

Europe of Migrations: Policies, Legal Issues and Experiences

Edited by
Serena Baldin
and Moreno Zago



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The Pakistani Community in Italy: Religion, Kinship and Authority

DIEGO ABENANTE*

1. INTRODUCTION

Pakistani migration to Italy is a relatively late phenomenon in the general framework of the movement of laborers from the South Asian region to the West. Not only it has emerged late in comparison with the long-established flux to northern Europe, but it has also been slow in its growth, a fact that has led the observers to give only sporadic attention to this phenomenon (there seems to be in fact a paucity of studies on Pakistani migration to Italy, although this vacuum may soon be filled by a growing quantity of research devoted to the topic; see, for example, the doctoral thesis by Cavenaghi 2013). In fact, the presence of the Pakistani communities in Italy is a factor which can no longer be considered temporary, given that it has already led to the formation of households on Italian soil, especially in the urban areas of northern Italy. It is therefore important to understand the evolution of the Pakistani community in Italy, its structure and its cultural dynamics.

The movement of Pakistani workers to Europe has obviously developed in connection with colonial rule, and has therefore interested Britain in the first place. The Pakistani presence in Britain has to be seen as the continuation of a

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stable flow of migrants from different parts of India that began in the late-nineteenth century, and that after the end of the British Raj led to the creation of large migrant communities of Indian, Pakistani, and, later, Bangladeshi origin, especially in the urban areas of London and Manchester. The flow followed the three-stage mechanism described by Lewis (Lewis 1994, 16-17): first, the generation of the “pioneers”; secondly, the formation of households through family reunion; finally, the formation of a British-born Pakistani generation. This steady flux of migrants would later be affected by the decision of the British authorities – with the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Acts, and then with the Immigration Act of 1971 – to abolish the automatic entry of Commonwealth citizens to the United Kingdom, and to link it to specific requirements. The ’60’s and ’70s were therefore a watershed for South Asian migration: the reduction of work opportunities in the United Kingdom, together with the rapidly growing force of both skilled and unskilled laborers in South Asia, which could not be absorbed by the local job market, saw the flow redirecting towards other destinations.

This movement initially interested the Scandinavian and Middle Eastern countries. Pakistani workers, in particular, migrated to Denmark, Norway and Sweden between the late 1960s and early ’70s (Rytter 2010, 94). During the same period, the increasing demand for workers from the oil-producing countries of the Middle East emerged as a major economic opportunity for South Asian workers. In the first half of the ’70s Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Oman had hired mainly workers from the neighboring Arab countries; however, from 1975 onwards the Arab workers became no longer sufficient to meet the demand of the oil and infrastructure industries in the Gulf. Religious and cultural reasons made Pakistan, India and Bangladesh the favored choices for hiring laborers (Brown 2006, 50-52). The movement from South Asia to the Gulf Countries was important for two reasons: first, the remittances of the workers to the home countries during the ’70s became one of the most important sources of public income for the South Asian economies. Secondly, the religious connections, which were established through the channel of migration, were to become a major factor for the growth of revivalist Islamic trends in the South Asian States, especially Pakistan: the influence from the Gulf States’ conservative religious environment contributed to the increasing radicalization of Pakistani society during the ’70s and ’80s (Talbot 1998; Nasr 2000; Zaman 1998).

It is to note, however, that the migration from South Asia to the Middle East was significantly different from the older flux to Europe. The legal obstacles posed by the Arab States to the permanence of the workers in the countries, after the expiry of their contract, made the migration of South Asians to the Gulf a temporary phenomenon. This circumstance has prevented the creation of a South Asian community in the Gulf States, while creating the ground for further migration routes (Arif 1998, 99-100). Other relevant factors were the introduction of stricter immigration laws by the Northern European governments during the ’60s and ’70s, and the decline of work opportunities in the Middle East due to the

political turmoil of the following years, especially the first Gulf War. The combination of these factors led to a gradual shifting of the migration route away from the traditional North-European and Arab destinations, towards Southern Europe, especially Italy, Spain, and Greece. In recent years, the emergence of the «Arab springs» in the Middle East in 2010-11 – especially the collapse of the Syrian State – has reinforced the migration trend. The flux of refugees caused by these crises has strengthened the older migration routes from Central and South Asia, particularly Pakistan, Afghanistan and, to a minor extent, India and Bangladesh. However, the connection of this late flux of migrants to the political crises is to be taken with caution; more often than not, it may be seen as the reemergence of the old economic migration patterns, which have spontaneously amalgamated with the political asylum seekers from the Middle East.

