DEP Deportate, esuli, profughe
Rivista telematica di studi sulla memoria femminile

Cities as laboratories of international welfare. Some remarks on the political value of migrant women's "spaces of freedom"[1]

by

*Brigida Proto**

Abstract. The hypothesis of the article is that pragmatist feminism, born in defense of the rights of the "invisibles" in the modern city, is the most appropriate approach to investigate if and how migrant women emerge as creative and imaginative actors turning cities in laboratories of experimentation with international welfare. First, social settlements and community centers in North American cities will be introduced as innovative spaces of democracy that gave rise to pragmatist and feminist thinking in the late nineteenth century. Then, relying on ethnographic fieldworks conducted in three urban contexts – Chicago, the town and cities of eastern Sicily and Paris – the article will focus on current migrant women's experiences of cities and show the political value of urban spaces created by migrant women in search of a new sense of freedom, thus contributing to the advancement of a new pragmatist and feminist research perspective on cities, gender and democracy.

How does the experience of migration become an "experience of freedom" for women? What are the times and spaces through which migrant women create an "experience of freedom"? Can we leave the study of relations between cities, migration and gender still within the horizon of the "marginal man", divided between two cultures (Park 1928), trapped in a life cycle that tends to end in assimilation (Stonequist 1935) or permanently living with a "double consciousness" (Du Bois 1923)? Or is it possible to recognize in the "spaces of freedom"[2] that migrant women

* Brigida Proto, PhD in Planning and Public Policies (University Iuav of Venice, 2007), is a Marie Sklodowska-Curie Fellow at the *Centre d'études des mouvement sociaux* of the *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales* (CEMS-EHESS) in Paris. Her research follows a pragmatist perspective in the interdisciplinary field of urban studies and focuses on the public problems of urban security, violence against women, and human trafficking. She worked at the University Iuav of Venice, the University of Chicago and the Technical University of Berlin. Acting mainly as fieldworker and principal investigator for EU-funded research projects on migrant women's issues and social policy, she always encourages experimental collaboration between the academic and non-academic worlds. She is the author of the ethnographic book *Al mercato con Aida. Una donna senegalese in Sicilia* (Carocci, 2018), forthcoming in French.

[1] The project leading to this article has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the "Marie Sklodowska-Curie grant agreement No 844164".

[2] I thank Daniel Cefaï for suggesting this expression to me during an exchange I had with him while writing this article.

 ISSN 1824 - 4483

create by confronting the problems the cities pose, the first steps, but also the difficulties, of a new international welfare relying on the "multiple Self" of migrant women as an inexhaustible source of imagination, experimentation and creativity?

The article aims to reflect on these questions through an initial analysis of the results of three ethnographies – one completed and two in progress – conducted with migrant women of different nationalities in three urban and territorial contexts: Chicago, the towns and cities of eastern Sicily, and Paris[3].

Rethinking cities through the experiences of migrant women, however, requires explaining a working hypothesis. We intend to recover the original political value of the idea of the city as a "natural laboratory": an analogy popularized by Park (1929), has, in fact, its roots in the forms of cooperative experimentation practiced in the social settlements and community centers of North American cities (Cefaï 2021) where natives and migrants practiced a radical conception of democracy centered on the principle of self-government, the socialization of care, the need to refound a social ethic based on pluralist understanding and the ability to put oneself in the place of the "invisibles" of social progress, and the pursuit of a political internationalism in favor of peace. The article therefore describes the political value of social settlements and community centers, the influence they have had in the establishment of pragmatist-feminist thought in the early twentieth century and its progressive reaffirmation over the past thirty years. Attention shifts to the political value of the "spaces of freedom" that migrant women create today and, therefore, to the ways in which a Mexican-American labor organizer in Chicago, a Senegalese trader in Sicily and Nigerian women in prostitution networks in Paris act in response to perceived problematic life situations. Finally, some issues are highlighted that should be taken into account to advance a feminist and pragmatist approach, still in its infancy, to city-gender relations and international welfare.

Why do we need to rethink cities through a pragmatist feminism?

In the late nineteenth century, in the face of unprecedented urbanization that saw the population of all North American cities more than triple and confront extreme manifestations of poverty and social vulnerability, Jane Addams (1902) stated that it was essential to refound new social ethics through the "socialization of democracy". According to her, industrial society managed to coexist with forms of social organization still pervaded by old ethics, personal, familial and militaristic: "the personal one that was attentive to individual achievements, the familial one that recognized in loyalty to a small circle of people the essential moral obligations of individuals, and the militaristic one that involved participation in the collective violence of a group" (Bianchi 2004, 30 my translation)

Instead, new social ethics required starting again with workers and, in particular, the poorest and most exploited, namely immigrants and women, as agents of change,

[3] Ethnographic research has been conducted within the framework of two Marie Curie Fellowships. The first one (2010-2013) had the University Iuav of Venice and the University of Chicago as host institutions. The second one (2019-ongoing) has the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris as host institution.

and creating new spaces of coexistence capable of stimulating a broader sense of belonging and a feeling of sharing as the first step toward social and economic equity (Bianchi 2004). But it was also necessary to push the state, on the basis of the new forms of association created, to act responsibly toward citizens and intervene in the redistribution of wealth, regulation of working conditions, and social security (*ibid.*).

If industrial society was still pervaded by old ethics that devalued home in community life and women's abilities, Jane Addams attributed deep social and moral significance to domestic space. The problems caused by ungovernable industrialization processes in cities – juvenile crime, prostitution, contaminated water, etc. – could only be addressed by recognizing in public space the values of care, protection of the weak, responsibility: cities had to be thought of in terms of "public housekeeping" (Addams 1910a, or civic, 1907) as a new practice of citizenship.

It is in this context that new spaces of coexistence with profound political value were created in cities: social settlements and community centers. With regard to the former, they were places of shared residence between natives and foreigners that promoted a radical vision of democracy: social settlements constituted new publics as communities of inquiry, discussion, and experimentation (Cefaï 2021). Jane Addams defined the "social settlement" as "an attempt to express the meaning of life in terms of life itself, in forms of activity" (Addams 1889: 36), then, simply as "a way of life" (Addams 1929). If until 1890 social settlements still displayed philanthropic and religious attitudes, they were later represented as "socialist" et "anti-Christian" centers, places of extremism that attracted moral disapproval and condemnation (Cefaï 2021). Actually, they disassociated themselves from the religious ideal of origin and contributed to the creation of public goods and services by attempting to organize the neighborhood community as a "small republic" and to develop a collective and creative intelligence through the use of scientific methods and the transformation of neighborhood residents into communities of inquirers and experimenters (*ibid.*). Community centers, twenty years later, shared functions, goals and ideals of social settlements but differed in three characteristics: they placed a more pronounced emphasis on the practice of public discussion; did not provide for shared residence between natives and foreigners; asserted their identity as "public institutions" (*ibid.*).

Social settlements and community centers constituted experiments in neighborhood democracy (Woods 1914; Follett 1919) conducted by individuals and social groups living in different social worlds (Cefaï 2021). Social settlements were defined as "cooperative experiments" (Addams 1910b: 141–143) in the course of which a common experience was formed and "applied and cooperative knowledge" was generated with neighborhood residents (Cefaï 2020: 316). Problems of a composite nature – economic cooperation, urban governance, social services, and community organization – were addressed, thanks to a proximity of experience with migrants and a neighbor and sympathetic understanding that allowed for a rethinking of the relationship with the Other in terms of sharing and inclusion, rather than dependence and subordination. What emerged was a "practical politics" (Follett, 1918: 265) based on listening to life stories (Addams 1916), sharing everyday problems and the tools of collective intelligence and direct government (Follett 1918:

366). Aiming at community self-government, social settlements and community centers used to bring together perspectives from distant social worlds and develop collective reflective work – "neighborhood consciousness" (Mead in Cefaï 2021: 412).

However, they were not bound to neighborhood action. The creation of settlements in U.S. cities constituted an early version of community organizing (Cefaï 2021): it was "a loose and unorganized movement, without any center or head, having in common only the name and the fact of residence" (Lathrop in Cefaï 2021:355) that pursued the idea of "social reconstruction" (Woods 1914) and of a "self-governed nation" (Woods 1893: 57–58). Social settlements were experiments to replace charity with a new social solidarity; they laid the foundations of the Providence-State that would find its full expression during the New Deal (Cefaï 2021: 351–352). Between 1890 and 1920, they contributed to the formation of new cities, defended a social democracy, brought forth a new public order, and invented a new social citizenship based on the creation and defense of civil, political, and social rights (*ibid.*: 463-464) and the collaboration with a variety of local actors – unions, charitable or philanthropic organizations of specific ethnic or religious orientation. (*ibid.*: 420).

