

Searching for Legality. Asymmetrical Bodily Opportunities

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To what extent does the presence of women influence the acknowledgement of social and legal right to migrant transnational communities? Starting from this question, my paper will focus on the changes in regulation processes affecting a Senegalese community of recent formation in Siena (Italy). My aim is to show how women's arrival has contributed to the overcoming of a severe social marginality connected to specific representations and conditions: those which defined Senegalese migrants just as temporary labourers, having no relevant social relations within the local community nor real personhood.

In this regard, I will highlight how the normalization of Senegalese presence has been achieved thanks to the new rights ensured by women: if men's productive bodies depend on labour market, women's bodies - through their reproductive function - represent per se an instrument of regularization within local devices of governmentality; this is more so the case in times of economic recession and high unemployment, when men's labour becomes somewhat marginal in the definition of the migrant community for its social inclusion.

My analysis, therefore, aims to understand to what extent the social assumption of *feminine given*, as a source of legal legitimacy, produces an asymmetry in the opportunities for regularization which, in turn, may cause an inversion of gender hierarchies. Useful instrument and threat to established gender hierarchies, women's body will be then understood as primary object of social control both in Senegal and Italy.