The following analysis of the Pakistani presence in Italy moves from the assumption that their community is not a homogeneous one, being composed of at least two different waves of migration: the most recent immigrants have settled in an environment characterized by a network of communities who have been residing in Italy since the 1990s; while the older settlers have made their choice of living permanently in Italy – and have reunited with their families or married in Pakistan through traditional patterns – the more recent settlers still perceive Italy as an intermediate step. They have not chosen Italy as their ultimate destination and, therefore, their attitude to Italian society is influenced by this condition.

2. MIGRATION IN PAKISTANI CULTURE

The idea of migration is central to both Islamic and Pakistani imagination. As it has been correctly noted, Islam itself was born through the experience of migration, or *hijra*. According to Muslim tradition, the Prophet Muhammad migrated from Mecca to Medina to establish the first political and religious community of Islam (Allievi 2002, 40; Abenante, Battera 2011, 125). Islamic culture has therefore developed around the idea of migration as a step towards the implementation of God's message. In this context, the sacrifices and difficulties that the migrant encounters in order to fulfil the divine command are particularly meritorious, and deserving the community's praise. According to this concept, the act of migration has mainly been conceived as the pattern towards the establishment of an Islamic society. From the Islamic point of view, at least in theory, migration should not lead the Muslims to be a minority in a largely non-Muslim society, but only to the establishment of a *dar al-islam*, the land where Islam predominates (Allievi 2002, 40). This said, the historical phenomenon of migration has *de facto* created a new dimension – which has been called *dar al-hijra* (abode of migration) – that, although ambiguous in Islamic terms, has nevertheless imposed itself in practice (Castro 1996, 271; Abenante, Battera, 126).

Moreover, other authors have argued that migration has added a new meaning to the concept of *hijra*: this would no longer be a movement from a non-Muslim to a Muslim land to live an Islamic way of life, but a movement to a non-Muslim land with better economic opportunities (Metcalf 1996, 19). In this context, the case of South Asian Muslims would have a special significance, in so far as Islam in the Subcontinent has shaped its own ideas and values in a period when it had no political power and was numerically a minority.

The experience of migration for the Muslims is also particularly powerful, because it leads the believers to move from an environment where Islam is «visible» in every aspect of daily life, to a dimension where it is almost absent in the public sphere. This shift may lead the Muslims towards a condition of «dis-orientation», or uncertainty about their identity and place in society (Roy 2003, 64-69; Allievi 2002, 40-41). The psychological strain brought by the necessity to adapt to the new reality is also accompanied by the contact with Muslims coming from other societies. For many migrants, the experience of living near people who practice a different form of Islam is a deeply touching one, and it may lead to reflect on their own religious identity, and on the relationship between Islam as a universal religion and the diversity of Muslim societies (Eickelman, Piscatori 1990, XV). In other words, they may begin to «objectify» Islam, in the sense of «self-examination, judging others, and judging oneself» (Metcalf 1996, 7). For this reason, «migrant Islam» may tend naturally to emphasize its universal, «orthodox» interpretation at the expense of the local practice. Therefore, migration brings into question the unresolved contradiction between unity and diversity in Islam, which has been at the core of Muslim life for much of its history. This sociological process of adjustment and reflection, which has been termed «islamization of the self» (Metcalf 1996, 7), bears a particular importance for the Italian experience where – unlike France, Britain or Germany – there is no dominant ethnic community of migrants.

There is also a historically rooted connection between the cultural value attached to migration and the formation of the Pakistani State. In fact, in Pakistan as in few other countries – notably the State of Israel – the concept of the Nation-State has developed with a strong connection with the idea of the physical movement of people. Just as with the Islamic *umma*, the State of Pakistan was created in 1947 through the migration of millions of Muslim citizens who left India to reach the newly created «Muslim homeland». The ordeal of the migrants has been equated, in the Pakistani political discourse, with that of the first Arab migrants in the history of Islam, and has been attributed the symbolically important title of *muhajir* (those who made the *hijra*). Their experience has become enshrined with the identity of Pakistan itself, as the symbol of courage and selflessness for the benefit of the community. This discourse has contributed to the development, not only symbolically but also politically, of Pakistan as a «migrant State» (Shaikh 2009, 47). However, the centrality of the idea of physical movement of people in the process of State building brought with it an ambiguity be-

