

MIGRATION IN SOUTHERN EUROPE: THE PERIPHERAL INCORPORATION IN CRISIS

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ABSTRACT

IN THIS PAPER, WE DISCUSS THE MAIN RESULTS OF A COMPARATIVE RESEARCH ON MIGRATION, THE SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS, AND THE PUBLIC POLICIES TOWARD IMMIGRANTS IN CAMPANIA (ITALY) AND EXTREMADURA (SPAIN). OUR PERSPECTIVE IS BASED ON THE CONCEPT OF PERIPHERAL INCORPORATION OF IMMIGRANTS IN THE LOCAL SOCIETY. OUR STARTING POINT, THEREFORE, WAS THE IDEA THAT, IN THESE LOW-DEVELOPED REGIONS OF SOUTHERN EUROPE, THE LOCAL SOCIETY INCLUDES IMMIGRANTS TO THE EXTENT THAT THEY SUPPORT THE LOCAL RESILIENCE TO ECONOMIC GLOBALIZATION AND THE RETRENCHMENT OF SOCIAL POLICIES. THE SURVEY, CONDUCTED IN 2014 MAINLY THROUGH INTERVIEWS WITH KEY INFORMANTS, HIGHLIGHTED THE BEGINNING OF A CRISIS IN THIS KIND OF SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS, BECAUSE OF RECENT CHANGES IN MIGRATORY FLOWS, THE LABOR MARKET, AND IMMIGRANT POLICIES. AT THE SAME TIME, OUR RESULTS HIGHLIGHT ALSO SOME DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THESE REGIONS.

KEYWORDS

MIGRATION, IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION, SOUTHERN EUROPE, CRISIS

MIGRACIÓN EN EL SUR DE EUROPA: LA INCORPORACIÓN PERIFÉRICA EN CRISIS

RESUMEN

EN ESTE TRABAJO SE ANALIZAN LOS RESULTADOS PRINCIPALES DE UNA INVESTIGACIÓN COMPARATIVA SOBRE LA MIGRACIÓN, LA INTEGRACIÓN SOCIAL DE LOS MIGRANTES Y LAS

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POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS HACIA LOS INMIGRANTES EN CAMPANIA (ITALIA) Y EXTREMADURA (ESPAÑA). NUESTRA PERSPECTIVA SE BASA EN EL CONCEPTO DE INCORPORACIÓN PERIFÉRICA DE LOS INMIGRANTES EN LA SOCIEDAD LOCAL. NUESTRO PUNTO DE PARTIDA, POR LO TANTO, FUE LA IDEA DE QUE, EN ESTAS REGIONES POCO DESARROLLADAS DEL SUR DE EUROPA, LA SOCIEDAD LOCAL INCLUYE A LOS INMIGRANTES EN LA MEDIDA EN QUE AYUDAN EN HACER FRENTE A LA GLOBALIZACIÓN ECONÓMICA Y LA REDUCCIÓN DE LAS POLÍTICAS SOCIALES. LA INVESTIGACIÓN, REALIZADA EN 2014 PRINCIPALMENTE A TRAVÉS DE UNA ENCUESTA CON INFORMANTES CLAVE, DESTACÓ EL INICIO DE UNA CRISIS EN ESTE TIPO DE INTEGRACIÓN SOCIAL DE LOS INMIGRANTES, DEBIDO A LOS RECIENTES CAMBIOS. AL MISMO TIEMPO, NUESTROS RESULTADOS DESTACAN TAMBIÉN ALGUNAS DIFERENCIAS ENTRE LAS DOS REGIONES.

PALABRAS CLAVE

MIGRACIÓN, INTEGRACIÓN DE INMIGRANTES, EUROPA MERIDIONAL, CRISIS

1. INTRODUCTION

Migration is a fundamental dimension of globalization. Since its founding, between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the global capitalist system has caused movements of people through the changing boundaries of states, even when the latter began to define themselves as «nation states» (Sassen, 1999). It is well known that migration has changed several times its own nature. More specifically, we are now facing a situation in which there is «a sharp increase in absolute numbers of migrants from multiple destinations worldwide (this despite the emergence of state-sponsored immigration restrictions)» (Spellman 2008: 8). Moreover, we live now in a condition of «perceived vulnerability of both source and destination states to the disruptive forces of globalization, ethno-nationalism and international terror» (*ibidem*). Migration studies are therefore particularly important for the understanding of the main dynamics that affect the contemporary world.

