Athens Journal of Social Sciences

Front Pages

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The *Athens Journal of Social Science (AJSS)* is an Open Access quarterly double-blind peer reviewed journal and considers papers from all areas of social sciences, including papers on sociology, psychology, politics, media, and economics. Many of the papers in this journal have been presented at the various conferences sponsored the Social Sciences Division of **the Athens Institute for Education and Research** (ATINER). All papers are subject to ATINER's Publication Ethical Policy and Statement.

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

Gregory T. Papanikos
President
ATINER

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The Ukrainian Migrant Flows to Greece due to the Russian-Belarus Invasion

By Gregory T. Papanikos[*]

Migration flows are as old as human history itself. In Greece, the first movements of people are recorded in the 13th century BCE and not stopped ever since. Inflows and outflows of people are a permanent future of Greek history. However, a distinction should be made between three types of flows. Firstly, people are forced to leave their country because of national agreements of resettlements. A world example of such resettlement was the exchange of population between Greece and Turkey in the first part of the 20th century. Secondly, people flee an area to save their lives because of war and prosecutions, including genocides. An example of such migration was the outflow of Greeks from Asia Minor because of the war between Turkey and Greece. Thirdly, people migrate for social reasons which may include economic, political and educational purposes. This was definitely the case of the post-Second World War period in Greece when many Greeks moved outside of Greece to find better jobs abroad (e.g., Germany); study abroad (e.g., U.K.); and to live in a democratic country (e.g., Canada, Sweden, etc.), because in Greece a dictatorship (1967-1974) had abolished democracy. Greece has also been on the receiving end of many migrants from all over the world for the same reasons. The latest example is the flow of Ukrainians who are coming to Greece due to the Russian-Belarus invasion of their country. These migration flows are examined in this paper.

Keywords: *migrants, refugees, migration policy, Greece, Ukraine*

Introduction

The Russian-Belarus invasion of Ukraine took many Europeans by surprise.[1] Many of them thought that a European war was a thing of the past and some unfortunate incidents such as the NATO bombing of Serbia were an exception to the rule. As far as human beings are concerned, war brings death and all kinds of displacement; the war in Ukraine is no exception. Since the beginning of this war, millions of Ukrainians have fled the war zone, either migrating inside the country or outside in the nearby bordering countries. According to the International Migration Office (IMO), from the beginning of the war on 24 February 2022, close to seven million Ukrainians have fled the country to find a safe shelter elsewhere. The number of people displaced inside Ukraine is not known as of yet.

Greece does not border Ukraine, but it has contributed its share in providing shelter to all Ukrainians who left the country due to war and decided to come to Greece. By the end of May 2022, 32.6 thousand Ukrainians have entered Greece as

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[*]President, Athens Institute for Education and Research, Greece.
[1]I have examined the issue of the Ukrainian war in a series of papers, see Papanikos (2022a, 2022b, 2022c, 2022d, 2022e)

refugees. Historically, Greece is a country where all kinds of migrations have occurred, which include the flows of outmigration and immigration and the types, whether economic migrants and/or asylum seekers.[2] Since antiquity Greeks themselves have migrated for various reasons all over the Mediterranean and even beyond. More recently, Greeks left the country after the Great Recession of 2008 and went to more advanced countries of Europe, North America and Oceania. Concurrently, many migrants and refugees were entering Greece to either be employed in various low-level skills jobs or seeking asylum as a first step to move to another European country, primarily in Germany and U.K. Most of them enter Greece as illegal migrants creating huge problems at the Greek borders and in the main cities where they end up. Greek migration policy towards these types of migrants and refugees, who mainly come from Africa and Asia, has been criticized as being discriminatory, inhumane and racist. In addition, the instrumentalization of migrants and refuges has created a political strife between the European Union and Turkey.

However, this is not the case with the Ukrainians. The Greek policy authorities acted very fast and designed a very effective migration policy towards Ukrainian war refugees—completely unprecedented for the Greek government which usually is notorious for its slow and ineffective policy implementation. This is not unique to Greece, but extends to all the countries of Europe which are more than welcoming to refugees from Ukraine while at the same time making life difficult for any other migrant from Africa and/or Asia. This differentiation in treatment has already raised some voices against this type of discrimination, but the explanation might be different from admitting migrants/refugees based on pure racist criteria. Economics might provide a non-racist explanation of this discrimination as explained below in this paper.

Including this short introduction, this study is organized into five sections. In the next section an argument is made which may provide a "rational" explanation for why the Ukrainian migrants/refugees are treated differently. In the next section, data on the total outmigration of Ukrainian refugees are presented. In section four, the statistical data on Ukrainian flows to Greece are examined since the beginning of the war until the end of May 2022. The last section concludes.

Selected Literature Review and Some Theoretical Considerations

All types of migration have been the subject of many disciplines including the arts. Some of the best novels in the world deal with the issue of migration. The well-known work of Homer, *Odyssey*, describes the nostos of one person, Odysseus, to return to his homeland. In this present study, the emphasis is on economics. A selected literature review is provided that demonstrates that migration imposes huge economic costs. Migrants should be welcomed by a public authority which requires an administrative structure in order to manage the entire process of the migrant/refugee flow requiring funding to provide food, clothes,

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[2]In Papanikos (1991), I examined the Greek emigration to Canada and in Papanikos (2003) I estimated the number of migrants/refugees living in Greece.

shelter,[3] education,[4] social services[5] and finally work for the migrants/refugees. All these should be decided by the political process and in democratic societies like the ones of Europe and USA where migration has become a major political issue as explained by Nath, Pedriana, Gifford, McAuley and Fülöp (2022). See also the study by Yang (2021), which compares the 2016 presidential campaigns of Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders on this issue.

Arts, culture and literacy writings have been influenced by migration stories. Ait Idir (2019) looks at literacy writings of Tayeb Salih and Joseph Conrad. The author of the article emphasizes the issue of alienation when people move to the north coming from Africa. Similarly, Chamekh (2021) examines illegal migration in Tunisian rap music. He studies the music as a means of resistance and protest against conditions which force many Tunisians to go to Europe, emphasizing, from an artistic point of view, the increasing security efforts of the EU[6] and Tunisian authorities. What is missing here is the fact that all these impose costs, which at the end of the day, are paid by the taxpayers of these countries.

The legal aspects of migration impose huge costs on both the host and home countries of migrants when it comes to family unification issues[7] and social security and pension matters.

All these sentiments–real or actual does not really matter—impose an economic cost on the host country. Resources should be expended to facilitate some kind of integration into the community. In many cases, migrants do not want to integrate, especially their children, because the return to the lost homeland is always in the back of their minds.[8] This important issue is discussed among many others by Avgoulas and Fanany (2021) for the Greek diaspora to Australia. In a similar

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[3]Given the huge inflows of migrants in countries like Turkey and Italy, Francese, Uz and Adamo (2016) have looked at how these flows have affected the city architecture in these two countries. In Athens if the 1920s, entire city-suburbs were built to shelter the over one-million refugees who fled the Asia Minor to avoid massacre. The prefix "Nea" is a reminder of their old areas in Asia Minor, e.g., Nea Ionia, Nea Smyrna, Nea Philadelphia.

[4]On the educational differential achievements of migrants and the host population, see Sakellariou (2017). Also, Zervas (2017) looks at the history of educational provision in USA emphasizing the needs of migrants.

[5]Lee and Weng (2019) look at the challenge of social work provisions to immigrants and refugees. This exerts additional costs and very much depends on the cultural characteristics of the displaced people. Language and religion are some of them.

[6]See Zichi (2018) for a discussion of one aspect of the security issue, namely the development of a European fleet in the Mediterranean to prevent illegal migration.

[7]For example, see Duca (2014) for family unification legal issues in Europe.

[8]One important aspect of the integration of children–the so-called second generation—is the acquisition of language skills of the host country. On the other hand, parents may want their children to learn their own language. In many cases this has some positive results as children become bilingual as has been demonstrated by Corbari (2017). This, of course, is not the case when migrants move to another country simply to work for a short period of time--a few months or years--and then return back to their country of origin. In many cases, they leave their children back home as was the case with Greeks who moved to Germany in the 1950s and 1960s. This is also the case of Mexicans today who migrate to the USA, creating inflows and outflows of Mexican workers. On the latter issue, see González-Rosas and Zárate-Gutiérrez (2018). It is interesting to note that Greeks migrated to Germany after the Great Recession of 2008 to find employment. The interactions of old Greek migrants to Germany and the new wave are examined by Tseligka (2022).

context, Pelliccia (2017) researches the identity of second generation of Greeks in Italy.

Internal migration, another important aspect of displacement, is discussed by Arnon and Shamai (2016) for the case of Israel. They look at the issue of cultural integration, which, despite the fact that migrants have a cultural affinity with the local population, conflicts did arise imposing costs on decision making at the community level. Similarly, Ozdemir and Dokmeci (2016) looked at the internal migration in Turkey from a demographic point of view.

Economics is also an important part of the literature on migration. In many cases, refugees and asylum seekers who claim that their lives are at risk may be disguised economic migrants, i.e., people move to find better paid jobs and avoid absolute poverty.[9] These economic migrants–legal or illegal—impose all kinds of economic and social costs, which, at the macro level, the host country should take care of, but at the microeconomic level, firms and other providers of employment to migrants should adjust their management approach. Cheng-Fei Tsai and Yen (2017) examined the adjustment process of Chinese immigrant wives in Taiwan. Reddy Edara (2020) studied the Filipino catholic migrants in Taiwan, finding that religion plays an important role in migrants' wellbeing. Both studies concluded with a number of suggestions to improve the management and social welfare of such migrant workers.

The above limited literature review solely based on papers published in the various eJournals of the *Athens Institute for Education and Research* show that migrations impose serious costs on the host country. This cost is multidimensional and includes economic, social, political, cultural, educational and religious aspects. If a strict cost-benefit analysis is applied, and assuming that the total number of migrants/refugees a given country like Greece can accept is fixed (say N* as in Figure 1), then as far as Greece is concerned more Ukrainians will be admitted, *ceteris paribus*, than any other migrants/refugees of a different nationality. Furthermore, if, from a philanthropic point of view, helping one refugee is as good as helping any other, then there is no ethical reason why Greece could not admit only Ukrainians as far as the number of Ukrainians wanting to come to Greece is greater than N*.

It is true that the migration/refugee crisis of Ukraine was met with an unprecedented positive reaction by all European countries. Governments and the citizens of Europe open their national borders to welcome Ukrainians who left their country. The only grievances were that there was a discrimination against other migrants/refugees. It is true that there was a difference, but this can be explained by a generic cost-benefit analysis. For whatever reasons, admitting Ukrainians is not the same as admitting a refugee from an Asian or an African war-stricken country. One easy explanation is to infer that the Greek policy authorities are racists and xenophobic and this is the reason why they prefer to admit Ukrainians to any other nationality. Of course, at the extreme end of racism and xenophobic sentiments, a country may decide to admit zero migrants/refugees.

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[9]Most migrants live in relative poverty in their host country, but they are better off relative to their home country. On the relative poverty of migrants in Italy, see Rimoldi and Barbiano di Belgiojoso (2016).

Figure 1 offers another explanation for this behavior. It is constructed in such a way so that the average cost of admitting a refugee from Ukraine is much lower than any other refugee coming from the rest of the world (ROW). This might explain why so many refugees were admitted not only into Greece, but into all other European countries, particularly those countries which border Ukraine as will be shown in the next section.

Assuming that admitting a migrant/refugee from one country as from any other country, then admitting only Ukrainians should be morally accepted and it does not necessarily demonstrate a policy of discrimination based on racism and intolerance. If the costs for admitting a migrant/refugee is not the same, then maximizing the number of migrants/refugees admitted in one country requires the equalization of marginal costs of admitting a migrant/refugee. As it stands, Figure 1 shows that only Ukrainians will be accepted because they incur the lowest average cost.

Figure 1. *Costs per Migrant/Refugee*
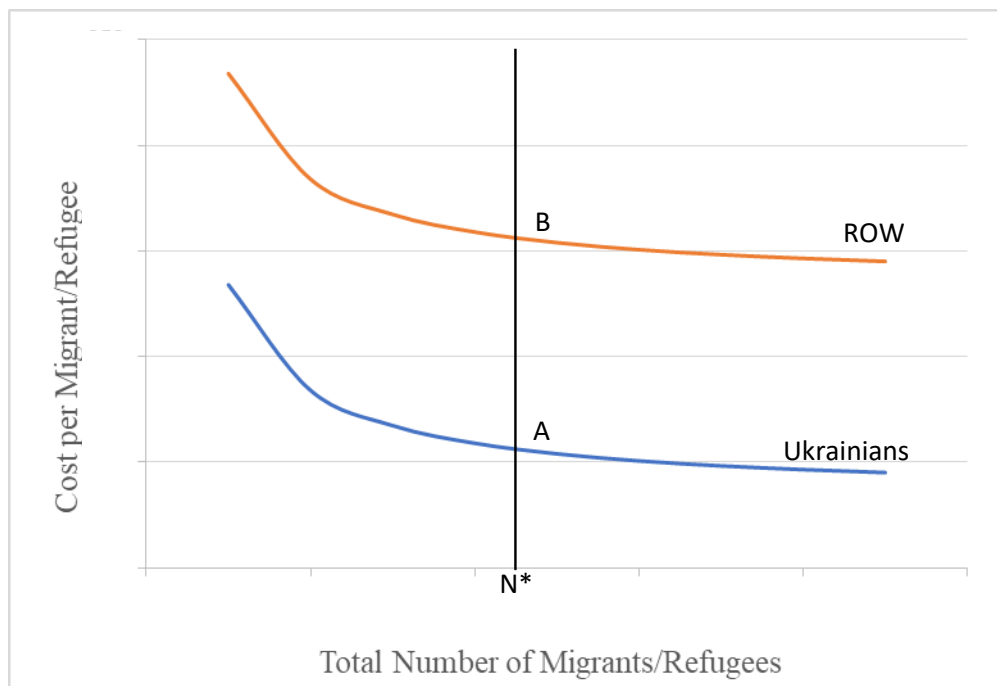
The next question which naturally arises is, why do Ukrainian migrants/refugees have a much lower economic cost than any other migrant/refugee? The cost is multidimensional, but at the end of the day it can be reduced to money (economic) cost. The economic costs are direct and indirect, short-term and long-term, fixed and variable. The direct economic costs arise immediately with the arrival of a migrant/refugee. These people must be fed, clothed and sheltered from day one of their arrival. Also, these people need public services such as health, education and security (policy) services. These make up the short-term (immediate) direct economic costs.

There are many additional costs which normally occur in the long run, say after one generation. The new generation of migrants who are born in the host country impose a cost on the country because they normally require additional social services, but the whole situation may get very dire if the youth of migrants feel that they are not welcomed in their place of birth. France, and to a certain extent many other European countries, have experienced social grievances that led to riots. It goes beyond the scope of this study to estimate these costs, but assuming that these issues do not exist or playing the blame game does not solve the problem. This might explain why Ukrainians are more welcome than other refugees: they impose the least of short- and long-term economic and social costs. The Ukraine flow of refugees is examined in the next section.

The Total Flow of Ukrainian War Refugees

Since the war started on 24 February 2022, millions of Ukrainians left the county and found shelter first in the neighboring countries (see the map in Figure 2), and then to other countries which wanted to admit them. In the past, Europe has had to cope with an influx of migrants/refugees many times, but the current numbers are unprecedented. Also unparalleled is the geographical proximity of the home country making it much easier to cross only one border.

Figure 2. *Ukrainian War Refugees to Neighboring Countries*

Source: United Nations (https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine)

Table 1 provides data on the Ukrainian migration to border countries. In total, close to seven million Ukrainians had fled by the end of May 2022. On 4 March 2022, the European Council adopted a temporary protection mechanism for all Ukrainians who left the country.[10]

Of great interest is where did these refugees choose to go? Half of them (52.84%) went to Poland. The influx of 3.7 million Ukrainians to Poland in just a

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[10]See https://bit.ly/3mamEGy.

three month period (a number equal to almost 10% of the Polish population) is unprecedented. Similarly, of great interest is the number of Ukrainian refugees who were accepted into Hungary. There, 10% of the total refugees or 698,420 were admitted into Hungary which corresponds to 7.16% of the Hungarian population. What is of interest for Poland and Hungary is the fact that during the crisis of Syrian refugees, both countries were reluctant to accept refugees coming from this area. Discrimination is an easy explanation, however including the economic and social cost of accepting refugees may be another explanation.

Table 1. *Total refugee influx from Ukraine in neighboring countries by the end of May 2022*

Country	Refugees	% Of Refugees	Population	% Of Population
Poland	3,690,089	52.84%	37,950,802	9.72%
Romania	587,219	8.41%	19,286,120	3.04%
Russian Federation	1,041,095	14.91%	144,104,080	0.72%
Hungary	698,420	10.00%	9,749,760	7.16%
Republic of Moldova	483,306	6.92%	2,620,490	18.44%
Slovakia	466,264	6.68%	5,458,830	8.54%
Belarus	16,648	0.24%	9,379,950	0.18%
Total	6,983,041	100%	228,550,032	3.06%

Note: The accumulated data in this table is higher than the total number of refugees fleeing Ukraine presented above since it also takes into account people crossing the border between Romania and Moldova.
Source: United Nations (https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine) and World Bank (https://data. worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=PL).

A last note on Table 1 is that many bordering countries may admit Ukrainian refugees as a demonstration of their historical anti-Russian feelings. Countries like Moldova and Poland still fear that a Russian invasion in their countries is possible. However, this cannot explain the feelings of Greeks towards Ukrainian refugees. Traditionally Greece had close ties with Russia going back to the late centuries of the first millennium. It seems that the invasion of Ukraine may tear apart these long, good relations. One demonstration of this was the welcoming of Ukrainian refugees.

The Flow of Ukrainian War Refugees to Greece

The Greek government reacted immediately to the Ukrainian refugee crisis, unprecedented for the Greek state bureaucracy. There are a number of reasons why Ukrainians are more than welcome in Greece. As a matter of fact, they would have been more than welcome if the war was not with Russia, which from the Greek point of view, bears the same characteristics as Ukraine. What are these characteristics? Firstly, both Greece and Ukraine share the same religion. i.e., they are both Greek Orthodox. Second, they share long cultural and historical affinities

that go back to the Homeric years. For example, Snake Island is also called the "Achilles' Island" because according to the Greek mythology, Thetis brought in the island and buried the corpses of Achilles and Patroclus after they were killed in the Trojan War. More significantly, in 1815 in Ukraine (the city of Odessa which was a Greek settlement established in the 6th century BCE), a secret Greek society was formed to liberate Greece from the Ottoman yoke. Thirdly, as Herodotus has said, Ukrainians and Greeks are "homotropous" which etymologically means that they have the same (homo) ways (tropous) of behavior; so much so that they would become completely immersed in Greek society. Their only difference is the language, but even that may be quickly surpassed because they use the Cyrillic alphabet which is most similar to the Greek alphabet than any other language. After all, the Ukrainian alphabet was created by two Greeks--the brothers Cyril and Methodius, the so called "apostles of Slavs"— in the 9th century CE.

Based on all this, the affinity between Ukrainians and Greeks is very strong, making it easy for the Greek Government to implement a favorable refugee policy and so they did. It should be noted that many of these refugees are of Greek descent, especially coming from cities like Mariupol which had a strong Greek community for centuries. Thus, this welcoming is not so "innocent" since in reality it reminds many Greeks of the inflow of Greek refugees from Asia Minor in 1922 or from Istanbul in the 1950s.

Figure 3 shows the daily arrivals of Ukrainian refugees to Greece. Actually, there was a complete open borders policy making it extremely easy to enter Greece. The daily inflow climaxed in the first 2-3 weeks of the invasion, and it has stabilized thereafter with the trend to be downward (not shown in the graph).

Figure 3. *Daily Inflows of Ukrainian Refugees to Greece from 23 Feb 2022 to 31 May 2022*
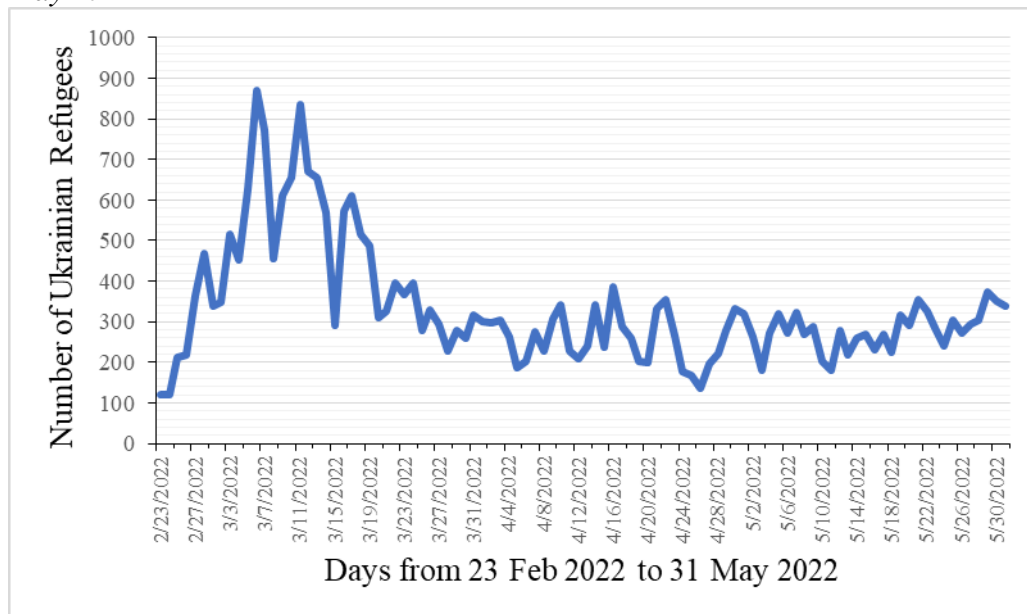
Source: https://migration.gov.gr/en/ukraine/.

The maximum inflow occurred on 6 March 2022 with 869 refugees entering Greece that day (Table 2). The minimum flow of only 119 refugees happened during the day of the invasion (24 Feb 2022), as well as the preceding day (23 Feb 2022). On average during the entire period under examination (end of May 2022), the daily inflow of refuges was 333 people, but almost half of the total inflow happened during the month of March (Table 3).

Table 2. *Summary Statistics of Ukraine Refugees to Greece from 23 Feb 2022 to 31 May 2022*

Variable	Number of People
Sum	32,589
Average	333
Maximum	869
Minimum	119
Standard Deviation	148

Table 3. *Ukraine Refugees to Greece by Month*

	Total Number of Refugees	Average Number of refugees
February	1501	250
March	14630	472
April	7759	259
May	8699	281

The average daily inflow of Ukrainian refugees to Greece was 250 people in February; it almost doubled during the month of March (472 daily average inflow); it decreased to 259 in April and picked up in May to 281.

The future of these inflows will very much depend on the war developments in the Ukraine. If a peaceful solution is established, then not only will the inflows stop, but many of the refugees will return home. For those who remain in Greece, the cost of adjustment and integration will be negligible.

Conclusions

In this study I am not claiming that there is no discrimination against migrants/ refugees caused by racist and intolerance motives. In any country, there will be some percentage of the population against migrants/refugees irrespective of where they are coming from. This percentage of population is not static and depends very much on the costs incurred by the local population. The higher these costs are, the higher the percentage of the local population who are against admitting and welcoming migrants/refugees, and this is the real danger for democratic societies. By accepting migrants/refugees who incur a higher cost, may fuel racist and intolerant sentiments of a much wider part of population, which may lead to extreme racist political parties to be elected as governing parties.

The conclusion of this study is that admitting migrants/refugees should be carefully designed so that political stability and social cohesion is maintained. The

case of Ukrainian migrants/refugees coming to Greece shows the actual costs do play a role and should be taken into consideration. Extreme voices of making value judgements and accusing everybody who raises concerns on the unconditional admitting migrants/refugees are as dangerous to democracy as those voices who shout that no migrant/refugee should be admitted.