tween the crucially important role played by migration, and the difficulties that the State itself has encountered in developing its own national identity. Unlike Israel, Pakistan had to face the difficult task of amalgamating the migrants from India with the 70 million local Muslims already living in the land, at the time of the foundation of Pakistan. The difficulties of this encounter, and the cultural obstacles defying the efforts to defining who is «the true Pakistani», have contributed to the State's struggle to establish its own identity (Shaikh 2009, 46-57). There was certainly an ambiguity in the definition of Pakistan as a «homeland», while at the same time emphasizing migration as its core meaning. Moreover, the connection between Pakistan ideology and Islam was, at once, crucial and problematic: it was crucial for the definition of Pakistan *vis-à-vis* India; but it was also bound to create further cultural ambiguities, because it called into question the nature of Islam in South Asia, whose «local» or «foreign» nature had been debated at least since the nineteenth century.

Therefore, Pakistan has always been a destination – perhaps a *utopia* – as much as a place of departure in search for the true self. This ambiguity must not be neglected in any analysis of migration to Europe: the fact that the migrants' parents were, very often, migrants themselves – or descendants of migrants – add a lay of complexity to their adaption to the new society. The ambiguity of the Pakistani sphere of belonging and the migrants' effort to relocate into the European society are very much interconnected (Shaikh, 2009).

3. PAKISTANIS IN ITALY: WHO ARE THEY?

We have seen that the Pakistani migrants in Italy are, generally speaking, of recent arrival in the country, the early communities having settled in the 1990s. The developing nature of Pakistani presence may also explain some of the basic sociological characteristics of the community, which stands apart from other Asian or Middle Eastern groups. These features are the relatively low age of the community, and it being mostly made of unmarried male members. Taking as a reference the already quoted pattern of migration outlined by Lewis, Pakistanis in Italy are for the most in the early stage; the family reunion process appears to be still in its initial phase (Lewis 1994, 17).

According to the most recent available data, there are about 116.000 Pakistanis in Italy, representing about 3% of the non-EU citizens (Ministero del Lavoro 2015, 6). However, the community is rapidly growing: the number of registered Pakistani citizens has increased of about 9%, between 2014 and 2015, which has allowed the community to move from the 14th to the current 11th place among the migrants' nationalities in this country. Interestingly enough, this trend contradicts the evolution of other, long-established non-EU communities, as the Moroccan, the Tunisian, and the Albanian, which after years of stable growth have registered a marked decrease in 2015. The growing Pakistani – and, gener-

ally speaking, South Asian – presence is gradually changing the landscape of the non-EU immigrant communities in Italy; a fact that should be taken into account by the authorities and the analysts, given that it is bound to have relevant consequences from the religious, cultural and political points of view.

The average age of the Pakistani citizens is 28, which is sensibly lower than the general population of non-EU migrants. Moreover, 28% of the community is of minor age, which amounts to approximately 3.5% of the total non-EU migrant population (Ministero del Lavoro 2015, 7). However, the fact that the percentage of minors has reduced from 30.9% in 2013 to 28% in 2015 seems to indicate a tendency to conform to the general socio-demographic trend (IDOS 2013, 1-2). The same may be said of the gender-related structure: as noted above, the Pakistani population is currently overwhelmingly male (69%), still, the process of family reunion will probably reduce this imbalance. In 2015, about 26% of the new entries from Pakistan to Italy were due to family reunions. Two further features characterize the community, as compared to other nationalities: one is the almost total absence of the female component from the workspace; only about 4.5% of the women of the community are employed, as compared to 46.8% of the non-EU migrant population. This data may certainly be explained with the conservative character of Pakistani society, taking also into account the rural background of many migrants. This factor must be placed in the context of a low level of employment of the community. According to the latest data, only about 57.9% of the male Pakistani population is employed, which is significantly lower than the average data for non-EC migrants (64.7%). The low rate of working activity of the Pakistanis is mirrored by their poor level of education: about one fifth of its members (18.3% as compared to 11.7% of the general non-EC citizens) have completed only the primary school, while the secondary school diploma is possessed by a half of the community (49.8%). It is important to note that the placement of the Pakistani community in the job market may be influenced by its preference for autonomous work, rather than dependent employment. In fact, the rate of Pakistani citizens working as autonomous dealers and artisans is considerably higher than that of the other non-EU communities, and place the Pakistanis as the ninth community in Italy, when ownership of individual companies is considered (Ministero del Lavoro 2015, 9).

