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The Oghene Damba Cremona Boys as an Example of Translocality

One of the minorities identified by Svanibor Pettan is that of ‘involuntary migrants’ (Pettan 2019). What must be stressed about the most recent irregular migrations is that transitional period for the migrants appears to be more fragmented than ever. In Italy, the authorities disperse asylum seekers throughout the country, fragmenting the stays of people of very disparate origins in several extraordinary reception centers. This makes it impossible in most cases to reconstruct a space of one's place of origin through music and dance. In the study conducted in two reception centers in the central Po Valley (Cremona and Vigolzone) between 2015 and today, it has emerged that the only and most used way to reconnect with home is listening to music in isolation. Nevertheless, a particular case happened in the Caritas reception center in Cremona, where a cultural mediator, Bawa Salifu, created a group of "African music", the Oghene Damba ensemble composed of people originating from different West African countries. While musical skills of Bawa involved the use of various Ghanaian styles, the dancers experienced a greater freedom of expression encompassing staging of local dances by individual participants as well as creation of group dances based on simple and repetitive steps. These enabled on the one hand a cohesion between the dancers and on the other a possibility for active involvement of the listeners. Dance thus reveals itself as a unique translocal field of expression that creates a new locality.

Bio

Fulvia Caruso graduated with honors in ethnomusicology from the Sapienza University of Rome, where she also obtained a PhD in cultural anthropology. She became an Assistant Professor at the Pavia University in Cremona in 2008 and an Associate Professor in 2015. She is also a part of the Dialogic Approaches to the Living Music research group and the rector's delegate for the social impact at the same university. Her fields of research include music and migration, intangible heritage and its heritagization, and oral poetry.