The relationship between pragmatism and feminism – and attention to women's contribution to the transformation of cities in the Progressive Era – fell into oblivion after World War I only to resurface in the 1990s, after Charlene Haddock Seigfried (1991a) published the article "Where are all the pragmatist feminists?" denouncing the absence of pragmatism in contemporary feminist discourses. Seigfried (1991b: 410) addresses the conceptual transformation of feminism "from a somewhat essentialist view of women as class to a pluralist sense of women's overlapping identities, and from an exclusive concern with women's issues to a broader analysis of gender and related structures, such as racism and homophobia, that mask and perpetuate unequal power relations". What feminism and pragmatism share is the goal of empowering all members of society to help determine the conditions in which they live (Seigfried 1993). The scholar notes the closeness between the two movements: "pragmatism, like feminism, internally disrupts artificial and counterproductive disciplinary boundaries" (Seigfried 1996: 45). She emphasizes their complementarity: "Pragmatist philosophy, for example, explains why neglect of context is the most serious fallacy of philosophical thought. Feminism shows convincingly and extensively how gender, race, class, and sexual preference are crucial parts of context that philosophy has traditionally neglected" (*ibid.*: 39). In this context, some horizons for reflection have been identified to interweave pragmatism and feminism again.

First, on the assumption that women's experiences are a resource for democracies that seek to manage the tension between individualism and community (Mansbridge 1993), and as opposed to the male-dominated notion of fraternity, it is necessary to foreground the notion of community and explore the role of emotions, their relation to the context in which they unfold and the forms of cooperative intelligence that emerge, paying attention to the Deweyan pragmatist notion of experience as a transaction between the organism and the environment, rather than still relying on the mind/body division as an inherited dualistic classification (Seigfried 1996).

Moreover, the distinction between ethics of care (women) and ethics of justice (men) proposed by Gilligan (1982) needs to be deeply challenged: instead, we need to understand women's diverse moral reasoning, their plurality of voices, the different contexts and ways in which women integrate ethics of care and ethics of justice (Seigfried 1996).

Second, we need to redefine political power through perspectives other than that of domination or compromise: in terms of "energy, strength, and effective interaction" (Hartsock in Mainsbridge 1993: 361), through intimate connection to "communities values as caretaking, nurturance, empathy, connectedness" (Ferguson in Mainsbridge 1993:361); in terms of persuasion, rather than domination, which derived from the ties of community – mutual obligation, vulnerability, understanding, and sympathy – as well as from the simple coincidence of material interests (Mainsbridge 1993: 361). Mary Park Follett and Jane Addams traced an enriching and stimulating track of reflection. With regard to the former, she introduced in *Creative Experience* (1924) the opposition between "power-over" and "power-with", the focus on the treatment of conflict through integration, rather than domination or compromise; the significance of integration as invention, rather than adjustment; the idea that only the integration of activities, rather than ideas or wills, can turn into creative experience. Regarding the latter, in continuity with Dewey's thinking on experimentation and democracy, she paid attention to and practiced the coupling of cooperation and experimentation as a distinctive feature of pragmatist feminism (Seigfried 1996: 197), emphasizing the power of social intelligence, thus, the role of organized habits of intelligent response in terms of the ability to use things in connection with the way other people use things (*ibid.*: 98), the "ability to acquire habits" as the power to "carry from prior experience factors that modify subsequent experiences" (*ibid.*: 99); the role of intelligence in guiding and giving meaning to action as well as in bringing imagination, novelty and creativity to what the human organism undergoes in connection with other actions.

Finally, if Dewey holds that cooperation is the root principle of the morals of democracy, we need to abandon the psychology of the isolated self and the moral subjectivism predicated on and embrace the pragmatist model of social intelligence which is based on the moral relevance of the individual, that is, "the significance of desire and thought in breaking down old rigidities of habit and preparing the way for acts that re-create an environment" (Dewey 1922: 57). What emerges is attention to the formation of the "multiple Self". Seigfried (1996) holds that the self is not fixed and simple and suggests to follow Dewey arguing that selfhood "is in process of making, and that any self is capable of including within itself a number of inconsistent selves, of unharmonized dispositions" (Dewey 1922: 138 in Seigfried 1996: 252). According to Keith (1999), on the other hand, Mead's thought offers the most convenient pragmatist and ecological perspective to explore the personal and moral liberation called for by feminists. The focus should be on the ways in which Mead conceives the Self as a Social Self, "always growing within a wider ecology of others" (Keith 1999: 333): she emerges from and within social relationships, interacts in a diversity of situations, learns morality and acquires a stronger ability to mediate the environment.

If the dialogue between feminism and pragmatism proposes to start from the context in order to redefine questions of community, political power and morality of the "Multiple Self", rethinking cities through migrant women's experiences, we may see the ways in which the tensions of the "Multiple Self" turn into a new sense of freedom. Following Dewey (1922) and Mead (1938a), human freedom is not simply "freedom of will": freedom that migrant women trace is rooted in their life histories and is connected to their ability to prefigure new life possibilities, to manage the deep force of desires and integrate conflicting impulses, to expand their margins of action. But also and, above all, to their ability to associate and cooperate in order to solve the "problematic situations" they experience with a view to the emergence of new relationships between cities and democracy.

The creative power of domestic spaces: butterflies' sanctuaries for a new interethnic neighborhood consciousness[4]

Migrant women may start from domestic spaces to reinvent cities. This is what happens thanks to Claudia Galeno, a Mexican-American woman who has transformed her home into a butterfly sanctuary in Chicago and has created with other women the Women for Green Spaces group in order to bring to public attention that low-income neighborhoods can become laboratories for experimenting with new connections between nature, cities and social justice.

Claudia Galeno was born in the Mexican state of Puebla in the seventies. She left her village and crossed the frontier between Mexico and USA by truck car to reach Chicago searching for better work opportunities in 2002. Here she got firsthand experience of the discrimination and abuse practiced against undocumented workers but in 2009 she became involved as a labor organizer in the Chicago Workers' Collaborative, a Latino workers' center focusing on temporary workers hired by staffing agencies to work in factories. There, she also found herself acting as a field inquirer paying attention to the relationships between staffing agencies and gangs.

The chapter she used to work in at Chicago Workers' Collaborative was at the frontier between two different ethnic neighborhoods – the Latino Back of the Yards and the Afro-American Englewood – where she experienced how the precarization of low wage labor exacerbated the vulnerability of both undocumented Latino workers and Afro-American workers: the former trapped in fear of deportation, lack of knowledge about their rights, isolation; the latter strongly affected by discriminatory hiring practices and criminal background checks. Furthermore, as a result of the severe effects of the 2008 economic downturn, she saw the rise of cases of sexual harassment against Latino undocumented working women but working as a labor organizer at the frontier of two ethnic neighborhood she also realized that interethnic cooperation was a challenge and a resource to fight for the defense of labor's rights. In 2017 she was among the founding members of the association Working Family Solidarity at the origin of which was her husband Leone Jose Bicchieri, an Italian-Mexican-American labor organizer she met at the Chicago

[4] Claudia Galeno was online interviewed twice, on November 11, 2022 and April 9, 2023. She also reviewed this paragraph.

Workers' Collaborative in 2010 where he was appointed as executive director and founder of the "Bringing Down Barriers" program to unite African American and Latino temp staffing workers to win more rights at work. Leone has been labor organizer working with workers and working families of any background and in any U.S. region, in rural and urban contexts but, as founder and executive director of the Working Family Solidarity, he, along with the other founding members, pursued a twofold goal: first, to build alliances between workers of different backgrounds as well as between urban and rural working families; second, to reframe the defense of workers' rights not only in terms of labor issues but also in terms of housing and green spaces issues.

In 2021 Claudia turned her house's garden in a sanctuary for monarch butterflies in the Mexican Pilsen neighborhood with the aim to give a contribution against climate change and to offer a new way of socialization to her children. This gave rise to the group Women for Green Spaces (*Mujeres por Espacios Verdes*) within the Working Family Solidarity: at the beginning it was composed only of three Mexican women, now their initiative has caught attention of more than 20 female volunteers of different nationalities.