The analysis of the motivations to migrate shows a slow but steady process of change, which is clearly connected to the evolution of the political scene in the region of origin. The economic factor as the main reason to migrate, which predominates among the old-established Pakistani families in Italy, has gradually given way to a mixed economic-humanitarian motivation. In 2015, the applications by Pakistani citizens of residency permits for political and humanitarian reasons have been 18.7%, as compared to about 7% of the non-EU population. The high number of the applications is connected with the deteriorating political situation in Pakistan, particularly along the Northwestern regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) bordering

Afghanistan. However, war and political turmoil often play the role of the ultimate factor, in a decision process mainly determined by the need for better life conditions, work opportunities and familial economic improvement. In fact, although a large number of the Pakistanis applying for residence in Italy tend to indicate the FATA as their region of origin, in many cases they are not able to provide evidence of their connection with this region. It seems likely, therefore, that political and humanitarian factors often conceal economic motivations as the main reasons to migrate. Not surprisingly, the majority of Pakistani citizens have settled in the urban areas of Northern and Central Italy, where there are better employment opportunities. The two regions with the larger Pakistani population are Lombardia (38.4%), and Emilia-Romagna (21%), followed by Toscana (6.2%). The community shows a clear tendency to settle down, as compared to other communities of Asian origin. In fact, the number of Pakistanis applying for long-term stay in Italy is sensibly superior to those from other communities from the Indian subcontinent or from other regions of Asia (Ministero del Lavoro 2015, 7). Moreover, the number of marriages between a Pakistani and an Italian citizen has increased considerably in the past three years. This fact, together with the relatively high number of Pakistanis who have received the Italian citizenship through marriage, residence or transmission, seems to confirm the tendency towards their stabilization in the country (Ministero del Lavoro 2015, 11).

It is also important to note that, apart from the skilled and unskilled laborers, there is also a phenomenon of intellectual migration that, although numerically marginal, is nonetheless significant from the cultural point of view. This Pakistani diaspora is made of scientists and intellectuals that have migrated to Italy for study, research or family reasons. One interesting example of this phenomenon is given by the group of Pakistani scientists that have been present since the 1960s at the International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) of Miramare, near Trieste. The Centre itself was founded by the Pakistani Nobel laureate Abdus Salam (1926-1996), and it has led to a stable presence of scientists from Pakistan, among whom we may mention the late theoretical physicist prof. Faheem Hussain (1942-2009), who had also been a professor at the Lahore University of Management Sciences. The Muslim intellectuals living in the West have often claimed for themselves a role as a «heroic» and more progressive élite; similarly, Pakistani intellectuals in Europe have frequently taken a strong stance about the issue of democracy in their country of origin, or have expressed modernist views on the relation between Islam and society (Metcalf 1996, 19). The intellectual diaspora adds, therefore, yet another significance to the act of migration, where *hijra* acquires the meaning of liberating oneself from the bounds of an oppressive regime, or from a State-sponsored vision of Islam.

4. A MULTIFACETED ISLAM

Pakistani presence in Italy obviously brings with it the peculiarities of South Asian Islam. Approximately 96.5% of the Pakistani population is Muslim; the religious minorities, mainly Christian and Hindu, constitute about 3.5% of the population. In the Indian Subcontinent, Islam has been historically plural, and different schools of religious and legal thought have traditionally coexisted, from Sunni to Twelver *shi'a*, to Ismaili. Moreover, the early and long-lasting contact of South Asian Muslims with European rule produced «different ways of being Muslims», which are also relevant to our discourse because they «can have significantly different attitudes to the State, in particular the non-Muslim State» (Robinson 1988, 3). Most of these responses have emerged between the second half of the nineteenth and the early-twentieth century, and have their roots in ideas of religious reform and revival. These trends still characterize Muslim societies in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh today.