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Knowledge, Attitude, and Practices (KAP) Towards COVID-19 among Older People Living in Informal Settlements in Nairobi City, Kenya

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Informal settlements in developing countries such as Kenya are the least prepared to deal with COVID-19 pandemic due to lack of basic housing, water and sanitation, and overcrowding. The risk is magnified for older people in such an environment due to their advanced age that compromises their immune system, and the fact that they are more likely to have pre-existing health conditions which weaken their body's ability to fight infectious diseases. This study sought to establish older people's knowledge levels, perception, and risk assessment with regard to COVID-19, and adherence to prevention measures. A cross-sectional survey was conducted among 150 respondents aged 60 years and above from two selected informal settlements in the city of Nairobi during the month of August 2020. Primary data were collected using questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics that involved the use of frequencies, totals and percentages. Knowledge of dry cough and fever as COVID-19 symptoms was high, but only 31.5% listed difficulty in breathing. Slightly over half correctly identified elderly people as being at greatest risk of getting severely sick from COVID-19. About 60% were aware that they are at risk of contracting COVID-19. Strong religious belief was the main reason among those who believed they are not at risk. Wearing face masks and hand-washing using soap were the main prevention measures adopted. In conclusion, the study revealed that knowledge about some key symptoms of COVID-19 is still low, and that a considerable number of older people do not think that elderly people are at great risk of getting severely sick. Misconception that a strong religious belief can protect one from contracting the disease is still common among older people. There is, therefore, need for well-tailored and contextualized awareness campaigns to reach this high risk group.

Keywords: *COVID-19, older people, slums, knowledge, behavior*

Introduction

Coronavirus belongs to a family of respiratory viruses that cause common cold, Middle-East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), all of which are zoonotic in origin and induce fatal lower respiratory tract infection as well as extrapulmonary manifestations (Karijo et al. 2020, Chen et al. 2020). The new COV, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), was isolated and referenced as severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-COV-2) (Adhikari et al. 2020, Karijo et al. 2020). Its clinical manifestations include fever, fatigue, dry cough, shortness of breath, and acute respiratory distress

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syndrome (Chen et al. 2020).

COVID-19 pandemic is wreaking havoc across the globe, causing a global health crisis due to its rapid onset, spatial extent and complex consequences (Cheval et al. 2020). Six major pandemic and epidemic outbreaks have swept the planet between 2000 and 2019, namely Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) (2002–2004), H1N1 influenza (2009), Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) (2012–2020), the West-African Ebola virus epidemic (2013–2016), the Zika fever (2015–2016), and Avian influenza (2008–2014). None of these, however, achieved the spatial extent and the widespread impacts that the novel coronavirus has done (Cheval et al. 2020). The World Health Organization declared it a health emergency (Kroumpouzos et al. 2020, Sohrabi et al. 2020).

Kenya has not been spared the ravage of this disease (Karijo et al. 2020). The first case of COVID-19 in Kenya was confirmed on 13 March, 2020 (Macharia et al. 2020, Barasa 2020). Since then there were 68,193 laboratory confirmed swab tests and 1,228 deaths with positive test results as of 13 November, 2020 (Kajliwa 2020b). By March 2021 Kenya ministry of health announced a third wave of the COVID-19 outbreak that was totaling over 700 cases a day (Nakkazi 2021). A fear, of a fourth wave as a result of the highly contagious COVID-19 delta variant was reported by June 2021 (Herbling 2021). Currently as at August 17, 2021 there have been 222,894 total confirmed cases and 4,354 cumulative fatalities (RoK 2021). Kenya has the highest number of recorded cases of COVID-19 in East Africa and, despite various confinement measures, infection numbers are yet to be contained. Although there was a drop in cases in the month of September 2021, there has been a surge with positive cases going up to 14% from the second week of October 2020 (Kajliwa 2020a) moving into 2021 and in August 2021 stands at 12.5% (RoK 2021). There is sustained local transmission. The major concerns, according to Barasa (2020), are limited surge capacity of the country's health system and groups of Kenyan population identified as potentially highly vulnerable to infection and/or severe disease, such as the older people living in informal settlements.

Informal settlements are themselves highly susceptible to disease outbreaks. For example, disease outbreaks in the past pandemics have been accelerated in informal settlement settings: the spread of Ebola during the 2014-2016 pandemic was propelled by the densely populated informal settlements in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone; and Zika took hold in favelas in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (Snyder et al. 2017, Snyder et al. 2014). The risk is magnified for older people in such environment by not only the poor living environment but also their advanced age that compromises their immune system and the fact that they are more likely to have pre-existing comorbidities such as heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, lung or kidney disease, which weaken their body's ability to fight infectious disease (Daoust 2020). To prevent this pandemic from having serious implications on such highly vulnerable groups, it is imperative to institute effective infection prevention and control measures. Consequently, it is urgent to understand their knowledge, perception, assessment of the risk, and adherence to prevention measures. In this study, we investigated participants from two informal settlements in Nairobi City.

Materials and Methods

This study was a cross-sectional survey of respondents aged 60 years and above from two selected informal settlements in the city of Nairobi. Records of the older people aged 60 and above were obtained from the Nairobi Urban Health and Demographic Surveillance System (NUHDSS) which showed that there were a total of 1829 older people aged 60 and above living in the two slums of Viwandani and Korogocho. From these records a random sample of 150 respondents was drawn to constitute study subjects, taking consideration of age group and sex.

The sample size was calculated based on Kothari's formulae for determining sample size for finite population (Kothari 2004) as illustrated below:

$$n = \frac{z^2 pqN}{e^2(N-1) + z^2 pq}$$

Where: n-is the sample size

N-is the population of older people in the two informal settlements (1829)

z-is value found in the table for the desired confidence level of 95% (1.96)

p-is the estimated proportion which has the attribute in question (sample proportion) (0.5)

q-is 1-p

e-is the precision rate or margin of error (8%)

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 x(0.5)x(0.50)x(1829)}{(0.08)^2(1829-1) + (1.96)^2 x(0.5)x(0.5)} \quad n = 138$$

The sample size was rounded to 150. Random sampling was used to pick respondents from the list obtained from the NUHDSS. Primary data were obtained using a questionnaire which was administered to each respondent by the researcher and research assistants. The questionnaire was used to gather information on the demographic characteristics of the respondents, their knowledge, attitudes and practices toward COVID-19. Health protocols such as wearing face masks, keeping social distance and sanitizing which are required to curb the spread of coronavirus were observed during the administration of the questionnaires. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software which enabled to the generation of descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages.

Results

A total of 150 older people respondents were included in the study. Most (63.3%) of the respondents were from Korogocho informal settlement. This is because it is the larger of the two. The majority (66.7%) of the respondents had resided in the informal settlements for over 20 years, with males being the most predominant group (61.3%). In terms of age, most (55.3%) were between the ages

of 60-69 years, with majority (44.7%) married; however, up to 30.7% were
widowed. Most of the respondents had either attained primary level of education
(44.0%) or had no formal education (40.0%). Up to 34.0% were unemployed with
28.0% involved only in small trade. Finally, 42.7% lived in households with 2 to 5
members, while 27.3% stayed alone (Table 1).

Table 1. *Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents*

Characteristics of Respondents	Male		Female		Overall	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Residence						
Korogocho	50	54.3	45	77.6	95	63.3
Viwandani	42	45.7	13	22.4	55	36.7
Length of residence (years)						
1-9	9	9.8	4	6.9	13	8.7
10-14	8	8.7	4	6.9	12	8.0
15-19	17	18.5	8	13.8	25	16.7
20 and above	58	63.0	42	72.4	100	66.7
Sex						
Male	-	-	-	-	92	61.3
Female	-	-	-	-	58	38.7
Age Category (years)						
60-69	54	58.7	29	50.0	83	55.3
70-79	30	32.6	20	34.5	50	33.3
80 and above	8	8.7	9	15.5	17	11.4
Marital Status						
Married	55	59.8	12	20.7	67	44.7
Single	8	8.7	9	15.5	17	11.4
Divorced/Separated	8	8.7	12	20.7	20	13.3
Widowed (widows and widowers)	21	22.8	25	43.1	46	30.7
Educational Attainment						
No formal education	33	35.9	27	46.6	60	40.0
Primary	41	44.6	25	43.1	66	44.0
Secondary and above	18	19.6	6	10.3	24	16.0
Main Occupation						
Roadside farming	5	5.4	5	8.6	10	6.7
Small trader	20	21.7	22	37.9	42	28.0
Retired former government/private employee	10	10.9	0	0.0	10	6.7
Community/social worker, clergy	2	2.2	3	5.2	5	3.3
Artisan/Jua Kali	13	14.1	1	1.7	14	9.3
Unemployed	29	31.5	22	37.9	51	34.0
Casual/domestic worker, security personnel	13	14.1	5	8.5	18	12.0
Size of household						
Stay alone	30	32.6	11	19.0	41	27.3
2-5	38	41.3	26	44.8	64	42.7
6-10	19	20.7	14	24.1	33	22.0
11 and above	5	5.4	7	12.1	12	8.0

Perception and Knowledge about COVID-19 by Older People

Over 99% (149 out 150) of older people living in informal settlements had heard about COVID-19 (Table 2).

Table 2. *Heard of COVID-19*

Aware/heard about COVID-19	n	%
Yes	149	99.3
No	1	0.7
Total	**150**	**100.0**

The older people who indicated that they had heard of COVID-19 reported receiving information on COVID-19 from a wide variety of sources (Table 3). Overall, radio programmes or messages were the most widely cited sources (46.3%). These included radio programmes or shows (27.5%), and government through radio messages (18.8%). These were followed by neighbors (16.8%) and government through T.V. messages (15.4%). Exposure to radio was almost similar for all levels of education; however, neighbors were mainly relied on by those with non-formal education. This group relied less on T.V. programmes as compared to those with higher levels of education. Most male participants (55.5%) as compared to females (31.6%) got information about COVID-19 over the radio. In terms of age, neighbors and radio as sources of information ranked higher with increasing age.

Table 3. *Main Source of Information About COVID-19*

Main source of information	n	%
Neighbors	25	16.8
Friends	4	2.7
Spouse	2	1.3
Government through TV messages	23	15.4
Government through Radio messages	28	18.8
Government officials e.g. chief, community leader	4	2.7
TV through the programmes or shows	11	7.4
Radio through the programmes or shows	41	27.5
Community meeting	1	0.7
Church	7	4.7
Mobile SMS/Internet	1	0.7
Community health workers/volunteers	2	1.3
Total	**149**	**100.0**

The study participants had varied knowledge on the symptoms of COVID-19. For example, although knowledge of dry cough and fever which are the top two symptoms of COVID-19 were high at 70.5% and 67.8% respectively, difficulty in breathing was only mentioned by 31.5% of the respondents even though this is a sign of very severe infection (Table 4). Up to 33.6%, 30.2% and 19.5% reported blurred vision, sneezing and sweating respectively yet they are not symptoms of COVID-19. Knowledge of symptoms of COVID-19 increased with education. For example, 64.4% of those with no formal education listed dry cough, and this was slightly higher for those with primary level of education at 69.7% and rose to 87.5% for those with secondary level of education and above.

Table 4. *Knowledge Regarding COVID-19 Symptoms*

Knowledge about COVID-19 symptoms	n	%
Fever	101	67.8
Sneezing	45	30.2
Sweating	29	19.5
Dry cough	105	70.5
Fatigue	23	15.4
Headache	50	33.6
Blurred vision	8	5.4
Difficulty in breathing	47	31.5
Sore throat	9	6.0
Blocked stuffy nose	1	0.7
Running nose	5	3.4
Vomiting	6	4.0
Feeling of tiredness	15	10.1
Loss of taste	5	3.4
Don't know	2	2.0

Among the older people, knowledge on who is at risk of severely getting sick from COVID-19 varied. For example, 51.0% were able to identify the elderly as at risk of getting severely sick, while up to 61.1% incorrectly believed that everyone was at high risk of severely getting sick from COVID-19. Only 9.4%, 19.5% and 29.5% mentioned people with HIV, young children, and people who are already sick/weak immune system respectively, yet these are groups that have been categorized by health bodies to be at high risk (Table 5). Education had mixed effect on knowledge of the two high risk groups, that is, the elderly and people who are already sick/weak immune system. For example, while knowledge on people who are already sick/weak immune system increased with the level of education (e.g., 27.1% for non-formal, 30.3% for primary level and 33.3% for secondary level and above), that of elderly at high risk decreased with level of education (e.g., 55.9% for non-formal, 50.0% for primary level and 47.1% for secondary level and above).However, knowledge of these two high risk groups was higher among females (e.g., 40.4% and 61.4% respectively) compared to males (e.g., 22.8% and 44.6% respectively).The same trend was noticeable with age category where the results indicated that the knowledge of the two high risk groups was higher among those aged 70 years and above as compared to those below this age category.

Table 5. *Knowledge of People at Greatest Risk of Getting Severely Sick from COVID-19*

People at greatest risk of getting severely sick from COVID-19	n	%
Everyone	91	61.1
Young children	29	19.5
Elderly people	76	51.0
Young adults	2	1.3
Pregnant women	5	3.4
People with HIV	14	9.4
People who are already sick/weak immune system	44	29.5
People who are obese	3	2.0

The study also sought to know what the older people think about being at risk of contracting COVID-19. Overall, 60.4% believed that they are at risk, while 39.6% do not think they are at risk (Table 6).

Table 6. *Own Assessment of Being at Risk of Contracting COVID-19*

At risk	n	%
Yes	90	60.4
No	59	39.6
Total	**149**	**100.0**

The main reasons given by most of those who indicated that they were at risk of contracting COVID-19 included age (50.0%) and underlying health conditions (40.0%). While those who believed that they were not at risk of contracting COVID-19 indicated mostly that it is because of their strong religious belief (35.6%) and because COVID-19 cases in Kenya might not actually be true (32.2%). The reasons for being at risk of contracting COVID-19 are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7. *Reasons for Being at Risk of Contracting COVID-19*

Reasons	n	%
Reasons they believe they are at risk (n=90)		
Because of my age	45	50.0
Because of my underlying health conditions	36	40.0
Because everybody is at risk	20	22.2
Because of my living (housing) condition	11	12.2
Because I know people who have contracted the virus	1	1.1
Because I have information about how the virus spreads	25	27.8
Because people where I live do not observe the health protocols against the spread of the virus	18	20.0
Because I don't know how to protect myself against the virus	2	2.2
Because I can't stop relatives/friends/neighbors from visiting me	4	4.4
Because I can't afford the protective measures required against the spread of the virus	9	10.0
I can't remain indoors because I have to go out in order to earn a living and buy food	12	13.3
Others (specify)	4	4.4
Reasons they believe they are not at risk (n=59)		
Because I am healthy	12	20.3
Because coronavirus is the disease for the rich	9	15.3
Because it is a white man's disease	5	8.5
It affects other people not known to me	1	1.7
Because of my strong religious belief	21	35.6
Because I am immuned to it	6	10.2
Because it does not affect people of my age	1	1.7
COVID-19 (coronavirus) cases in Kenya might not actually be true cases but meant to attract funding	19	32.2
Because I stay indoors all the time and take all precautions	13	22.2
Others (specify) e.g., there are a lot of myths around COVID-19	5	8.5

The main fears reported by the older people about COVID-19 according to the results presented in Table 8 are that COVID-19 is a virus that may result in death (40.9%), and that there is no cure or treatment (20.8%). The least reported fears were being afraid of infecting others (1.3%), loved one may get ill (2.0%), and that many people under-estimate the disease (3.4%). Fear of death was slightly

higher among those aged 70 to 79 years (42.0%) compared to those aged 80 and above (37.5%) and those aged 60 to 69 (41.0%).In terms sex, more males (41.3%) than females (40.4%) feared death.

Table 8. *Main Fear Regarding COVID-19*

Main fear	n	%
Death/virus kills people	61	40.9
No cure or treatment	31	20.8
Loss of income	10	6.7
Food shortage	12	8.1
I may infect others	2	1.3
Many people under-estimate the disease	5	3.4
Loved one may get ill	3	2.0
It may infect too many people and turn uncontrollable	6	4.0
People losing their jobs and livelihood	8	5.4
Getting quarantined	6	4.0
Others (specify)	3	2.0
I have nothing to fear	2	1.3
Total	**149**	**100.0**

Asked about the behavior they have adopted in response to COVID-19 pandemic, the majority of the study participants reported that they mainly wear face masks when outdoors (73.2%) and wash their hands more frequently using soap (69.8%) as away to avoid contracting COVID-19. But less than 50% stopped attending social gathering, keeps distance, stays indoors, and avoids greeting with hands (Table 9).Overall, men and those with higher education wore face masks and washed their hands frequently. However, this was reversed considering age where the lower age categories had adopted more of the response behavior than the older ones.

Table 9. *Behavior Adopted in Response to COVID-19 Pandemic*

Behavior	n	%
Staying indoors	40	26.8
Stopped attending social gathering	55	36.9
Keep distance of at least 1.5m while in public places	55	36.9
Inform people of illness symptoms	4	2.7
Wash hands using soap frequently	104	69.8
Use hand sanitizer frequently	33	22.1
Always wear face mask when outdoors	109	73.2
Stop greeting people by hand	35	23.5
Sneeze on a closed elbow	5	3.4
Others (specify)	6	4.0
Do nothing	2	1.3

In response to what they would do if they developed symptoms similar to those of COVID-19, most study participants indicated that would go to clinic (79.2%). Only 20.1% noted that they would call the government toll free hotline number, and less than 15% reported that they would keep distance, go for test, stop attending social gatherings or stay indoors (Table 10). Men were less likely (12.0%) to go for test as compared to women (15.8%). Similarly, those with less

education (10.2% non-formal and 12.1% primary level) were less likely to go for test. In terms of age, the percentage of those who would go for test were higher among those aged 60 to 69 years, decreasing to 14.0% for those aged 70 to 79 years and none among those aged 80 years and above.

Table 10. *Behavior adopted if you had Symptoms Similar to Those of COVID-19*

Behavior	n	%
Go to clinic	118	79.2
Staying indoors at home more	16	10.7
Call toll free number	30	20.1
Inform neighbors	6	4.0
Inform friends	6	4.0
Inform spouse	6	4.0
Go for test	20	13.4
Keep distance	22	14.8
Stop attending social gatherings	17	11.4
Informs people of illness symptoms	7	4.7
Others e.g. buy medicine to manage symptoms	3	2.0
Do nothing	1	0.7

Discussion

Evidence has shown that older people are the most vulnerable population group to COVID-19 pandemic (Daoust 2020). This situation is accentuated for those living in informal settlements in developing countries like Kenya, because living and sanitation conditions in these areas are poor, coupled with high population density, small dwelling and very low income among residents. They are, therefore, the most poorly equipped for the COVID-19 and the most at risk for transmission (Austrian et al. 2020). Consequently, attitude towards COVID-19 and compliance toward preventive measures among older people living in informal settlements will have a greater effect of minimizing the spread and its attendant severe illness and death among this very highly vulnerable group. To facilitate a mechanism through which the government can engage this group in COVID-19 response we conducted a survey to provide information on the level of their knowledge, perception, and assessment of the risk of COVID-19, and adherence to prevention measures. The study showed that almost all study participants had heard or were aware of COVID-19 pandemic. This means that the daily updates from public health agencies in Kenya, and government efforts to enforce measures to curb the spread of the disease have ensured that even older people living in informal settlements get to know about the existence of the disease (Hagger et al. 2020). The most important source of information about COVID-19 for the older people living in the informal settlement was radio. This is in contrast with studies targeting the general population (Hager et al. 2020) or the youth (Karijo et al. 2020) that have shown that the social media (internet) and TV were the main sources of information about COVID-19. This could be attributed to the fact that older people are less likely to use mobile phone or internet technology because they are late adapters to technology. Furthermore, T.V. ownership among residents

of informal settlements and especially older people is low. This, therefore, means that to effectively reach the older people living in informal settlements with messages on COVID-19 pandemic, response teams should prioritize the use of radio.

The study revealed that most participants were able to identify two important symptoms of COVID-19, but few accurately identified difficulty in breathing, a key symptom which signifies critical illness and potential need for hospitalization (Austrian *et al.*, 2020). For the older people, not being able to correctly identify this symptom can be fatal in a short time. Overall, response teams need to develop communication strategies that can better educate the older people on the key symptoms of COVID-19 in order to increase their knowledge and empower them to seek help from health facilities when they notice these symptoms.

Slightly over 50% of the participants correctly identified the elderly as those at greatest risks of getting severely sick from COVID-19, and fewer (less than 30%) listed those with compromised immune system. Emphasizing that this group is at very high risk can help the older people and the people around them better prioritize and take steps to protect this group. About 60% of the participants felt that they were at high risk of infection. However, this leaves out about 40% of this highly vulnerable group with a false feeling that they are safe at a time when second wave in COVID-19 infection and deaths is being experienced in Kenya (Sanga 2020). Although the perception of being at risk to COVID-19 among the study participants was higher than those recorded in a previous study (35%) carried out by Austrain et al. (2020) among general adult population in informal settlement in Kenya at the end of March 2020, there is indication that several months after the first case of COVID-19 was reported in Kenya, risk perception among vulnerable population groups like older people has not reached the desired level, and, therefore, should be of concern. Such a scenario requires concerted effort by health and other government officials to sensitize the older people being a high risk group. The apathy which is the result of the perception that they are not at risk, according to the finding of this study, arose from the fact that the study participants felt that they had strong religious belief, so God would protect them, and also the false but commonly spread rumour among a section of Kenyan population that the government is using COVID-19 positivity figures to attract funding from donors. A previous study by Karijo et al. (2020) in April 2020 among the Kenyan youth had revealed similar myth on the belief about God's protection from the risk of contracting COVID-19. Such myths and misconceptions are a threat to curbing the transmission of COVID-19 pandemic and a great danger to a vulnerable group like the older people living in informal settlements. This calls for strengthening messaging to eliminate them.

Most participants expressed concern about death from COVID-19. This was higher among those who had not reached 80 years. Loss of income that had been reported as a major concern in a previous study in informal settlement in Kenya (Austrian et al. 2020) was reported by few older people in the current study. This could be attributed to the fact that unlike the other sections of the society older people rely on government cash transfers, relatives and well-wishers. Therefore, direct effect on income is not pronounced. Government actions need to sustain and

even increase cash transfers to older people in order to reduce the risk of older people exposing themselves to the virus when they go out to seek employment or other income generating activities.

Many participants indicated that the main steps they have adopted to avoid contracting COVID-19 were wearing face masks and frequently washing hands using soap. However, many were not taking steps like avoiding social gatherings, keeping distance and staying at home. Yet these are some of the recommended behavior to avoid contracting the disease. These precautionary measures are key in reducing the spread of the virus in already densely populated informal settlements, and to high risk groups like older people. It is critical that the government messaging regarding steps to be taken to avoid contracting COVID-19 should be packaged to target specific groups like older people. Over three quarters of study participants indicated that they would go to clinic if they developed symptoms similar to those of COVID-19. But of concern is that only a few would go for test, keep distance or stop attending social gathering. Meaning they would transmit the virus to others. The finding that most informal settlements residents in Kenya would go to clinic if they developed symptoms are similar to those of Austrian et al. (2020). Meaning that World Health Organization's (WHO) guidance on staying at home and calling a health provider if symptomatic to avoid overcrowding health facilities has not been understood well by most people living in informal settlements.

Conclusion

Our study revealed that although almost all older people living in informal settlements in Nairobi city have heard about COVID-19, knowledge on symptoms, risk and preventive measures are not that high. There is, therefore, need for well-tailored and contextualized awareness campaigns to reach this high risk group. Strategies to ensure older people adopt and sustain appropriate preventive measures will be critical in reducing the impacts of the virus on older people living in informal settlements.

Acknowledgments

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The Structural Conditions for the Expansion of COVID-19 in Peru

By Jan Lust[*]

Peru is one of the most affected and infected countries by COVID-19. The expansion of the virus could not be contained by lockdowns and states of emergency. The re-opening of the economy increased the expansion of COVID-19. We argue that the role of Peru in the international division of labor is not only the structural condition for the persistence of labor precariousness in the country, but also the principal cause for the expansion of COVID-19 in Peru. Labor precariousness and the expansion of COVID-19 are the expressions of the country's economic and business structure. An economic structure heavily dependent on the non-tradable sectors and a business structure dominated by micro business undertakings, characterized by low productivity levels, do not permit the eradication of precarious labor conditions as economic growth hinges on economic progress abroad and precariousness is the source of profit of micro companies. The persistence of labor precariousness impedes the containment of COVID-19. Labor precariousness expressed in wages at the subsistence level and the lack of labor stability in the formal sector, in combination with the structural character of informality have been the catalysts for the expansion of the virus. We demonstrate that COVID-19 is not a democratic virus but a class virus. For Metropolitan Lima, districts with a more than average rate of informality have also a more than average rate of COVID-19 infections. The neoliberal development model has been responsible for the incapacity of the government to implement measures in accordance with the country's social and economic structure that might have contained the expansion of COVID-19. This model is the expression of Peru's function in the globalized world, the relation between this role and the country's economic and business structure, the functionality of the extractive development model for the Peruvian State, and the correlation of class forces within and outside the state apparatuses.

