

# Facets of Women's Migration

ELISABETTA DI GIOVANNI

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This volume presents original and high quality contributions on women's migration from several different perspectives. Because of its complex nature, this topic has been examined in order to bring into dialogue a variety of theoretical perspectives, within an interdisciplinary context which includes not only sociology, anthropology, psychology and political geography, but also linguistics and literature. As the papers present the results of research projects which refer to specific geographical contexts, the collection is structured around the diverse destinations of the migrations here considered: namely, the Italian city of Palermo, Italy and Europe.

All the papers were presented during the sixth edition of the "Migration, Human Rights and Democracy" Summer School, organized by the University of Palermo, Italy, in September 2012, which every year focuses on specific topics concerning questions of migration and human motilities in the contemporary world.

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Edited by

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## INTRODUCTION

This volume presents a collection of papers by contributors with different backgrounds who share a strong interest in women's migration. Because of its complex nature, this topic has been examined bringing into dialogue a variety of theoretical perspectives, within an interdisciplinary context which includes not only sociology, anthropology, psychology, and political geography, but also linguistics and literature. Moreover, each chapter focuses on aspects which interest women not only as individuals – for example their entrance into the labour market – but also in their roles as members of a couple and within the family. All the chapters were presented during the sixth edition of the Summer School "Migration, Human Rights and Democracy", organized by the University of Palermo (Italy) in September 2012, which every year focuses on specific topics concerning migrations and mobilities in the contemporary world. The summer school gathers many scholars, activists, NGO members, and researchers interested in discussing these issues.

As the chapters present the results of research which refer to specific geographical contexts, the collection is structured around the diverse destinations of the migrations here considered: (1) the city of Palermo (Italy), (2) Italy, and (3) Europe.

**Elisabetta Di Giovanni**, in "Ethnically Unprivileged: Some Anthropological Reflections on Roma Women in Contemporary Italy", deals with the conditions of extreme poverty and uncertainty surrounding Roma women in Italy and the consequences they have on this minority group. The analysis starts from the living context and from the reproducing discrimination of families in ghettos, then continues on to focus on the woman's economic activity, and, finally, to the debate on the ethnicity of this community.

As female migrant sex workers have been identified as a population at risk of acquiring and transmitting HIV in many countries, the essay "HIV Prevalence, AIDS Knowledge, and Sexual Behaviour among Female Migrant Sex Workers in Palermo, Italy" gives an exhaustive overview of the phenomenon in a local context. In collaboration with the association "Pellegrina 12/14 Terra Oulus (The Pilgrim of the Earth)", a non-governmental organization in Palermo, **Tolupe Monisola Ols** and **Roseline Adeniji** examine the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, AIDS knowledge,

and the sexual behaviours of female migrant sex workers in Palermo, investigating their working conditions and legal statuses as well. In order to collect useful data, the authors developed an interviewer administered, structured questionnaire. The results of this survey lead us to consider that increasing support for female migrant sex workers' health and rights in Italy would be advisable.

Through the analysis of conversations, **Anna Ceronio** and **Bucca** refers to prejudices and stereotypes which can emerge in the daily communication between migrants and non-migrants. In "Women, Sociality, and Language: Reflections on the Observation of a Group of Native and Non-Native Women in Palermo", the author offers an analysis of her research during an intercultural programme in a primary school in Palermo. The aim of the project was to organize some activities addressed to the foreign students' parents in order to create an opportunity for them to socialize with Italian parents. From the observation sessions emerged the presence of a series of stereotypes, linguistic ambiguities, and misunderstandings which confirmed the importance of the role played by both non-verbal elements and the spoken language.

In "Bicultural Couples: Discrimination, Place Identity and 'National Styles'", **Cinzia Novara** and **Gioacchino Lavanco** investigate some dynamics of bicultural couples in which one partner is Italian and the other is of foreign nationality. After an introduction which describes in depth the situation of mixed marriages in Italy – which in the last ten years have increased significantly – and which analyses several studies of trends, the authors illustrate their research and their results. During their face to face interviews with both partners of twenty-two bicultural couples, Novara and Lavanco consider variables such as the level of religiosity, the educational qualifications, and the motivations behind the foreign partners' migration. From the analysis of data, there emerged results with reference to concepts such as the added value of biculturalism and bilingualism, the perception of discrimination, the social identity of the foreign partner, and the diversity in educational choices.

The essay "Perspectives of Female Migration: Between Political Geography and Feminist Geography" collects together some of the issues from feminist geography which can contribute to the study of migration. In addition, **Elena Di Liberto** explores the nature of boundaries, in order to discuss key concepts such as transnationalism and globalization. The second part of this piece of research offers a study of the labour market of migrant women in Italy. After an analysis of some theoretical contributions by feminist researchers – such as those concerning the delineation of complex identities, the gender of boundary, and the feminization of

migration – Di Liberto delineates the occupational positions of migrant women in Italy. As a result, she illustrates a deeply variegated context, referring, for example, to the distribution of migrant women by nationality, work sectors, and level of employment.

**Sorana Toma's** essay focuses on the Sub-Saharan African context, especially on migration from Senegal to Europe, by using recently collected quantitative data on the determinants and economic outcomes of female migrations. In "Migrant Social Capital and Female Migrants: The Case of Senegalese Women Moving to Europe" two forms of mobility are investigated, namely, independent and partner-related moves.

After a review of the relevant theoretical and empirical literature, it is demonstrated that female independent migrants make a more extensive use of their networks, considering both the usefulness for women seeking to move autonomously abroad and the rigid patriarchal system and the low level of female autonomy in Senegal. The author presents and analyses some data from the "Migration between Africa and Europe" (MAFE) project, a recent survey on sub-Saharan international migration conducted in 2008.

In "Strategies of Reading Migration Literature Through Enneclera's Novel *Second-Class Citizen*", the effectiveness of a literary analysis that emphasizes migration is shown. **Cioia Panzarella** examines some key features of migration studies and uses them to analyse a literary work, highlighting concepts such as otherness, unfixity, hybridity, and mobility. This approach can help legitimate comparisons within literary works belonging to contexts far from each other's historical or geographical points of view. In this perspective, reading Enneclera's *Second-Class Citizen* as a migration novel raises several stimulating issues, especially when the protagonist's inner negotiation emerges. The essay discusses some passages of the novel, illustrating the representation of migrants. Also examined within the essay is the issue of language and the role that it plays in building a literary canon.