MESA 59
TABLE 59

Mujeres y política. Parte 3
Women and Politics. Part 3

CHAIR

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“Women MPs in the Turkish Parliament: Their Life Trajectories and Political Tracks in the Men’s Club

Grazia Prontera (Austria):
“Political Participation of Women Migrants in Deutschland in the late 20th Century”

Christin Quirk (Australia):
“The Right Order of Things’: Conservative Politics, Liberal Public Sentiment and the Experiences of Lesbian Mothers in Contemporary Australia.”

Dieter Reinisch (Austria):
“Interviewing Irish Republican women: An Oral History of Cumann na mBan”
Women MPs in the Turkish Parliament: Their Life Trajectories and Political Tracks in the Men’s Club.

Serpil Cakir and Ayse Nilufer Durakbasa
(Turkey):

Abstract: The paper is based on an oral history research about women MPs from the political parties represented in the Turkish Parliament for three terms after the 1999, 2002 and 2007 elections. Seventy two women MPs were interviewed.

The focus will be on the paths that women take to be nominated for elections and their strategies after they become members of the parliament, which can be characterized basically as a gender-dominant composition, discourses and practices. We will ask and try to answer questions about the presence of women: What are some sources of mobilize various channels for political expression, action and influence on formulation and implementation of policies.

We will expand on the cases to exemplify four types of routes to politics: i) familial connection via politician fathers or husbands ii) professional career iii) the party organization iv) grassroots politics/women that women MPs try to create within a male-dominated political sphere shaped by a society-wide patriarchal culture.


Se centrará la atención en los caminos que las mujeres pueden tomar para lograr ser candidatas a las elecciones y en las estrategias que emplean una vez que han llegado a miembros del Parlamento, el cual cabe definir básicamente como un debido a la composición, los discursos y las prácticas machistas que lo caracterizan. Nosotras preguntaremos e intentaremos responder acerca de la presencia de mujeres en este organismo: cuáles son sus fuentes de para movilizar los distintos canales de expresión, acción e influencia políticas en la formulación y la implementación de políticas.

Nosotras extenderemos en casos concretos para ejemplificar cuatro tipos de vía hacia la política: i) la conexión familiar, a través de padres o maridos políticos ii) la carrera profesional iii) la organización de partido iv) la política de bases/el movimiento feminista. Trataremos las posibilidades que las diputadas intentan crear en una esfera política dominada por los hombres y configurada por una cultura patriarcal.
The history of Turkish modernization has been critically evaluated from the point of view of feminist social researchers extensively (Cak Sancar, 2012). Sociologists and political scientists have tried to solve the discrepancies in between the relatively high number of women in the professions as opposed to very tiny percentage of women representatives in the Turkish Parliament for many years after 1934, the year women were given the franchise by the modern Turkish Republic, as a sign of its modernity, more than anything else (Tekeli, 1982; Arat 1987, 1989, 1998).

Women MPs are women who have benefitted the most from the Republican Reforms about women in Turkey in the first and second decade of the culmination of the Republic (1923). They can be considered as part of the elite classes with highly qualified education, and professional career considerably higher than that of the average years of education of the men in the Turkish parliament, which has been dominantly male with a few exceptional female members, whose numbers have only increased to 4.4% in 2002; 9% in 2007 and 14% in 2011 elections from very low percentages under these figures almost for 67 years. That is, the figures show that women in Turkey could reach the percentage of women MPs in the parliament session of (1935-1942), which was 4.5%, only after more than 60 years. 18 women were nominated by Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey, and elected in the year just after Turkish women got the vote in 1934 (Çak -27).