No surprise that comparative research at international level is gaining new spaces in this context. This can be true also for southern European countries, and more specifically for Italy and Spain. Surely there are differences among these countries, but there are also similarities among them, so that refer-

ences to «Mediterranean» or «southern European» models are growing in the literature (for a recent discussion on this topic, see Baumeister, Sala, eds., 2015). These studies looked in particular at fields of the social life that are particularly relevant for our purposes, such as the labor market, migration flows and the welfare systems. As regards migration, in particular, southern European societies only recently passed from the status of source to that of destination in migration flows (King, Black, eds., 1997; King, ed., 2001; Pugliese, 2006; Arango, Finotelli, 2009). In addition, these countries share a number of problems that are at the center of public debates, including especially the simultaneous presence of unemployment and immigration.

In this paper, we discuss the results of a comparative research on migration, the social integration of immigrants, and the public policies toward immigrants at a regional level that we realized in 2014. We focused on migrants from underdeveloped countries (including those coming from Eastern Europe) and on two low-developed regions of southern Europe, namely Campania (Italy) and Extremadura (Spain). We chose to focus our analysis on the sub-national level, because of the role played by the local (and regional) society in the framing and re-framing of migrants' inclusion.

For instance, regional authorities (*Comunidades Autónomas* in Spain; *Regioni* in Italy) bring important responsibilities in the field of immigrant policies. Furthermore, Campania and Extremadura have always been regarded as economically «backward» or low-developed regions, and they are viewed also as rather poor in terms of public services and welfare provision. Therefore, they can offer a special perspective on the social integration of immigrants. Why international migration when there are economic stagnation, structural unemployment, and a large presence of traditional activities and the informal economy? What happens to the relationship between immigrants and the native population when the host society faces the crisis caused by neoliberal globalization?

Our aim is to assess the nature and extent of immigrant integration in the new context emerging from the economic crisis in which southern European societies are since 2010. In section 2, we will briefly discuss our conceptual framework, in which the idea of the peripheral incorporation of immigrants in the host society is prominent. In the third section, we will present an outline of the methodology used in our research. Subsequently, we will discuss the results we obtained (sections 4-6), starting from a general outline of immigration in Campania and Extremadura, with a special reference on its territorial distribution and ethnic composition. We will focus, then, on the features assumed today by the integration of immigrants in the host society in some areas of special concern, such as the labor market, social services and housing. In our conclusive remarks, we will discuss the new features taken by the peripheral incorporation of immigrants in the local society in a time of crisis. Furthermore, we will highlight some differences between Extremadura and Campania, which seem to us very important in order to improve our sociological understanding of immigration today.

2. ON SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS: THE CONCEPT OF PERIPHERAL INCORPORATION

Our perspective is based on the concept of peripheral incorporation, or subordinate integration,

of immigrants in the host society. Even if this idea has already a long history in the studies on migration and the underground economy in southern Europe (Reyneri, 1999, 2001; see also Mingione, Qassoli, 2000, and Ribas-Mateos 2004) we found a recent discussion of the concept of peripheral incorporation in Avallone (2013). Anyway, this author refers more specifically to the mode of social incorporation of migrant laborers in the capitalist agriculture in southern European regions as Murcia (Spain) and Campania (Italy). Our use of the concept, therefore, is wider, since we refer to a number of interrelated phenomena of subordinate integration of immigrants in southern European peripheral societies.

Our starting point, therefore, is the idea that in low-developed regions of southern Europe the local society includes immigrant workers and their families insofar they support the local resilience to economic globalization and the retrenchment of social policies, which in these regions have always been poor and rather ineffective. More specifically, «the cheap workforce of immigrants enlarges the profit margins of local small businesses stressed by the liberalization of the market in the primary sector, the collapse of public investment in the building industry, and the erosion of the tolerance towards tax evasion in the service sector. Moreover, the often-illegal housing market for immigrants adds a source of income to the household budget of native residents, at a very low cost» (Blanco, Maddaloni, Moffa 2016a: 27). Furthermore, the specialization of immigrants in a number of professional roles unwanted by local workers – especially by medium- or highly –skilled young people– produces a segmentation of the labor market in which they can devote themselves to the search for a better job, even at the price of a long-term official unemployment. Finally, immigrant caregivers (mostly women) fill the shortcomings of a very poor welfare system in terms of services for the households, and particularly for the elderly. In the less developed regions of southern Europe, therefore, the presence of an immigrant population may be seen as a device allowing the local society to charge a part of the human and economic costs

of the growing precariousness of work and life on these groups².