Keywords: *Peru, COVID-19, labor precariousness, international division of labor, neoliberal development model*

Introduction

At the end of December 2019 the world was notified about the existence of a new coronavirus in the city of Wuhang in China. This virus, SARS-COV-2 (COVID-19), rapidly spread and was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 11 March 2020. In response, Peru was the first country in Latin America to implement a nation-wide lockdown and strict quarantine measures. These measures were implemented through a declaration of a state of emergency, with the military and the police charged with controlling the population.

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This situation lasted for 3.5 months, from mid-March 2020 to the end of June. However, because of the expansion of the virus, in some regions the lockdown continued. In the whole of the country, the government of Martin Vizcarra maintained the prohibition on leaving one's residence between 10 pm and 4am.

This early response has not prevented the expansion of COVID-19 in the country. Currently (23 March 2021), Peru is ranked nineteen on the world ranking of the number of individuals infected by the virus. The slow but determined reopening of the economy seems to have increased the number of COVID-19 infections. Physical social contacts between economic agents augment the possibility for the virus to expand.

The expansion of COVID-19 in Peru during the lockdowns and now in times of the almost completely re-opened economy, appears to demonstrate the class character of the virus. Although the economic, social and health effects of COVID-19 might be diminished through concentrated efforts by the state apparatuses, the most affected are the salaried and non-salaried working class, in formal and informal situations, and self-employed workers.

The principal objective of this article is to show that the role of Peru in the international division of labor is not only the structural condition for the persistence of labor precariousness in the country, but also the principal cause for the expansion of COVID-19 in Peru. Labor precariousness is the transmission mechanism of COVID-19 expansion in Peru. A structural condition is a condition that is fundamental for non-structural conditions to help certain political and social developments, processes, and/or phenomenon to occur.

The expansion of the virus has a socioeconomic and class background. While it seems that the virus was brought into the country by travelers pertaining to what might be called the accommodated social classes, it rapidly turned into a disease of the laboring classes. First of all, these classes did not have the option to stay at home during the lockdowns as was mandated by law. Second, as the big majority of these classes perform manual labor, in general they are not able to do this work at home and, hence, they are more likely to be exposed to the virus. Third, the conditions for the expansion of the virus might have been eliminated if the government would have decided to actively intervene in the economy instead of providing late and uneven financial alleviation and repressing the population who have no other way to search for a job, income, and nutrition than by leaving their houses.

This paper intents to advance the discussion within the social sciences regarding the economic and social conditions for the expansion of COVID-19 in peripheral countries that are economically depended on their extractive economic sectors, especially the mining sector, and have implemented a neoliberal development model. Although we believe that economic conditions determine the social conditions for the expansion of the virus, both conditions are interrelated. Hence, in order to contain the virus, it would have been necessary that a coherent and interrelated set of structural economic and social measures would have been implemented that might have been able to eradicate the economic and social basis for the expansion of the virus. We analyze household surveys, statistical data on economic and labor development, and correlate data on employment in micro

companies and the number of own-account workers to the rate of COVID-19 infections.

The data we use in this paper to demonstrate the expansion of COVID-19 within the laboring classes has been limited to Metropolitan Lima, which is the most infected area in Peru. We rely on data from this area because it is the most reliable data and most accessible. Furthermore, data on the rate of labor informality at district level is able to be constructed and the social heterogeneity of Metropolitan Lima permits an analysis of districts that are heavily infected by COVID-19 and contain above average rates of labor informality, and thus enable a comparison between these and districts that are less infected by the virus and where the labor force is not principally informal.

As such this work is structured in five sections. Section one provides a panoramic view on the expansion of COVID-19 in Peru and discusses the expansion of the virus and its effects. Section two argues that the neoliberal conception of the State disabled the Peruvian Government's ability to implement effective measures that might have contained COVID-19. In section three we examine the structural conditions for COVID-19 to expand and to maintain its devastating health effects until an adequate vaccine against the virus has been implemented. Section four delves into the relation between informality and COVID-19 in Metropolitan Lima. It demonstrates that the expansion of the virus is principally located in what might be called the capital's working-class districts, characterized by above average rates of informality. In section five we present our conclusions.

The Rise of COVID-19 and its Effects

On 16 March 2020, the Peruvian government declared the state of emergency for the whole of the country in order to contain COVID-19. Three days later a complete and total lockdown began. Only pharmacies, grocery stores, supermarkets, public marketplaces, and banks were accessible to the public. Essential state institutions maintained in operation though were not open to the public.

During the lockdown, the military and the police were in charge to control the movements of the population. A curfew was implemented restricting people to their house from 5 p.m. until 6 a.m. the following day. On Sundays the lockdown was 24-hours.

As a response to the continuing expansion of the virus throughout the whole country, after months the lockdown measures were sharpened. In some parts of the country the curfew started earlier, and the use of face masks became mandatory when leaving one's residence.

The end of the total lockdown in July 2020 and the subsequent reopening of the economy (semi-lockdown) has not meant that all measures to contain the spread of the virus were also lifted. At the time of writing, the use of face masks is still mandatory and new restrictive measures are to be expected, at the same time maintaining the state of emergency in force, in order to reduce infections caused

by the "Second Wave" and the possible "Third Wave". The lockdown measures vary according to the rates of COVID-19 infections.

Despite these efforts, the Peruvian regime has not been able to control the virus and the death toll. In Latin America, Peru occupies the fifth position regarding the number of COVID-19 affected individuals, after Brazil, Colombia, Argentina, and Mexico. In August 2020 the country rated as the world's number one country in terms of mortality rate.[1] It was only since mid-September 2020 that the State was finally getting some control over the virus when daily reported positive cases started to reduce. However, the "Second Wave" of COVID-19 infections is putting the clock back at the time when the State was incapable to really fight the virus. In the last months the number of infections and deaths are rapidly increasing. The process of vaccination is very slow and has been subject to corrupt of authorities.

Even though the Peruvian government has been praised for its quick response to COVID-19, the lockdowns did not impede people from getting infected. As a matter of fact, what the lockdowns should have impeded was actually taking place during all these months of supposed social distancing. The first reopening of the economy (July 2020) directly increased the daily number of infections. 8.000 to 9.000 infections a day became rule. Currently (January-March 2021), the number of deaths and infected is comparable with the most dangerous periods of 2020.[2]

Although leaving one's house was restricted to the purchase of the necessary food and to do financial transactions, a major part of the population, principally in working class districts, did not abide to these rules. In addition, the military and the police were not able to impede a massive number of people from 'trespassing'.[3] The use of force to control the population might have met violent responses.

It is possible that the government foresaw an increase of informality and massive unemployment as a consequence of the lockdowns. It is to be expected that the loss of jobs and the lack of a universal social security system that would have protected individuals against the financial consequences of unemployment, has increased informality as the informal sector is the only social security individuals have when their employers or their own businesses have to close.[4] At mid-August 2020, the unemployment rate in Metropolitan Lima reached 16.4%, a more than 100% increase since March 16. Half December it had reduced to 15.2% (INEI 2020c, p. 1).[5] However, not only did unemployment increase, also the labor force participation rate dropped (Weller et al. 2020, pp. 18, 20). Moreover, the

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[1]On 22 March 2021, Peru ranked seventh on the world ranking of COVID-19 mortality rates. Source: https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/data/mortality. [Accessed 29 January 2021]

[2]Source: https://gestion.pe/peru/covid-19-exceso-de-fallecidos-bordea-los-300-casos-por-dia-segun -datos-del-sinadef-noticia/. [Accessed 20 January 2021]

[3]Source: https://www.clarin.com/mundo/coronavirus-peru-vendedores-ambulantes-esperan-fin-cuarentena-toman-calles_0_jh5yCTC8w.html. [Accessed 28 August 2021]

[4]According to data of the International Labour Organization (ILO), informality is on the rise in Peru. In June 2020 it had increased 1.7 percent points in comparison with June 2019 (OIT 2020, p. 3). In March 2021 the rate of informality was estimated between 75% and 80% of the occupied active population, in https://udgtv.com/noticias/informalidad-laboral-aumento-peru-menos-75-pandemia/. [Accessed 16 March 2021]

[5]See also: https://es.investing.com/economic-calendar/peruvian-unemployment-rate-516. [Accessed 29 January 2021]

government did not account for the health consequences that an increase of informality and unemployment might have on the population. The search for jobs, income, and food by the informal and recently fired working classes have driven them into positions that expose them to catching COVID-19.

The only relief strategy the government implemented was that of short-term financial assistance. In May and June 2020, the poor, the extremely poor and the self-employed workers, about 7 million families (Vergara 2020), received a subsidy of around US$ 210. In August, again a subsidy of US$ 210 was handed out to what are called the most vulnerable families. However, this amount was not enough to finance the monthly basket of basic foodstuffs for a family of four. In 2019, the poverty line stood at around US$ 390 per month. Thus, the subsidy of US$ 210 is actually closer to that of being in extreme poverty, for the extreme poverty line for a family of four is set at US$ 207 per month. In February 2021, a subsidy of US$ 170 was starting to be handed out to about 4.2 million poor families.

The decision to reopen the economy in July 2020 was primarily economically grounded. In the second trimester of 2020, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) had reduced with 30.2%. In the first semester GDP already fell with 17.3%. This decrease was not only the product of the almost complete standstill of the national economy (a drop of internal demand with 27.7%), but it was also the result of reduced economic growth of its most important commercial partners, principally China that even saw its economy decrease in the first quarter of 2020. This caused, according to statistical data of the Peruvian Central Bank and the National Institute for Statistics and Informatics (INEI 2020b, p. 4), a global reduction for the prices of the country's mining products (followed by a weak recovery) and export volumes, Peru's main export products.[6] In the second trimester, total export value decreased by 40.3%. Gold reduced by 51.6%, zinc by 49.7%, copper by 40.7% and lead by 22.4% (INEI 2020a, pp. 1, 7). Data for 2020 show that GDP has fallen with 11.2%.[7] The number of exporting companies diminished with around 13%.[8]

The principal sources of income of the Peruvian State are Value Added Tax (VAT) and income tax. The economic, social and sanatory crisis reduced governmental income from both sources and increased governmental expenditures in healthcare and financial assistance to the most vulnerable families. The result will definitively be a phenomenal increase of the country's fiscal deficit. The Peruvian Central Bank (Banco Central de Reserva del Perú 2020a, p. 81, 2020b, p. 87) expects for 2020 a fiscal deficit of 8.6%, up from 1.6% in 2019. In the first semester the deficit was already 6.7%.

The reopening of the Peruvian economy not only caused an increase of COVID-19 infections due to reduced social distancing at the workplace, but also because of the increased use of public transport. The lack of regulation and

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[6]It should be underlined that the commodity prices were already falling before the COVID-19 outbreak in Peru (Tröster 2020, pp. 5–7, IDB 2020, p. 3). According to the International Development Bank (IDB), starting from early 2019 goods exports from Latin America were reducing (IDB 2020, p. 2).
[7]Source: https://www.eleconomista.com.mx/economia/PIB-de-Peru-cayo-11.12-en-2020-peor-de sempeno-en-tres-decadas-20210215-0062.html. [Accessed 16 March 2021]
[8]Source: https://portalportuario.cl/peru-cantidad-de-empresas-exportadoras-disminuye-125/. [Accessed 16 March 2021]

enforcement of this industry has led to an intense competition between private transport companies. Prices are also too low to properly finance the transport of citizens at current international standards of safe public transport. These companies are not really abiding to these standards and the Peruvian citizens are not complaining in order not to face increasing prices in these times of economic recession. Especially in the working-class districts safe public transport is non-existent.

The Peruvian State and COVID-19

Since the 1990s, Peru has been ruled by firm neoliberal governments such as those led by Alberto Fujimori (1990-2000), Alan García (2006-2011) and Pedro Pablo Kuczynski (2016-2018) or regimes that coupled market-oriented policies with programs of social inclusion like the governments presided by Alejandro Toledo (2001-2006) and Ollanta Humala (2011-2016). In general terms, all these governments considered the market the principal mechanism to distribute the wealth produced in the country. The neoliberal constitution of 1993 radically reduced the role of the Peruvian State in productive activities.

The pandemic demonstrates that only the State has sufficient power to impose measures in order to contain COVID-19, to finance the economic consequences of the expansion of the virus and to develop a vaccine. The State is not only fundamental for the economic reproduction of the system, but also for its social and ecological reproduction.

The effects of COVID-19 demonstrate that in the last 20 years social progress in Peru has been very thin, although the size of the Peruvian economy, measured in real GDP, in the years between 2000 and 2019 increased with around 145%. There are definitively more shopping malls, more cars, more credit card holders, and more internet connections than 20 years ago, however informality and underemployment have maintained high. While in 2002 it was estimated that 85.3% of all employed workers were informal workers (Gamero Requena and Carrasco n.d.) and 42.9% of the Economically Active Population (EAP) was underemployed (Murukami 2007, p. 430), in 2019 still 72% of the EAP was informal (Lust 2020, p. 323) and 42.5% was underemployed[9]. In the period 2000-2018, that includes the years of impressive economic progress triggered by the commodities boom in the period 2005-2011 (Lust 2019a, p. 1234), the Gini coefficient only reduced with a bit more than six points, i.e., from 49.1 in 2000 to 42.8 in 2018[10].

During 2020 the demand for oxygen and medicines to combat COVID-19 increased phenomenally. As this increase was not matched by a corresponding increase of supply, prices rose spectacularly. In Peru, many people have died because of a scarcity of medical oxygen or for not having sufficient income to pay

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[9]Of course, during the pandemic the rate of underemployment must have increased significantly (Weller et al. 2020, p. 24).
[10]Source: https://datos.bancomundial.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?locations=PE. [Accessed 12 October 2020]

for the dramatic price increases of medical oxygen.[11] Cases are registered in which patients have been asked to take their own oxygen to the hospital.[12]

The lack of supply is principally the consequence of the ideology of non-intervention in the markets. The market of oxygen is dominated by two companies that do not have the capacity and/or the interest to produce more oxygen.[13] And although the State, in August 2020, took some measures to increase the production of oxygen,[14] it was just recently (end of January) that oxygen plants were implemented in some hospitals. The Peruvian State has not taken measures to ensure the production of oxygen for the population that needs it for their families at home (the mass of the COVID-19 infected individuals). Oxygen was starting to be imported from Ecuador and Chile.

The reduced role of the State in the economy and the preference of market-based solutions to social problems or a healthcare system that for one part is based on the market mechanism (private healthcare) and for another part is public (with differentiated units for salaried workers and informal workers), is for a considerable part responsible for the collapse of public healthcare. The permanent shortage of intensive care units and hospital beds in public hospitals causes that many individuals infected by the virus are attended in wheelchairs outside the hospital buildings, in tents in the hospital's parking lots or not at all and stay at home connected to big oxygen cylinders. In addition, there is a lack of doctors and nurses (Caretas 2020).

Notwithstanding the fact that the pressure on public healthcare is immense, its collapse is not only due to increased demand, but also to the continued lack of support from the different governments. Governmental expenses in healthcare are not near to what is expected by the Pan American Health Organization. In the last two and half decades, only between 4% to 5.5% of GDP was expended on healthcare. Furthermore, the country has a low number of intensive care units (ICU), principally located in its capital city Lima, and a scarcity of professionals to work in the ICU's (Schwalb and Seas 2021, p. 1).

In this context it is interesting to observe that, when we compare Peru with Uruguay at the moment of writing, in Peru the total number COVID-19 infections stood at 1.472.790 and 50.339 people had died from the virus, in Uruguay the number of accumulated confirmed COVID-19 cases was 84.230 and 811 deaths.[15] Uruguay spends around 9% of its GDP to healthcare (Vergara 2020, pp. 7–8)[16].

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[11]In August 2020, the government took measures to increase the production of oxygen, in https://www.eldiario.es/sociedad/peru-espera-reducir-la-escasez-de-oxigeno-con-65-nuevas-plantas_161 76562.html. [Accessed 26 August 2020]. At the end of January, oxygen plants were implemented in some hospitals.

[12]Source: https://especiales.elcomercio.pe/?q=especiales/la-crisis-del-oxigeno-en-el-peru-ecpm/in dex.html. [Accessed 26 August 2020].

[13]Source: https://ojo-publico.com/1842/dos-companias-globales-dominan-negocio-del-oxigeno -en-peru. [Accessed 17 March 2021]

[14]Source: https://www.eldiario.es/sociedad/peru-espera-reducir-la-escasez-de-oxigeno-con-65-nue vas-plantas_1_6176562.html. [Accessed 26 August 2020]

[15]Source: https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html. [Accessed 23 March 2021]

[16]See also: https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-52843655. [Accessed 11 January 2021]

The idea that the private healthcare system should function in combination with public healthcare has created a segmented healthcare system, that is, a healthcare system according to income. As the mass of the population is attended in the public healthcare system, the capacity of the private system has been limited. The collapse of the public system would not be mitigated by the capacity of the private healthcare system.

The Structural Conditions for the Expansion of COVID-19 in Peru

The principal role of Peru in the international division of labor is to provide the country's raw materials for productive processes abroad, predominantly to transnational corporations that originate in the advanced capitalist countries and China. Its secondary function is to participate in the globally organized value chains.

Economic growth (and slowdown) is mainly the consequence of increasing demand for the country's natural resources and rising commodity prices in international markets. Metal minerals are by far the country's most important export products. The motors of economic growth in Peru are concentrated in a few large exporting companies, principally mining corporations (Lust 2020, pp. 6–7).

Peru's chief role in the globalized capitalist world has been translated into the extractivist economic development model that is in place since the 1990s. It is believed that lasting economic progress can be attained through a model based on the export of the country's commodities and foreign investment in, principally, the mining sectors.

In order to 'operate' the current development model and to 'comply' with the country's assigned principal role in the international division of labor, only a very small part of Peru's EAP is necessary. In addition, as argued by Palma (1988, p. 37), the role of countries at the periphery of the world capitalist system, such as Peru, does not permit 'sufficient' accumulation to provide employment for all.

In 2018, around 70% of the EAP was not necessary to 'run' the economic development model based on the export of the country's commodities and investments in the extractive sectors, principally the mining sector. The sectors and branches that are directly and indirectly needed to comply with Peru's function in the globalized capitalist world such as mining, transport, communication, finance, manufacturing, water, gas, electricity, private and social community services, and the state sector (excluding public education), provide employment to about 30% of the EAP (Lust 2020, p. 323).

Peru's particular economic structure is product of the country's principal role in the international division of labor. In 2019, the non-tradable sectors such as electricity, water, construction, commerce, and most of the services, contributed with more than 60% to GDP. This is all understandable as there does not exist any real interest in the development of high value-added exportable goods and services by national and international capital. The most important tradable sectors pertain to the extractive sectors. The non-tradable sectors are too weak to stimulate economic growth as their own prosperity depends on economic progress abroad and because the country's internal markets are too small to provide an "autonomous

internal push for new and/or extended economic activities in the non-tradable sectors" (Lust 2020, p. 324, Lust 2019a, p. 1235).

Peru's business structure is dominated by what are called very small companies. According to the country's National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (INEI for its acronym in Spanish), in 2018 94.9% of all private enterprises were micro companies, defined as businesses with annual sales not higher than US$ 176.400 (S/. 622.500) or less than 150 Taxation Units and 4.2% were small companies (annual sales between 150 and 1700 Taxation Units). In absolute numbers these were 2.370.856 small and micro companies (INEI 2019, p. 22). In 2018, about 72.4% of the EAP worked in micro companies, defined as corporations that employ between one and ten individuals.

The around 70% of the EAP that is not directly necessary to operate the economic model, are laboring in what we call the capitalist subsistence economy (CSE). The CSE is an "economy of micro-enterprises characterized by low levels of productivity and expressed in remuneration rates at or near (below or above) the minimum wage level" (Lust 2019b, p. 782).

In part, the CSE can be seen as a social security network as it provides employment for all those who have not been able to find a job in the advanced economy. The CSE is not only a provider of employment, but also the necessary starting point, and most of the time also the end point, of emerging micro businesses. On the other hand, the CSE is functional for the development and the profitability of the advanced economy as it is "a key provider of labour and materials (at low costs) for the advanced economy", "the principal supplier of the goods and services for the reproduction of labour-power in the advanced economy" (Lust 2019b, p. 786), and executes outsourcing functions for the advanced economy. Most of the individuals infected by COVID-19 are employed in the CSE.

Individuals who are employed in what we have called the advanced economy are, in general, laboring' in medium-sized and big companies. It's the advanced economy that receives most of the foreign direct investments[17] and is composed of the principal exporting sectors and companies.[18]

Without the lockdowns, the Peruvian economy would also have been hit hard by the outbreak and worldwide expansion of COVID-19. Not only through the reduction of the export of mining products due to diminishing demand in the Global North[19] and the reduction of the commodity prices, but also through its

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[17]Data for the period 2008-2018 for instance, show that the three principal foreign direct investments (FDI) receiving sectors were mining, finance, and communication. The energy sector and the industrial manufacturing sector alternated to occupy the fourth place in importance (Source: https://www.proinversion.gob.pe/modulos/LAN/landing.aspx?are=0&pfl=1&lan=10&tit=instituc ional-popup; accessed 03/05/2020).

[18]In 2018, 2.836 big companies contributed with 96.1% to total export value. The participation of 2.782 micro business was 1.0%. (Ministerio de la Producción 2020, pp. 12, 32, 91)

[19]"The Global North consists of those countries that used to be called advanced capitalist countries. These countries form part of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). However, not all OECD member states are advanced capitalist countries. Although China is not considered an advanced capitalist country and is not a member of the OECD, on the basis of its global economic power we consider it part of the Global North." (Lust 2019b, p. 791)

insertion in the globalized value chains organized by transnational capital. As a matter of fact, the emergence of a mass of micro businesses is not only the consequence of Peru's main role in the international division of labor, but also of the worldwide restructuring of productive processes since the start of the economic crisis of the 1970s (Lust 2020, pp. 318–319, 327).

The Peruvian micro businesses are not only nationally oriented, also a number of them are incorporated in globalized productive process. In the context of a business structure dominated by micro companies, outsourcing is a highly lucrative strategy to increase profits. Fierce price competition caused by the huge number of micro enterprises, a surplus of workers that exerts downward pressure on wages, and a labor legislation that attempts to reduce the labor costs of micro enterprises (Lust 2020, p. 4), provide the basic conditions for profitable outsourcing.

The worldwide reduction of productive activities and the drastic restrictions on international transport, have meant an important blow to the global value chains. Complete supply chains came abruptly to a halt as the chain cut. For this reason, it can be argued that through their worldwide insertion in globalized productive processes, the Peruvian workers in micro business or self-employed workers might have contributed to the expansion of COVID-19 as it urged them to 'trespass' the regulations regarding social distancing when the global value chains broke down.

The reopening of the economy has principally been the restart of the activities of large companies. Of course, since July 2020 not only large but also small and medium-sized companies have restarted their businesses. However, in the case of micro businesses a restart of activities is a very difficult question. As most of these companies are of precarious nature, lots of them have closed down permanently. Furthermore, the sanatory regulations to which companies have to abide before they can reopen are very difficult to finance by these companies.

The economic problems of micro enterprises can be clearly illustrated when we analyze the data of companies that have received loans against an average interest rate of 1.69% in the context of the reactivation of the economy.[20] Although the majority of these companies were micro or small businesses, it is but a very small part of the total number of micro and small companies in Peru. Data of the Peruvian Central Bank for October 2020 show that only 471.642 of all small and micro businesses received a loan, i.e., 19.9% of all micro and small companies according to the total number of these companies in 2019.[21]

The lockdowns caused the doors to close of micro companies, medium-sized enterprises, and big corporations. Massive layoffs are currently allowed by the government. Individuals working in micro businesses were directly fired and workers in medium-sized and big corporations maintained their salaries, saw their wages reduced or were also fired, temporarily laid-off or their working hours

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[20]Of course, not all micro businesses that restarted their activities asked for financial support. However, it is a strong indicator for the economic strength and weakness of these companies as the average interest rate lies around 1.69%. In other words, it is very lucrative or convenient to ask for a loan. Data on how many micro and small companies currently operate is not available.

[21]Source: https://gestion.pe/economia/bcr-reactiva-peru-alcanza-ya-480122-empresas-98-de-ellas-mypes-noticia/. [Accessed 23 March 2021]

reduced. Data for Metropolitan Lima show that in July 2020 around 50% of the total jobs lost during the lockdowns, around 1.7 million, were in companies that employed between one and ten individuals. Also, in the case of adequate employment[22], individuals working in micro enterprises had to pay the biggest price. Adequate employment reduced by almost 70% (INEI 2020c, pp. 2, 6, 12).

