

Description of the planned dissertation project – Chiara Massaroni

Young Children Migration and the Negotiation of Social Identities in a Superdiverse Setting as Rabat, Morocco

My work focuses on the everyday life of young children with migration background coming predominantly from West Africa and living in Rabat and Ashua (fictional name), Morocco. I am looking in particular at the construction and lived experience of their life, and at the expressions of belonging, inclusion and exclusion. **My research question** is: how do young children with migration background living in Rabat and Ashua, Morocco, construct their social identity through the narratives of their everyday life? What kind of relationships do they establish in the school, the home and the neighbourhood?

I am looking at three specific places that children occupy: the school environment, the street/neighbourhood and the home. These three places are relevant as this is where children spend most of their time, and are highly meaningful for them. These places are characterised by different degrees of formality and institutionalization: at one extreme, we have schools, which are highly formal and highly institutional; on the other side of the spectrum, there are the streets, which are highly informal (Cresswell, 2015; Huber & Spyrou, 2012; Robinson & Kellet, 2004). This implies that the freedom and agency of children within these three places vary significantly.

The idea of looking at experiences of belonging and exclusion and inclusion is perfectly in line with the intention of looking at children's everyday life and identity constructions related to different relationships and places. The concept of belonging has received plenty of different interpretation. One which I find particularly useful is that of Antonisch (Antonisch, 2010), which splits it into two aspects, one of belonging as "feeling at home", related to a series of emotional and relational factors, as well as the construct of a sense of Self that allows the individual to feel at home in certain communities or groups. The second aspect is that of politics of belonging, and is linked to the creations of borders between the "us" and the "others", and to the idea of exclusion and inclusion. Therefore, there is a strong link, which is not separable, between the idea of place, identity, belonging, exclusion and inclusion.

The **methodology** utilised is a multi-method approach loosely based on the Mosaic Approach. It means that, in order to ensure the centrality of children's perspectives and to fully acknowledge their role as active social actors (Prout & James, 1997), I have combined a series of qualitative methods in different workshops conducted with small groups of children who were familiar with each other. I have used a draw-and-tell method, a vignette method, conversations and semi-structured interviews and walking tours with camera. I have also conducted daily participant observation in a pre-school and in a non-formal setting in Rabat, Morocco, for a period of 3 months. 33 children, ranging from 4 to 14 participated, together with 9 parents, 2 teachers, and 13 key informant belonging to diaspora communities, NGOs and research centres.

The **project** started in February 2016, and it was interrupted for maternity leave for 1 semester. I am expecting to **complete it by end of 2019**.

The project is being conducted within the Department of Sociology, under the **supervision** of prof. Heinz-Jürgend Niedenzu and being co-supervised by prof. Dirk Rupnow from the Department of Contemporary History.