Raising butterflies in a Chicago's neighborhood opens up for sure a new horizon of reflection on women's creative freedom in the cities. On the one hand, this makes it possible to advance the feminist analysis of domestic spaces opened up by Dorothy Smith (1971). According to the sociologist, we need to overcome the idea that the household constitutes a discrete social unit and put on the foreground the ways in which it interacts with the surrounding environment (*ibid*.: 73). Attention should be given to the relationship between household space and family organization: the spatial arrangements and the resulting movements of household members (*ibid.*: 73), changes in family structure of control (*ibid*.: 73) and the "interpenetration of household and neighborhood normative structures" (*ibid.*:74), the differentiation of front and back regions as a contribution to social order (*ibid.*:74), the degree of formality which characterizes family relationships and the ways it affects the socialization of children (*ibid.*:75), the "texture" of family relationships (*ibid.*:69), the spaces of "unplanned interplay" (*ibid.*:68), the "interstitial territories" (*ibid.*:61), where major transitions between the intimate and the public occurred, due to the spilling over of family life.

On the other hand, the case of women raising butterflies in Chicago enriches the analysis of interaction between human and non-human agents with a gender perspective. In *The Global Pigeon* (2013) Jerolmack considers the interaction between men and pigeons in different urban contexts not only as a matter of embodied nature but especially as an expression of a changing relationship between the self and the society. Just to mention some evidence from his ethnographic book. In New York, in Queens, pigeons flying reflects a masculine and cosmopolitan ideal transcending ethnic or class differences: white middle-aged and black younger working-class men create coops on the rooftop of buildings and enjoy breeding, raising, and handling their pigeons and watching them in flight, continuing a ritual ever more threatened by the process of gentrification affecting the neighborhood. In Berlin, conversely, Turkish men create coops and raise pigeons on a vacant piece of

land in the neighborhood of Kreuzberg as a way to elaborate a primordial attachment to the idea of nation and the affections of the homeland.

Women caring for butterflies in Chicago show the relevance of a Mead's pragmatist ecological perspective for the analysis of domestic spaces. It is precisely in the "interstices" of domestic space that women reinvent home as an ecological niche in which human and non-human agents trace new "webs of life" that intertwine with each other, with their respective temporalities and ways of living (Mead 1938b). Furthermore, they concretely show gender differences in taking care of non-human agents. What distinguishes the sanctuary of butterflies in Chicago from the coops in New York or in Berlin is the creative and political value of domestic space as the origin of a new "civic housekeeping" (Addams 1915) dealing with nature through inquiry and experimentation. Four steps have been taken.

First, Claudia developed "knowledge by acquaintance" (James 1890, p.221). Together with her husband and her two children, she left the condos to live in a single house with a small garden in 2016 in the Pilsen neighborhood: the aim was to foster her children's direct contacts with nature. Then, she realized that this opportunity was even more restricted to children in Pilsen because gentrification was threatening the quality of green spaces for low-income families. Property value was constantly rising: a single house was 290 thousand euros in 2016, 700 thousand euros in 2022. Meanwhile, she became acquainted with moths, butterflies and caterpillars as long as she started to water plants in the evening at the Orozco Community Academy, her children's public school. She also attended a workshop focusing on monarch butterflies at El Valor Reyes Children & Family Center where her children's early education began. There she discovered that, especially due to climate change, monarch butterflies were in risk of extinction, this leading to a consequent loss in terms of vegetal biodiversity of the environment. She learned how to help monarch butterflies to breed: how to collect the eggs, feed the caterpillars, let the butterflies go free the moment they emerge from the chrysalis. Longing for a neighborhood socialization based on contacts with nature for her children she developed ever stronger commitment to experimentation. She and her family started keeping caterpillars and butterflies in the home with smaller kits, then they built outdoors a first small sanctuary of butterflies in the little garden at the entrance of her house with the aim to raise even more butterflies and teach others. She became acquainted with the butterfly's life cycle. She observed when the eggs hatch, the larvae totally eat the milkweed plant for food and then they turn into a butterfly. However, she realized that something in her garden was hindering the regular development of the butterfly life cycle.

Knowledge by acquaintance was not enough. Claudia needed to integrate with scientific knowledge. She started to attend workshops held by female biologists and doctors at the Chicago Botanic Garden and during these moments of exchange with experts she extended her insight from butterflies to native plants and pollinators gardens[5]. She learned that raising monarch butterflies meant "helping their colonies grow by planting the plants butterflies like": each region had to rely on its native

[5] A pollinator garden is one that attracts bees, butterflies, moths, hummingbirds or other beneficial creatures that transfer pollen from flower to flower, or in some cases, within flowers.

plants to prevent arbitrary use of tropical and climate from disrupting the timing of butterfly migration. A late bloom can cause butterflies to lay eggs when it is time to start migrating. Cold weather, on the other hand, can cause them to migrate early and die before reaching other regions. If the blooming process and seasonal temperature variation influence butterflies' migration, what is convenient is not to confuse the butterflies. "Taking care of pollinators means being aware of how everything is so well-connected: if humans take care of pollinators, the latter will help birds have more caterpillars to eat, and humans have more vegetables and fruits available" explains Claudia. She, thus, created a second larger sanctuary of butterflies in the back of her house, paying more attention to the use of native plants.

Taking care for butterflies, then, spills over the domestic space: this is the third fundamental step for a new ecological civic housekeeping. Claudia and the other 20 women of the group Women for green spaces intend to turn Pilsen into a neighborhood model and stimulate a new public consciousness: green spaces are workers' rights, exactly as are higher salaries and affordable housing. Claudia goes on the street, talks about butterflies, native plants and pollinators gardens, brings butterflies in a box with her and lets them fly free in front of passerby. The daughter also brings butterflies with her to school and lets them fly free in the presence of classmates and teachers: her nickname has become *Mariposa*, butterfly in Spanish. Furthermore, being in the street with butterflies opens up an unexpected dialogue between ecology and art: butterflies sanctuaries turn also into an "aesthetic experience" (Dewey 1934). In the street Claudia meets the Mexican artist Hector Duarte, who is also strongly committed to the preservation of monarch butterflies. He is the author of a circular sculptural ring, *La Ronda parakata*: a gathering place, with native plants at the center, located in Burnham Park on the Chicago lakefront, and made up of interlocking butterfly forms inspired by the magic symbolism of the butterfly, harmony with nature, and migration. Duarte also honored with paintings two Mexican activists died, probably murdered, protecting monarch butterfly habitats in Mexico, in the El Rosario sanctuary in Michoacán. Women and children in Pilsen, attracted and intrigued by the sanctuaries in Claudia's garden, under Hector Duarte's color advice, covered the walls of the front and back of Claudia's house with multicolored butterflies.

The media also took an interest in the butterflies' sanctuaries in Pilsen and the commitment of Women for Green Spaces for taking care of native plants and pollinators gardens. After a few articles on local newspapers, Women for Green Spaces got the attention of different institutions. Thanks to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the Field Museum and the Chicago Botanic Garden the women's group received about 5000 native plants. Given the lack of public green spaces in low-income neighborhoods, Women for Green Spaces collaborates today with the University of Illinois to monitor monarch butterflies' activities in 20 private gardens: 40 private gardens anyway were available in the neighborhoods of Pilsen, Back of the Yards and Little Village and the 20 excluded from the project have planted native plants for monarch butterflies as well. De Paul University has invited Women for Green Spaces onto the advisory board within the framework of a project which aims at evaluating the presence of green spaces in low-income neighborhoods. The Field Museum has proposed the co-organization with the women's group of

workshops with the aim to make a list of people interested in planting native plants in their gardens, to initiate an experimental survey in order to assess the quality of gardens by comparing the behavior consequences of native and non-native plants and advocate for the use of native plants in public space. The group Women for Green Spaces organizes also workshops with the Chicago Botanic Garden to let people come into Claudia's home and learn how to create gardens like hers in their communities. Meanwhile, it extends its attention to the accessibility of public spaces in low-income neighborhoods. The group wants to stop the organization of private festivals in public parks and have more native plants and native trees there, especially for their children quality of life. As coordinator of Women for Green Spaces, Claudia, though tempered by her past tough experiences with staffing agencies, is now raising awareness on how much women fighting for social equity and human wellbeing can be perceived as a threat to private profit.