### NUMBER OF WOMEN MPS ACCORDING TO THE TERMS OF ELECTIONS IN TURKEY:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Number of MPs</th>
<th>Number of Women MPs</th>
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<td>5th Term (1935-1939)</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>400</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.8</td>
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<td>7th Term (1943-1946)</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>3.7</td>
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<td>550</td>
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Taken from Women in Statistics, Turkish Statistical Bureau, http://www.tuik.gov.tr

This paper is based on the findings of an oral history project carried out by Serpil Çak interviews with 72 women MPs out of the 21st, 22nd and 23rd parliamentary terms composed after 1999, 2002 and 2007 elections, on the whole. The project covered three parliamentary terms and therefore took quite long to finish; the interviews being conducted in the years in between 2002-2011. A book was published in Turkish recently, using only part of the vast material collected, the title and the content of which has given the inspiration to this paper.
In Turkey, what most political parties and leaders understand from democracy is elections—roots politics and the view of participatory democracy. Our interviews have shown that women MPs who come from women organizations; they are the ones who have brought such issues as crimes to women such as the Civil Code\(^1\) (2001), the Penalty Code (2004), the Code for the Protection of the Family (1995; 2011), these moves made under the influence of campaigns carried out in the women organizations and a fairly strong women feminist consciousness and a political consciousness of taking a critical stance towards the state, after the military coup of 1980. Women MPs who have some kind of a connection with the women and the women leaders and the party executives are not always happy to acknowledge these efforts and those women who are experienced and who have accumulated knowledge and power out of women—roots politics are not trusted so much and they are moved away from positions of influence in most cases, especially in the center-right and center-left parties.

Political parties do not prefer to adopt feminist principles which will challenge the authority of the leader and question the party ideology in terms of gender equality, and because feminism is usually perceived as a threat to the establishment. The non-hierarchical organization and horizontal relationship model that the feminists foster do not usually accord with the strict hierarchies of the political structures. That might be one reason why majority of feminists also keep away from party politics.

Women are not the ones who set the rules of the game in politics. To set the rules of the game means that you can determine the activities and who will participate in those activities and how those activities are to be performed. Women are disadvantaged from the start because they are part of a game the rules of which are determined not by themselves but by men, as actors and game-setters. The right to politics is perceived as a masculine characteristic, not really appropriate for women. As expressed by a woman from the governing party, sphere of politics; however, when you become a member in the parliament or a mayor, a member of the presidency of the general assembly of MPS, there is the common perception that this position is, in fact, deserved by men and not really appropriate for women.\(^2\), A. J.

The positions of power enable one to speak up and influence others, your co-mates, the decision-makers, the followers, the opinion-makers, so to shape the public opinion, as well as the policies and the terms of the public debate about those policies. Women MPs, even though they have been elected to positions of power as political representatives, are usually kept from expressing themselves in the parliament.

\(^1\) The adoption of a secular civil code, i.e. the Swiss Civil Code, with some amendments, was accomplished in 1926; as a very important step in the secularization attempts during the early Republic. Turkey is still the only Islamic country, in the Middle East, which has a secular family law.

\(^2\) Abbreviations are used for the names of the parties, as follows: JDP for Justice and Development Party (right-wing, Islamicist-conservative; RPP for Republican People Party [left-wing, secular, with overtones of Kurdish nationalism]; DSP for Democratic Left Party [social democratic, secular, with overtones of Turkish nationalism]; BDP for Peace and Democracy Party [left-wing Kurdish Party, with overtones of Kurdish nationalism]. Note that only those parties quoted in the text are mentioned here.
came up and spoke to the Parliament. It might have been for 4-5 months, I did not speak up. This even had an impact on other spheres of my life; I became silent even at home, without being aware. My husband, having sensed this silence and moody state, asked the reason. Well, the warning must have infiltrated into me somehow. My husband awakened me to my old, talkative, lively nature. That strange feeling of an alienated and troubled self. I could then break my silence; and started to talk again. (JDP, Ö. H.)

of the others. He acts as if what you say has no value. This is a behaviour that degrades your words and yourself. He does not talk negatively to your face; he does not criticize you, not at all. If you go on your talk, without taking notice of him, there is no problem. (JDP, A.R)