On the other hand, the peripheral or subordinate integration of immigrants in the local society of southern European low-developed regions has –more often than elsewhere– the nature of a temporary stage in the migration path, culminating in further movements towards more developed regions. However, the foreign population has also experienced processes of stabilization and inclusion in the host society. Sometimes these processes relate to the appearance of middlemen or brokers between the local society and migrant networks: trade unionists, social workers, *caporali*³, even –in some cases– regular workers. There have been also more specific and direct cases of migrant integration in local primary networks (mixed couples) (Blanco, Maddaloni, Moffa 2016b: 34-35).

In recent years, the economic crisis heavily affected the southern European countries, with special reference to their most backward regions. They experienced a whole set of public policies aimed at securing a growing share of income to capital, and a complete freedom of movement to financial capital. Nowadays these countries show the lowest economic growth rates and the highest increase in the unemployment rate in all of Europe. Moreover, these changes are producing an erosion of the (southern) European social model⁴, which was (and, to some extent, still is) based on an extensive public intervention in the economy and social protection, and a growth in social and territorial inequalities (Maddaloni, 2016).

The main cognitive goal of our work was therefore to assess the persistence of this model in this era of crisis. We tried to understand the features of the subordinate inclusion of immigrants in these

southern European low-developed regions, assessing whether they are subject to a change in the face of crisis. More specifically, we tried to see if the crisis has affected the «usual» modes of immigrant inclusion in the labor market and their relationship with the welfare system.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Having defined our conceptual framework and cognitive goals, our methodological choice was to conduct a comparative research at a regional and local level. More specifically, the choice of a comparative approach is aimed at understanding some social processes taking place in a transnational context, such as international migration, the neo-liberal agenda and the current crisis of southern European societies. Taking into account that «you do not compare objects, nor properties, but states» (Fideli 1998, 29), and that the comparative analysis is based on the selection of objects sharing the same states in a large number of properties (*ibidem*: 17-33), we chose to compare two regions in the periphery of Europe, Campania and Extremadura. These regions have differences as regards, for instance: (1) the geographical location –Campania is a coastal region, Extremadura is an interior region–; (2) the population size –Campania has a larger population than Extremadura–; (3) the economic evolution –Campania has a history of industrial development older and more detailed than that of Extremadura. Nevertheless, these regions share some important features, such as: (1) a chronic condition of underdevelopment and high unemployment and poverty; (2) a long history of emigration towards more developed

² There are exceptions to these tendencies. In some districts, the formal economy and a legal regulation of workforce usage have become prominent recently (see for instance Gadea, Torres, 2016).

³ In the southern regions of Italy, the *caporale* (corporal) was a sort of recruiting and organizing officer of day laborers in the agricultural labor market. Almost disappeared because of structural changes in agriculture, the *caporale* is back in the limelight because of the need to find a coordination between the agricultural entrepreneurs, on one side, and the immigrant labor, on the other.

⁴ Note that the specific features of this southern European social model result in inefficiencies and inequities, which were very prominent, even before the crisis. The inability to provide equal employment opportunities (Maddaloni, 2009) or to ensure protection from poverty (Ponzini, 2008), are two good examples of this condition.

countries / regions; (3) a foreign presence that is still rather narrow in comparison with other regions of the same countries. This makes the comparison between Campania and Extremadura especially interesting if we want to understand the present and the future of migration and immigrant integration in southern Europe.