However, letting butterflies fly free aims to spread a new ecological neighborhood consciousness. "Butterflies are super, fragile, tiny, magical creatures. But they are also very powerful: they fly three countries, Mexico, United States and Canada. They don't have any frontier or citizenship. Their migration is unique[6] and gives me mixed feelings of happiness and sadness. It brings me back to my experience of migration, to the troubles I suffered for years when I used to feel Chicago was a cage preventing me from rejoining my family in Mexico", Claudia says with melancholy eyes. "But, when I let them fly free, it feels like you are *giving life to the world"*, she finally adds smiling. She wants people feel and share this pleasure with her.

Letting butterflies fly free turns into a symbolic and political act. "Women for green spaces doesn't want to raise butterflies to be famous. This is about raising concern of people that we can really have the power to do the changes we need in community: we don't have to be abused because we are poor and without documents. It doesn't matter. We can still raise concern, but we have to do it together. We got to be united. This is the power to change our difficult situations in communities of color", Claudia points out.

Jerolmack (2013) holds that if "urbanism as a way of life" (Wirth 1938) described a peculiar set of interactions and attitudes that made the social order of the city distinct from that of the country, "hybridity as a way of life" denotes the fact that nonhuman species are regular participants in what Jane Jacobs (1961) called the "intricate sidewalk ballet" of the urban social order.

In Chicago women dealing with butterflies' sanctuaries, native plants and pollinator gardens show the creative and transformative power of domestic spaces. They show their efforts to envision new worlds and transform existing social orders starting from the critique of home as an isolated domestic workplace (Hayden 1981).

[6] It is well-known that each fall, monarch butterflies embark on a journey up to 5 thousand kilometers long from the United States and Canada to the warm forests of Mexico, where they spend the cooler months avoiding the harsh winter climate of North America. Monarch butterflies make as many as 100 kilometers a day each October to overwinter in their homeland Mexico after leaving Canada in late summer.

They act for a "blooming Pilsen", rather than a gentrified Pilsen. They show their concern for the consequences of gentrification and climate change. They turn domestic spaces into micro-labs of experimentation with new webs of life between human and non-human agents (Mead 1938). They foster reflexivity, and through it, a new women's consciousness, thus longing for a new neighborhood public intelligence. They sublimate the tensions of a "multiple Self" coming from their experience of migration with concernment and care for nature and use their imagination to overcome a model of urbanization that has insulated people from contact with animals and nature.

Moral honesty in public space: Senegalese women's micropolitics at the Sicilian market.

Sometimes, however, the neighborhood is not the action horizon migrant women take into account to reinvent themselves in urban societies that are strongly resistant to change. In Sicily Aida Fall, a Senegalese market trader, has turned a public space, the outdoor market, into her workplace in Sicily.

Aida is part of a second generation of Senegalese women who came to Italy in the early 2000s. They did not arrive to be reunited with their husbands, nor do they spend their days in the inner courtyards of Catania's historic center like those who came before them. They are often lonely women: unmarried, divorced, victims of violence, anyway in search of a new life away from their country of origin. Aida is the first Senegalese woman in Catania to hit the market as an independent entrepreneur without relying on a man to drive her car, as her female colleagues do. As an employee of Senegal's Ministry of Interior in the information technology sector and the wife of a local businessman, she led an affluent middle-class life in Dakar. When her relationship with her husband entered a crisis, she filed for divorce, left Dakar by plane in 2001 at age 34 on a tourist visa for Paris, where she asked her sister to take care of her young daughter, and reached Catania in Sicily: the market would allow her to rebuild her life in Italy and her daughter to grow up and study in Paris.

Whether in the Global North or Global South, the marketplace, a symbol of disorder par excellence (Geertz 1979), is an urban edge where women reinvent themselves. It is the space of a "womanhood in transition" (Kapchan 1996): a forum of transition, transgression and hybridization (*ibid.*). Senegalese migrant women, particularly, turn the market in a space of economic cosmopolitanism that make it possible to subvert traditional hierarchies in the family (Khaïry Coulibaly 2007) while continuing to oscillate between the difficulties of rebuilding a new social reputation in both the country of origin and the host country (Rosander 2005). Thus, focusing on Senegalese women, what is reconfirmed is the Simmelian idea of the Stranger as a trader, permanently on the move, disinterested in the problems of the society with which she interacts (Stavo-Debauge 2017).

Aida, by contrast, is a trader and an activist in Sicily: the market, thus, reveals its political nature insofar as it requires Aida to defend her work in public space through four different modes of interaction with the host society (Proto 2018).

First, the market becomes "itinerant living" as a new habit of living shared with natives and migrants. Aida travels by car carrying all her work equipment inside a car: bags and boxes full of costume jewelry, umbrellas, tables, cots and blankets for the night, engine for electricity and a computer with which she connects with Senegal. Her workplace, however, does not coincide with a defined physical area, nor with the migrants' "*territoires circulatoires*" (Tarrius 1992) overlapping without any interaction with the territories of native settled populations. Through Aida's experience, the market emerges as an ever-changing "web of life" deeply nurtured by transactions with local societies. Aida lives in Catania but travels for work believing that the city's markets are not accessible to traders, natives and especially foreigners, who wish to work within the law. Until 2008 she worked regularly between Calabria and Sicily. Then her business trips became increasingly contracted in distance: the more unemployed natives poured into the markets improvising themselves as market traders in order to survive the consequences of the economic crisis, the more regular foreign traders had their traditional jobs taken away from them without any well-founded reason. In 2013, Aida spent the entire month of August in Portopalo, on the southern coast of Sicily, for the first time in her life and reached Reggio Calabria only in September for a 15-day summer fair, having lost her assigned places at the market in some Calabrian towns on the sea where she used to work during the summer since she arrived in Italy in 2001.

As long as Aida travels throughout Sicilian cities and towns – like the many Senegalese women who sell costume jewelry in Sicily – she is confronted with the "moral order" of the market, with its invisible structure made up of a variety of interactions that contribute to the maintenance of public order (Duneier 1999). There is a frontstage, at the table, during the sale of her costume jewelry, but there is also and above all a backstage, made up of administrative procedures and institutional interlocutors who influence Aida's market job opportunities. The market is a "social world", an interweaving of "social worlds", made up of communication networks, borders, experiences, and collective activities with stabilized perspectives (Cefaï 2015): those of customers, policemen, stall holders, black workers, etc. The market is a "human ecology" growing through endogenous relationships and dynamics of cooperation, competition and communication that are established among multiple actors for the control of territory, for the creation of new territories.

The more Aida's workspaces contract, the more protest in public space becomes her second way of self-defense from the discrimination she faces in the workplace. The allocation of fairground stalls provides an example of such a dynamic.

Traders could choose between two alternatives: to enter the public rankings provided by municipalities or to rely on "unionists", officially representatives of trade associations, however, controversial mediators who are held responsible for abuse in the management of the fairground stalls. Although Aida chooses to abide by law and enter the public rankings, institutions never act as "troubleshooters" (Emerson & Messinger 1977): they don't intervene at all to protect her from the abuses of the "unionists". To defend her workspace, then, Aida turns into a "troublemaker" (*ibid.*). When at the Gela fairground in September 2013, she found her assigned stall occupied by a colleague protected by a "unionist", she protested on several levels: she sternly reprimanded the Italian trader occupying her place,

generating panic among her Italian colleagues who attempted to contact the "unionist" by phone; she joked with the local policeman questioning his role as a defender of public order; at the moment when the "unionist" appeared, loudly called out by Aida, the woman sternly stressed her honesty at work and forced the unionist to apologize for the abuse of power committed against her with the aim to delegitimize the "unionist's" power in the eyes of her Italian and foreign colleagues, all of whom remained strictly silent. When the man went away deferring the solution of the problem to the trader occupying Aida's place, it was an Italian colleague who persuaded, without any help from the "unionist", the trader occupying Aida's place to back off a little and reach a compromise with the woman by providing her with electricity for the three days of the fair. In Reggio Calabria, when Aida found her stall at the fair occupied, it was again an Italian colleague who acted as a troubleshooter (*ibid.*) by persuading the municipal manager of the fair plant to add a place in the position that suited Aida best.

Sometimes, however, Aida could find herself unexpectedly deeply troubled by brand-new abuses of power at the marketplace. In Reggio Calabria, after solving the problem of the assignment of the fairground stall, she turned – like so many of her foreign colleagues – into a victim of a ring of black money, false receipts and insurance of dubious origin that showed the strong collusion between municipal employees and the "unionist" in charge in that area: all this happened despite the fact that the municipality of Reggio Calabria was under prefectoral commissioner for mafia, thus, supposed to ensure transparency in administrative procedures.