It is the character of the Peruvian economy that can explain this dramatic situation for the mass of the Peruvian workers. In the first place, the absolute majority of the working population is employed in companies that are principally pertaining to the CSE. This makes the precarious nature of their employment a structural reality. As they are employed in low productivity companies (micro business undertakings) that do not add much value to national production (Lust 2020, p. 4) and which contribution to total export value is insignificant, there is no real economic sacrifice for the Peruvian State to oblige these businesses to close.[23] Second, companies in the CSE are mainly performing manual and low-skilled labor. This type of labor can only physically be executed at the workplace, or the employer should move some means of production to the residences of these workers in order to continue the productive process. This last option is not to be expected.

The lockdowns urged the mass of the Peruvian workers to look for other sources of income and by 'breaking' the lockdowns they might have contributed to the expansion of COVID-19 in Peru. Previously formally employed individuals are forced to look for work in the informal sector. The precarious social and economic situation of the informally employed further aggravated when their informal businesses were forcefully closed.[24]

The workers who were fired due to the pandemic were formal and informal workers. Formal workers have access to unemployment benefits. However, as these benefits are individualized and based on one's salary, in general these benefits are not sufficient to maintain one unemployed for more than three months. Because these individuals are forced to look for work, they contribute to the expansion of the virus.

The socioeconomic welfare effects of informality are well-known. Informal workers have no contract, their labor conditions are precarious, and they do not have an unemployment insurance. In addition, most of them are not insured for healthcare. The total and semi-lockdowns caused extremely negative income effects for the large majority of the Peruvian labor force and contributed to the unfolding of a social and healthcare drama.[25]

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[22]An individual who works less than 35 hours a week but wants to work more but cannot find employment, is not adequately employment. When someone works 35 hours a week, but remuneration is less than the established minimum wage level, this person is also not adequately employed. A not adequately employed individual is an underemployed individual.

[23]The mining corporations, however, did not have to suspend their activities. As outlined, mining is crucial for economic progress in Peru.

[24]According to Weller et al. (2020, p. 234), workers with relatively low qualifications, low incomes, and precarious jobs, were the most affected by the sanitary crisis.

[25]Data of the ILO shows that in months of June to August 2020 the monthly real income of the 3.6 million working individuals in Lima reduced with 10.5%. The average real income in these months was equivalent to the real income in the same months in 2011 (OIT 2020, p. 20).

The absolute majority of workers in the private sector has a temporary contract (Cuadros Luque 2017, p. 55). Hence, as the companies had to close their doors, also these contracts came to an end without any possibility to proceed with a legal claim regarding the loss of income and to demand a certain compensation. This obliged these workers to not only use their unemployment benefits to survive, but also parts of their personalized retirement funds. When their savings run out, they began to look for work, resulting in more people interacting and a resulting expansion of the virus.

The question of temporary contracts or the generalization of labor instability that was introduced during the neoliberal adjustment programs in the 1990s and maintained still then, is not reduced to particular businesses or companies of specific size. Public and private education use temporary contracts as also, for instance, transnational telecommunication businesses and small textile producing companies. However, the use of temporary contracts is not crucial for micro businesses to maintain competitive because normally they do not use any contract at all.

As the big majority of the EAP labors in micro enterprises, it is easy to understand how the financial consequences of COVID-19 for these workers and their families might have given a formidable boost to the expansion of the virus. In Table 1 we present data on the type of contracts of workers in micro companies for the years between 2004 and 2018.[26]

Table 1. *Type of Contract of Workers in Companies that Employ One to Ten Individuals, Excluding the Own-Account Workers: 2004-2018 (As a Percentage of Total Remunerated Workers in Micro Companies, Excluding Own-Account Workers*

	Permanent contract	**Temporary contract**	**Without contract**
2004	1.8%	5.2%	91.5%
2005	1.6%	5.4%	91.6%
2006	1.5%	4.4%	92.6%
2007	1.9%	4.5%	91.8%
2008	1.9%	4.7%	91.3%
2009	1.6%	4.9%	91.9%
2010	1.6%	4.9%	91.9%
2011	1.9%	4.9%	91.3%
2012	2%	5.9%	90.4%
2013	2%	6.7%	89.7%
2014*	17.8%	28.6%	45.2%
2015	2.1%	6.8%	89.7%
2016*	18%	29.6%	45.1%
2017	2.4%	7.7%	88.2%
2018	2.2%	7.8%	88.2%

*We believe that the percentages in these years are incorrect because they radically break with the trend of the entire series.
Source: Household Surveys of Peru, 2004-2018.

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[26]Micro companies are defined as companies that employ between one and ten individuals.

Informality and COVID-19

As argued above, we think that informality or the 'expulsion' to the informal sector of previously formally employed individuals has worked as a catalyst for the expansion of COVID-19. As a matter of fact, we believe that there might exist a positive relationship between the rate of informality and the rate of COVID-19 infections. This section pretends to examine this relation.

In Peru, data on informality exists at the level of departments and provinces, but not at district level. Information on the number of COVID-19-infected individuals is available at the level of departments, provinces, and districts. In order to determine the existence of a relation between the rate of informality and the rate of COVID-19 infections, data at the level of departments and provinces is not suitable. For instance, a province might have a relatively low number of COVID-19 infections in comparison with the rest of the country, but in some of its districts it might be extremely high and tightly related to the rate of informality. An analysis at the provincial level does not visualize this possible particularity.

Before we present the evidence that our hypothesis holds, it is important to explain what is meant by the rate of informality at district level. It is not a specific number as there is no data available to calculate it.[27] In this article the rate of informality at district level includes the percentage of individuals that labor in companies that employ between one and five individuals and the percentage of self-employed workers.[28] In the case the rate of individuals working in companies that employ one to five individuals is higher than the average rate in Metropolitan Lima (55.5%), the rate of informality is considered to be high. The same analytical determination applies to the rate of self-employed workers. The average rate of self-employed workers at the level of Metropolitan Lima is 32.4%. Although it is only necessary that one of the two variables must be higher than the average in order to be counted as a district with high informality, in general a more than average rate of individuals working in very small companies is 'accompanied' by a more than average rate of individuals working on their own account. We have considered to include the variable "without health insurance" as an indicator of informality, however as formal and informally employed individuals may contract private health insurance companies, the validity of this variable reduces.[29]

It is important to underline that this section only intends to find out how a more than average rate of informality is related to a more than average rate of COVID-19-infected individuals. We analyze individuals instead of companies. In

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[27]It should be noted that the yearly published rate of informality at nation-wide level is an estimation. Estimations may differ according to the definition of informality.

[28]According to the literature, workers who labor in companies that employ between one and five individuals or work on their own account might be considered informal workers (Maloney and Saavedra 2007, pp. 29–30, 39, ILO 2012, Salazar-Xirinachs and Chacaltana 2018, pp. 18, 20, 21).

[29]Weller et al. (2020, p. 29) use the lack of health insurance of employed individuals as their principal and only indicator to determine labor informality. Although it is not correct to use the question of health insurance as a proxy for formal and informal labor, our data on the percentage of individuals without health insurance according to district show almost full coincidence with the data on individuals who work in companies that employ between one and five individuals and the percentage of own-account workers.

the case an individual works in a very small company in the district of Villa El Salvador (with a high rate of informality) but lives in Pueblo Libre (less than average rate of COVID-19 infections), this individual is counted as working in a company that employs between one and five individuals for the district of Pueblo Libre.

Metropolitan Lima consists of 43 districts. The smallest has 1,090 inhabitants (Santa Maria del Mar). The biggest is San Juan de Lurrigancho with 1,150,470 residents. The differences regarding the number of individuals per district, causes that the relation between the rate of informality and the rate of COVID-19 infections becomes diffuse. For example, the number one district for COVID-19 infections is San Juan de Lurrigancho. San Juan de Lurrigancho is the most populous district in Lima (1,150,470), however its high rate of informality does not correspond with a high rate of COVID-19 infections. Santa María has above average rates of COVID-19 infections, but not many people live in this district.

These above considerations have led us to conclude that districts such as Ate, Comas, San Juan de Lurrigancho, San Martin de Porres have to be excluded from our analysis as the number of their citizens is bigger than the upper limit. This upper limit is determined by dividing the total number of Metropolitan Lima citizens by the number of districts. The average population is 222,787 per district. We consider the lower limit at 1 resident and the upper limit at 445,575 inhabitants.

The rate of informality and the rate of COVID-19 infections demonstrates that a positive relation exists between both variables. Data show that 52.1% of Metropolitan Lima individuals live in districts for which a positive relation exists between the rate of informality and the rate of COVID-19 infections.

The relation between the rate of informality and the rate of COVID-19 infections might be stronger when we take the uneven access to health services into consideration. It is to be expected that individuals working in the informal sector have difficulties to access these services due to financial barriers. As a consequence, the number of COVID-19 infections might be much higher than reported. Furthermore, the precarious financial and labor situation of informally employed individuals might not 'allow' them to report themselves sick due to a COVID-19 infection.

Research on the mortality rate in working class districts appears to be crucial in order to determine if the uneven access to health services of individuals employed in the informal sector is expressed in a more than average rate of COVID-19 mortality. This investigation would increase in importance when it also enables to establish a relation with food habits and the overall health situation in these districts.

Conclusion

COVID-19 is not a democratic virus. Although every human being can be infected, some human beings have more chance to be infected than others. The Peruvian laboring classes in Metropolitan Lima seem easier to be infected by COVID-19 than the accommodating classes, through our demonstration that a

more than average rate of informality is related to a more than average rate of COVID-19 infections.

The lockdowns and the different states of emergency could not prevent the expansion of the virus. When the country started to reopen, COVID-19 got a tremendous boost. The principal function of Peru in the globalized capitalist world has called into existence an economic and a company structure (the big majority of the Peruvian EAP are low-skilled and are employed in micro companies) that have functioned as the structural conditions for the expansion of the virus. The economic development model in place expresses Peru's primary role in the international division of labor as a provider of the raw materials for capitalist development abroad, principally in the advanced capitalist countries and China.

The expansion of COVID-19 is for a major part product of the overall labor precariousness and informality in Peru, the result of the above-mentioned structural conditions for the expansion of the virus. The general use of temporary contracts, the product of the neoliberal adjustment programs in the 1990s, enabled the companies to rapidly reduce personnel and labor costs, but also forced their former workers to put their lives and of others in danger by neglecting social distancing. For these workers the question has been simple: dying from hunger or from COVID-19.

A social and economic structure that contributes to the expansion of COVID-19, a development model that through the elimination of the regulating role of the State and the privatization of its social obligations has converted the country in a permanent social emergency, leading to the incapacity of the government to develop and implement measures against the expansion of COVID-19 in accordance with the country's characteristics, makes discussions over the future design of the social and economic structure of Peruvian society and the role of the State in society more than urgent. These discussions should begin with the current economic development model.

COVID-19 has demonstrated that the prevailing model must change if Peru wants to be prepared for new pandemics. It has shown that Peru has being living in an economic statistical fantasy, where some believed that the country was near of becoming a member of the organization of the most advanced capitalist countries, i.e., the OECD (CEPLAN 2014). However, as recounted here, economic development in the last twenty years has been very thin. Peru is still heavily depended on foreign direct investments in its extractive sector and for the demand for its commodities, the laboring classes are principally performing manual labor, the big majority of the EAP is informal and is employed in very small companies characterized by low productivity, and healthcare is structurally deficient. Without acknowledgement of these factors, it will be difficult to prepare effectively for future pandemics and avoid repeating Peru's experience with COVID-19.

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In Defense of the Classics, Against New Racism

By Victor M. Kogan[*]

The wave of the struggle against "white privilege" and "systemic racism" did not pass the field of classics, the study of Ancient Greece and Rome. Critical Race Theory, broadly recognized in American colleges and universities, presents reality in two colors only. It overshadows and even substitutes any merit by the color – white is wrong, non-white is good. This approach is quite convenient for replacing professional knowledge with the loud noise of mind "decolonization," disorients presumed beneficiaries and turns out to be new racism, in this case, aimed as discrimination against whites. The spark of its prominence in classics and humanities was given by Dan-el Padilla Peralta, who is a black, undocumented immigrant from the Dominican Republic. He has been supported by white people against the US immigration law all the way up to Princeton, Oxford, and Stanford, some of the best educational institutions, to master Greek and Latin and, finally, teach Classics at Princeton. At the pinnacle of that, he speaks against the historical foundation of this society, what he has understood to be a white man-dominated slaves-holding structure fraught with systemic racism. Positive Discrimination or Affirmative Action programs exist in the USA, India, Malaysia, Nigeria, and other countries as a broadly recognized way to correct historical injustice. Winners, who, in most visible cases, happen to be white, try to pay dues to the retrospective non-white victims of oppression. It is possible to apply Affirmative Action to history classes through acceptance and grading, but not to History itself. Slavery and the dominance of men, which nullify the value of classics in the eyes of fighters against "white supremacy," were everywhere, while Democracy was in Athens and Rome only. So, to promote truth and our dignity, Classics must stay.

Keywords: *antiquity, classics, colorism, discrimination, immigration, merit, prejudice, racism, slavery, western civilization*

The Tenets of Critical Race Theory (CRT)

In our country "People of color lead shorter lives, receive worse medical care, complete fewer years of school, and occupy more menial jobs than do whites," (Delgado and Stefancic 2017, p. 13) but lamentable not only that. There is a racial gap in many aspects of life - rates of infant and maternal mortality, longevity, level of schooling and educational achievements, menial and professional job, unemployment, abortion, marriages, divorce, single motherhood, median family income, people living below the poverty line, health, alcoholism, drug dependency, HIV/AIDS, and healthcare. In all these cases, Blacks perform worse than Whites. The gap persists despite the society-wide historical improvement brought on by the Civil Rights movement and along with Affirmative Action. Blacks' life improvement occurs in the background and context of Whites' life improvement. So, the life of Blacks,

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despite the meaningful improvement, might be seen and felt as getting worse. Paradoxically, CRT comes as a reaction to this relative deprivation.

"Critical Race Theory questions the very foundations of the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightenment rationalism, and neutral principles of constitutional law" (Delgado and Jean Stefancic 2017, pp. 3, 13). According to CRT, "racism is the usual way society does business, the common, *everyday experience* of most people of color in this country, the norm. The system of "white-over-color ascendancy" serves important purposes, both psychic and material, for the dominant group. Racism is difficult to address or cure because it is not acknowledged." The color-blind or "formal" conception of equality covers and can remedy only the most blatant forms of discrimination, which stand out and attract our attention (Delgado and Stefancic 2017, p. 8).

Although in all indicators of a good life 'Whites' stand behind "Asians," CRT considers the binary Black-white relationship as the paradigm central to racial analysis, (Delgado and Stefancic 2017, p. 169) the window onto ignored or alternative realities[1] (Delgado and Stefancic 2017, p. 46). "To see the world as binary and to choose the side of righteousness makes life much more meaningful, - Andrew Sullivan commented. - It banishes doubt and complexity. It makes us feel better to be part of a tribe and to have a simple enemy or ally who is clearly visible — just check the color of their skin, as every elite student is now trained to do" (Sullivan 2021).

The wisdom of street smart guys might help us here.
What are you looking for? The keys.
Did you lose them here? No.
Why are you looking for them here? It's light here.

In that vein, why not denigrate Western Civilization?

Polychromy in Antiquity[2]

"So what does it say to viewers today when museums display gleaming white statues? What does it say when the only people of color one is likely to see appear on a ceramic vessel? Sara Bond wrote. Intentional or not, museums present viewers with a false color binary (CRT tries to impose) of the ancient world?" - Sarah Bond asks. With rescoring their true polychrome, "we can come to better understand ourselves" (Bond 2017).

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[1]"Alternative facts" was a phrase used by U.S. Counselor to the President Kellyanne Conway during a *Meet the Press* interview on January 22, 2017, in which she defended White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer's false statement about the attendance numbers of Donald Trump's inauguration as President of the United States. When pressed during the interview with Chuck Todd to explain why Spicer would "utter a provable falsehood," Conway stated that Spicer was giving "alternative facts." Todd responded, "Look, alternative facts are not facts. They're falsehoods." (Taken from the Internet)

[2]Gods in Color: https://buntegoetter.liebieghaus.de/en/.

To the credit of Richard Delgado, and Jean Stefancic, they recognize that CRT may become "the New Civil Rights orthodoxy" and embed itself "in academic scholarship and teaching and that its precepts became commonplace, part of conventional wisdom" (Delgado and Stefancic 2017, p. 158).

The CRT is analyzed but rejected as "*overly radical, inconsistent with Enlightenment* philosophy and a bad example to minority communities" (Delgado and Stefancic 2017, p. 159).

The proponents of CRT commit to working toward social justice and reject liberalism with its support of colorblindness, equal opportunity, and meritocracy.

In modern societies, meritocracy means the power of people distinguished by their talents and skills regardless of class, race, gender, or ethnicity. This is a historically progressive social arrangement because, more than any other social arrangement, it opens to people at the bottom of society a path to social success based on their abilities and efforts. According to its vision of the society as a system that works against people of color to benefit white people, Critical Race Theory, broadly recognized in American colleges and universities, overshadows and even substitutes any merit, blamed as "mechanical scales," (Delgado and Stefancic 2017, pp. 104, 179) with the right color – the further from white, the better.

"The classical past has never been co-opted by only one political tendency: Classics have probably legitimated as many revolutions as they legitimated conservative dictatorships," - as Mary Beard, a professor of Classics at Cambridge, writes. - "Classics are, of course, about us as much as about Greeks and Romans" (Beard 2013, p. 7).

From one side of the academic spectrum, our discipline was built to exclude, Rebecca Futo Kennedy wrote "It continues to be used to craft and promote exclusions. I look around this room today and I see a sea of whiteness, just like we see at every conference and still too often in our classrooms." We have to truly "embrace a "classics for all" mentality and way of acting, and understanding that "classics" don't have to be an *ex uno unum*--it is and should be an *e pluribus unum*" (Futo Kennedy 2017).

From another side of the academic spectrum, Roger Kimball wrote, "There has never in history been a society more open to other cultures than our own; nor has any tradition been more committed to self-criticism than the Western tradition: the figure of Socrates endlessly inviting self-scrutiny and rational explanation is a definitive image of the Western spirit. Moreover, "Western" science is not exclusively Western: it is science plain and simple—yes, it is "universal" science — which, though invented and developed in the West, is as true for the inhabitants of the Nile Valley as it is for the denizens of New York" (Kimball 1991, p. 8). The wave of the struggle against "white privilege" and "systemic racism" has not excluded the field of classics, the study of Ancient Greece and Rome. "Although the faculty members and departments are obligated to operate as market actors procuring resources in a hypercompetitive environment" (Shullenberger 2021), and students are mostly imbued with utilitarian goals, either their own or those transferred from their parents who are paying tuition bills (Beye 1998), the wind of cultural wars (Adler 2016, pp. 19, 23, 123–124, 127–130, 133,162) did not disappear

from the sails of the *Black Athena* controversy, presented and symbolized by this collocation. When you hear someone – be the student, a colleague, or an amateur -- say that they are interested in classics because of "the Greek miracle" or because Classics is "the foundation of western civilization" and "culture," Donna Zuckerberg, the Editor-in-Chief of *Eidolon*, recommends, "Challenge that viewpoint respectfully but forcefully. Engage them on their assumed definition of "foundation," "Western," "civilization" and "culture." Point out that such ideas are a slippery slope to white supremacy. Seek better reasons for studying Classics" (Zuckerberg 2016).

From another side of the academic spectrum: "We are now seeing efforts to ban classics of Western and American literature and remove some famous texts, declared racist or sexist, celebrated on social media. But canceling Homer for whom loyalty, responsibility, courage, and "clear head" are life-saving qualities is not virtue-signaling. It is broadcasting ignorance" (Hanson 2021). Even in the Soviet Union, where a connection with people was the "party line," similar to our political correctness, it was an official cultural motto, although not always followed in practice: "It is necessary to raise common readers to the level of great writers, not to lower great writers to the level of common readers" and this is an allegoric rule for setting standards in education and beyond, so the label of "elite" as well as "overprized" can work as an attraction.[3]

The Points of Retreat

In 1988, Stanford University's faculty senate voted to replace the University's Western Culture sequence with *Culture, Ideas, and Values* (CIV). It was "a slight improvement on the original course in Western culture because they retain enough of the core readings so that the educational purpose of the original is not lost, and at the same time, they enrich course work with reading outside the European tradition" (Searle 1992, p. 106) but had the significant symbolic meaning.

By 1990, the national debates over political correctness (PC) commenced with a *New York Times* article by Richard Bernstein, "The Rising Hegemony of Politically Correct" published on October 28, 1990. And the "political purpose (*political, not academic!*) *Black Athena* is, of course, to lessen European cultural arrogance" (Bernal 1987, p. 73). So, the presence of Critical Race Theory in the study of Classics is no surprise.[4] It has sharpened one of several issues, which, in light of America's historic burden, its original sin, is the topic of lasting interest – race, slavery, and consequences.

W.E.B. Du Bois' idea of the "Talented Tenth" refers to the one in ten Black men who have cultivated the ability to become leaders of the Black community by acquiring a college education, writing books, and becoming directly involved in social change (Battle and Wright 2002, pp. 654–672, Jucan 2012, pp. 27–44). Du

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[3] I remember a student's explanation for self-selective enrollment to some of my classes: "Nobody wants to look not smart enough."

[4] Society of Classics' Annual Gathering: https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2019/03/04/new-video-shows-exactly-what-was-said-during-heated-discussion-annual-gathering.

Bois strongly believed that the Black community needed a classical education to reach their full potential, rather than just the industrial education. He saw classical education as the pathway to bettering the Black community. "The Negro race, like all races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men. - W.E.B. Du Bois wrote. - The problem of education, then, among Negroes must first of all deal with the Talented Tenth; it is the problem of developing the Best of this race that they may guide the Mass away from the contamination and death of the Worst, in their own and other races." He supported the idea that the object of all true education is not to make men carpenters; it is to make carpenters men.[5]

One of the Talented Tenth, Dan-el Padilla Peralta is a black, undocumented immigrant from the Dominican Republic, whose mother brought him to New York and had decided to take the adversities of life without English and papers (Padilla Peralta 2015).

He is "obviously brilliant and once found liberation in the classics," the way so many others did, - wrote Andrew Sullivan. - He becomes "a prodigy in classical scholarship" (Sullivan 2021).

Dan-el Padilla Peralta has been supported by white people against US immigration law all the way up to Princeton, Oxford, and Stanford, some of the best educational institutions, to master Greek and Latin and, finally, teach Classics at Princeton, and, at the pinnacle of that, speak against the historical foundation of this society, what he has understood is a white man-dominated slaveholding structure fraught with systemic racism (Poser 2021).

In the Dominican Republic, where Padilla Peralta came from, the racial hostility toward Haiti, whose population is black, can be traced back to Haiti's invasion and occupation of the Dominican Republic from 1822 to 1844. During this time, Haiti replaced Dominican institutions with transplants of its institutions and Haitian customs into the Republic and imposing Haitian Creole instead of the Dominican Spanish language (Metz 1990, p. 10). Thus, black is associated with Haitian invasion and oppression.

Not All Slaves Were Black

The very fact that certain Africans were called slaves reflected the fact that *white* people, who were enslaved centuries before, were slaves. The word, not only in English but in other European languages and Arabic, was derived from the name Slaves (Sowell 2009, pp. 306–309).

"In ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Greece, there were considerable conceptual overlaps between foreigner and servitude, and even greater one between women and slave. The later association is epitomized by the Sumerian ideogram for "slave," which combines the element for "women" with that for "mountain," the symbol of foreign lands for living in flat Mesopotamia. The Chinese character for "slave" merely contains the radical for "women" with a phonetic sign to indicate its pronunciation" (Bernal 1995, p. 988).

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[5]W.E.B. Du Bois, The Talented Tenth: http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp/document/thetalented-tenth/.

When in a counterpunch to anti-black historical aberrations, Marcus Garvey (Martin 1983) spoke about the Greeks stealing from Africa, "he was not creating a new historiography; he was creating a new mythology." For black Americans, the African origin of Greece is a myth of self-identification and self-ennoblement, the kind of "noble lie" that is, to use Bernal's term, the fabrication; but such fabrications may build confidence, and encourage marginalized groups to quit the margin and participate in the common culture. "In that sense, they may be useful and even 'noble.' And even if helps black people to gain confidence, it will teach them, and any other people who believe the myth, that facts can be manufactured or misreported to serve a political purpose (*what we see now in the work of "cancel culture"*[6]) that origins are the only measure of value; that difference is glory or danger, when in fact it is a common, challenging fact of life, that the true knowledge of customs, language and literature is unimportant for understanding the nature of culture. However, the cultural legacy of Greece belongs to all as the legacy of other cultures and their contributions belong to each other, and all of us" (Lefkowitz 1992, p. 36).