In order to grasp the complexity of the social and institutional processes related to migration and the foreign presence in this era of economic crisis and deep structural and cultural changes, we used a mixed methods approach, based on two main stages. The first was an analysis of documentary sources (national and regional legislation, documents on immigration by public agencies and official reports), the scientific literature and statistics available on the subject. The second step was a survey with key informants (Del Zotto, 1988). Since the object of our research had rather general connotations, the use of non-directive interviews seemed to us more appropriate than a structured research technique (e.g. questionnaires), since the latter can restrict the information potential of the respondent (*ibidem*). Therefore, we carried out the survey through in-depth interviews (Montesperelli, 1998) to 24 social workers, trade unionists, officials and experts having a direct and profound knowledge on migration and the presence of foreigners at local and regional level. The survey was carried out during summer and autumn 2014⁵. However, our approach is not entirely constructionist, since our intention was to integrate the data emerging from in-depth interviews and from other information sources in the context of a thoughtful and iterative process of understanding (Tracy, 2013). In the

following sections, we will present the main results we obtained from our research pathway.

4. MIGRATION IN CAMPANIA AND EXTREMADURA: SOME PRELIMINARY DATA

In both regions, the presence of immigrants is rather narrow and mainly concentrated in certain areas. According to recent available statistics (2014)⁶, foreign residents in Extremadura are 37,716, 3.4% of the total population (1,099,632 inhabitants). 48.8% of foreign residents (i. e., 18,395) are women. As for the country of origin, the composition of the immigrant population follows the Spanish profile in general (a review on the topic is in Cangiano, Strozza, 2008: 166-168), although in the case of Extremadura, immigrants from South America are fewer than those from African countries. The importance of agriculture in the region makes Moroccan (and more recently Romanian) immigrants, who are mostly laborers, the majority in the foreign population.

By contrast, according to 2014 statistics⁷, foreign residents in Campania are 217,503, that is 3.7% of the total population (5,861,529 inhabitants). 54.3% of foreigners are women (118,021). As for the country of origin, the largest groups come from Eastern Europe, although there is a significant presence of immigrants from Asia, particularly Sri Lanka and China, and Africa (both from the North and the sub-Saharan region), an evident sign of the globalization process in the regional (as well as national: see Cangiano, Strozza 2008: 164-166) migration system. On the contrary, there are fewer immigrants from Latin America. Like the native population, foreign residents are concentrated

⁵ 13 interviews were realized in Campania, 11 in Extremadura. Each interviewee is identified by a code (from C1 to C13 in the case of Campania, E1 to E11 for Extremadura). The list of the informants –not reproduced here for reasons of privacy– is available on request. We recorded, transcribed, coded and analyzed the interviews following the rules for the analysis of qualitative data reported in Diana and Montesperelli (2005; see also Silverman, 2010, 2015).

⁶ Source: *Instituto de Estadísticas de Extremadura*, <http://estadistica.gobex.es>. Last visit: February 1, 2016. It is well known that the use of official statistics on immigration runs the risk of underestimating the phenomenon because of irregular immigrants.

⁷ Source: <http://www.tuttitalia.it/campania/statistiche> (based on data from Istat). Last visit: February 1, 2016. About the reliability of official statistics on this topic, see the note above.

mainly in the coastal area and almost half of them live in the province of Naples. Here immigrants work mainly in services (mainly caregiving and domestic services) and construction, while in the inner area of Campania immigrants work also in the primary sector.

However, this demographic framework is likely to be rapidly overtaken by the events. The economic crisis affects not only the countries of southern Europe, but also those of North Africa and Middle East. In many of these countries, this led to political upheavals, but somewhere (as in Libya and Syria) this did not give birth to a new stable regime. On the contrary, new conflicts caused by ethnic, religious, and/or political factors have arisen. This has been producing a significant increase in the flow of refugees between the two shores of the Mediterranean, a flow that at least partially offsets the decline of economic migration. A pattern of mobility dictated by the need of survival is now rapidly emerging, in which the main actors are the asylum seekers⁸. Some of the countries most affected by the economic crisis, as Italy and Greece (but not Spain, at least to this extent) are at the forefront in the efforts to cope with the refugees flow. As we shall see later, this has created some new differences between the case of Campania and that of Extremadura.

5. THE PERIPHERAL INCORPORATION OF IMMIGRANTS IN THE LABOR MARKET AND THE CRISIS

The concept of peripheral incorporation of immigrants refers primarily to their role in the labor market. The latter may be seen as the result of a combination of three processes. The first is the restrictive nature of the initial policy responses - which later change ambiguously, with a mixture of openings and closings towards immigrants.