Although the market is for sure a "milieu of life" (Cefaï 2019) where emerging problematic situations gave rise to deceptive forms of association, cooperation and communication resisting to change, working at the market spurred a new consciousness-raising among Senegalese women. *Teranga* is a Wolof word to represent a mixture of solidarity, kindness, hospitality but, above all, sharing that originates in the polygamous family, in village or neighborhood networks, in the ambivalence of an identity that wants the woman to be a "bride" and a "rival", competing with other "co-wives" in marriage. In Sicily, by contrast, *teranga* shows up at the marketplace where Senegalese women first meet, in the instinctive gift of a piece of jewelry to an Italian customer or in the money lent to female colleagues to guarantee a stall at the fair, whether through legal or illegal ways. But above all, *teranga* lives in the unexpected spaces, hardly visible and accessible, where religious events and family celebrations take place in Catania. In 2013 the meeting with the Tijani marabout did not take place in the mosque but in the municipal auditorium. Family parties did not take place at home but in the labor union hall. The ultimate expression of *teranga*, in Senegal they consist of an entire one-day, punctuated by breakfasts, lunches and dinners, spent in the home of the woman being celebrated, together with other women, men and children. During the party, invited guests give ornaments, dresses and fine fabrics as gifts to the women celebrated. In Catania, however, *teranga* no longer had the dimension of family, neighborhood, village. The family parties take place at the labor union hall, only in the evening and for women. There is no time even for sharing dinner. The celebrated woman cooks and prepares meals in small plastic bags that she gives to the other women as gifts. They will eat them on their own, at home, in a hurry, because they leave for work at dawn.

Furthermore, if in Dakar gifts were symbolic manifestations of the social and emotional value of honor, in Catania they give money as gifts and this means giving capacity for action for the future as a gift. They reinvent the tontine system even though the dues they collected are not fixed, as if they do not even obligate themselves to the reciprocity of giving and having. They donate money to support personal projects, fund large family parties in Dakar but also as part of the Senegalese community in Catania for the repatriation of a corpse or health care for those who are sick. Family parties and religious events are the moments when Senegalese women abandoned the image of *fatou fatou*, determined migrant female traders in Italy, sometimes aggressively defending their work, and recover the images of *drianke*, mature Senegalese women, proud of a sensuality made up of autonomy, elegance and irony.

What distinguishes Aida from other women is her effort to reinvent *teranga* on a different level of action. She discovered civic engagement thanks to her experience of migration. While she had never been an activist in Dakar, experiencing the discrimination perpetuated by "unionists" and local governments against her compatriots generated in Aida the desire to defend the rights of Senegalese people. She does not, however, recognize herself in the unwitting activism demanded of migrants by the labor union. She has always refused to protest in the streets without knowing the contents of the laws that would be protested against and refused to be a member of the labor union's migrant coordination committee when she realized that her freedom of speech would be restricted. At the same time, she does not agree with actions taken by local anti-racist activists: for her, civic engagement has to coincide with a willingness for "cooperative experimentation" (Addams 1902) with institutions for the very purpose of changing them. In 2004, Aida managed to overcome initial resistance from the Senegalese community and became the first woman on the board of the Senegalese association. In 2009, when it became evident how the consequences of the 2008 crisis were degrading the working conditions of foreign traders at the market, relying on old and new competences – as an employee of the Ministry of the Interior in Dakar and as a market trader in Sicily – she participated in forms of collaboration with institutions centered on the concrete problems experienced by foreigners, and especially her compatriots. In particular, Aida proposed to Confcommercio a pioneering experiment in the integration of foreigners in Italy: the co-management with the association of a multiethnic work training center (*patronato multietnico*) that would address both the training of foreigners for trading in Italy and of natives who proposed to invest in Africa.

More than two hundred Senegalese attended the conference to present the project, but when the association found the premises to rent for the work training center, despite the widespread consensus that the initiative aroused among foreigners, due to pressure from native traders, the Confcommercio withdrew its support for the initiative: the skills required for that project would have been absorbed by the already existing intervention units, rather than assigned to the association. In this case, as in other initiatives carried out by the association, it is the pressure exerted by external actors and groups that does not allow the experiments to take off. Italian traders, in the case of the multiethnic work training center, but also the Honorary Consul of Senegal of Sicily when Aida opened up direct collaboration between the association

and the Embassy of Senegal in Rome for a management of passport renewal with the aim to bypass disfunctions practiced by the Honorary Consul office. But intergenerational conflicts within the Senegalese community did also not allow Aida, the favored candidate, to win the election of the first foreign deputy city counsellor despite the consensus that the board had achieved among other ethnic communities around the figure of the woman. Aida was deeply disappointed by her ethnic community.

Alongside itinerancy and "troublemaking" at the market, solidarity among women and civic engagement constitute two additional forms of Aida's self-defense in Sicily: they are all moved by a sense of moral honesty. The market therefore does not end in the reciprocity of exchange between the Self and the Other but enters the lives of Senegalese women as a new process of socialization away from Senegal, reconfigures habits that migration have broken, suspends past abilities, creates new abilities, generates displacements and partial replacements of meaning that redefined attachment to family, religion, the Senegalese community in Sicily and host society in general. Senegalese women learn, in the marketplace, as a public space, to confront the tensions of a "multiple Self", to live with the contrasts between opposing moral emotions that ensued – between humiliation and freedom, invisibility and social recognition, compassion and suspicion, dependence and autonomy – to inhabit territories that redefined the boundaries between intimate and public by offering the possibility of a new women's consciousness-raising.

In-between living: Nigerian prostitution, from the forest to the Court[7]

The experience of migration can result, however, in extreme living situations that subvert the boundaries between freedom, morality and justice and inhibit imagination as the ability to "awaken emotions, make assessments, generate representations" but above all "to act and materially reorganize the environment" (Cefaï 2019: 71). Nigerian women' experiences of prostitution in Paris show how hard is to transform the relationship between the Self and the environment by living at the frontier between different "webs of life" (Mead 1938) – inside and outside prostitution.

Route de la Pyramide, within the Bois de Vincennes, urban park at the eastern margin of Paris, is the street where Nigerian women work as prostitutes. Before emigrating, most of them used to live in "ghettos" of Nigerian cities – especially from Benin City – or in rural villages. Those who arrived in France before the Covid-19 pandemic waited in Libya for weeks or months to have their destination European country assigned. A few directly reached Paris; others spent a couple of years in southern or northern Italian cities and then they moved to France. In Paris girls usually live, crammed ten to fifteen to a single room, in apartments managed directly by pimps, often in the suburbs or in the Chateau-Rouge neighborhood. In the afternoon or late evening, carrying food, wigs and all their work clothing inside a plastic bag, they reach route de la Pyramide several times a week, being bound to

[7] Louise de Carrere, in charge of the Saint Rita's branch of the association Aux Captifs, la libération in the Pigalle's neighborhood in Paris, reviewed this paragraph

pay not only the debt incurred to leave Nigeria – which can range from 20,000 to 50,000 euros depending on the network involved and the kind of journey they embark – but also rent, electricity and food for the apartment where they stay.

Some work on foot, on the sidewalk, often paired with an older woman. They turn trees on the sandy path into hangers for their bags and vests and share the sidewalk with joggers and bike riders near bushes and trees, with families, children or groups on horseback. Other girls enter inside the vans lined up on the side of the road that someone has them find directly on the spot. They light the gas lanterns, the stove, and undress while the back of the little trucks turns into a cramped bedroom. On the street or behind the van's windows, even in the coldest weather, they display their bodies naked or covered only by skimpy underwear.

Tarrius (2022) used the concept of "moral region" (Park 1915) to investigate the movements of prostitutes between the Balkans and Spain in the context of the different forms of cooperation between organized crime, migrant populations, and illicit trafficking. Focusing on the Nigerian women's experiences of prostitution in Paris, the route de la Pyramide becomes a "milieu of life" (Cefaï 2019) where problematic situations arise, generate troubles, let moralities in action emerge, and reconfigure the forms of cooperation and interdependence between the different actors involved in the networks of Nigerian prostitution: girls on the street, girls in the vans, experienced and improvised "maman", "cult"[8] members but also clients, passerby, police officers and social workers. Route de la Pyramide is a "milieu of life" (*ibid.*) where impulses and desires collapse frontiers between the intimate and the public.