It is well-known that Aristotle's *Politic* relates slavery to human inferiority. However, just following his endorsement of "natural" slavery, Aristotle agrees that war captives who became slaves are not necessarily natural slaves, and so should not be enslaved (Thornton 2000, p. 77).

According to Victor Davis Hanson and John Heath, Greeks saw slavery as the accident of life that anyone can be a victim of (Beye 1998). In the ancient world slavery was not predicated on color or purported racial inferiority, as it should be according to Critical Race Theory, but on an accident of life. Heraclitus says that war "makes some slaves, others free." The same disaster could be brought on by a siege or pirate attack. It was a horrible institution, but with some flexibility, so Diogenes could say, pointing to a Corinthian buyer: "Sell me to him, he needs a master" (Hanson and Heath 2001, p. 114).

Ex-slaves in Petronius's Satyricon assume that slavery is bad and unlucky but often a temporary start, which can be circumvented by more cunning, so slaves can outwit their witless masters and end up with cash, status – *and slaves of their own*, as some American blacks had (Kroger 1985). Having been open to the vagaries of life, a Greek could not be bothered that his slave was a better man than he is, something unacceptable for an American plantation owner with a pseudo-genetic creed (Hanson and Heath 2001, p. 114).

"In Greece, the gulf between master and slave was not so great as to close off any possibility of empathy" (Thornton 2000, p. 63). A slave tutor was more than just an attendant; he also had responsibility *for shaping his charge's character* (Thornton 2000, p. 64).

Examples abound in Greek history of the mass liberation of slaves. "We hear frequently of slaves given freedom for fighting alongside their masters, made citizens in times of population decline, armed by cagey insurrectionists, and manumitted upon the death of their master. Slavery in the Classical world was clearly a mutable and debated enterprise, with the distinction between bound and

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[6]https://countercurrents.org/2020/09/case-against-cancel-culture/.

free often blurred in a way unknown in the American South (Hanson and Heath 2001, p. 113).

Greek slaves could be bankers or even professors; they could be chained and die in mines, but the true evil of slavery in the ancient world was more often the reality of non-existence in the political community life, "a forfeiture more *bitter to any Greek or Roman adult* male than it is conceivable to us" (Hanson and Heath 2001, p. 112).

To the Greeks, the advent of chattel slavery in the city-state delineated the rights of citizens (*another hot topic today, undocumented Padilla Peralta's trauma*), and highlighted the divide between slave and free in a way unknown to the serfdom and palace culture of the Near East and Egypt. A free Greek could now be defined by what he was not. In no other language of the time was there the word for freedom, or the more concrete "free citizen."

According to Bruce Thornton, we see in Aristotle the consequences of making slavery an object of rational analysis. Once that happened, it could become an object of criticism as well (Thornton 2000, p. 78). Nowhere else in the ancient world can one find slaves and slavery discussed in a "Greek" critical way. "There the debate began, and once the Greeks made slavery an object of free thought, analysis, and discussion, the possibility of challenging the institution itself opened up (Thornton 2000, p. 82). Aristotle would add that we Americans have *outlawed slavery only to treat millions of free men* as little more than slaves (Hanson and Heath 2001, p. 115).

Greek inheritance has meaning and influence regardless of color, but some people are mostly interested in the color of Socrates and Cleopatra. "How do you read Aristotle and conclude that the most salient quality of his genius was that he was "white"? (Sullivan 2021). According to M. Bernal, St. Clair Drake attributes anti-black colorism to the rise of the Persian Empire and rigid dualism of Zoroastrianism, with its perpetual battle between good and evil symbolized by light and dark, or white and black, respectively (Drake 1987). There is evidence of Africans being seen in both Hellenistic Greece and Rome as bringers of misfortune. This attitude was even more intense in early Christianity, as reflected by Jerome's Latin translation of the bride's line in Song of Songs, in which the Hebrew and Greek texts render "I am black and beautiful" as "I am black **but** beautiful" (Bernal 1995, p. 998).

The students who believed that Socrates and Cleopatra were blacks assumed "we had deliberately tried to deny the truth, that we had used (or misused) history as yet another means of enforcing European political domination" (Lefkowitz 1992, p. 30).

Some Afro-centrists deride ancient Greeks as Affirmative Action kids of the West; (Sullivan 1990, pp. 19–21) others added fuel to the fire with claims that M. Lefkovitz thinks is easily refuted: that Europeans are "ice" people, cold, calculating, and destructive, and Africans are "sun" people, warm, natural, and peaceful (Lefkowitz 1994, p. 107).

Anyway, in the semantics of popular culture, whiteness is often associated with innocence and goodness. Brides wear white on their wedding day to signify purity. "Snow White" is a universal fairy tale of virtue and just reward. In contrast,

darkness and blackness often carry connotations of evil and menace. Whiteness is normative; it sets standards in dozens of situations (Delgado and Stefancic 2017, pp. 85–86).

Accordingly, white Americans have devalued black skin color. Blackness, in general, has been associated with discouragement, despair, depression, coldness, the unknown, the haunting shadow, and the nightmare. This negative blackness concept, probably originating from the associations with day and night.[7]

The Offensive Game of Colorism

American Blacks long ago adopted this negative blackness concept. For several reasons, they identified with the white ego ideal. Thus, for decades within the American black culture, the owners of black skin resigned themselves to the fact that they were "negative," inferior, and less attractive (Anderson and Cromwell 1977, pp. 76–88).

This was true even within the Negro Ivy League, Historically Black Colleges and Universities. With the onset of the Black Power Movement, students embraced blackness (Gasman and Abiola 2016, pp. 39–45).

As Joel Williamson shows, light men are having difficulty marrying as they choose because light women seem to be calculating the advantages to their future children of marrying darker (Williamson 1995, p. 191). Although Parish's study is now about 75 years old, (Parrish 1946, pp. 13–20) similar attitudes about skin color prevail among today's Black youth. Many believe that light skin is feminine and dark skin is masculine, and very light-skinned boys and very dark-skinned girls often suffer from being at odds with this cultural stereotype (Russel-Cole et al. 1992, p. 66).

Yet a light-skinned wife is not always an asset for a successful Black man, especially if he is in the public eye. When the dark-skinned Marion Barry first campaigned for mayor of Washington, D.C., as a militant advocate of Black causes, some Blacks accused him of hypocrisy, since he had, after all, married a light-skinned woman. Afraid that his wife, Effi, was becoming a political liability, Barry bought her a sunlamp and told her to try to make herself darker. When that failed, he sent her to the Hilton Head Beach Resort in South Carolina to work on a suntan (Russel-Cole et al. 1992, p. 108).

Traditionally, the color complex involved light-skinned Blacks' rejection of Blacks who were darker. Increasingly, however, the color complex shows up in the form of dark-skinned African Americans spurning their lighter-skinned brothers and sisters for not being Black enough (Russel-Cole et al. 2013, pp. 195–199, Gasman and Abiola 2016, p. 42).

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[7]So, "liberation" from the natural darkness of night may come from migration to places of white nights where this phenomenon occurs, including Russia, Finland, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Canada and Alaska. Many of these destinations celebrate the summer solstice in their own way but St. Petersburg honors the entire white night period with its own festival. See Salisbury Vanita. "Top 8 Summer solstice celebrations around the World." June 18, 2020. *Lonely Planet.*

Attitudes about skin color among African Americans occasionally erupt in this manner in the workplace. Feelings of resentment toward those who are lighter or prejudice against those who are darker are common sources of job-related color harassment (Wilder 2018, pp. 1978–1987).

Tensions between Blacks about skin color and features may also be fueled by the tendency of Whites to hire and promote light-skinned Blacks over those who are darker (Russel-Cole et al. 1992, p. 125).

The color complex even includes attitudes about hair texture, nose shape, and eye color, and leads Blacks to discriminate against each other (Hunter 2007, pp. 237–254). "Because the color complex has long been considered unmentionable, it has been called the "last taboo" among African Americans" (Russel-Cole et al. 1992, p. 2). In the 20 years since the first edition of "*The Color Complex*" in 1992, things have not improved. Instead, "skin-color prejudice has gone viral and appears to be infecting ever-greater numbers of people around the world" (Russel-Cole et al. 2013, p. 246). But playing with color symbolism is fraught with irony; not all blacks are "white," and some whites are still "black."

In March 1938, U.S. President F. D. Roosevelt convened a 32-nation conference at Evian, France, to discuss the resettlement of German and Austrian Jewish refugees to other lands. At that time, Nazi Germany was still agreeing to let Jews emigrate if they transferred their assets to the German government. The assembled nations endorsed the idea of resettlement but given the xenophobia and moods of the Depression-era in effect, no nation was expected to take more than a few thousand refugees. However, only the Dominican Republic, led by Rafael Trujillo, expressed a willingness to accept between 50,000 and 100,000 Jews. Historians believe Trujillo hoped that, after his brutal massacre of 25,000 Haitians in 1937, accepting Jewish refugees might repair his image internationally. Though himself a mulatto, Trujillo strongly believed in white superiority, and became a "blancophile." Trujillo's middle name was Leónidas, after the Spartan king who martyred himself with 300 of his soldiers at Thermopylae, and who has become an icon of the far right. "Playing the race card" reminds of the Nazi's glorification of Sparta. After 1933, German scholars who identified themselves with the new Nazi regime defined Sparta as a quasi-Nationalistic institution (Rebenich 2002, p. 334).

However, Trujillo granted visas to a thousand Jews in hope that young European Jews who were to live in Sosúa, a special community established for them, would marry Dominican women and produce light-skinned offspring (Levy n.d.).

An incident involving his daughter Flor de Oro also was a factor in Trujillo's decision. She attended school in France between 1930 and 1932 and was snubbed by her French classmates, except for a Jewish girl who befriended her (Metz 1990, p. 17).

So, the Dominican Republic was the only country that agreed to accept Jewish immigrants. "Had the originally projected 100,000 refuges settled in Sosua, its story may have been different," but it happened only to a handful, while 99,000 were annihilated in the Holocaust (Metz 1990, p. 22).

Padilla, it seems to A. Sullivan, was able "to resolve some of the huge challenges of modernity and his own psyche and background by surrendering his

mind and soul to a purely racial, and thereby tribal, analysis of the world." Andrew Sullivan, like many others, "prefers another form of liberation — out of race and identity and into learning, out of one's own identity and into others', out of the present and into the past, another world entirely, waiting to be explored and understood" (Sullivan 2021).

More Persons from the Tenth

According to Dan-El Padilla Peralta, "That scholarly merit can, even in the minds and hearts of supporters and well-wishers, be decoupled from the fact of my Afro-Latinity is why the rage will continue to burn brightly. If this discipline is to cherish the minds of scholars of color, it must begin by cherishing their bodies — and all the legacies of racism past and present that are seared into their flesh."[8]

The quality of studies and writing are excluded from Padilla's equation, probably in exchange for the color of skin. Last summer the University of Chicago's English department explained that its Ph.D. program would be accepting only applicants interested in working in and with Black studies because "English as a discipline has a long history of providing an aesthetic rationalization for colonization, exploitation, extraction, and anti-Blackness" (Shullenberger 2021). But this is the only fair basis for publication; is it not? Is omitting such a "trifle" as quality not self-explanatory?[9]

While writing as a correspondent for the "Washington Post" in Africa, Keith Richburg, unlike Dan-el Padilla, asks, "Are you black first, or journalist first? (*Or scholar first?*) Are you supposed to report and write accurately, and critically, about what you see and hear? Or are you supposed to be pushing some kind of black agenda, protecting black American leaders from tough scrutiny, treating black people and black issues differently? … Was I not called a dictator, just because he happened to be black? … Pan Africanism, as I see it ... prescribes a kind of code of political correctness in dealing with Africa (*and black Americans*), an attitude that says black America should bury its head in the sand to all that is wrong in Africa (*and good in America*) and play up the worn-out demons of colonialism, slavery and western exploitation of minerals (*or the new demon of systemic racism*), or otherwise is said to be playing into the old 'white conspiracy" (Richburg 2000, p. 125).

Unlike Dan-el Padilla Peralta, Ward Connerly believed that his skin color should not be a factor in a public policy debate. "It should not be relevant," he said (Ambinder 1998). Connerly's ethnic heritage is a mix of Irish, black, French, and Choctaw Indian, but he identifies himself as black "because blackness is an experience and others have forced that experience upon me" (Connerly 2001, pp. 24–26).

He attended American River Junior College and then Sacramento State College, graduating with a BA in political science in 1962. A year later, he

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[8]https://medium.com@danelpadillaperalta/some-thoughts-on-AIS-SCS 2019.
[9]Dan-el Padilla - The Haunted House of Classics: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sqbJl71 H1t0.

married, similar to Dan-el, a white classmate. Connerly ran his own consulting and public housing development company for more than two decades and became a millionaire. In 1993, he was appointed by the governor to the University of California Board of Regents, where he served until March 2005 (Bearak 1997, p. 1).

According to CRT, Affirmative Action is the policy that strives to increase minority enrollment, activity, and membership, often intending to diversify a certain environment such as a school or workplace (Delgado and Stefancic 2017, p. 167).

Unlike Dan-el Padilla Peralta, Ward Connerly opposes affirmative action out of what he calls a "passion for fairness." He believes race-based remedies only prolong America's racial divisions and inequities. In his memoir, *Creating Equal*, Connerly says race is "a scar" in America that he first saw as a toddler in the segregated South. He yearns for race consciousness to dissolve in America's melting pot, but without the government turning up the heat.

"My fight against race preferences has sharpened my appreciation for the principles that are at the core of the American experiment," Connerly writes in his memoir. "I feel more fully a citizen now – more part of this nation – than ever before in my life" (Connerly 2000, p. 365).

When your society forces you to check the box and decides whether you win or lose in the competitions of life based on the box that you check, your freedom is diminished. And so it was that, as a regent, I discovered that the University of California was really using different standards to admit people. We were classifying them on the basis of whether they're African-American, or Chicano, or Latino, or American-Indian, or Asian, or white. We're making people fill out these silly little boxes and saying if you fill out this one these are the number of points that you get, if you fill out this one these are the number of points that you get (Connerly 2000, pp. 24–26).

From Thermopylae to the Legal Insurrection

On January 6, Padilla Peralta turned on the television minutes after the windows of the Capitol were broken. In the crowd, he saw a man in a Greek helmet with TRUMP 2020 painted in white. He saw flags embroidered with the phrase that Leonidas is said to have uttered when the Persian king ordered him to lay down his arms: *Molon Labe*, the laconism for "Come and take them," which has become a slogan of American gun rights activists. A week after the riot, Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene, a newly elected Republican from Georgia who has liked posts on social media that call for killing Democrats, wore a mask stitched with the phrase when she voted against impeachment on the House floor (Poser 2021).

However, the words of Leonidas, as it is expected from the laconic words, open to other things.

The battle at Thermopylae is a contentious point in the study of Classics. It is a well-known and widely publicized fact that the current political movement - white nationalists - glorifies King Leonidas and his Spartan men. This connects the

current cultural struggle with Sparta, one of two prominent ancient city-states, while Classics heritage is usually associated with another one, Athens. This is the essential point of perception and interpreting history as having roots from two main political arrangements – democracy, represented by Athens, and a totalitarian state, represented by Sparta. "The sole business of the Spartan citizen was war, to which he was trained from birth" (Russell 1961, p. 95).

Speaking about Spartans, we remember the sad words of M.I. Finley: "They knew how to die like heroes; they never learned to live like men."[10] But "it cannot be denied that, for a long period, the Spartans were successful in their main purpose, the creation of a race of invincible warriors. The battle of Thermopylae (480 B.C.), though technically a defeat, is perhaps the best example of their valor" (Russell 1961, p. 98). Let us not forget that the idea of patriotism, played out at Thermopylae, cannot be overshadowed by any Racist interpretation of Greece's past. "Some may even argue that we should only teach and discuss with the general public aspects of the ancient world that will not offend anyone - wrote Rebecca Futo Kennedy. - But when that goal of inoffensive appeal runs against the goal of scholarly honesty, we do our field no favors" (Futo Kennedy 2017).

The epitaph, attributed to the poet Simonides, in very modest terms, glorifies the battle at Thermopylae, fought in 480 B.C. "Foreigner, go tell the Lacedaemonians that we lie here obedient to their commands" (Russell 1961, p. 99). Even in the former German Democratic Republic, "which normally was more interested in the slave system than the military history of Greece and Rome, Leonidas was not entirely forgotten" (Rebenich 2002, p. 335).

Thermopylae is the symbol of the West's heroic self-defense. ("The most valiant are sometimes the most unfortunate," - wrote Michel de Montaigne.- "Thus there are triumphant defeats that rival victories.") And the Persian invasion is the symbol of a formidable threat to the tiny West by the huge East. ("If the issue of that day had been different, the Britons and the Saxons might still have been wandering in the woods,"- wrote J.S. Mill.) In addition to that, as Ernle Bradford righty stresses, Thermopylae brought to Greeks a sense of unity, something that we need, too.[11]

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[10]On 28 March 1952, Rutgers University Professor Moses Finley appeared before the United States Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security and invoked the Fifth Amendment regarding his association with Communism. On 12 December 1952, Rutgers's Board of Trustees resolution declared, "It shall be cause for immediate dismissal of any member of faculty or staff" to fail to co-operate with government inquiries. On 31 December 1952, Rutgers dismissed Finley. (See Osborn 2017). Moses Finley wrote about Sparta the following: "During the Peloponnese war, Sparta sent a round of proclamations asking helots to choose from among their ranks those who have distinguished themselves against the enemy, so they could be rewarded with their freedom. Two thousand were selected, and Spartans then secretly murdered them all" (Finley 1962, p. 173). Moses Finley lost his job and county for the state which treated its citizens as Sparta had treated helots.

[11]"The last stand of King Leonidas and the Spartans was told as the golden story of my youth. Since then it would seem to have been downgraded, perhaps because their military outlook and stubborn courage had made them unattractive to a hedonistic society" (Bradford 1980, p. 14). Transcribed excerpts from Booker T. Washington's Atlanta Exposition Speech, September 18, 1895, read, "As we have proved our loyalty to you in the past… In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress."

The same laconic expression - *Molon Labe*, the laconism for "Come and take them" - speaks not only for the right to bear arms; it speaks as much for the freedom of speech and press.

We all are politically engaged and divided but professional duty still stands and makes scholars different from the mob – at least, the existence of other points should be recognized, and answering its arguments is the issue of academic standing.

"This is a power play. … What we're seeing going on, on campuses and in the culture, more broadly, is an exercise of power to prevent open debate of ideas," Jacobson said during the two-hour gathering hosted by the Legal Insurrection Foundation.[12]

The Ambivalence of the Past

"This entwining of the white supremacist assumptions of the Enlightenment with ancient Greece and Rome means the classics are therefore fatally tainted. You can arrive at this deranged conclusion, it seems, in two contrived ways, - writes Andrew Sullivan. - One is to view the ancient world as some kind of founding proof of the superiority of the "white race," whatever that means. Imperialists and fascists have always loved this theme; Mussolini was especially fond of it. The very word "fascism" comes from the Roman "fasces," a bound bundle of logs that were used to signify the authority of the state. In the same *New York Times* piece, we are reminded that the "marchers in Charlottesville, Va., carried flags bearing a symbol of the Roman state; online reactionaries adopted classical pseudonyms; the white-supremacist website Stormfront displayed an image of the Parthenon alongside the tagline "Every month is white history month" (Sullivan 2021).

In his understandable moral outrage against white Americans, parading at Charlottesville, and rioting on Capitol Hill, Dan-el Padilla Peralta gives them the whole ancient world. And this is too much. To make Ancient Greece and Rome responsible for proto-Nazi and neo-Nazi activities is not true and not fair. From Damon Linker's wide historical perspective, it would be similar to lessening the two millennia of Europe to the history of antisemitism, which sadly is its integral part. However, "the world in both the present and past cannot be reduced to any single account of its unfolding" – such approach "would be evidence of intellect in the grip of a kind of hysteria" (Linker 2021).

In 1981, when the renowned Israel Philharmonic Orchestra tried to play a piece from Wagner's opera *Tristan und Isolde* as an encore, a Holocaust survivor jumped onto the stage, opened his shirt, and showed scars inflicted in a Nazi concentration camp. The conductor, Zubin Mehta, stopped the performance (Brilliant 1981).

In an unsettling way, we now listen to Wagner through Hitler's ears. Moshe Brilliant wrote, "I doubt that anyone would have been more confounded by this turn of events than Theodor Herzl, the founder of Zionism, who was deeply under Wagner's spell. As Herzl once recalled, 'I, too, believe that I heard such a fluttering of wings while I wrote that book. I worked on it every day to the point of

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[12]The Legal Insurrection Foundation: Discussion

utter exhaustion. My only recreation was listening to Wagner's music in the evening, particularly to "Tannhäuser," an opera which I attended as often as it was produced. Only on the evenings when there was no opera did I have any doubts as to the truth of my ideas.' The book in question was *The Jewish State* (Ross 2012).

Underscoring the close ties between Christianity and Judaism and calling the Holocaust denial "madness," Pope Francis told an interviewer that "inside every Christian is a Jew." In an interview published in Spain's *La Vanguardia* newspaper, the pope said dialogue between the two faiths can sometimes be a "hot potato."

"I believe that interreligious dialogue must investigate the Jewish roots of Christianity and the Christian flowering of Judaism," Francis said, "I understand it is a challenge, a hot potato, but it is possible to live as brothers." Francis' statement seems to go further than his predecessor, St. John Paul II, who made headlines in 1986 as the first pope to visit Rome's main synagogue and declared Jews to be the "elder brothers" of the Christian faith. "Every day, I pray with the Psalms of David. My prayer is Jewish, and then I have the Eucharist, which is Christian," the Argentine pontiff added (McKenna 2014).

So, our past is truly ambivalent and is the same as our present; the past is an integral part of it.

These are the words of an American journalist, who happened to be African American, working for the *Washington Post* amid a fratricidal war in decolonized Africa. "If that original ancestor hadn't been forced to make that horrific voyage, I would not have been standing there that day on the Rusumo Falls bridge (between Rwanda and Tanzania) a journalist – a mere spectator – watching the bodies glide past me like river logs. No, I might have instead been one of them – or have met some similarly anonymous fate in any one of the countless ongoing civil wars or tribal clashes on this brutal continent. And so I thank God my ancestor made that voyage. Does it sound shocking? Does it sound almost like a justification for the terrible crime of slavery? Does it sound like this black man has forgotten his African roots? Of course, it does, all that and more. … I sympathize with Africa's pain. I recoil in the horror at the mindless waste of human life and human potential. I salute the gallantry and dignity of sheer perseverance of the Africans. But most of all, I feel secretly glad that my ancestor made it out – because, now, I am not one of them (Richburg 2000, p. 125).

Conclusion

Ancient Greece and Rome are with us so much that everybody wants to cling to them. Away from the hot academic debates on whether ancient Greece received seeds of its culture from Egypt, Asian people, or somebody else, it is different from parents or grandparents more than similar to them. Regardless of origin, the "product" is completed as something of independent value. The Parthenon had been built for life before death, independently from the pyramid of Khufu, built for life after death; and the Acropolis is as independently great as Giza. And both are great human achievements in their own kind.

The wave of the struggle against "white privilege" and "systemic racism" did not pass the field of classics, the study of Ancient Greece and Rome. Critical Race Theory asserts that racism is a fundamental and integral part of our society and works against people of color to benefit white people (Delgado and Stefancic 2017, pp. 8-11).

Supporters of Critical Race Theory insist that their ideas and programs are irrefutable because disagreement and dissent are just proof of "white fragility," unconscious biases, or internalized white supremacy. Straight, white, English-speaking, Christian males are members of the oppressor class. To them, equality is "mere non-discrimination" and provides "camouflage" for white supremacy, patriarchy, and oppression (Rufo 2021, Pluckrose and Lindsay 2020).

Ibram X. Kendi, Director of the Center for Anti-Racist Research, has proposed the creation of the Federal Department of Anti-Racism with the power to nullify, veto, or abolish any law at any level of government and curtail the speech if the political leader and others are deemed insufficiently "antiracist" (Kendi 2019).

In modern societies, meritocracy means power of people distinguished by their talents and skills regardless of class, race, gender, or ethnicity. This is a historically progressive social arrangement because, more than any other social arrangement, it opens to people at the bottom of society a path to social success based on their abilities and efforts. Critical Race Theory, broadly recognized in American colleges and universities, presents reality in two colors only. It overshadows and even substitutes any merit, blamed as "mechanical scales," (Delgado and Stefancic 2017, pp. 104, 179) according to color – white is wrong, non-white is good. This is a blunt contradiction to Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, 1963 famous "I Have a Dream" speech: "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character."

