

Other contributions to the workshop

Integration policies and local reactions on immigrants in the rural area of Luzzara, Italy

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Luzzara is an exceptional city. While official statistical data sources estimate migrants to amount between 1,5million (2,5%) and 2,5million (4,3%) people in Italy in 2003, a percentage that reaches ca. 4% for the region Emilia-Romagna in which Luzzara is situated, the city itself experiences a migrant presence of 12,7%. 1.116 of its 8.785 inhabitants at 31.12.2002, one of eight, is of non-Italian nationality. This percentage rises to 26% regarding pupils with migration background in public schools.

Instead of the prevalence of migrants of Moroccan (17,7%), Albanian (12,7%) and Tunisian (6,8%) nationality in the region of Emilia-Romagna, immigrants living in Luzzara are of Indian (52,4%), Pakistan (16,8%) and Macedonian (4,8%) background.

Wood and cultivated soil dominate 60% of Luzzara's surface. The municipality declares itself committed to the traditional production of groceries typical for the plain of the river Po: milk for the famous cheese Parmigiano-Reggiano, grapes for Lambrusco wine and pig-breeding for sausages and meat products.

Decreasing local labour offer led to the recruitment and immigration of foreign labour forces since the 1980's. Today the prevalence of migrants with Asian background in the city centre is eye-catching. They buy and restore old and uncomfortable houses in the ancient city centre as well as on the country-side; They open small businesses such as Asian food supermarkets and communications with Bollywood films to rent and buy; They celebrate Indian dance and culture in the *piazza*, the traditional meeting point of the local society in Italian cities.

Autochthonous experience the migrants' presence as a substantial change of their home town and everyday life. Italian Madonna's are replaced with Indian divinities, shops opened "exclusively for them" and Indian dances are judged "aggressive" and associated to "martial arts", while the celebration of Indian culture in the *piazza* is perceived as the parish fair of a foreign town/country.

Fearing threat to "social peace", integration policies are undertaken and strategies applied by the local government in collaboration with the school administration and the CARITAS/local church. Interaction between the different actors, though, seems to be lacking in practice and the implementation of integration measures appears to be delayed or not realized at all, not appropriated to immigrant's needs or missing their attention.

Against the background of Luzzara's extraordinary immigration in numbers and background my conference contribution focuses on the realization of integration policies within the city's elementary school, while giving valuable insight into the measure's perception by addressees, immigrant and autochthonous, and their de-facto everyday living situation in the city. Emerging prejudices and stereotypes towards

migrants on the side of both, autochthonous actors and addressees, as well as the implicit acceptance of migration in everyday-life-contexts highlighted by the study, seems though to question Luzzara's exceptional character.