Zoom created an environment which interfered with the demonstration of these skills. Further research should examine this issue and how Zoom relates to perception of appearance in a therapeutic interview. While appearance is typically controlled by the student with or without interview-specific knowledge (e.g., dress, tone, how they convey confidence), the interview structure is new and largely learned through their classes and pre-practicum experiences. This is also an area where students can develop and grow. While there is specificity detailed by this split, many more students, (i.e., 21.3%, would have "failed" and required remediation if using only the factor of Interview Structure). Part of this could be due to the structure of the class, where students are required to conduct all parts of the interview in a 15-minute period at pre- and post-test. However, during class they each perform 15 minutes of a typically hour-long interview and are not required to include all parts of the interview at once. It may be that students are still unsure how to include all of these skills in a 15-minute interview and that altering the format of the class could examine this potential explanation further. In addition, future research could score other, longer, interview encounters using SPICES to determine if it is the time limit that is responsible or if further practice is needed.

A strength of this study is that it advances the literature in training psychology students. Very few studies examine training of clinical psychology students using simulated patients; nor do they analyze exactly how skills are assessed. The updated and now factor analyzed scale can be used with similar programs to assess progress in empathic communication, professional presentation, and appearance. It was made up of ratings from multiple raters who were familiar with the measure and inter-rater reliability was at least adequate. Another strength of this factor analysis is that the sample size of 197 is appropriately large for the number of items on the SPICES form. The sample is also unique in that it is made up of students in the same year of their training, which reduces the variance of past experiences and provides generalizability for students in similar training programs at the same level. Finally, the pre-post design allows for discussion of improvement, as there is a valid baseline, and factors such as skills acquired and simulated patient experience are controlled for in this class.

This analysis also has some limitations. In terms of generalizability, we have data to support similar findings with other first year clinical psychology students but not for early career professionals or students in other years of similar programs. It is also noteworthy that of the two years of data, one year was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. While the class structure was maintained as much as possible, all experiences were transferred to an online format mid-semester. The influence of COVID-19 on students and their skill acquisition is not fully understood at this time. Future studies should assess the impact that the stress of COVID-19 and the move to online instruction has on psychology trainees.

Conclusions

This study accomplished its goal of both identifying factor structures for SPICES pre- and post-training as well as illuminating what is learned and specified in an experience-based diagnostic interviewing class using simulated patients. Future research could use this same instrument to determine if similar gains and/or factors emerge when evaluating students without the use of simulated patients. It is also of note that the post-test for 2020 was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is unclear at this time the full impact of this pandemic on the students' learning and how simulated patient role plays are experienced over zoom. To address this limitation, confirmatory factor analyses should be implemented on future iterations of this study to demonstrate if there was a significant effect of the pandemic on the findings, as well as to confirm the overall factor structures.

These findings have implications for teaching basic interviewing skills to first year psychology doctoral students. Based on the two factors in the pre-test SPICES, students seem to understand interviewing in terms of communication and presentation. Many students enter interviewing courses with limited direct psychological experiences. This study has demonstrated the importance of providing students with the opportunity for practical experience in interviewing. Instructors and trainers can aid students in communicating empathically early on in training by utilizing simulated patients. Many programs and classes use students as clients in role-plays, but the seriousness, severity, and anonymity of the simulated patients helps to teach empathic communication, not just the practice of speaking to someone. This study emphasizes both the impact of direct instruction and role-play, through improvement in interviewing skills, and presents a factor structure for measuring those skills.

The split of the Professional Presentation factor into Appearance and Interview Structure factors at post-test demonstrates an area of needed improvement early in the training of emerging psychologists. It is recommended that trainers introduce students to the concept of a full interviewing session and what that entails, as opposed to only discussing specific aspects such as consent and suicide assessments. Discussing how the various aspects of the interview work together to build rapport and to increase the amount and veracity of information collected will help students develop their interviewing skills. It is also important that programs teach students how to present themselves in a way that communicates professionalism and confidence as well as building the therapeutic alliance.

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