This simplistic two-color social structure for everything is enthusiastically supported by young romantics who have never lived in the Soviet Union or Communist China. This is a war against knowledge, which is not new; German, Austrian, and Chinese students burned books, Soviet officials declared genetics a pseudoscience, the Khmer Rouge killed doctors, teachers, and other people who could count to 20, and China's Red Guard, or *Hóng Wèibīng,* committed nothing less than Cultural Revolution.

Regardless of the intentions of its shakers and movers, Critical Race Theory fails to distinguish truly important differences between individuals and groups. It pretends to help marginalized minorities but harms them by providing a false base for satisfaction. However, this approach is quite convenient for replacing professional knowledge with the loud noise of mind "decolonization," proponents of which are strengthening in numbers. Critical Race Theory disorients presumed beneficiaries and turns out to be the new racism, in this case, aimed as discrimination against whites.

The spark of its prominence in classics and humanities was given by Dan-el Padilla Peralta, whose personal story (Padilla Peralta 2015) is charged with symbolism. He is a black, undocumented immigrant from the Dominican Republic whose mother brought him to New York and had decided to take the adversities of life without

English and papers, in the hope for a better life for her sons. He has been supported by white people against US immigration law all the way up to Princeton, Oxford, and Stanford, some of the best educational institutions, to master Greek and Latin and, finally, teach Classics at Princeton. At the pinnacle of this position, he speaks against the historical foundation of this society, what he has understood is a white man-dominated slaveholding structure fraught with systemic racism. Inside the "white structure of oppression," after graduation from Princeton as a 2006 salutatorian, Padilla Peralta earned a master's degree from Oxford and a doctorate from Stanford, all while bypassing the US regulations on immigration, and with the unselfish help of many people. Unlike Ward Connerly or Keith Richburg, Dan-el Padilla Peralta believes that his skin color should be a factor in a public policy debate, making race a new definition of merit.

His personal life story and topic of work, and the aim of his intellectual and civic revolt – this is the intersection where the current cultural war conflagrations are. A Russian joke plays well here: In our family, only a computer has memory, and only dogs show gratitude.

In his book *Tenured Radicals*, Roger Kimball notes that the privileged beneficiaries of the spiritual and material achievements of our history, "out of perversity, ignorance, or malice, have chosen to turn their backs on the culture that nourished them and made them what they are." It was published in 1990, 30 years ago; there are new people in old comfortable shoes.

Why is today's racism new? Because the official society moved from protecting historical victims, who presently are not victims anymore, to discriminating against historical winners, who are not winners anymore. From Critical Race Theory's perspective, Racism against Us, who were victims, is unfair, shameful, and harmful; racism against Them, who were oppressors, is just, praiseworthy and beneficial.

Positive Discrimination or Affirmative Action programs exist in the USA, India, Malaysia, Nigeria, and other countries as a broadly recognized way to correct historical injustice. Winners who, in most visible cases, happen to be white, try to pay dues to the retrospective non-white victims of oppression. They are set for a long and hard way: no shame, no conscience, nothing extra. It is possible to apply Affirmative Action to history classes through acceptance and grading, but not to History itself. Slavery and the dominance of men, which nullify the value of Classics in the eyes of fighters against "white supremacy," were everywhere, while Democracy was in Athens and Rome only. So, to promote truth and our dignity, the Classics must stay.

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Fantasy upon Fantasy and the Love for Nostalgia: New Forms of Connection in Young Generation Italian Diaspora in Perth, Australia

*By Angela Princiotto**[*]

This paper presents and discusses some of the findings of my research conducted in Perth as part of the fieldwork for my PhD thesis "We are both Italians of the opposite sides of the world, a comparative analysis of diaspora and distance". My work is focused on emigration from my home village, S. Angelo di Brolo, in Sicily, a phenomenon that started at the end of the 19th century and has never stopped, bringing people to different destinations. The key element of my project is that it is based on the trans-national emigration of a micro-community that has never been investigated before but that has largely contributed to the Sicilian diaspora. The subtitle, "a comparative analysis of diaspora and distance", highlights the concept of distance that is not only used to refer to geographical spaces, as I have studied a trans-national community and the research was conducted in five sites (New York-USA, Perth-Australia, Canton Zurich-Switzerland, Velbert-Germany, Busto Arsizio-Northern Italy) but also to time distance, as the different destinations correspond mainly to different waves of migration. In dealing with the reasons that brought people to leave, it's also taken into consideration that the distance in time from the event allows a different perception of the event itself and sometimes allows to reveal the true reason why, that is too hurtful in the present or impossible to admit because of the present circumstances. We need also to be aware that in the distance of time, memory, in its selection work, can mythologize the meaning of events. Moreover, I also take into account generational distance: in the experience of migration, the generational distance is particularly evident as there is a gap in the perception of self-identity. As part of a bigger project, this paper will discuss new forms of connection to the homeland used by young generation Italian migrants, born in Perth, Australia.

Keywords: *belonging, ethnic friends, imaginary, identity, tattoo*

Introduction

Fantasy upon fantasy and the love for nostalgia is a paper about new forms of connection used by young diaspora generations to show their identity and their sense of belonging. In particular, this aspect has been contemplated among the young Sicilians in Perth, Western Australia, where the distance from the home-village, together with shared memories, feelings and experiences plays an important role in the creation of the mythology of the abandoned village. This imaginary has been transmitted to the younger generations, who find different avenues of connection to the homeland. One of these is through tattoos, which symbolize the same sense of attachment shown by the previous generation, while transformed

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into different forms. Due to the generational gap, that is made deeper in the diaspora environment, the attitude of young people can be perceived as disinterested, but it could also be understood as a different way to show their feeling of belonging. In fact, in examining the recurrent themes of their tattoos, it becomes clear that they are related to religion, family, lineage, ancestors, some of them all mixed together in the same one. Of course, in the choice of getting a tattoo, together with the influence of a global trend, a form of rite of passage can be seen, that introduces the subject to the tribe of the ethnic friends.

Moreover, in this need to connect to a land most of them have never been to, an important contribution is played by the imaginary created through the stories they have listened to and through the movies they have watched. A central role, especially for the males' perception of belonging, is played by movies such as The Godfather and The Sopranos, whose protagonists belong to Mafia[1] families that, according to Gambetta's (1993) definition is "a specific economic enterprise, an industry that produces, promotes and sells private protection". Some Italians identify themselves with these characters, for the sense of honor and pride they embody, to the point that they are understood to represent the quintessence of being Italian/ Sicilian, creating in this way, a fantasy upon fantasy.

Literature Review and Background

1860[2] is the year that officially opens the era of Italian diaspora. The first destination was the USA and so it was for decades. During the Colonialist period[3], the government tried to convince people to find an alternative in the colonial land of Libya, but the propaganda was never successful. The USA at that time was the promise land for many families and so it was till the fifties, although it stopped for a period when the fascist government opposed migration abroad. For Italy, there have been two great waves of migration abroad: The Great Migration between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th and that of the second postwar period (Pugliese 2002). Anyway, the Italian exodus was generated by an individual choice. All emigrants from Italy, included those who exiled for political reasons, had a great freedom in choosing the moment of departure and the destination where to go. "Their experience wasn't an unwilling or sudden dispersion in an infinite exile. The Italian diasporas resemble more that of the ancient Greek navigators and

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[1]There are various theories about the origin of Mafia. One of these traces it back to the anti-Risorgimento reaction that led some brigands to organize a violent rebellion against the northern occupation of southern Italy. The brigand's war continued for 20 years and its repression coincided with a wave of mass migration to the USA. In fact, the Prime Minister Nitti's phrase "Either migrant or brigand" summarized the options available to starving peasants in Southern Italy (Lupo 2018).

[2]This years is also a turning point in Italian history as Garibaldi's 'One thousands expedition' that started from Sicily in 1860 is considered one of the main events that brought to Italian unification in 1861. In fact, Garibaldi was the charismatic leader who was able to gain the Sicilian peasants' support against the Bourbon government, so Sicily was declared independent. Unfortunately, this did not bring to the fulfillment of peasants' claims: to get rid of taxes and own lands.

[3]During the Fascist Period, under Mussolini's leadership, Italy was involved in attempts of extending Italian power on colonies in Africa that were depicted by the Fascist propaganda as a solution for Italian lack of labor, especially in the South.

<<business owners>> (merchant diasporas) than that of slave Africans or persecuted Jews" (Gabaccia 2000).

The phenomenon of emigration has been a continuum for Italy: not only abroad there are many Italian communities that refer to themselves as emigrants, but there are still waves between Italy and other countries mainly European (Pugliese, 2002). However, since the beginning, the bitterness of leaving the home-country was always vivid: "they moved in a sadder wilderness, where the language was strange, where their children became members of a different race. It was a price that must be paid" (Puzo 1964, p. 7). And of course mourning is inextricably linked with exodus as a "human being is like a tree, it suffers when it's transplanted. Everyone has their own landscape" (Ferraro 2015). In this new environment, the Italian community worked as a means of mutual support but at the same time it showed some differences. "Because of their strong regional affiliations (North vs. South) they were treated differently in different places, but overall integration was never easy, not even in places where the Italian community, or colony as it was called back then, was large and mixed. On the contrary, their substantial numerical presence prompted more rooted prejudices that were only somewhat surmounted over time in some countries such as the United States, for example" (Fiore 2017, p. 4). It's obvious that with time the situation changed, as interactions in the host country increased. "Safe from the depredations of their home states, diaspora communities become doubly loyal to their nations of origin and thus ambivalent about their loyalties to America" (Appadurai 1996, p. 172).

A relevant part of migration literature has been dedicated to the migrants' *nostalgia,* as many emigrants don't feel comfortable in any of the two places (the place where they come from and the place where they live) and consequently continue travelling between the two looking for the true home, the hearth. For them the hearth is always moving. It's in travelling, in the transit between one place and the other that they find the feeling of being home (Baldassar 2001). As mobility becomes an inner part of the exodus experience, identity results to be affected, as "diasporic identities stay mobile and grow more protean" (Appadurai 1996, p. 173). For Second Generation migrants, "their ties to home have developed through the transnational imaginary of shared familial and community ideals about the ancestral homeland" (Sala and Baldassar 2017, p. 387).

From this point of view what is of major interest for me, for the purpose of this paper, is the symbols and the avenues migrants use in everyday life to reconnect to their past, to their ancestors' land so as they build their own identity. In order to do so, a socio-psychological and ethno-psychiatric perspective will be taken into consideration to investigate more profound aspects of their experience. In this section I take inspiration from the work of Beneduce (2018) who in the differences between the homeland and the host land sees the origin of very complex psychological and social dynamics that bring to a continuous definition of one's identity and image, a continuum between past and present that contributes to create a disorientation regarding themselves and the passing time, a sense of estrangement.

Methodology

This study is mainly based on qualitative analysis using anthropology and sociology methodologies such as interviews, participant observation, ethnographic fieldwork. In order to collect data, a phenomenological approach has been used, while an emic perspective will be used in analyzing the data, so as to "give voice to people", thus emphasizing the way they see the world and the meaning they give to it.

In order to understand how this transnational young community refers to its identity and how family ties work to bring people home both physically or imaginatively in methodology, a corpus of in depth semi-structured interviews has been conducted. In fact it is stated that "home (both migrant and ancestral) is defined by family relationships and ties, both real (through nuclear and extended family) and imagined" (Sala and Baldassar 2017, p. 387).

Together with interviews, field notes have been taken to record spontaneous discourses about themes regarding being part of the community abroad. Moreover, notes have been used to collect information regarding the identity expression in the use of the private space and the meaning of details that are shown in that same space and how they change over the generations.

For the aims of this paper, a corpus of ten interviews with second and third generation Sicilian diaspora members, will be taken into consideration. Out of the interviewees, only three are females who have got a tattoo. The gender trend is also relevant for the discussion.

Results and Discussion

Understanding the role of imagination and nostalgia, as well as generations and family relations is the focus of this paper. Drawing from Sala's statements that "family is a crucial factor in the development of ethnicity and cultural transmission that must not be discounted, and that family is a key symbol in the construction of ethnicity for the second generation" (Sala 2017), this paper will discuss how the creation of a nostalgic imaginary in the diaspora community can be passed on to the following generations and how this is displayed.

The home-village degree of mythologization and perception of nostalgia can be considered directly related to distance and inversely to the numbers of visits (Princiotto 2019, p. 251). For many decades, visits home were a rare occasion, especially from far distant countries, due to the cost of travelling and the duration of trips. The distance from the homeland and the closeness to the community of *paesani* (people from the same village) set up the circumstances of the ideal environment for the creation of the myth of the abandoned village. The migrant would look for mutual support in the proximity to the community of *paesani* with whom, as tensions would often arise, the relationship was ambivalent: he couldn't live in it but he could not live without it. The frequency of gatherings and mutual visits, however, would establish a chance for sharing memories about life back in the village, whose way of living was often idealized. In the longing for the

homeland, occasions like these contributed to "the creation of an emotional space where imagination mixes with nostalgia". In this way, "symbols and histories are loaded with imagined meanings, constructed and reconstructed in distance". This nostalgic imaginary can be transmitted to younger generations through familial memory (Princiotto 2019).

Sala and Baldassar (2017) highlight the "important role of family and intimate culture in sustaining ethnic identity" in multicultural societies like Australia. In the intimate domain of family, the imaginary about the homeland is shared with family members. In this way, an intimate collective imaginary can be created, based on memories as well as on the taste for movies set in the homeland or with whose protagonists the watcher feels s/he shares the same background of a migrant of Italian origin, established in a foreign country. The worldwide diffusion and success of the trilogy *The Godfather* and of the series *The Sopranos* might have had an influence on the perception of what it means to be Italian and of the values of Italian culture. Some of my informants have pointed out how these films and series represent for them some of the values at the basis of what they perceive as representative of Italia-ness. Together with the stress on the relevance of family, and the related sense of pride and honor, what seems to appeal in these movies is the achievement of power as a means of social redemption. Focusing on the sacrifice made by migrants in leaving their homeland in order to create the chances for a better life for themselves and their descendants, the attainment of a powerful position in the host country can be considered a reward for all the sorrow at the basis of the diaspora experience. In the necessity of creating a personal narrative about the individual experience of separation, transfigured through the role of imagination, these movies can work as a means of connection to the homeland where the personal direct experience of the homeland finds a substitute in the frames of the films. The influence of oral stories interconnected with movies in creating an imaginary about the homeland, is well explained in the following extract:

> "I think to be in Sicily and Calabria would be very different to here. I think it would be more traditional, the housing, the mountains, I think it would be like in the movies. I haven't been there myself to experience it, but from what I have been told, from what I have seen, all that sort of stuff, it is like the Father movies. I have got that picture in my head, I hope it is like that. I'm looking forward to going."

In the need for a connection with the homeland, popular culture can have an impact in the creation of an imaginary where even bad behavior can exert attraction when it is romanticized by the interference of nostalgia. In this way, the memories about the homeland, handed down from the older generation, mix together with the fantasy based on the images from motion pictures, creating a fantasy upon fantasy. The following quotation from the conversation with a second generation Sicilian can be explanatory on the matter:

> "These boys watch The Godfather and The Sopranos and they act as those in the movies because they think Mafiosi were good and bad, as they acted badly against bad people. So, when these guys are one by one, you don't see this behavior but

when they are in groups, the way they move, the way they speak is exactly as in the movies."

These words are relevant as they refer to the creation of an imagined community (Anderson 1983) based on the values shared by ethnic friends whose collective imaginary of Italia-ness is also founded on fantasy upon fantasy. The way of acting reported by the informant can be considered an appropriate manifestation of masculinity according to the youth ethnic culture narrative created by movies. The attraction for deviant behavior, represented by Mafia members can be seen as an ethnic imagined claim for power in opposition to the dominant power, as well as a demand for sticking out in a multicultural environment. In this claim for social mobilization and recognition, these established social patterns, or institutions are "set of relationships" committed to specific purposes, the "constructs" of groups "trying to solve problems, defend or enhance their positions… establish meaning, achieve understanding, or otherwise negotiate the world in which they live" (Tricarico 2017, citing Cornell and Hartmann 2007, p. 149).

In this way, a social ethnic boundary (Barth 2010) is established, that requires a commitment between the members of the group that allows to assert and display their ethnicity both publicly and privately. The imagined space set up through a collective imagined boundary can be occupied by those who share a connection to an ideal *nostos*, that needs to be represented through symbols. The honor and pride of belonging that generates an ethnic feeling can be represented through tattoos that constitute an element of inclusiveness and exclusiveness at the same time. The use of tattoos as a way of connection to the ancestral land, used by younger generations, is an unexplored topic in the literature about the Italian diaspora.

Getting a tattoo is part of a global trend but the symbolic meaning of the images chosen has to be taken into account. Drawing from Geertz (1973) and his stress on the powerful role of symbols, we can assert for the deep meaning of tattoos in culture and identity display and performance. Following Tricarico (2017), I can claim for the creation of a local young subculture expressed in tattoos as specific ethnic symbols and practices, as a "young subculture" is a group whose practices "revolve around the symbolic meaning of stylized presentation of self and around the symbolic meaning those performances have" (Schwartz 1987, cited by Tricarico 2017, p. 146). "Meanings originate in popular culture, specifically via the mass media, but are translated and customized to suit a youth agenda" (Tricarico 2017, p. 146).

This cohort of young people in Perth has developed their feeling of belonging from "the transnational imaginary of shared familial and community ideals about the ancestral homeland" (Sala and Baldassar 2017, p. 387), influenced by mainstream media. This sense of belonging can find its best expression in the commonality with peers. The relationship with fellows can build its strength on the shared background of the ethnic experience while at the same time, the strength of the relationship with ethnic friends can give the opportunity to affirm ethnic identity. As Badci and Çelebi (2018, p. 37) affirm, "social identity theory […] stated that individuals strive to become part of groups as a way of affirming their

own identities and maintaining a positive social identity would eventually lead to higher levels of personal self-esteem […]". That can be particularly relevant in multicultural societies where members of ethnic groups look at being different from other ethnic groups as a way to affirm one's self-image that finds relevance in the commonality with friends. From this perspective, it can become essential to get a stigma that works as a mark of the belonging to the tribe of ethnic friends. These are the words used by one of my third generation Sicilian informants to describe the decision made with his friends to get the same tattoo:

> "There was eight of us who got the same tattoo (a little chilly). We decided to bond our friendship together a little bit more, having the same tattoo together. We'll always have that friendship, it's on us now, you know what it is for. We were all Italians except one who is Turkish. We had it done all together at the same place and at the same time. It was just a spirit of the moment, fast. Someone said it as a joke that we should get a tattoo. Me and my cousin called the place and we did it together."

Drawing on Leszczensky and Pink's (2019) assertion that "the strength of ethnic identification affects not only how much individuals desire same-ethnic friends, but also how attractive they are as potential friends to others", I want to focus on the cohort's choice of a collective rite of passage as a way of reinforcing close ties with ethnic friends. In order to be considered part of an ethnic tribe, a rite of passage based on physical pain, thus on the demonstration of strength, is needed. The belonging to the same community is expressed through a long-life visible symbol that makes the tie irreversible because as my informant said "it is on your body". That means that the tie is inextricably part of the fellows who participated to a collective ritual that allowed the affiliation to an imagined clan. Moreover, focusing on the performative approach, tattoos can be considered a performance of ethnic friendship, a way of doing friendship based on symbols of Italia-ness. In fact, the image chosen in this case, for example, is a good luck charm very common in Southern Italy and the option picked is even more relevant considering my informant's words, "it was a spirit of the moment", a fast decision that brought the choice on a symbol of Italia-ness with apotropaic value. This decision shows the relevant role of *familial habitus* (defined by Sala and Baldassar, citing Reay, as "the deeply ingrained system of perspectives, experiences and predispositions family members share" (2017, p. 386) in creating ties with the homeland, displayed through a symbol that is relevant to ethnic friends because of the share of similar familial habits and practices. In this case, the micro and meso domains interact as the transnational imaginary passed down to kids in the family domain is shared with ethnic friends, thus can create communitarian boundaries in which a shared sense of belonging is expressed.

As Sala and Baldassar point out, the notion of a transnational imaginary is relevant to the second generation, "as their transnational emotional connections are facilitated through their parents' attachments, particularly for those (like the second generation born in Australia) who have never been to their ancestral homeland" (2017, p. 387). This is also confirmed by one of my third generation interviewees who states:

> "My connection to Italy is through my parents. Moreover, we have family there, with the same last name, through the same heritage, through the same channels, but my connection is mostly through my parents because I have never been there. However, I see myself mostly as Italian, as we still hold the traditions, as I know quite a few Italians who are more Australian."

This declaration supports the centrality of family role in maintaining an emotional connection with the homeland but also the importance of expressing elements of Italia-ness in opposition to other ethnic members who seem to have lost the connection with the ancestral homeland. Moreover, this attitude has to be considered related to the Australian multicultural context and the way European ancestry is regarded in this environment. As one of my informants testifies:

> "I get it as a bonus to be Italian and having connections there that I know other people would love to have. Let's say people who have been Australians for 100 years would love to have a connection to another country. Almost everybody here has got a mixed identity, if you don't, it's like you are missing out something."

From this perspective, the reference to the ancestral past becomes valuable, attractive and calls for an emphasis. The recognition, starting from the 1980s, of the migrants' culture as an added value in the process of integration has highlighted the importance of maintaining culture. Therefore, for nowadays young Italian-Australian generations, to be a "*wog*" (word that was used with derogatory value to refer to migrants of Southern European origin) is a merit rather than a cause for shame. In this way, the perception of the personal connection with the homeland can be romanticized and even mystified in the emotional connection to the homeland that is shared with fellows, creating a love for nostalgia. Using a second generation Italian perspective:

> "This boys who have those tattoos and think they are Sicilian, have got no idea of what it means to be Sicilian. They don't have the connection me and my wife have, they don't know what those symbols mean. They are in love with nostalgia."

Together with a generational gap, what is understood in this extract is the need of the return visit as a direct experience of the source of culture so that the connection with the homeland is not mediated through somebody else's tie, but made personal through direct contact and knowledge. On the other side, these young ethnic group members express the need for self-identity recognition connected to ancestry, becoming necessary in a multicultural environment, even when the individual has not embarked in a physical trip to the homeland. The significance of the return visit in dealing with self-identity is highlighted by another informant who expresses himself like that on the matter:

> "My identity is still evolving, it's not something that is set. I got a very interesting perspective last year. Previously, growing up in Australia, I always saw the Italian part as being pretty important, but then the few times I went to Italy, that was put in contacts with how Italian I am and that is not so Italian."

This testimony highlights how the return can create a fluctuation in the perception of self-identity when dealing directly with the homeland. On the contrary, the auto-identification, even hyphened, can result to be perceived as more steady in the absence of direct experience with the homeland. This is the testimony of a third generation migrant, who has never visited Italy:

> "Even though I speak English as a first language and live in another country, I identify myself as Italian opposed to Australian. We always get everyone together, family, friends, everyone, it's always 50-60 people, 100 people, it has always been big. That's the way I feel the Italian sort of way is, getting everyone together, being in one area, one room, being together and have a good time."

This highlights how, in this case, the self-recognition is based on the context of Australian multiculturalism and that calls for a need for homogeneity and sameness with other fellows who share the same experience of transculturation that requires to look for identity definition. Following Ricatti (2018), the studies about new generation in Australia suggest a high level of transculturation so that young people appropriate different attitudes towards family in order to develop their own "moral community" as they have to manage "not only the expectations of their ethnic group, but also those of the broader society". "Many embraced and embodied certain values, but rejected others that they felt were no longer relevant" (Ricatti 2018, p. 87).

In this need for negotiation in a very complex and multiple context, a connection to the past can be maintained by choosing signifiers that remain valuable in the present (Chirico 2019). One of the trends in the community of young Italian-Australians in Perth is the choice of an ethnic tattoo. This can be particularly evident in some areas of settlement traditionally Italian. These are the words of one of my interviewees:

> "In Balcatta it is full of those tattoos: Sicilian map, Trinacria (the symbol of Sicily), the word Sicily, names, Italian cards."

This trend becomes popular in areas where the presence of the ethnic community has been strong for decades and its heritage is displayed in individual-collective forms that are considered by young people to be adequate to the global trend followed by peers. Of course, the choice of ethnic symbols as signs of showing a sense of belonging makes these icons a trend in the trend, being exclusive of a specific group manifesting the affective and emotional dimension of migration (Sala and Baldassar 2017). Sala and Baldassar (2017, p. 397), following Hollan (2012) underline "the role of emotional attachment and identifications with other people and meanings that come to influence the desires of individual experiences". According to relational psychoanalysis, motivations emerge from a specific history of interpersonal engagements. In accordance to that, my data show how the young cohort is expressing their ties to the community and to the homeland in ways that can be misunderstood in the generational gap, as long as being a specific means of identification with fellows who share a similar family background.