The presence of Nigerian girls working on foot on the route de la Pyramide grew dramatically between 2014 and 2017 and remained high until March 2020, when the first confinement due to Covid-19 pandemic abruptly stopped the girls' activities on the street. In the post-pandemic, violence on girls by clients and passersby has changed in nature. Nigerian women of the Bois de Vincennes have always been victims of physical assaults and theft of money and phones accomplished by clients against them after sexual services but in June 2022 it was before consummating the sexual act that a client attempted to slit the throat of a girl, who survived despite the severity of her injuries. In September 2022 girls inside vans became targets of communal violence: men in cars hit the vans with air guns, shattering side and front windows of the vans' passenger compartments. The increasing appearance of policemen since summer 2022 has multiplied group escapes to the woods, eye injuries in the bushes, and bruises and fractures caused by falls in the dark of night in the woods. This goes hand in hand with a change in the organization of Nigerian networks in the Bois de Vincennes. As of late summer 2022, prostitution on foot has all but disappeared, prostitution in vans has become predominant while the presence of black men keeping watch on route de la Pyramide becomes more visible on the street: they stay between the sidewalk and the woods, showing familiarity with the girls, calling them by name, reassuring them at the sight of the cops.

[8] The "cults" are Nigerian confraternities which have their origin in secretive students groups within Nigerian higher education. They have been involved in violence and organized crime since the 1980s.

The Bois de Vincennes has also become a key reference in international Nigerian prostitution networks. Especially after the Covid-19 pandemic, there is a new intense intra-European circulation of girls of age: they come for short periods – a few weeks or months – to the route de la Pyramide from Turin, Verona, Venice, and Milan, where they have lived for up to ten years. There are also women with papers who live regularly between Italy and France; others arrive in France to try to regularize their legal position in Europe after their asylum application was rejected in Italy. But there are also many girls who live in Paris without papers and travel for work, moving for a few weeks to Lyon, Montpellier, or crossing national borders, to Brussels, Amsterdam, Hamburg.

For a few of the women of the Bois de Vincennes, the Pigalle branch of the association Aux Captifs, la libération[9] represents a "space of freedom" where they can reinvent a new habit of life and develop a new reflexivity on the experiences of prostitution lived or still in progress. Girls' contacts with the association actually begin on route de la Pyramide. In interacting with the association staff, Nigerian woman express different moral feelings. Embarrassment: when they cannot give up negotiating with clients in front of social workers. Provocation: when they flaunt their daily ties to Libya or play with their work names, brag about their many boyfriends, jest about the possibility of an unexpected pregnancy status, point out that they have no bosses and prostitute themselves despite the fact that all associations keep asking who their bosses are. Unexpected moments of confidentiality: when memories of the Mediterranean crossing or fragments of private life surface, when they declare that they do not leave prostitution because the economic help offered by institutions is insufficient to live on, but ask about the association's headquarters.

A few of them reach out to social workers for the first time at the "permanence"[10] of the Pigalle branch of the association. They do not say they want to leave prostitution. What they seek for is domiciliation, French or computer classes. Then, they start attending the "permanence" for other activities during the week – especially ateliers of art therapy, sexual health and dance therapy. Computers, notebooks, pencils, drawing papers, photos: they hardly succeed in verbalizing their experiences but communicate through objects, eyes, gestures and sometimes let their desires and confidence in new possibilities for life surface. At the "permanence" there is also a kitchen offering women the opportunity to freely use and handle the space, learn and compare French and Nigerian cooking, share a meal together. As long as they regularly attend the association, the permanence turns into a new hybrid intimate space at the frontier between school and domestic space where women create a new habit of living. As one of them states, "This is our family of France".

[9] Aux Captifs, la libération is a catholic association founded in 1981 with the aim to address prostitution and homelessness through a street-level approach. They were pioneers with regard to this in Paris. Today, the association has a well-established street outreach work and social work units covering the whole Paris. Its activities have been also extended outside Paris in recent years.

[10] I use the term in French because replacing it with "reception centre" or "welcoming centre" does not express the sense of affective and stable women's attachment to the "permanence".

The Pigalle branch in fact practices its own way of "socialization of justice" (Addams 1902): they offer Nigerian women a new "web of life" (Mead 1938), distant from that of the Bois de Vincennes, but leave them the freedom to reinvent their "public morality" (Cefaï 2019) by engaging themselves in the different processes of association, cooperation and communication pertaining four life horizons: play, inter-religious dialogue and participation, relationship with nature, and justice. As Jane Addams argued (Bianchi 2011), also the association pays deep attention to foster Nigerian women's joyful dimension of life.

First of all, what Nigerian women appreciate the most is the Uno card game that gives rise to a women's "world-building activity" (Goffman 1972: 25) where communication occurs through moves rather than messages (*ibid.*: 32). Nigerian women and association's personnel play the Uno game together, sharing moments of amusement so intense as to push Nigerian women, whether still in prostitution or not anymore, to regularly travel by public transportation for more than one hour and a half from Paris suburbs to the "permanence" in Pigalle. "When you play Uno, you're focused and you don't think about the rest. You just have fun", says G. The Uno card game reshuffles the boundaries between the intimate and the public: it encourages interaction between women who are still in prostitution and women who are out of prostitution, flattens asymmetries between social workers and Nigerian women, gives the opportunity to exhibit attributes valued in the wider social world, such as knowledge, intelligence, courage, and self-control (*ibid.*: 61), and to virtually live an interaction shaped by mutual fatefulness, rather than mutual influence (*ibid.*: 33).

Second, Nigerian women experiment with inter-religious imagination. It is well-known that they make an oath of allegiance, commonly referred as *juju*, in front of a so-called "native doctor"[11], to ensure debt payment incurred to emigrate from Nigeria. Despite being Pentecostal believers, they seek the help of the Catholic church to be liberated from the influence of the *juju*. In the past a Catholic priest carried out an inter-religious experiment with the aim to deconstruct the *juju* ritual. He began to practice with the woman asking to be liberated an individual prayer based on images opposed to those of the *juju*: the Jesus's sacrifice of life against the *juju* sacrifice of the animal; the welcoming of the Bethel, the "House of God", as a way to delegitimize the pact between the woman and the "native doctors", liberation by the work of God and the priest's fraternal accompaniment, rather than as the result of the actions of a "medicine man" of Christianity. The experiment was so successful that it prompted many women, once felt as liberated, to denounce Nigerian networks. On March 9 2018, Oba Ewuare II, the King of Benin (current Edo State, Nigeria) ordered "native doctors" of Edo State to revoke all of the curses and oaths placed on girls exposed to human trafficking, himself invoking a curse on all those "native doctors" who continue to force or coerce girls into taking oaths: this coincided with the decline of demand for being liberated from juju at the "Aux Captifs, la libération" branch in Pigalle. Experimenting with inter-religious imagination, however, goes on.

[11] A "native doctor" or "medicine man" is a traditional healer and spiritual leader who serves a community of indigenous people. He is supposed to have supernatural powers of curing disease and controlling spirits.

Nigerian women make connections between game and spirituality: "Permanence is like God: when I'm sad, I come to the "permanence", I play Uno and I find my smile again": says B. who comes with her little one-year-old daughter on her back while waiting for the outcome of her asylum-seeking application. Religious symbols may create unexpected troubles. A woman coming for the first time at the association stared at the wooden statue of Joseph, Mary and Jesus in a corner of the permanence for a few minutes: she takes small steps back and forth while continuing to look at that sculpture and then walks away, saying: "If I will have the courage, I will be back next week". She never came back to the permanence and never met again on route de la Pyramide. Meanwhile, the boundaries between French and Nigerian churches become porous when Nigerian women bring the sound of African drums and their singing in English to the small church of Saint Rita in Pigalle, when they pray and have dinner with Catholic believers monthly, when a few of them attend participatory activities for the strategic plan of the association within the framework of the 2021-2023 synodal renewal of the Catholic church.