In a male-dominant atmosphere, some women might not want to accept that they have been exposed to discrimination, even though they are actually aware of this. They learn to internalize the norms of the patriarchal society, when they cannot find the strength and courage to change it. They try to adjust their manners and behaviours to this structure of social relations. They learn to excel in the behavioral codes and tactics and the requirements for the ideal womanhood prescribed by social conventions. This is acknowledged as an important part of their family socialization.

negative experience in my professional life, either. Because I think my mother and father have taught me well how to behave, the things to be careful about, as much as they can instructions so well that I have faced no disadvantage of being a woman, either in my professional life, university years or in my marriage. Is it what I have learnt? I don too good, or because the people are too good? I don knew exactly what I shouldn't have done. I worked so ambitiously that I did not allow anybody to scratch (annoy) me. I worked more than anybody else. If a man worked 8 hours, I worked 16 hours more than him. And I am still like that. (JDP, A.N.)

What could women parliamentarians do to break the prejudices against their gender? In some cases, they tried to appear like men, or look asexual, altogether. If being powerful necessitated being like men, they could behave like men. This would be how their families will trust them. Hence, they applied the model of man, nothing bad can happen to me, you trust me, and send me to school family. You make your family feel this kind of trust. These manners helped me a lot. This is how I was able to go to high school and graduate from high school. (JDP, U.

a severe price to be paid; because I had to camouflage everything. I had to camouflage my sexuality. Because I was in Eastern Turkey. There was no woman in my workplace in the East. Women used to backcomb their hair at that time; I tied my hair on the back tightly. A woman friend once made her hair up like a knot and as she talked to the villagers, a man went quite to her and tried to examine her hair style (because he wasn't neat to my hair; and put it under my hat, this is how I usually go around; everybody knows me with my hat. (DL, A.T.)

In male dominant political institutions, feminine characteristics and feelings are downgraded; women are marginalized as the masculine attitudes and behaviors as a solution. Working excessively hard is another path to follow. This is a solution that women adopt as a response to the treatment of being the give the account of similar experience.
For example, men go to the meetings as well as mixed meetings and also women because we want to share our political views with those of our sex. We, therefore, put more effort, because we also talk to women. This is because we feel a thirst for freedom. Our political work goes along two dimensions, and hence, very dense. We have a struggle as Kurds. However, we also struggle as women. Therefore, our plans are always both sided. Our work is always more than men. (PDP, Z.A.)

Although women have developed coping strategies with gender discriminating attitudes and practices; it is not always so easy. They try hard to establish the trust of their voters, as well as their colleagues, the other MPs. Because women are less in number, they cannot easily develop solidarity among themselves. They do not have a magical stick in their hands to come to a position of equality with men once they become members of the parliament. Women are expected to act according to the social roles readily shaped in the minds. Women MPs are not seen as women, either. Because if they were seen as women, they wouldn’t have the luxury to be unsuccessful. You have to go on, disregarding and trivializing what other people say. (JDP, İ.L.)

you share your trouble, you might get despised. Sacred is the family. Family is sacred and valued by everyone. However, if you have dared to be here, in the parliament, you should not mention it. Your son illness is not so important here. It is trivialized. This is the the field of politics. involved in politics? You go and better stay beside your child might face in all professions.

Because of the burden of sex roles and sexist attitudes and behaviors that they face in the parliament, women MPs have difficulty in entering the network of relations, or strengthening them in their own favour. A small number of women compete for a small number of positions with men who are much more powerful in the competition. Hence, when there is no grass-roots movement, a strong women movement who supports them outside the parliament, women parliamentarians might feel discouraged and failed in their mission.

In the interviews, women MPs emphasized the family heritage, their experience of politics at home and how this early experience had an impact on their political consciousness and career, in the long run. They also acknowledged support of their families, partners and mothers in their daily strategies to cope with life in the political sphere and as well as other areas; they usually express their gratitude to these family members in their life narratives. We will now try to exemplify different routes to politics in three cases that we have chosen.