The second is the relative inefficiency of public institutions in the control of migration flows and in assisting the new immigrants. The third is the largely informal or irregular nature of the local economy, with a special reference for such sectors as agriculture, construction and personal services. These activities are some of the main features of the productive specialization of the southern European countries in the continental context (Maddaloni, 2008). Briefly, this combination produces: (1) an underground and irregular status of the new arrivals; (2) a concentration of immigrants in dirty, dangerous, and demanding jobs; (3) a social marginalization of migrant communities. It is true that these features of the role played by immigrants in the southern European labor market are almost everywhere in the post-Fordist economy (Ambrosini, 2005: 58-63). Nevertheless, these features are more noticeable in these countries, since their pattern of change and development is deeply rooted on these phenomena⁹.

What happens, then, to this kind of labor market integration in face of the crisis? From this point of view, we can note that in southern European «backward» regions such as Campania and Extremadura, immigrants suffer for the economic crisis at an even greater degree than native workers do. In Extremadura, migrants are affected by the general decline in working conditions due to the crisis that hit Spain (Colectivo Ioé, 2012).

I believe that, with the advent of the crisis, the jobs occupied by immigrants have been the first to disappear; they are a group highly exposed to job loss, not only because they choose fixed-term contracts, but also because the sectors where they work were the most exposed to the crisis. Therefore, yes, I believe that the crisis has affected them, but not enough to encourage them to come back to

⁸ According to Eurostat, «there was a gradual increase in the number of asylum applications within the EU-27 and later the EU-28 through to 2012, after which the number of asylum seekers rose to 431 thousand in 2013, 627 thousand in 2014 and close to 1.3 million in 2015». In 2014, asylum applicants were 64,625 in Italy, 9,430 in Greece (which is one sixth of Italy by population), but only 5,615 in Spain. Source: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_statistics. Last visit: June 22, 2016.

⁹ Moreover, the proximity of southern Europe to certain regions of the world that are source of significant migratory flows –as Eastern Europe, the Near East, and North Africa– is a cause of a great permeability of State borders in itself.

their home country, as in the case of immigrants engaged in housework (E11).

The recent growth in the unemployment rates and the continuous spread of precarious jobs result in a reduced availability of economic resources. This in turn leads to a greater spread of economic poverty and social deprivation (Rodríguez-Planas, Nollenberger 2014). In Campania, the crisis has also led to a decrease of work opportunities, even in the informal sector. For example, as regards the agriculture,

[...] there is a greater discontinuity in the work, closely linked to the economic crisis, which has affected some firms of the agricultural sector. Some immigrants report they cannot find a chance to work every day, also because they are in the grip of illegal hiring (C9).

Among the effects of the economic crisis on the immigrant population, there is a decline in the immigration motivated by economic reasons only. In both regions, many legal migrant workers, having lost their jobs due to the crisis, are faced with a choice between repatriation and survival in conditions of economic and/or legal irregularity.

Well, the crisis affects them, the immigrants... many [of them] who had documents, because of the crisis, are now without them because permits are renewable. Those who had not achieved the permanent permit after five years, all those who had to renew it (in order to renew you must have an employment contract), then those people have lost permission, regularization. They have gone from being legal to be illegal and being illegal they leave [the country], because it is very difficult not to be expelled (E7).

In these regions, therefore, the crisis has so far produced the permanence of immigrants in irregular conditions, more often than their return. This choice often depends on a variety of personal and familial factors:

Others cannot leave even if [they are] illegal, because they are in debt, because they have bought a home, because their children are integrated, because the crisis is affecting them just like us. People who were fully integrated and then, well, they are going very badly, because they can no longer send money home and for them it is a failure [...] (E6).

This is often linked to the tightening of labor exploitation and even the proliferation of illegal work, as noted by a key informant from Campania who refers to immigrants living in the metropolitan area of Naples:

On the streets today, you can meet immigrants subject to mental distress and begging. The latter is not an activity freely chosen by foreigners: there are criminal organizations that put immigrants to their «workplaces» [...]. This means that the crisis is causing a great loss of opportunities, and that the choice to remain here is done even under these exploitative circuits (C11).