Even though often first generation migrants complain about their children's disinterest towards their tradition, my data demonstrate that of course, in the effort to feel at ease in the host country young people have rejected some of the traditions brought from their parents, but have found their own ways to express that bond in an attempt of adaptation of the inherited meanings to new forms. These new ways sometimes are hard to understand for older people. Talking about second generation Italian-American youth in New York, Tricarico (2017), drawing from Lipsitz's assertion that they can be characterized as "bifocal" (1994), states that these young cohorts are appropriating popular culture from a position inside ethnic culture. In this scenario, being bifocal means that "they could be immersed in kinship traditions as well as peer-group rituals" (Tricarico 2017, p. 141).

In this need to negotiate between inherited meanings and new forms, between kinship traditions and affiliation with peers, in the need to use symbols that can be associated with masculinity and that can explicit the symbolic affiliation to a group, younger male in Perth are likely to choose an ethic tattoo as an element of collective youth identity display related to ancestry. One of the trends I have found is that tattoos are associated with religious icons. This becomes relevant if considered in accordance to generations and family relations. In fact, with disagreement of the older generation, Italian youth are not likely to participate to processions or celebrations of the patron Saints brought to Australia from the home-village or to go to mass, but are likely to have a cross or Virgin tattooed on their body. These can be seen as two different ways to express the same relation with faith used as a means of urban space appropriation through a public display of Catholic belief. In fact, bringing a Saint in procession means that a Crucifix or a Holy statue is carried around a demarcated area in the city, that needs to be authorized by public authorities. In this way, the feast makes explicit the strong relationship between feast and power (Teti 2002). What happens with somebody who has got a religious tattoo is that the procession happens to be every day and with no space limitations and no need for authorities permission, as this is not done in a showing off way, but in a more intimate way. So, basically, the expression of meaning is very similar, what is different is the way, that in the distance between generations, made deeper in the foreign land, can create discrepancies. Besides, in a mobile world, the conquerable space expands and ideally it can be the whole space the subject, physically and imaginatively, explores. The strong symbolism at the basis of the use of tattoos implies that it represents the return/non return of younger generations who have distanced themselves from the home-village, where most of them have never been, while looking for a connection between the host and homeland, where the two mix up and overlap. Therefore, physical and imagined spaces mingle also through fantasy upon fantasy that requires embodied symbols that can work as a counterpart in the interconnection between distant places.

Moreover, as Iuliano demonstrated (2010), the celebration of the annual feast, was an occasion of socialization with family and friends, of a special day during which they behaved differently than in everyday life. As demonstrated before, tattoos become a means of socialization, reinforcing ties between the members of a community. The relevant point is that through the practice of tattooing, there is a personal choice at the basis of deciding to become part of the

clan, as well as there needs to be a commitment between the members in order to be allowed into the community. Moreover, in this way, the special day of celebration of the Saint becomes part of everyday life, as symbolically the procession takes place every day through the individual's performance of the tattoo that can be displayed publicly or be kept into the intimate domain as a personal celebration of the inherited religious faith. Therefore, tattoos with religious icons reunite the public and private religious practices brought with them by emigrants: tattoos can be seen as modern expression of devotion that combine the public procession with the domestic shrine many migrants have in their houses. In the mediation put in act by young generations, contemporary social inclinations have to be taken into consideration. In fact, "in the modern disposable approach to many aspects of life, neither the house is conceived as a permanent place where to live, in opposition to the older generation for whom the purchase of a home, generally meant that it would have been a life-long place of stay. From this perspective, the body is the only physical place that can shelter symbols that are considered representative of the individual's identity, thus expected to be of key importance for the subject's whole life" (Princiotto 2019, p. 261).

In looking at the house as a transient place, in accordance with a change in taste, I have noticed a relation between the decreasing of numbers of photos exhibited in the homes, with the increasing number of tattoos dedicated to family members, ancestry and lineage. The importance of photos for emigrants has been stressed in the literature, and it gets to the point that the second generation in particular, has demonstrated an interest in creating family trees, when possible completed with pictures of kin members. This practice can be regarded as a modern form of worship of the dead. Furthermore, tattoos can be considered replacements of photos and family trees in representing a modern cult of *Manes.* This has been confirmed by a third generation interviewee, while describing his tattoo:

> "The wings set in the shield, that is my family crest, mean that our family has always been carried and brought forward. The knight's helmet is something that I added to it myself and that in my mind means that there is always someone protecting in that family, so you always have one knight looking after that family. To me it's a person and then that person may become a spiritual thing later."

Despite the rupture created by separation, or even because of separation, it becomes necessary to put the family under the ancestors' protection. While emigration is a chance for the emigrant and his immediate family to be brought forward, the fault at the basis of parting can last as a burden for generations, so in the need for the sin to be expiated, a reconciliation with lineage is necessary. In this requirement, a rite of passage based on physical pain can be considered appropriate in order to look for ancestors' protection. In this way, the family is made sacred through a ritual that connects to ancestors, a ritual that is needed because the conflict happens to be inside the family, so that it could cause the ancestors' fury. Through the ritual the contrast is mitigated in the symbolic offering and demonstration of bravery. Showing loyalty to the clan through a

symbol of affiliation is a way of redemption, which means that the subject and his family are meritorious of ancestors' mystical protection.

The centrality of family for Italian migrants has been largely discussed and has also been displayed in monuments as Iuliano (2010) highlights talking about a sculpture set in Perth's foreshore. As she points out, the monument underlines the "importance of the *ideal* of family unity" for Italian migrants, most likely made more acute by the separation and hardship faced by families in dealing with the migration process. As stated by Sala (2017) in citing Phinney and Ong (2007), "the family environment provides the foundation for the development of knowledge and understanding of one's ethnic background". Moreover, it is where, through familial habitus, also the ideal of family unity is passed down to younger generations. A new form of expressing the importance of relationships and family ties is through tattoos. This is the description of his family tattoo provided by one of my informants:

> "My tattoo is basically a representation of me and my immediate family. There is a slogan that we used to use when I was doing my military training, that is something we were built with (honor), so that's me, that is my meaning. The two roses that are highlighted in the red symbolize my mother and my sister. I didn't need a picture of them, or their names, or their dates of birth, I just needed something that is to me what represents them and a rose when it's matured is something beautiful, so that's why they are there. The veins that connect the roses, that to me is to symbolize our life, our life has never been straight line path, it has been a windy road with lots of bumps. With those sharp thorns you are going to experience a little bit of pain but at the end of the day something beautiful comes out of it and you get two roses."

The further symbols my interviewee illustrates are embedded in his family crest. In this way, the relevance of both nuclear and extended family is outlined as the unity of the whole clan can be represented through an emblematic image, that can symbolically reunite the extended and nuclear family, shortening distances as the kinship is gathered in the same place: the body. Therefore, in this tattoo, family is performed as united, as the immediate family is put in direct contact with ancestors, all of them represented as wholeness in the family crest. It is a symbolic way to overcome the fracture created by emigration and ideally cover the distance that separates from ancestors and extended family members living abroad. This ideal reunification can be made more tangible in the somatic depiction through the artistic technique of tattooing that makes visible what is invisible, as blood lines are, so that this unity can be experienced through the sense of sight, sensory experience that the visual image makes possible. Moreover, it can be considered an imagined physical manifestation of the kinship members, as the token is embedded in a clan member's body, inextricably linked to his corporal presence that ideally nullifies blood relatives' absence. The relationship with them is imagined as even stricter as their essence is embodied through the permanent image.

In the graphic depiction described by my informant, a special spot is devoted to the female members of the nuclear family. As a common trend with other guys, women are often represented as roses. This common scenario calls for the

association of female family members with Virgin Mary, as a result also of "their central position in the family domain and their association with the sacred realm" (Baldassar 1999, p. 13). However, the symbolism associated with roses can be very different, as it varies from purity to passionate love, from virginity to sensuality, but overall it is associated with beauty. This image suits the Bottomley Mediterranean honor and shame maxim (Anderson 1983), according to which, as used in Baldassar's reference (1999, p. 11), women are accorded spiritual and emotional superiority in their association with the Virgin Mary. At the same time, "they are believed to be temptresses with voracious sexual appetites". Therefore, through an icon, the family confirms to be "the sphere of validation of women" (Baldassar 1999, p. 13). In giving preeminence to the female members of the family, they are validated through the values of the patriarchal system. In the rose symbol, two antithetical aspects of femininity are represented: purity and sexuality. In this way, according to patriarchal values, potential female corruption is exorcised as her contingent diabolic nature is made innocuous through the ritual that is undertaken by a family member, so the tempting sexual element is annihilated. At the same time, through the symbol, the male member takes the responsibility for the female protection and honor. Thereby, tattoos can also be considered an exhibition of habitus as they express a reformulation of believes and practices that are handed down through family and generations.

In the Italian diaspora socio-cultural dimension, the way of looking at the practice of tattooing is strongly related to gender. In fact, if it is considered an appropriate means of showing masculinity, where the social consensus refers to the reinforcement of evidence of male sexual proficiency, a more general dissent is shown when the decorating technique is employed on female bodies. Actually, out of my informants, only three females have got tattoos. One got it in a hidden place, on the sly of the family, another one after she got married dedicating it to her first son, the last one got it as a reminder of a difficult time that she overcame. What my data show is a connection to ancestral necessity of custody of the woman body, with relation to Christian and patriarchal values. As related by Mendoza citing Sánchez (2019, p. 2), Catholic religion, in different eras, prohibited tattoos, starting from Costantine, as "God created mankind in His image and likeness and it was sinful to alter the human body". According to patriarchal values, "the ideal order of the virginal and faithful woman" (Baldassar 1999) has to be protected. As a result, the female body has to be kept pure and a mark on it would make it impure. Moreover, tattoos can be perceived as signs of sinfulness as in some cultures they are performed as a social practice that shows the achievement of sexual maturity. This could also imply the freedom of promiscuous sexual relations. Therefore, the restrictions of the Italian moral code make the tattooing practice inadequate for women, especially if they are single, for the implied relation with sexual activity. In this scenario, the male is the protector of family woman's honor and respectability. However, also mothers contribute in fulfilling what Pallotta-Chiarolli defines "the myth of good Italian girl". "Italian mothers rise their daughters in accordance with patriarchal laws and values, in order to fit that myth" (Baldassar 1999, p. 14). Therefore, both males and females from older generations are generally against the practice of tattooing for girls as the corruption

of the body symbolically involves a corruption of the soul. This attitude entails a connection with the Christian heritage, according to whose symbols, there is only the Virgin or the whore, there is no intermediate figure. The family has to protect the chastity of women, thus these marks symbolically would contaminate the girl's body and her reputation.

In accordance with the relevance of marriage for Italian culture, following the patriarchal system, the female's body has to be kept immaculate for the husband, as it will be his possession after marriage. He will be, then, the one who can decide what the wife can change in her appearance, that's why it's more likely that a woman is allowed to get a tattoo after marriage than before, especially if its meaning is linked with her change of status: becoming a wife and a mother. In this case, the icon is a manifestation of the achievement of *sistemazione* (to set one up, establishing his/her household), (Baldassar 2001) and it can be accepted as culturally adequate. Moreover, being married prevents the woman to be involved in promiscuous relationships, so that to put her reputation at risk. Even if the mark can be associated with being sexually mature, that is considerate culturally adequate, as sex inside marriage is to fulfill her Christian duty to become a mother. In this case, the mark can even be seen as appropriate, as in her status of mother, the woman proves the man to be "healthy" as being able to procreate, thus she becomes the guarantee of family stability and of the prosecution of the family line.

The challenge to the honor/shame model, put in act by second generation women, as discussed by Baldassar (1999), a challenge mainly against the "gender role inequity", is carried on by younger generation females. As some of them are breaking free from the control of the family domain at an earlier stage in life, as they are able to be financially independent and to establish their own accommodation even though they are not married, some of them might explicit the achievement of personal success and independence in tattoos. In fact, the images used by women are not related to cultural heritage or symbols connected with Italia-ness, they can be decorative images, words used as a personal positive reminder or symbols of strength. In challenging the patriarchal system, put in practice with the decision to leave the paternal household before the social norm would consent, the girl might look for a mark as evidence of the personal fulfillment. The inner strength necessary to break the social communitarian code calls for a reminder. That means being included in the community is not that relevant anymore, while freedom becomes the most important pursuit to be followed. The icon works as a self-reminder of the possession of the force required to break free from judgment and restrictions, as strength is needed in order to release oneself from familial expectations and reputation inside the community. Drawing from what Pallotta-Chiarolli and Skrbis (1994) define "The voices of resistance", meaning resistance to parental and communal authority in second generation, these artistic practices in females can be considered exhibition of resistance. These young women, following previous generation challenges, can manifest their resistance in elements that are visible, even though not always shown.

The same inclination to have tattoos in parts of the body where they can be hidden was shown by some male informants. In this dialectic between concealing and exposing private life, visual communication can be understood as a way to

access the informal youth network, where symbols of association can become common and whose meaning is understandable to ethnic friends. For example the association of the female members of family with the image of roses was confirmed by another informant that described his tattoo in this way:

> "I have got a clock with the time my daughter was born and I have got four roses. I have got roses because I didn't want to get names as there are four girls in my life: my two sisters, , my mum and my wife. Instead of names I got those four roses that I liked the design. The saying: "Ogni rosa ha le spine", I got it because every rose has a thorn, so every scenario in life, there is something, every good thing comes with a bad thing and every bad thing comes with a good thing. It's a saying that I like and I ended up with translating it into Italian. That was my first tattoo and I felt like I didn't want it to be in English, because a lot of people could read it, so putting it in Italian was a way that not a lot of people could read it. Many people would ask the question but it is in an area where I think it's kind of hidden when I wear a T-shirt. None of my tattoos are visible when I wear a T-shirt. I'm not that generation that I get a tattoo purely to show off or show everybody. I don't want tattoos on my body where people can see them and I don't want to get stupid tattoos that mean nothing to me."

This testimony exemplifies the double intrinsic capability of tattoos as bearing intimate meanings that can be shared in public when there is the individual will to do so. Moreover, they have a direct impact on the inclusion in the clan as their association with the hidden meaning is immediately clear to those who are part of the community. The translation of the saying into Italian underlines the need for a "secret code" that is shared with ethnic friends, a code that needs to be decrypted from those who are not part of the tribe or of the larger Italian community, but that is likely to draw attention precisely because it is different. At the same time, the translation into another language highlights the point of the correctness of the words when using a foreign language in a permanent mark. In this case, the rendition is correct but it makes clear, to a mother tongue speaker for example, that it is a literal translation from English, as the correct way of saying it in Italian is: "Non c'è rosa senza spine". In the desire to show a connection to the homeland, the hybridity of identity becomes evident. At the same time, these tattoos become an artefact of specific local youth culture, whose meanings are influenced by popular culture and are clearly recognized by the group. Some signs are also distinguishable from outside the group, when the observer has got a knowledge of some elements of the ethnic culture. This is the testimony of a second generation Sicilian, who can be regarded as an insider/outsider of the ethnic tribe, as he does not have tattoos so he is not part of the imagined community but has got a direct relationship with some of the members due to age and family:

> "They have tattoos with <<Siciliano, famiglia>>, but they can't speak Italian. Famiglia is a very interesting tattoo. If you go around Perth you will see wogs with tattoo that says familia and it's written in Spanish because they are influenced by the American TV and Mexican immigrants who write familia and that's how little they understand Italian as they don't get the right Italian spelling of what they meant."

This can be considered a manifestation of what Tricarico (2017, p. 138) refers to as "youth agency", indicating "meaning making, narratives, cultural productions, and social engagements" of young people in relation to popular culture, the specific ethnic context taken into account. This testimony marks a dividing line between those who need to "embody" a "thicker ethnic culture" (Tricarico 2017) and those who stand apart from the tribe of ethnic friends, while sharing some cultural features. In this case, the difference can be marked by the individual's direct interest and connection to the homeland versus connection through family members. That means that the link of the insiders/outsiders of the ethnic tribe is established through periodic visits, interest in Italian politics, listening to recent music, ability to communicate in the Italian language. In this respect, for example, what can become relevant for them might be the reference to experienced cultural practices as leisure activities can be, as signifiers of "ethnic family rituals" (Tricarico 2017) as the following extract exemplifies:

> "If I was to get a tattoo, it would be a playing card, probably one of those aces, some have interesting designs. I wonder if Italians have something similar. I think it is because one of the ways of connection as children was playing Italian cards. This is something unique as we played with other family members or other Italian kids as maybe many Australians don't even know these cards or games even exist. If I was to look for a tattoo that expresses my identity, that would be what fits the box."

This testimony demonstrates, as stated by Sala and Baldassar (2017), a clear link between habitus and family environment, where the choice of symbols representing connection to the homeland is strictly tied to the habits developed inside the household and with close friends. Drawing from Reay (1998), Sala and Baldassar (2017, p. 397) define familial habitus as a "concept that invokes an understanding of identity premised on familial legacy and early childhood socialization". Sala and Baldassar (2017, pp. 397–398) continue affirming that, "for Bourdieu (1984), habitus refers to cultural understandings as unconscious, internalized dispositions that are deeply engrained within ourselves and socially produced, for example, habits, behavior, beliefs, values, movement, language, thoughts, and feelings". In this way, these interiorized practices can be externalized through the use of symbols that become representative of what the individual perceives as performative of his identity.

Conclusions

This paper has been an exploration of new forms of connection to the ancestral homeland used by young cohorts in Perth. In doing so, the role of familial imaginary created in the distance from the homeland has been taken into consideration. Together with familial habitus, a sense of belonging shared with ethnic friends calls for the need of a rite of passage in order to be affiliated to the tribe of ethnic friends. In the necessity to show elements of masculinity, the practice of getting a tattoo can be considered an appropriate way to affiliate to the ethnic group, so as to assert the sense of belonging to the ancestral homeland. In this way, using a

practice that is globally shared by peers, in order to embody symbols of ethnicity, a bridge between practices, habits and beliefs brought to Australia by migrants and new forms of adaptation is built. I maintain that analyzing the ritual of getting a tattoo, as well as the symbolic meaning of the icons chosen, can lead to a better understanding of the semantics at the basis of the younger generation interpretations of self-identification and their world view.

Furthermore, using a feminist perspective, the role of gender in dealing with ethnicity has been taken into account. The association of tattooing with eroticism and sexual maturity in many cultures, makes this practice unsuitable for women according to the patriarchal model of surveillance. In the wide range of symbolic associations opened up by a multilayered protean means of signification as tattooing is, a search for freedom from familial and communal surveillance can mostly be seen in the female practice. On the contrary, in relation to the widespread male trend, the semantics of shared symbols can be understood as a way to become more rooted in the group of ethnic friends that, through the connection between fellows, creates a thicker shared ethnic identity. The individual perception of the belonging to the ethnic tribe is seen at the basis and one of the reasons for strong friendship ties that need to be performed in rituals of doing friendship. These friendship ties are made stronger as the ethnic tribe refers to an imagined shared ancestral past that finds its commonality in the members' connection with the ideal *nostos*. A shared desire of identification with lineage is expressed through the common trend of tattooing family crests or features related to kinship, that can be seen as *Totems*. In doing so, through the icon on the skin, a symbolic embodiment of the family protective entity is pursued. The shared symbolic reference to elements of heritage, that is relevant to males for their function of guarantors of the continuation of the family line, becomes a means of identification for the group members that is made more evident through the indelible aspect of the image.

The importance of tattoos as means of communication can become a privileged simulacrum to express the innermost feelings of a group that, in the inconsistencies of many aspects of the modern era that bring many young people to forms of rebellion that often are represented in tattoos, needs to express their search for identity. That is made elusive because of the lack of a rooted family background in their country of birth, so that it needs to be performed in impactful ways. This visual practice can be seen as a response with permanent symbols to the recent familial rootedness in the host country, in order to overcome the sense of impermanence as a consequence of the lineage eradication from the homeland. In claiming for the use of ancestral rituals, revived in order to be applied to new experiences, a bridge with the ancestral past is built so that new certainties, as the permanence of the ties inside the tribe is, can be created. The permanency of the sign that remains on the skin even after death can be considered an attempt to contrast the transiency of life, when even the survival of the individual through lineage is jeopardized because of the caesura in the family line generated by separation.

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"As Long as the Boat Goes":
Singing by Metaphor in the Years of Lead

By Pier Paolo Bellini[*]

"There is everything in the Sixties ... it is a phase of magmatic confrontation" (Colombo 1998, p. 248). Those that in Italy will be called "years of lead", marked by the well known dramatic social and cultural changes, claim the tension of real "worlds" and "point of view of worlds" alternative, a new and an old no longer reconcilable, but forced to cohabitate. The Italian song of those years is a photograph of this situation: in it, old aspirations, imaginary, values face each other with new ones, without getting to definitively eliminate the antagonists. If it is true that the text of the most famous "ditty" of the Italian singer Orietta Berti is able to make people talk about its hidden meaning even today, it must be admitted that the musical creation of those years is a forge of "polysemic" production. "Where there is metaphor, there is conflict" (Goodman 1968, p. 67). Even in its narrative function, the metaphor presents conflict: it can have, in fact, a "selective" function or, on the contrary, an "explanatory" function, aimed at favoring the understanding of obscure things, those not easily communicable through the usual narrative practices.

Keywords: *metaphor, Masscult, sense and meaning, multichannel, polysemy*

The "Stigmatized" Creativity

The sociology of cultural processes must recover many years of inattention to a certain type of "expressiveness", considered (due to the heavy inheritance of the humanistic tradition) production of "low interest" at a qualitative level: of course, the differences are relevant and stating that "everything is the same" is not a sign of scientific expertise. De facto, however, every discipline must deal with its object of study: artistic value can be "evaluated" by philosophy, aesthetics, history or art. This does not change the fact that, whatever level a product is able to reach, it represents a "cultural object", that is a bearer of meaning. The production of the so-called "cultural industry" (in our case, that one linked to popular music) presents itself today as a very rich repository of information on the aesthetic and values "environment/fields" of our cultural history. This is true despite the "stigma" (more or less justified) that it carries with itself since its birth, in the first half of the 20th century.

Dwight MacDonald certainly gave the most stigmatizing definition of American cultural industrial production: it is labeled as Masscult, making it clear that it is not about culture, but rather a "parody" of the High Culture. The characteristic of this parody is that of not offering its customers "neither an emotional catharsis nor an aesthetic experience, because these things require effort. The production chain grinds a uniform product whose humble purpose is not even entertainment, because

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this also presupposes life, and therefore effort, but simply distraction. It can be stimulating or narcotic, but it must be easy to assimilate. It asks his audience nothing, because he is 'completely subject to the viewer'. And it gives nothing" (MacDonald 1960, p. 21).

It should be actually noticed, that already thirteen years before, Theodor Adorno (with much more refined aesthetic and philosophical instruments) had been focused precisely on the "diversionary" function of American cultural production, according to a radically negative perspective of the experience of "having fun". "To have fun means to agree. Having fun means every time: not having to think about it, forgetting suffering even where it is exposed and displayed. At the base of fun there is a feeling of powerlessness. It is indeed an escape" (Horkheimer and Adorno 2010, p. 154).

The German philosopher and sociologist (great connoisseur of musical language) had gone on to investigate the mechanisms of this "depressive" process of expressivity, highlighting in particular that consumer music would not have the spread and success it gets without what in America it is called plugging. The songs chosen to become successful pieces are continuously imposed, "hammered into the heads of the listeners until they have to recognize them and then love them" (Adorno 1962, p. 42).

The feeling, therefore, that the musical product is in some way "predigested" generates mass listening habits that "do not imply any intellectual commitment. Furthermore, the familiarity of melodies tends to reassure users, reducing the perception of conflicts and critical capacity" (Savonardo 2010, p. 54).

But, something, at the same times in the 1960s, begins to change from the point of view of the analytical horizon of the social sciences: Umberto Eco is certainly one of the first intellectuals that offers an alternative frame to the dominant one at that time. The well-known Italian semiologist and writer confirms the "diversionary" purpose of industrial cultural production: "One of the characteristics of a consumer product is that it amuses not revealing something new, but reaffirming what we already know, which we anxiously awaited to hear repeated and which just amuses us" (Eco 1965, p. 280). This "fun", however, can provide very useful information to the scholar of culture, who must, in order to respect his scientific mandate, have to do with this type of production: "One of the objections to such research is to have put in place an exaggerated cultural apparatus to speak of things of least importance, like a Superman's cartoon or a Rita Pavone's ditty. Now, the sum of these minimal messages that accompany our daily life constitutes the most visible cultural phenomenon of the civilization in which we are called to work" (Eco 1965, p. 26).