Along with the game and inter-religious experimentation, another activity plays an important role: interacting with unknown natural environments accelerates women's times of emotional processing of their experiences when they participate at the breakup-stays, short periods – from 2 to 5 days – of time away from Paris. They discover life aboard a sailing ship, spend a weekend in the countryside in Normandy, put themselves at the service of people with disabilities in the Burgundy Franche-Comté region. On February 2022 five Nigerian women reached, with a social worker and a volunteer, the Jura mountains at the frontier with Suisse. There, the relationship with nature generates unexpected commensurabilities between seemingly distant experiences. The sight of a chicken, often used in *juju* sacrifices, can terrify more than a poisonous snake, making the girl run away. Raising cows for organic milk production causes Nigerian women's silent puzzlement, disgust and rejection of the milk produced: "Producing milk needs exploitation, like prostitution!", says one of them, being back to the guest house from the farm. Cultivating the land brings back dormant memories of childhood in the village: they chase each other amusedly, ride their bikes on country paths, throw themselves on the lawn, do cartwheels as if they had become children again. The snow, seen by them for the first time in their life, gives them a sensation of innocent freedom: they all launch themselves on sleds into the snow, jump out of the sleds, fall on the snow, lie there, smiling, eyes closed. One of them, on the very day of our return to Paris, hurried to reach the river that runs alongside the house where we were hosted, to conserve water that comes "from the mountain where God lives": she did firmly believe that this would act as a blessing for her new life out of prostitution.

As long as attending the "permanence" creates a new habit, distant from prostitution at the Bois de Vincennes, in Nigerian women's life, access to French justice gradually becomes their priority. Breaking the link with trafficking networks is an important step since it deprives the girls of the availability of an apartment. The moment they seek help from social workers for housing they begin to face the difficult work of critically assessing their own life history and the most appropriate legal device of the three provided by the French system of justice. Alongside the two old ones – asylum application and the lawsuit against human trafficking – both of

which require the girl to self-report as a victim of human trafficking, since 2016, the third device, the PSP (*Parcour de Sortie de la Prostitution*), provided by the law on the criminalization of the client (Law 2016-444 of April 13, 2016*)*, allows Nigerian women to leave prostitution without declaring themselves victims of trafficking but by providing firm evidence of interruption of prostitution on the basis of regular monitoring carried out by specific territorial commissions. Girls are ever more using the PSP. It has been stated that during the Covid-19 pandemic there was a 35% increase in demands of PSP in France[12]. Of those five girls who spent in the mountains in February 2022 none had yet come out of prostitution except one at that time. In October 2022 two of them no longer attended the association: one of them applied for PSP outside Ile de France, the other one has disappeared. The remaining three chose different pathways out of prostitution: one filed a complaint against Nigerian networks, one had her asylum application rejected and is trying PSP, and a third is in PSP.

Embarking on a legal path of regularization they long to gain the freedom to work in Europe but unpredictably they find themselves suffering for the intimate conflict between two desires. On the one hand, the "desire for response" is reinforced (Thomas 1923). They want to get married and start a family: not having children becomes a source of stress[13]. On the other hand, they are driven by a "desire for recognition" (*ibid.*): they want to achieve autonomy by devoting themselves to vocational training to work as caregivers, subway conductors, seamstresses, boulangerie employees. There are those who burst into tears of happiness when they realize they have gained the freedom to work in Europe after bringing complaints to trafficking networks. If they have applied for asylum at OFPRA (*Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et Apatrides*), they may find themselves in the waiting room at CNDA (*Cour nationale du droit d'asile*), alone and sadly looking down, appealing against the rejection of their application made by OFPRA. At the hearing, they show the judge that they are already in PSP and have filed a complaint against the "maman" as evidence of a final break with prostitution. Increasingly, girls who have been denied asylum as victims of trafficking come forward with a man and children requesting refugee status for their female daughter as she is exposed to the risk of genital mutilation in her country of origin. Some girls decide to file a complaint but remain silent before the policeman in the police station.

When the complaint leads to a court trial in the Court of Assize, the girls may find themselves unexpectedly exposed to re-traumatization due to the long timeframe of the French justice system. In 2020, the first trial took place in Paris in which a group of sixteen Nigerian girls who came of age, albeit as minors in 2015,

[12] Fact-S (2021), La situation de la prostitution en France. Analyse des associations de terrain sur l'impact de la loi du 13 avril 2016 et recommandations pour une phase II, Fevrier 2021, https://fondationscelles.org/pdf/FACTS/RAPPORT-FACTS-V2-23MARS2021.pdf. It should be specified that the report has been prepared by abolitionist associations supporting the law.

[13] They are distant from the ways in which Jane Addams represented young women in prostitution as unable to overcome a progressive state of moral dissolution making them reject the value of motherhood and family (see Addams, Jane.1912).

filed as plaintiffs against Nigerian trafficking networks[14]. Since then, they are still waiting to close a dramatic chapter in their lives that the justice system's timeframe does not allow an end to. Hearings and trials postponed, testimony repeated over and over again, on video and in person. But above all, what was extremely controversial, as a lawyer noticed, was the charismatic influence that men, rather than the "maman", exerted on the girls. When faced with the accused, one lost her words, remained silent, looked terrified and then unexpectedly became saddened and expressed compassion for the accused despite having received the maximum sentence as the girl herself wished. Still unsolved intimate troubles and visceral impulses continue to inhibit reflexivity and overwhelm public space.

Cities as laboratories of international welfare? Some open issues.

In the late nineteenth century, women made a major contribution to the effervescence of a community movement that addressed the problems of urbanization and industrialization without limiting itself to local actions but questioning the emergence of a "new State" (Follett, 1918), the consequences of transnational migration, and the state of degradation of a politics constrained by expert knowledge or financial logic. Social settlements and community centers offered women – as well as the many migrant and indigenous populations that inhabited the most marginal neighborhoods in North American cities – the opportunity to expand their civic, social and political freedoms by coming into contact with social worlds perceived as distant, incommunicable, incommensurable through engagement in activities of inquiry, discussion and experimentation. They were "spaces of freedom" in which people became authors of a "practical politics" (Follett 1918: 265), reached new civic, political and social rights, reinvented the relationship between science and democracy.

Today, migrant women turn their troubles into new "spaces of freedom" in cities that are increasingly distressed, fragile and affected by different forms of social injustice. The freedom they practice is never disjointed from morality, nor does it coincide with a "metaphysical freedom of will", as Dewey (1922: 303) would say. It can all start simply with care for butterflies in a private garden of Chicago neighborhood and then give rise to a group of women, documented and undocumented, of different nationalities, advocating for green spaces as labor's rights against gentrification and climate change. A public space like the Sicilian outdoor market can make a Senegalese woman practice her micropolitics of self-defense to maintain moral honesty and, at the time, transform her way of living ethnic community's habits, women's solidarity and civic action. Nigerian women of the Bois de Vincennes attending the little "permanence" in Pigalle may find themselves in an in-between living until they are able to integrate impulses and

[14] The plaintiff was organized by the association Mist (Mission d'intervention et de sensibilisation contre la traite des êtres humains/ "Intervention and awareness mission against human trafficking") founded by two French experts on human trafficking and a few Nigerian women in January 2020. The association is committed to develop a methodology and an expertise on participatory action for persons who have been victims of human trafficking or pimping.

desires, acquire reflexivity on their experience of prostitution and reinvent the frontiers between the intimate and the public.

Cities thus emerge as laboratories for experimenting with an international welfare that makes the "multiple Self", with its creative tensions between conflicting impulses, emotions and desires, as an inexhaustible source of moral and civic imagination. New horizons for action and reflection are thus opened.

First, we need to explore moral and civic imagination with which migrant women face the problematic situations that cities pose and materially re-organize their living spaces. How do women evaluate their own moral emotions and desires? How do their troubles move from one domain of action to another? What commensurabilities between experiences and/or contexts emerge? How do these commensurabilities turn into association, cooperation, and communication?

Second, the emotional, which is cognitive and visceral, imposes itself as an essential dimension in drawing new relationships between science and democracy. Priority must be given to how women translate their troubles into processes of inquiry in the course of which they gain knowledge of facts and "employ them in connection with desires and aims" (Dewey 1922: 303) or translate "the things of the environment unknown and incommunicable by human beings in terms of their own activities and sufferings" (Dewey 1946: 173). What are the obstacles that prevent migrant women from letting their experiences emerge and reconfigure the asymmetries of relationships in which they operate in the everyday?

Third, migrant women translate their own troubles into sequences of displacements and partial replacements, at different degrees of accessibility, publicity and visibility, through which they widen or narrow their "webs of life" (Mead 1938): "spaces of freedom" are experiments in an international welfare and give rise to territories transversal to pre-defined geographic-administrative identities, whether a neighborhood or the Nation-State, however centered on the resolution of "problematic situations" (Dewey 1938) they experience.