OYA ARASLI [1943- - ].
Republican People (Mersin), 22nd term(2002-2007) Ankara MP

Born in Bursa into a middle class family, father being a military doctor and mother being a biology teacher; they had to move from one town to the other in Anatolia because of the father Mersin, where they lived for 26 years. She mentions the importance of the influence of her mother who was a dedicated member of the RPP and functioned as the president of the Women member of the Local Executive Board of the Party and a member of the municipal council in Mersin. She has led a life-trajectory shaped by politically lively atmosphere in her family of origin. From university years, she became a member of Republican People party. After she graduated from the Law School in Istanbul, she returned Mersin in which she became an influential figure in the local organizational committees.
That executive committee of the Party and the general assembly of the Party, after she moved to Ankara to pursue her further studies in Law and married her husband whom she knew also in the political activities, because he was the president of youth branches of the Party.

this view but also transferred this idea to me, they trained me according to their way of life. Woman and man, they can both accomplish everything they want, this is how it was taught to me. My father shared everything with my mother; in the evening, there would long hours of chat at our dinner table, our opinions would be asked as two girls, two sisters.

archeologist, never practised his profession; he got engaged in journalism. However, if you asked him his job, he would answer: he had to decide to enter the elections. I had to be abroad at that time; he decided to run for elections. I had to stay abroad to learn a foreign language; however, I had to be in Turkey to give support to him. We discussed who should be the candidate; since I did not want to leave the university, the person to do politics was Do totally to politics then. I had positions to be accomplished in the academic career and I did not want to let them aside and move into politics; this is probably commonsense, conventional woman

load, I must confess. The doorbell didn emptied for others to come; you are required to serve them. The academic life was also hard, it takes your full time. Those years were really hard for me, I must confess. You must be nice to people, there should be somebody at home to look after the visitors. With the help we got from our families, support of the paid house carers we tried to cope with this work. I don satisfactory because my husband was put on the first place in the list for the 2nd term that he ran for elections.

In 1982 Constitution, accepted after the military coup of 1980, faculty members of universities were banned from membership of political parties; therefore, she had to break from direct connection to the Party; although she was always involved in political debates both as a supporter of her husband and as a consultant because of her professional career as a professor of constitutional law. In 1994, the ban on party membership of university professors was erased and she could then officially be back to the party to be elected an MP in the 1995 elections.

Oya Arasl transferred from her mother and a dedicated work in the local organizations of the Party both in the youth and the women branches. It is interesting that she secured herself in acquiring the academic qualifications in her professional career before she decided to enter elections herself after she backed her husband who served for two terms in the Turkish Parliament as an MP of the same party, RPP; from his own hometown. Oya Arasl in her own hometown, Mersin, that is, she preferred to be elected as a representative based on her own previous party work and her mother

consulted, with the academic titles of professor, associate professor, it enables that your words could be accepted by these men. I observed this quite closely, I witnessed it myself, you are not easily contested and you even become someone whose opinion would be consulted. This is very important in politics, because political career is accomplished on authority that you establish over others; to become someone of public significance, to rise up among others as someone distinct, depends on this authority. Therefore, the titles that we carry and specialization in one area as an authority carry importance in politics.
Güldal Ak [1960- ]
Justice and Development Party, 22nd Term (2002-2007) and 23rd Term (2007-2011) and 24th Term (2011-2015) served as Minister of Tourism and Minister of State chairing Women and as the Chair of the Council of Gender Equality of Opportunity in the Turkish Parliament. Since 2011, she is the general coordinator of the Women

Born in Malatya, into a family of Malatya descent, daughter of Galip Demir, an upper-bureaucrat father, who served as a mayor and governor, a consultant in the Ministry of State and an MP. They moved from one town to another in Anatolia, because of her father in Urfa, she studied law at Istanbul University.