This "possibilist" attitude is based on the observation that, beyond the discordant evaluative orientations of scholars in industrial cultural production, the separation between high culture and low culture tends to be reduced. The spread of culture "no longer occurs according to a pyramid structure for which a narrow vertex elaborates tastes and values that, once consumed and become obsolete, are made their own from the base (the so-called trickle-down model), but rather it reproduces the model of a mosaic culture" (Abruzzese and Borelli 2000, p. 137). The consequence of this "directional" change is the diffusion of a new type of

culture, a new type of influence and new strategies and persuasion dynamics. For the baby boomer generation the media were the main producers of "subtle culture", so-called "because breathed everywhere, discussed among equals, caught between the folds of high culture still absorbed and looked at with respect. For the first time there was a 'youthful world' abstracted from the adult world [...]. The 'youthful world' thus became what it is today, that is, a 'galaxy' in which even contradictory trends coexist and clash" (Colombo 1998, p. 242).

This "subtle culture", generally "light" in its contents, nevertheless had a very significant impact on the way of "feeling the reality" of an entire generation and, inevitably, of the following ones: "Perhaps the student movement cannot be understood without taking into account the substantially romantic subtle culture (in the broad sense) that had permeated that generation. Indeed, perhaps, the romantic aura of the first phase of the protest is explained precisely by that cultural tradition, naturally updated and embodied in the needs of that present time" (Colombo 1998, p. 270).

For this reason, mass culture has been interpreted as the "mythological device of the twentieth century", that is, "a system of meaning that, on the imaginary level, reflects, elaborates and communicates normative ideals and behavior patterns of everyday life. As all mythology even mass culture has its own heroes, rituals and divinities" (Abruzzese and Borelli 2000, p. 189).

And like all the good mythologies, even the one produced by mass culture has found itself having to deal with previous and subsequent mythologies. This struggle for the supremacy and the monopoly of representations is extraordinarily interesting for the scholar of cultural processes. When the "sacred" ganglia of a society are attacked, this latter battens down the hatches. This creates a war of representative powers, in which the "metaphorical" dimension becomes a fundamental weapon for the survival of the minority ideology.

The "Censored" Creativity

If the vast majority of industrial cultural production is therefore stigmatized because of its "lightness", it is true that in some cases, such lightness is produced with great formal expertise to "veil" uncomfortable depths. The ancient custom of "censorship" is extremely interesting for the sociologist. Through it, in fact, we have always tried to "preserve" (more or less legitimately and more or less effectively) the values of the entire social system. In Italy, this preservative action is legally formalized in the somewhat uncertain concept of "good costume": it is necessary (as Durkheim well understood) that the boundary between "sacred" and "profane" is marked with (variable) precision for a society to exist. For this reason, in the Italian Constitution we rely on this fundamental concept that is ever more mutable because, clearly, the identification of its content cannot take place without referring to the social context existing in a certain historical period and, immediately afterwards, to the principles and to the ethical-social values that belong to that society-community. Therefore, "good costume" can be filled with correct contents only in reference to the historical-social-moral contingency of a community.

The ancient custom of the censorship has therefore arrived (in a process of uninterrupted "updating") up to our days and, in the years that concern us here, has had a strong influence on musical creativity. In that period in Italy an institute was created that "was not called 'censorship commission', because the memory of the fascist one was too close, but 'preventive listening and control commission on the texts', which were to be considered suitable for the radio public" (Targa 2011, p. 8). The "lightness" of contents and forms, in fact, in this case was considered not as a limit but rather as a real quality, in the belief (Dario Fo points out) that "nothing is needed to sing. No need to be educated or graduated. You don't need to know how to read or know how to write. You don't even need a good voice. Perhaps this is why so many songs, those born under the table, on the street, in the fields, in factories and in other unfortunate places, have always been so afraid of power and its thugs. Poor, illegitimate ditties, with a common blood: red, lively and vigorous. Strong and inextricable like the bad grass, they always appear everywhere, in the deserts and in the cities, in the East and in the West" (Fo in Korpe 2004, p. ix).

It is within this conflictive situation that the communication strategy at the center of this study should be placed, that which is indicated with the expression "writing between the lines". One of the main functions of the "metaphorical" communication is that of "veiling" inconvenient or inadmissible contents due to the current "good costume". Already in the seventeenth century, the intellectuals who wanted to give a broader resonance to their ideas or aimed at cultural hegemony underwent "the path of publication protected by the necessary precautions and by adequate rhetorical screens. Thus, in the humanistic age, an art of dissimulation and of dissimulated writing on the subject of specific treatments was codified in specific rhetorical techniques" (Frajese 2014, p. 70).

Interesting, from this point of view, the "countermeasures" of the dominant culture of each era: in the sixteenth century, "the screens and ambiguities of writing were well known to judges who, for this reason, demanded texts that were always transparent and not leave room for doubt or effective defensive barriers. And in order for ambiguity not to be a convenient resource for writers, judges presumed a hostile sense behind the ambiguous expressions" (Frajese 2014, p. 83). It is humorous the recent version of this strategy, as a result of which, in 1968, the El Paso radio station in Texas censors all Bob Dylan's songs because they were "too difficult to understand": "The broadcaster is afraid that, in the verses, offensive or illegal messages are hiding. It is true that Dylan splutters a little too much and those who are not native speakers find it hard to understand it, but it is surprising that, having censored him, his covers, his songs performed by other artists, were broadcast in the American broadcaster's programming. Perhaps it was Dylan's somewhat hen and nasal voice that disturbed?" (Targa 2011, p. 144).

As you will have guessed, the key problem of what has been outlined so far is concentrated in the meaning and in the dynamics linked to the concept of "sense", inherent in any symbolic practice: it is therefore necessary to try to clarify its semantic profile.

Sense, Meaning, Polysemy

Is art communication? Is it capable of producing meanings? If it is, which ones and how?

The Italian sociologist Franco Crespi uses, to clarify these dynamics, the distinction between "sense" and "meaning", a distinction that can be useful to identify basic symbolic strategies for the objects we are analyzing. According to the author, the first dimension (sense) coincides with "the original pre-reflective environment" (needs, stimuli, emotions), within the conscious reflexivity of the subject is realized. It is what is given as a biological and relational structure, and being "given" does not allow the ultimate awareness of its origin. "It is existence itself that, giving itself, gives meaning: for the simple fact that something is given, it necessarily gives sense" (Crespi 2005, p. 25). Our reflexivity is inevitably brought to question the sense, or, if you want, directionality of existence, without nevertheless being able to comprehend it comprehensively on a cognitive level. Therefore, it can be deduced from these passages, a little provocatively, that "sense" can be considered a "non-cultural" element.

The culturally determined meaning, instead, "being always a reduction of the complexity of the original sense, fails to say completely the latter, but only to approximate or indirectly allude to it. The sense remains rigorously unattainable, not traceable within the meanings, even if it is always lived by us. For this reason, with respect to the sense there is always a dimension of unspoken, a difference irreducible to meanings" (Crespi 2005, p. 26). The peculiarity of the creative symbolic dynamics (as we will explain later) is precisely that of trying in every way to avoid the "predictability", the "uniqueness", the ease of "meaning", aspiring instead to something more vague, unattainable and therefore more challenging and fascinating: the "sense".

This perspective perfectly matters, on the one hand, the complex condition of musical communication and, on the other hand, the exponentially and dangerously "polysemic" situation that is created with the overlapping of multiple expressive codes. When one approaches, as in our case, the analysis of the text of a song, it is necessary not to be naive in front of the objective "complexity" of the operation (regardless of the qualitative level of the object analyzed). In fact, among the problems that content analysis must face up, "the most relevant ones concern the difficulties deriving from the opposition between 'manifest' content and 'latent' content, from the de-contextualization made by analytical procedures that isolate simple units of content in the messages, from the failed or intuitive reference to the specificity of the codes and their overlap and intertwine in any message that is not a written text" (Losito 1993, p. 30).

A song represents a "superposition" of stimuli and "communicative" codes (verbal, non-verbal, visual, acoustic, corporeal...) whose final meaning does not coincide with their sum but rather with their complex interaction. Even the verbal language used in it "does everything", as we will see, to get rid of the referential cage in which it is forced in everyday or scientific use. The music then, means "in another way", as Alfred Schutz had already guessed in the sociological field: if it can be said that a piece of music represents "a context with meaning", it will be

necessary to clarify that, applied to music "the terms 'meaning' and 'context', 'understanding' and 'interpretation' are used in a specific way, different from other systems of meaning such as languages" (Schutz 1976, p. 29).

If logic, in fact, has always been mainly a science of concepts, when you face the question of musical signification, you are forced to admit that "music is an example of a context endowed with meaning without reference to a conceptual scheme and, strictly speaking, also without immediate reference to the objects of the world in which we live, to their properties and their functions. Music has no representative function" (Schutz 1976, p. 30).

Another extremely challenging aspect, when we want to analyze the communicative dynamics of music, is the decisive function carried out by the "affective" element. The American philosopher and composer Leonard B. Meyer (reference point for later musicology and sociology) considers that the affective and intellectual approaches to musical enjoyment are not alternative. They rather "are competitors not in the sense that one excludes the other, but in the sense that both contribute to defining the profile of the aesthetic experience of music" (Meyer 1956, p. 12). The communication mode proper to music does not, therefore, consist in its denotative or referential (almost absent) potential, but rather in its evocative power of richly polysemic connotations. "The fact that music does not specify or define in particular the connotations it evokes, it has often been called into question as the main obstacle encountered in the attempt to formulate a theory of the connotative meanings of music" (Meyer 1956, p. 336).

However, we could say that, if polysemy is an essential characteristic of musical language, it presents itself as the objective of any other code aimed at expressiveness or creativity: even in the specific of verbal communication (the most harnessed in referentiality). "The poetic message uses the terms on purpose so that their referential function is altered; to do this it puts the terms into syntactical relationships that contravene the usual rules of the code; it eliminates the redundancies so that the position and the referential function of a term can be interpreted in several ways; it eliminates the possibility of unambiguous decoding; it gives the decoder the feeling that the current code is violated in such a way that it no longer serves to decode the message [...]. The work of art is proposed as a message whose decoding involves an adventure, precisely because it strikes us through a way of organizing the signs that the usual code did not include" (Eco 1965, pp. 94 and 100).

Let's try to put these points of method in the specific of our analysis carried out on the songs (on their "sense"), adding to what has been observed other problems not sufficiently highlighted in the authors encountered.

Let's start, as stated, from the fact that in the song there is a complex encounter/ clash between verbal code (at constant risk of reference) and non-verbal codes (inevitably further from that risk). From the first experience in the field, the purely empirical one, it is to wonder if the classical available analytical categories of sign (index, icon, symbol, according to the traditional classification of Charles Sanders Peirce) are effective tools in situations of such strong interaction between symbolic different codes: it is to hypothesize, in fact, that the signs belonging to a given code undergo a sort of mutation at the point of encounter with another code.

Another consideration that came up from the analytical work is that a cultural product like a song, with its many functional and interpretative sides, offers a more or less accentuated measure of a hierarchy of "possible and differentiated levels of interpretation", all plausible even autonomously. That is, it is possible enjoy the simple aesthetic, emotional, ideological, verbal, stimulating effect of a song without considering the interaction that occurs between these different elements. At the same time, however, it is necessary to recognize that the most interesting levels of information are often the least immediate. In other words, it is clear that, if you do not "put your mind to it", it becomes very difficult to understand "a part" of meaning (sometimes the most decisive for the identity of the song itself). It often happens, then, to be surprised discovering inedited "senses" of known passages, consumed and re-consumed without nicking that depth that was just below the surface. Well-known songs destined for a long time to remain in their state of message in a bottle. The phenomenon already mentioned of plugging, in other words, can represent a very resistant obstacle to the reconstruction of the less superficial sense of a piece. From this point of view it is evident that, in the great majority of cases, the "memorized" lyrics are often those "less understood".

Moreover, it is a common experience that the text of a piece (i.e., the most referential aspect among the many present) hardly, especially among young people, comes to be perceived as "essential" in order to appreciate a song. On the other hand, as we will see, the authors themselves frequently, use the words "regardless" of their meaning, that is, only as "verbal sounds" on musical sounds.

Having thus clarified that the sense of a song does not coincide with (and cannot be reduced to) the verbal logic, it becomes easier to understand the provocative statement of Igor Stravinsky for whom "music means nothing". This paradoxical expression cannot be read as an attribution of a non-sense intrinsic to the code of sounds, but rather as a multiplication of opportunities for a "different" sense from a simple "meaning".

What are these meaningful strategies that we could identify?

First of all, as mentioned above, the meaning can derive from only one of the used codes, but it can be nevertheless emergent outcome from a multimedia and multi-sensory experience. Here we could introduce, metaphorically, some linguistic approximations to be able to describe the complexity of the interactions in place. It is possible, for example, to talk about a "sense of sensations", or even about a "centrality of the belly" in the interpretative act (perhaps this is the sense of the colorful expression used by Franco Ferrarotti in 1985: homo sentiens). We intend to say that perhaps the frequent disqualification of the "feeling" as a semantic instrument must be reconsidered, since it represents a way of "feeling" things rich in information to be decoded. This centrality of sensation had already been underlined by Rudolf Arnheim, German art historian and psychologist, according to whom, with effective paradox, "who paints, who writes, who composes or dances, thinks through his own senses" (Arhneim 1974, p. ix).

Among the different levels of meaning, we must consider the one linked to the "functions" of the musical piece: each of us "uses" music for different purposes, aims/goals, in turn, more or less compatible. These purposes of the recipient can be configured in a coherent way with the contents and styles of the song but,

sometimes (often), even regardless of the contents wanted by the author. We must not forget that the research on the reception has the purpose of "finding how people give meaning to a particular media product" (Sorice 2007, p. 86), not defining what is the most plausible sense of the product itself. From this point of view, symbolic dynamics emerge that are non-existent in other expressive codes, but strongly incident on the meaning of a musical piece. Let us only think about the rhythm (so intrusive, cheeky, repetitive in light music) and how this extraordinarily communicative dimension is linked to pre-reflexive and reactive dynamics.

Different as a process, but similar in terms of the impossibility of categorical definition, is the "empathic" dimension of the musical experience. Each of us lives, even at a communicative level, a particular relationship with other people, understanding immediately some of them, refusing the comparison with others. The same (and certainly even in a more stressed way) happens with the songs, their lyrics, their music and, above all, their "interpreters". If I listen to a song that I do not know of Mina, I will be led to reconstruct its meaning based on the type of empathic relationship I established by listening to her interpretations for years. It is appropriate here to recall the enormous expressive value of the human voice, regardless of its artistic use. The word emission is a fast but complex result of a skilful management of many parameters, such as the paralinguistics, the vocal segregated, the timbre (unique and unrepeatable for anyone), the volume of the sound, the speed of speech, etc. To understand the decisive value of these aspects it is sufficient to bring to mind the sometimes abysmal difference of the same song played by different artists: in certain cases, one has the perception of being in front of different objects, with consequent different meanings.

Another interesting factor in order to identify the potential of a song's sense is the phenomenon of pieces that "rise again" after years of forgetfulness, as if they had preserved a life on their own under the ashes of their abandonment, to reaffirm themselves decades later (clearly in a setting of meaning inevitably changed). A similar phenomenon is the very widespread one of the covers, more or less known pieces re-entered the market with new clothes (from the voice, to the arrangement, to the organic…) often assuming real "new identities": sometimes these processes operate on one of the codes used to create a discrepancy between music (genre and style) and text. In these cases a new object is generated that takes on parodistic or metaphorical features. In any case, new objects.

To sum up, the sense of a song is the result of a complex process, with many signs and codes available and with many subjects in action. For this reason, we could define the meaning of a musical piece as an "emerging phenomenon", i.e., as the outcome of the interaction of different subjects (author, performer, singer, listener) who cooperate and negotiate among themselves, without anyone being able to claim its absolute ownership in the end. Indeed the song (like any "text") can be defined as "a strange spinning top that exists when it is in motion. To give birth to it, it is necessary a concrete act that is called reading, and it lasts as long as reading can last" (Sartre 1947, p. 33). The song therefore presents itself as a treacherous field for scientific research being inextricably linked to the "connotative" activity of the recipient.

The Metaphor and its Sound

When you operate in a creative communication framework, you always find yourself having to deal with "noise". We could say that every art form is the result of a "noise controlled". Basically this is what distinguishes it from scientific discourse or everyday conversation, which perceive noise as a problem, essentially negative. Now, the operation of the imagination, as the writer Alberto Moravia called it, can be clear and rational, but it is always a bit ambiguous; instead, "the scientific one is not: if it says one thing, it must be that and nothing else. It is the type of language that assures the literary work the ambiguity of which art cannot do without" (Camon 1973, p. 21). It is certainly not a recent discovery: we can consider all the classical rhetoric (and not only the linguistic one) a sort of "encyclopedia of noise", with its figures, its rules, its limits.

The most promising noise in the arts is probably the "metaphor". One can try to clarify what a metaphor is using a splendid series of metaphors. It "is something like teaching new tricks to an old word ... it is a matter that takes place between a predicate with a past and an object that condescends by protesting ... where there is a metaphor, there is conflict" (Goodman 1968, it. transl. 1976, p. 67).

The metaphor's desired results can be of two types: the first is the "selective" one. The whole classical literary tradition is based on more or less "dedicated" codes to a more or less restricted reference audience. What is widely diffused becomes vulgar. Consequently, precious things cannot be accessible to everyone, as the troubadour Raimbaut explicitly states: "Because the most difficult lines make deaf the silly people". Other times, as we have seen, the metaphor was a necessary tool not just to defend elitist cultural values, but rather to protect one's own safety put at risk by the ideology conveyed. "There are such well-protected writings that they certainly keep the author safe from every inquisition but at the price of losing all incidence on the public and being reduced to a coded language addressed to very restricted circles of initiates" (Frajese 2014, p. 73).

However, this selective function of the metaphor coexists, with the exactly opposite function. Let us take as an example the "evangelical metaphors": the parables are justified with the consideration "Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand" or also "though hearing, they do not hear or understand". This somewhat extravagant connection makes us understand the second sought outcome of the metaphor. Not to exclude, but rather to give the possibility to understand things that otherwise would be completely incomprehensible. Lakoff and Johnson define metaphor as "a way of conceiving one thing in terms of another"; it should have "understanding" as its primary function. This process takes place whenever we, through the metaphor, "transfer, dimensions that are known to us in our practical experience to dimensions that by their nature appear to us to be far less easily definable" (Crespi 2005, p. 19). We could say that it is an obscure speech because it speaks of obscure or confused things, which can only be approached "metaphorically", by linking them to something more familiar. This, perhaps, is the main peculiarity of artistic languages, even if, precisely because the clash with "obscure and confused" things is actually a daily practice, we can say

that "the metaphor enters into all our ways of thinking about reality" (Crespi 2005, p. 21).

Let us now see, in an inevitably partial and temporary manner, a list of metaphorical situations frequently used in the Italian song of the years of lead, between 1968 and 1977, specifying that our sample is built on the "best selling" songs, that is "probably" the most popular ones because "probably" the most ones listened to.

One of the most widespread creative phenomena in Italy in that period is the "translation/transfiguration" of foreign pieces in Italian. In most cases, these are real "remakes" through which the original "sense" is radically disregarded: by enforcing the evocative power of music and exploiting its inherent polysemy and its lack of referentiality, it is possible to create products that "sound the same" but "say" totally different things. It is thus that a heartfelt evocation (Greek) of the homeland can become a passionate declaration of love (Italian) for a woman, while a moving invocation to God (American) becomes a real hymn to the "nihilism" of living for today.

Another metaphorical strategy is the "decisive" function of connotation: some songs "cannot be understood" if we are not given an "external" interpretative key to the text, which is not explicit and cannot be reconstructed through a careful textual analysis. It is impossible, in some cases, to reconstruct episodes and personal memories of life if the author does not intervene (ex post) to explain them. It is impossible to understand that a certain letter described in a song was dictated by "a prisoner" (something not declared anywhere in the text, but that radically changes its meaning, once explained by the author). It is impossible to understand that a text speaks of three different women (a nun, a prostitute and a single mother), if it had not been subsequently explained by the author; it is impossible that the "heart that flies" does not do it like the 99% of the known songs, because this time it takes flight to reach the singer's wife who died in childbirth. There is no explanation of this in the interstices of the text, but, once the thing is known, the text is irreparably revolutionized.

It is a true "semantic revolution" and, consequently, even a sensorial one. A melody with typical childish characters (recently used also in an advertisement for melted cheese slices), getting to know that it actually tells a fact of chronicle of pedophilia ended with a suicide: at the following listening, the contradiction between the implicated codes becomes a sort of excruciating discrasia. The "sense", once identified and made explicit, is also able to distort the "sensory" perception of the piece (especially for the listener who is used to "hum" what he hears, making it his own). Once "the truth" is known, it is no longer possible not to reckon with it: the awareness that what has always been considered a nostalgic song for a girl left for the military service is instead the punctual and passionate description of a homosexual love, which is ended with the suicide of the protagonist, makes it impossible to go back, to the first serene sensation.

Certainly, sexuality is one of the most statistically "metaphorized" aspects of existence (also due to the consequences of not respecting the "good costume"): this justifies the rich harvest of metaphors that act as moralizing veils, which mainly affect you in situations in which one does not expect them, for the image of

the singer or for the feature of the piece. Double meanings, allusions or playful frames are the most common strategies for saying what one could not.

Other times the words "seem" metaphors: in reality they are used as "pure sound" among other sounds, they are arranged in "acoustic" order, they are accepted under conditions that are freed from the sense: "A sung text is reduced to its own shadow, when it is fixed on the page" (Fiori 2003, p. 86). The reasons or the occasions of these "non sense" operations can be of various types (very frequent in the Anglo-Saxon pieces): so we meet authors who cannot remember what they meant in that particular text, for the simple fact that they were drunk (and for years they have been trying to remember about it...!); we meet texts that are the simple mechanical and obsessive repetition of a name or an adjective connected to trivial figures (an accountant) or to mythical prehistoric characters, troglodytes; we meet known singers recognizing candidly "that the incomprehensibility of their texts derives from the function of mere filler that these ones play in their songs" (Nobile 2012, p. 25). Only a naive listener could commit to reconstructing the "meaning" of all this!

Finally, there are the "false metaphors": these are true errors, which, "playing well", are left there, "meaningless", just "because they are appreciated" (whether it's Mogol or the Beatles).

Conclusions: The Eternal "Approximation"

"However, from a certain point of view this flexibility of connotation is a virtue. It allows music to express what we might call the immaterial essence of myth, the essence of experiences that are central and vital to human existence" (Meyer 1956, p. 336). The songs, their "metaphorical" communication, can offer man a useful tool, thanks to their remoteness from the everyday and worn-out referential function of language. This makes the communication frame that is created through the production and listening of the songs very special: in fact, "there is communication, Mead points out, only where the interpretation of the gesture is identical on both sides. The listener on the other hand does not necessarily have to put himself on the side of the composer's position" (Meyer 1956, p. 73).

It is therefore possible to state that "in its most authentic forms, the work of art presents itself as an attempt to express a sense, which is unseizable by other forms of knowledge and representation. The peculiarity of the artistic product is thus revealed in the fact that it is an objectification whose function is to show the unobjectifiable, or the proper limit of every form of determination" (Crespi 2010, p. X).

How, then, can "ditties" be a useful tool to overcome the determination? What important goal can they realistically make accessible more easily? Why continuing to produce them and listen to them?

It is useful, at this point, to share with Jean Duvignaud the question about the motivations of the "creative impulse", that is, to ask oneself about the innate need that has always forced man to produce something "imaginary". According to the French sociologist, the perpetuation of this "extravagant" and incessant dynamism

shows that "if our substance was actually given to us, and we had it at our fingertips, we would undoubtedly not project us beyond what limits us. But we are insufficient to ourselves" (Duvignaud 1969, p. 134). This "insufficiency" is therefore considered as a non-cultural fact (but a structural one) and as a primary impulse inherent in man to "project himself" beyond what limits him.

The artists, in the great majority, are aware of this dynamic: for the Italian poet Giuseppe Ungaretti, for example, it is demonstrated by experience that between the word and what one wants to say there is always a huge gap, even when it may seem very small: "The language corresponds poorly to what one has in mind and one would like to say: sure, it does not correspond, if not very approximately. I will therefore say that I was looking for the least inaccurate approximation, the reduction, as far as possible, of that unavoidable gap" (Camon 1982, p. 11).

Singing by metaphors is perhaps another way to "get as close as possible", to reduce an uneliminable gap.

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