Paradoxically, the same religious currents that were born during the colonial era with the aim of enabling Islam to survive in an environment dominated by European power, have been brought to Europe through the migration channel. The model of Islam it envisaged was based on the idea of ignoring political power: it was an apolitical version of Islam. For the majority of Muslims in South Asia, in the nineteenth and early-twentieth century, the State was irrelevant because it was in European hands. The Muslim learned men – or *'ulama* – who lived in this environment tried to build a model of Islam based only on the social and religious institutions – mosques, schools –, without any interference from the State. This attitude was shared in particular by the Deobandi and Ahl-i Hadith schools. A sensibly different attitude was offered by the Barelwi school, which emerged around the same time as a reaction to the reformist view of the two former schools. Religiously speaking, the Barelwis differ from the Deobandis and the Ahl-i Hadiths because the former defend the custom-centered, popular Islam of the saints' shrines, while the latter have a critical attitude towards popular religious practices. Apart from their religious ideas, however, there is no great difference in the attitude of the three schools towards the State, although the Barelwis may have a more sympathetic approach towards political institutions (Robinson 1988, 3-6). The greatest difference in relation to power may be found between the above three schools and the supporters of the Jama'at-i-Islami party. This organization is part of the twentieth century Islamic revival, often called in the West «fundamentalist», and has been since 1941 its main representative in South Asia. The Jama'at's attitude to political power is radically different from the nineteenth century schools. The State, in the Jama'at's vision, is the main instrument in order to obtain the islamization of society, which constitutes the main goal of the party. This project, however, according to the founder of the movement, Abu-a-la Maududi (1903-1979), has to be carried on along strictly peaceful lines,

and through the participation of the party in the democratic process (Robinson 1988, 10-4).

In sum, it is reasonable to expect, from Pakistani Muslims belonging to the Deobandi, Ahl-i Hadith or Barelwi schools, an attitude centered on the founding and managing of their own institutions, free from government control; while an active participation in the political process is less likely. A more politically minded approach may be expected from the Jama'at-i-Islami supporters, as an emphasis on participation to elections and on working within the political institutions at local or national level. It is also important to emphasize that all the religious groups we have seen have a tendency to engage in bitter polemics with each other. In contemporary Pakistan, religious debates have also created the ground for increasing sectarian violence (Nasr 2000; Zaman 1998). It is reasonable to infer that this tendency to religious fragmentation may become a feature of the Pakistani migrants' life. The experience of the Pakistani migration in Britain, for example, seems to indicate that migration may export the migrants' religious networks, as well as the existing sectarian tensions. This trend may emerge also among the migrants' community in Italy.

The tendency to religious confrontation may also affect any attempt to organize an institutional representation of the communities. The existence of a plurality of religious views make South Asian Muslims generally not inclined to accept being represented by a single voice. Given the already divided landscape of Muslims in Italy – due to the absence of a dominant national or ethnic origin – the flow of migrants from South Asia may increase this fragmentation. In this view, the Italian government's declared goal of the agreement – or “Intesa” – with the Italian Muslim community may become a more difficult task to achieve. On the other side, it is interesting to emphasise that the role played by Muslim clerics among the Muslims of Pakistani or Indian origins is generally more influential than among the Arab communities. The *'ulama* of South Asia have managed to maintain a certain level of autonomy from the State, which has enabled them to be influential in society. This factor may work, at least in part, as a counterbalancing factor to the fragmentation already observed among the Muslim migrants in Italy.

5. CREATING A CULTURAL SPACE: BIRADARI AND THE STATE

The above analysis on the religious currents is not intended to suggest the idea of an «inherent religiosity» of the Pakistani population, which is a common stereotypical assumption on South Asians abroad. Obviously, the adherence to religion is a matter of personal choice; however, this attitude is also influenced by regional culture, and by the social environment of origin. In a society characterized by strong local identities, this dimension acquires an even greater relevance. Therefore, the regional and social background bears much importance in defin-