A pragmatist-feminist approach on cities, gender and international welfare is only in its infancy. It would be necessary to extend the look at how individuals and groups with different and/or overlapping identities – gender, class, ethnicity, religion, etc. – experience the problems that cities pose and create their new "spaces of freedom". Collaborative research becomes imperative.

References

Addams, Jane. 1899. "A Function of the Social Settlement." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 13(3): 33–55.

Addams, Jane. 1902. *Democracy and Social Ethics*, New York: Macmillan.

Addams, Jane. 1907. "Utilization of Women in City Government". In Id., *Newer Ideal of Peace*, chap. VII: 180–208, New York: The Macmillan Company.

Addams, Jane. 1910. "Women and Public Housekeeping." New York: National Woman Suffrage Pub. Co. Inc.

Addams, Jane. 1910. *Twenty-Years at Hull House with Autobiographical Notes*, New York: Macmillan Company.

Addams, Jane. 1912. *A New Conscience and an Ancient Evil*. New York: Macmillan Company.

Addams, Jane. 1916. *The Long Road of Woman's Memory*. New York: Macmillan.

Addams, Jane. 1929. "The Settlement as a Way of Life." *Neighborhood*, 2: 39–146.

Bianchi, Bruna. 2004. "Il pensiero sociale di Jane Addams (1881-1916)". In Jane Addams, (ed. by Bruna Bianchi), *Donne, immigrati, governo delle città. Scritti sull'etica sociale*, 7-67. Santa Maria Capua Vetere: Edizioni Spartaco.

Bianchi, Bruna. 2011. "Lavoro e criminalità dei giovani immigrati a Chicago negli scritti di Jane Addams (1889-1912)." *Giornale di Storia Contemporanea* 1: 7–25.

Cefaï, Daniel. 2015. "Mondes sociaux. Enquête sur un héritage de l'écologie humaine à Chicago," *SociologieS* (Dossier "Pragmatisme et sciences sociales: explorations, enquêtes, expérimentations"). On-line: [http://sociologies.revues.org/4921].

Cefaï, Daniel. 2019. "Les problèmes, leur expériences et leurs publics, Une enquête pragmatiste." *Sociologie et Sociétés*, 51(1-2): 33–91. On-line: [https://www.erudit.org/fr/revues/socsoc/2019-v51-n1-2-socsoc05787/1074730ar/]

Cefaï, Daniel. 2020. "La naissance de l'expérimentation démocratique. Quelques hypothèses de travail du pragmatism." *Pragmata*, 3: 270–355. On-line: [https://revuepragmata.files.wordpress.com/2021/04/pragmata-2020-3-7-cefai.pdf]

Cefaï, Daniel. 2021. "Politique pragmatiste et social settlements. De nouveaux publics aux Etats-Unis à l'ère progressiste." *Pragmata*, 4: 342–518. On-line: [https://revuepragmata.files.wordpress.com/2021/10/7-pragmata-4-cefai.pdf]

Dewey, John. 1922. *Human Nature and Conduct: An Introduction to Social Psychology*. New York: Modern Library.

Dewey, John. 1934. *Art as Experience*. New York: Capricorn Books.

Dewey, John. 1938. *Experience and Education*. New York: Macmillan Company.

Dewey, John. 1946. *The Public and its Problems*. Chicago: Gateway Books (or. ed., 1927. New York: Henry Holt and Company).

Du Bois, William Edward B. 1903. *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches*. Chicago: A. C. McClurg & co.

Duneier, Mitchell. 1999. *Sidewalk*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Emerson Robert M. & Messinger Sheldon L. 1977. "The Micro-Politics of Trouble." *Social Problems* 25(2): 121-134.

Follett, Mary P. 1918. *The New State: Group Organization, the Solution of Popular Government*. New York: Longmans, Green and Co.

Follett, Mary P. 1919. "Community is a process." *The Philosophical Review* 28(6): 576-588.

Follett, Mary P. 1924. *Creative Experience*. New York: Longmans, Green and Co.

Geertz, Clifford. 1979. "Suq: the bazaar economy in Sefrou." In Clifford Geertz, Hildred Geertz and Lawrence Rosen (eds.) *Meaning and order in Moroccan society: three essays in cultural analysis*, 123–313. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gilligan, Carole. 1982. *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: Harvard University Press.

Goffman Erving. 1972. *Encounters. Two Studies in the Sociology of Interaction*. London: Penguin Books.

Hayden, Dolores. 1981. *The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods and Cities*. Cambridge, Mass. and London, England: MIT Press.

Jacobs, Jane. 1961. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Modern Library.

James, William. 1890. *The Principles of Psychology: Volume One*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

Jerolmack, Colin. 2013. *The Global Pigeon*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Khaïry Coulibaly, Oumoul. 2007. "Approche typologique des circulations commerciales féminines sénégalaises : pour une analyse genrée." In Cedril Audebert and Emmanuel Ma Mung (eds.), *Les migrations internationales : enjeux contemporains et questions nouvelles*, 283–295. Bilbao: Université de Deusto.

Kapchan, Deborah. 1996. *Gender on the market. Moroccan women and the revoicing of tradition*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Keith, Heather E. 1999. "Feminism and Pragmatism: George Herbert Mead's Ethics of Care." *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, 35(2): 328-344.

Mansbridge, Jane. 1993. "Feminism and Democratic Community." *Nomos* 35: 339–395.

Mead, George Herbert. 1938a. "Miscellaneous Fragments" Essay 31. In Charles W. Morris with John M. Brewster, Albert M. Dunham and David Miller (eds.), *The Philosophy of the Act*, 606–66. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1938.

Mead, George Herbert. 1938b. "Perception and the Spatiotemporal," Essay 13 in Charles W. Morris with John M. Brewster, Albert M. Dunham and David Miller (eds.), *The Philosophy of the Act*, 174–204. Chicago: University of Chicago.

Park, Robert Ezra.1915. "The City: Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behavior in the City Environment." *American Journal of Sociology* 20(5): 577–612.

Park, Robert Ezra. 1928. "Human Migration and the Marginal Man." *American Journal of Sociology* (33)6: 881-883.

Park, Robert Ezra. 1929. "The City as a Social Laboratory". In Thomas Smith and Leonard White (eds.), *An Experiment in Social Research*, 1–19. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Proto, Brigida. 2018. *Al mercato con Aida. Una donna senegalese in Sicilia*. Roma: Carocci.

Seigfried, Charlene Haddock. 1991a. "Where are all the pragmatist feminists?." *Hypatia* 6(2): 1–20.

Seigfried, Charlene Haddock. 1991b. "The Missing Perspective: Feminist Pragmatism." *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 27(4): 405–416.

Seigfried, Charlene Haddock. 1993. "Shared Communities of Interest: Feminism and Pragmatism." *Hypatia*, 8(2): 1-14.

Seigfried, Charlene Haddock. 1996. *Pragmatism and Feminism. Reweaving the social fabric*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Smith, Dorothy. 1971. "Household Space and Family Organization." *The Pacific Sociological Review* 14(1): 53-78.

Stavo-Debauge, Joan. 2017. *Qu'est-ce que l'hospitalité? Recevoir l'étranger à la communauté*. Montréal: Éd. Liber.

Stonequist, Everett Verner. 1935. "The Problem of the Marginal Man." *American Journal of Sociology* 41(1): 1-12.

Tarrius, Alain. 1992. *Les Fourmis d'Europe. Migrants riches, migrants pauvres et nouvelles villes internationals*. Paris: L'Harmattan.

Tarrius, Alain. 2022. *Trafics de femmes. Au cœur de l'Europe, allers et retours entre les Balkans et l'Espagne*. La Tour d'Aigues: l'Aube.

Thomas, William Isaac. 1923. *The Unadjusted Girl: with cases and standpoint for behavior analysis*. Boston: Brown & Company.

Wirth, Louis. 1938. "Urbanism as a Way of Life." *American Journal of Sociology* 44 (1): 1-24.

Woods, Robert Archey. 1893. "The University Settlement Idea." In Jane Addams, Robert Archey Woods and al., *Philanthropy and Social Progress*, 57–97. New York and Boston: Thomas Y. Crowell & Company.

Woods, Robert Archey. 1914. "The neighborhood in social reconstruction." *American Journal of Sociology*, 19(5): 577-591.