On the other hand, the same width of the informal economy in these regions—especially in Campania—keeps working in part as a shock absorber, which often is not the case in more developed regions:

These are immigrants who come mostly from Brescia and Bergamo¹⁰, fired by firms that went bankrupt because of the economic crisis. Being unable to renew residence permits, they came here, where they can find accommodation at the lowest prices, move with less control by the police and the legal system. With the possibility of a job in agriculture (C10).

At the same time, however, some key informants refer to an incoming competition between migrants and the marginal strata of the native population. The economic crisis is causing the return of native workers in labor market segments previously left to immigrants (Blanco, Maddaloni, Moffa, 2016b:

¹⁰ Brescia and Bergamo are two of the most developed areas in northern Italy.

41). In particular, «women from Campania have been coming back in the domestic work sector, a field occupied mainly by immigrant women» (C8). In Extremadura,

[...] now the native worker accepts working conditions that before were accepted only by the immigrant, because he is in a state of necessity. Here it is where we see more strain, [...] because [indigenous workers] accept a job at lower or more precarious conditions to those accepted in the past, or those established by the contracts (E2).

Therefore, the peripheral incorporation of immigrants into the local labor market is experiencing increasing difficulties in these underdeveloped regions of southern Europe. There is no doubt that the informal nature of the economic activity often helps to avoid extreme economic poverty. This may explain both the resilience of many immigrants to the recent worsening of their legal status and economic conditions, and the internal migration of immigrants from developed regions with more «structured» economies. Nevertheless, the worsening in the legal and economic status of immigrants is a widespread reality. Moreover, the incipient competition between native and immigrant workers in some segments of the labor market may raise concerns for the future of immigrant integration policies, at least at a regional or local scale.

6. THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF PERIPHERAL INCORPORATION IN AN AGE OF CRISIS

Some kinds of competition related to access and / or use of social services may amplify the risk of a conflict caused by the worsening of the local labor market situation. In the field of social integration of immigrants, the concept of peripheral incorporation refers mainly to the predominance of informal networks allowing immigrants to solve the problems of the everyday life. These networks

are mostly based on ethnic or religious affiliation, but sometimes they may include native citizens with useful resources for the immigrant workers and their families. These resources can be intangible, such as the acquaintance with government officials; sometimes they can be material or physical, such as accommodations to use as dwellings. The direct relationship of immigrants with public authorities is reduced to a minimum—for example, the release of permits and other personal documents—and, when necessary, is often mediated by non-governmental organizations, working both on a voluntary base and on public funding.

From this point of view, a first more general observation is that immigrants now show «a dependence on the public sector that before they did not have» (E5), because of the weakening of informal networks of self-help caused by the crisis. Since immigrants have less economic resources and political support than natives, many key informants report that now public policies may not favor equal rights and hinder therefore integration. Moreover, things may get even worse because the immigrant population is often unable to get the intermediate resources (e.g., job and residence permit) required in order to access other public policy measures such as social housing¹¹.

[...] I think the cutback in public services and aid affects those with fewer opportunities to get resources that would give access, for example [...] if you do not have a job, if you have no residence permit, if you do not have certain things, you cannot have a home even if you have other kind of support. [...] so I think that the immigrant population is not accessing these intermediate resources and they are more affected by the cuts because the effects of certain programs on certain populations are not evaluated [by public authorities] (E8).

This can cause increasing problems to a public welfare system that is already in trouble due to the continued reduction of the budget. Southern

¹¹ As regards Spain, it has been noted also that these changes may affect immigrants differently depending on the genre, and they can contribute to the weakening of the social conditions of the immigrant women (Manzanera, Ortiz, Clavero, 2015).

European countries have a very high ratio of public debt to GDP; therefore, they are constantly pushed to reduce their public budgets. As is known, the sector of social provisions and services is the main target of this pressure towards reduction in public spending. This may be seen as a choice shared by the élites –insofar they share a common neoliberal vision–, both at a national and a regional level. Nevertheless, there are still differences rooted in national and/or local political cultures. For instance, in Italy a party named *Lega Nord* (*Northern League*) –a supposedly independentist party, whose political discourse is not only anti-immigrants but also anti-southerners (Diamanti, 1996; Biorcio, 2010; see also Biorcio, 2015)–, has been gaining a broad electoral support in many parts of the country. Moreover, after the breakdown of the post-World War II Italian party system, in the 90s, extreme right movements have been gaining consent and political influence in the center-right coalitions (Caldiron, 2009). Nothing similar appeared in Spain, at least as a mass political and/or ideological movement. This means that anti-immigrant discourse has perhaps more room in Italy than in Spain to express itself in the political arena, thus influencing public authorities.