ing the immigrants' attitudes to religion and society. Given the overwhelming presence of migrants from Punjab – and, to a minor extent, of Pashtuns from the areas of North-Western Pakistan – among Pakistanis in Europe, the specifically *punjabi* attitude to religion has tended to become largely dominant (Lewis 1994, 27-35). It has to be noted, however, that this conception has not necessarily much to do with «orthodox» Islam; rather, it will probably be indebted to a series of ideas and values that are connected with the rural Punjabi worldview. Such a conception will also have much in common with the Sikh or Hindu Punjabi culture. We may summarize this worldview in two basic notions: the first is the idea of mediation, which is indebted to a popular or «folk» understanding of Islam. According to this view, a central role is played by the *sufi pirs* – or «saints» – who are the embodiment of the sacred on earth, and can play a role of intercession between men and God. The *pirs* may assist the believer in everyday life, and protect him or her from the uncertainties of life (Gilmartin 1988; Liebeskind 1998; Ewing 1997). Far from being only an understanding of Islam, the concept of mediation is part of a whole worldview. In fact, the same notion permeates one's behavior in society, and even in political relations. In order to find a proper place in society and to obtain justice, a person will normally require a powerful mediator to interact with the authority. Just as one would need a *pir's* intercession to obtain protection from the evil, so a powerful patron will be necessary to obtain the favor of a distant and arbitrary government. The idea of mediation is therefore at the root of the system of patronage and patron-client relations in Punjabi society and politics, as indeed in much of South Asia (Piviliasky 2014).

The second notion relates to the working of power, and its relations with the individual. The basic idea is that the State will never interact with individuals, but only with groups. These groups, in Pakistani society, are based on kinship, and are structured as clan or «caste» (*biradari*, «brotherhood»). In spite of the theoretical egalitarianism of Islam, therefore, the Pakistani society presents a form of hierarchical segmentation based on descent that for many aspects relates to the caste system. There is no single, universally accepted definition of *biradari*. The term comes from the Persian language and indicates the group made up of individuals and families who recognize each other as descendants from a common male ancestor; therefore, the base of the system is patrilineality (Abenante 2014). The term is used mainly in Punjab, however, the centrality of this province in public life in Pakistan has meant that gradually the Punjabi vocabulary has come to extend to the whole country. The terms *biradari* – and «*biradarism*» – have thus become widespread expressions, which indicate the dependence of the political system from balances, alliances and conflicts between ethnic and interests groups. Other frequently used terms are *qaum* and *zat*: the former is variously translated as «community» or «nation», and seems to indicate a larger ethnic group, comprising different *biradari*. The second relates to the existing subdivisions within a *biradari*. In this sense, *zat* may be used as a synonym for «faction». However, these terms are used in Pakistan to indicate different levels

of identities, according to the circumstances. The main reason is that in Pakistani society, as in the Subcontinent as a whole, identities are flexible, and people are able to shift from one level of identity to another depending on the context. Like the caste in India, *biradari* in Pakistan is an element of «a complex, layered and pluralistic social system» (Weiner 2001). At various levels, the *biradari* will have different political relevance: in the wider, national dimension, the *biradari* will not be very influential politically; still, the people will be able to recognize themselves in this category, and this recognition will have a meaning for their status. Even at this broader level, the *biradari* can sometimes play a role in national politics, although this is more the exception than the rule. A national leader may use his *biradari* as part of his or her public image. It is at the local level that the *biradari* will play its most important role in politics. In this sense, it may be correct to define Pakistan a «patronage democracy», although the concept has been more commonly applied to India (Chandra 2004).

This aspect is also of crucial importance in shaping the political attitudes of the migrants, and their approach to the State. In their relations with the authorities, the communities will very likely tend to reproduce the model of power and authority of the Punjabi society. This model is based on *biradari* connections, and will seek the intervention of the most influential members of the *biradari*, rather than seeing the individual members of the community directly approaching the authorities. Moreover, the idea of community representation will probably be marginal, if not totally absent (Lewis 1994, p. 21). It is easy to see how such vision may influence the relations between the community and the State, and that the understanding of its underpinning on the part of the authorities may play a decisive role in the process of integration.

The Pakistani community is one of the most recently settled groups of migrants in Italy. However, it shows clear signs of an ongoing stabilization process. The community has strong social and religious peculiarities, as compared to other Muslim groups from the Middle East or North Africa. In this sense, it constitutes an additional element of complexity for an already heterogeneous landscape. At the same time, the Pakistani appears to be a more «traditional» and less individualized community. The relevance of local and kinship bonds might play a stabilizing role for the migration phenomenon in Italy. At the same time, the experience of European countries with long-established Pakistani communities shows that patronage and patron-client relations may constitute a challenge, in the long term, towards the goal of inclusion of the community into the political process.

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