We can find some differences between Campania and Extremadura on this topic. In Campania, there was an important change of political attitudes towards immigrants in 2010, when a center-right coalition won Regional elections. This has led to a shift, from a strategy of integration to one of indifference towards immigrants:

From 2010 onwards, there is nothing [in the field of immigrant policies]; in fact, there was even a total cessation of the activities financed by the [Regional] government, such as the fight against the trafficking [of women]. The problem at stake is not simply the crisis and the lack of regional funds, but it is the [political] will, the unwillingness to

address this situation and allocate money in the field of immigration [...] (C10)

The shift of regional policy has given increased responsibilities to local councils, the Social Zone Plans (*Piani Sociali di Zona*)¹² and –above all– non-governmental organizations:

Many services and resources that contribute to the integration of immigrants are carried out and supplied locally. [...] With the cut in funding, everything was in the hands of municipalities, and often there has been no concrete action. The political focus has shifted to asylum policies, even if there has not been a real mobilization of municipalities, but only on the side of the third sector (C13).

Moreover, the Italian national policy on refugees and asylum seekers aims at their distribution throughout the country. Despite not being a border region, therefore, Campania is hosting many refugees recently. This implies that regional and local social policies aimed at the immigrant integration may suffer now three types of obstacles. The first type comes from the change of government at the regional level¹³. The second one stems from the reduction of funds due to a more restrictive budgetary policy. The last one comes from the need to cope with a new emergency. In this increasingly difficult context,

[...] there is less and less funding for non-governmental associations, and often [third sector] workers are not paid and there are protests, in particular in the sector of the social solidarity, and within this broad area, particularly regarding the world of immigration (C7).

In Extremadura, on the contrary, the change of attitudes of the Regional government on im-

¹² According to L. 328/2000, the Social Zone Plan is the planning tool for the development of a social welfare policy, covering all the municipalities of a district. The Plan is designed by the local authorities, with the support of public institutions, non-governmental organizations and businesses interested in the policy.

¹³ There was a new change in the regional government of Campania with the elections of 2015, won by the Democratic Party. However, the effects of this change on immigrant regional policy cannot yet be easily evaluated.

migration policy –from the social integration of immigrants toward the management of the social emergencies– seems to derive mostly and directly from the economic and budgetary crisis. Nevertheless, even if the process seems to be more orderly and slower than in Campania, the direction remains the same:

[...] *In the field of social policy, [...] the current government in the region is favoring welfare dependence, i.e., they are financing mostly [...] the Red Cross, the Caritas, associations of this kind, the Food Bank [at the expense of] projects aimed at integration [...]* (E2)¹⁴.

Housing may be a sector in which the current general trend may be fully appreciated, together with some other differences between the regions at issue. In Extremadura, there were social housing programs that addressed the needs of immigrants. However, access to housing itself could generate suspicion among native groups that live in a precarious condition.

Housing has created problems in the sense that, well ... [...] the social group who most needed [these policies] was the immigrants and there were housing assignments that virtually 100% of allocations was for immigrants, with this suspicion that [this] induced in the native population (E2).

Furthermore, according to some informants, immigrants' dwellings are those natives do not want, and they are often located in poor neighborhoods. Thus different groups at risk of exclusion are forced to live together, which can further hinder integration and community life. Moreover, there are now more *extremeños* living in a precarious situation, which may be seen as a pre-condition of a competition with immigrant groups (E7). In addition, access to housing, both in the free market and as a social service, may depend on immigrants'

nationality, because of the stereotypes shared by the natives (Blanco, Maddaloni, Moffa 2016a: 21-22).

As for Campania, recent literature highlights the precarious conditions of immigrant housing in this region (see, for instance, Diana, 2010; Diana, Marra, 2012; Ammirato, Diana, Strozza, 2015). Like other Italian Regions, Campania lacks a public housing policy for the lower strata of the population. Therefore, many immigrants have access only to deteriorated dwellings, and in many cases, they have to live in overcrowded conditions. «The immigrants who cannot afford higher rents accept housing conditions rejected by almost all natives. It is a largely submerged housing market, in which garages, *bassi*¹⁵ and hovels are turned into dwellings» (Blanco, Maddaloni, Moffa 2016a: 26).

To sum up, our results seem to show the onset of increasing difficulties in the pattern of peripheral incorporation of immigrants in the southern European «backward» societies. The growing shortage of resources available to the public sector seems to make social policies toward immigrants more and more centered on management of social emergencies, rather than in the social and cultural integration of immigrants in the local society.

7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Social reality is more complex than any abstract pattern designed by theorists, ideologists and political entrepreneurs. Today there are many population movements in southern European countries. In particular, there is emigration to the countries of North and Central Europe –or other developed countries (Alba, Fernández, Martínez, 2013; Triandafyllidou, Gropas, 2014). At the same time, there is also some flow of immigration from these same countries, motivated by a lifestyle choice (King, 2002; Stone, Stubbs, 2007; Benson, O'Reilly, 2009; Torkington,

¹⁴ Note that, like Spain as a whole, Extremadura has not yet experienced the problem of refugees and asylum seekers, which instead has fully affected Italy, besides Greece.

¹⁵ The *bassi* are small dwellings of one or two rooms on the ground floor, with direct access on the road. They were very popular in Naples, but also in other areas of southern Italy. Today their usage is viewed as an indicator of urban and social decay.

2010). The refugee flux affecting Italy (and Greece) more than Spain today relates to people who mostly sees southern Europe not just as a new homeland but, once again, as a transit area. Moreover, immigrants from underdeveloped or peripheral countries are «highly differentiated by gender, religion, ethnic group, country of origin, settlement area, and economic sector» (Blanco, Maddaloni, Moffa 2016a: 28), as almost every empirical research on them may show. Finally, the world of migration is continuously changing, adding new factors of complexity to a research field which is already multi-layered and that can be properly addressed only by means of an interdisciplinary and comparative perspective. The research findings we have discussed in this paper should therefore be understood only as a little contribution to a collective effort to increase our shared knowledge in this field.

Having said this, we can also add that ideas related to the concept of peripheral incorporation of immigrants in southern European societies are alive and well in current scientific literature (Tomei, 2016). However, the changes under way in the low-developed regions of southern Europe can produce a transformation of their pattern of immigrant integration in directions that are not easily predictable. The local labor market downturn has produced an increase of repatriations, a new spread of irregular conditions and a partial displacement of immigrant workforce. The reduction of public spending on social policies is making the satisfaction of the most basic social needs increasingly difficult to immigrants but also to native citizens, especially those in disadvantaged conditions. The increasing scarcity of resources allocated to the foreign population results in a lower potential for integration. In turn, this may imply an increase in the internal inequalities in the immigrant population. Our analysis seems to support the opinion that the crisis may have the effect to make competition among immigrants, and between natives and immigrants, more likely than they were in a recent past. Nevertheless, today «open conflicts are few and focus mainly on the issue of cultural rights of the Muslim minority, which is only a part of the immigrant population» (Blanco, Maddaloni,

Moffa 2016a: 28). The political issues related to the presence of foreigners and multiculturalism in southern Europe still seem to be open to different solutions. In this regard, many key informants share the view that a new citizenship policy, with particular reference to the granting of voting rights in local and regional elections to foreign residents, could rebalance the political debate on immigrant integration (E10, C5).

There are also differences between Campania and Extremadura (Blanco, Maddaloni, Moffa, 2016a, 2016b). The first of them concerns the issue of refugees, which is a major social and political problem in Italy today—more than it was in 2014, when we interviewed our key informants. The second one concerns the effectiveness and quality of public intervention in the field of social integration— even in this respect Campania seems at a disadvantage when compared to Extremadura. The combination of these phenomena can generate growing difficulties in the management of immigration, thus contributing to the further deterioration of a social context already hurt by a long history of economic stagnation, unemployment and poverty.

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