Güldal Ak
Justice and Development Party; she has followed another path. Her father Galip Demirel was an MP of the Justice Party, the center-right wing party of 1960

13 women founders of the party; that is, she was given a mission to serve for this new right-wing Islamicist party.

the time I opened my eyes, I was circled with these manners. I did not work with State but wherever I turned was State. Hence, after I became elected as an MP, and after I became an MP, many of the traits developed naturally in me, these were the things we were used to; these were the activities I carried out without any difficulty. And consequently, this is how I became one of the founding members of AK Party (JDP); I want to express this as the starting point as well.

the oath; the 58th government was composed by Abdullah Gül and I was announced as the Minister of Tourism, to my honour. You see that your life changes all of a sudden, you enter the politics, an election so fast, you become a Minister without serving a term as an MP. Even though I hadn't until then I found myself under great responsibilities, at a top position within the State.

Gülten K [1961- ]
Elected as an independent MP supported by Peace and Democracy Party, 23rd Term (2007-2011) Diyarbakır 2014) Siirt MP. She served as co-president of PDP; elected as the municipal mayor of Diyarbakır

Gülten K is an example of an MP who has made her route to the Parliament through grass-roots politics of Kurdish people and women

Elazığ the positive influence of the relatively egalitarian view of gender relations in her family, due to the Alevi cultural background and the social democratic ideals which were discussed at home because her father was a worker involved in trade union activities. She graduated from Teachers Literature at Dicle University, Diyarbakır coup and put to prison in Diyarbakır politicized in the meantime both in the Kurdish movement and especially, women and studied public relations at the Faculty of Communication Studies at Ege (Aegean) University. She mainly worked as a journalist, in left-wing journals (Yeni Ülkü, Özgür Gündem, Özgür Ülkü) and also had a connection to the women journal. Her story as an activist has carried her to the position of being the co-president of the Kurdish Party, BDP (Peace and Democracy Party) in the Turkish Parliament, and an MP from Diyarbakır 2007 and and MP from Siirt in 2011 elections.

id everything from being the chief editor, news editor, bureau representative, to acting as a correspondent. From 1998 onwards, I had been concentrating my
interest on women to the struggle for emancipation; that consulting council. We had joint projects with women and journalism went hand in hand till 2002. In 2002, I made the preference for activism and worked very actively in Amargi both in the feminist consciousness raising projects and others and then focused more on social projects. In 2004, I started as the coordinator of social projects at Ba lity in Diyarbak women, till 2007. I carried out the projects to set up a women education, and to start courses for developing various job skills. When the 2007 elections arrived, I mean, I had always seen myself as a political actor in my life, this was actually defined in terms of opposition and activism, I had not really thought a Professional political career in a political party, I did not have such a thing in my personal agenda. However, the women movement for emancipation, my women friends, I was forced to be a candidate in the elections and with the dense pressure from these friends, I became a candidate and was elected as an MP from Diyarbak

CONCLUSION
The oral history material that we have used in this paper, even though only a small portion of the collected data, show how intricacies of the patriarchal nature of the social fabric, in the intersection of social class, ethnicity, rural-urban background, regional differences and the sharpened divide in between the secular and the Islamist-conservative sectors of the society are woven into the life trajectories and the paths taken by the women MPs into the Turkish Parliament. Their stories do not convey easy lives. They have all struggled with the conventions of the patriarchal culture and used different strategies to cope with the men members, colleagues, voters, party leaders, and other members of the parliament. Their stories are sometimes story of adaptation, adjustment and even obedience; sometimes resistance and opposition and most of the time also entail conceptualization to refer to the various forms of accommodation that they have to make with the patriarchal system, and with the male actors benefitting from the system (Kandiyoti, 1998).
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Ka.der, Ankara
Mattek Matbaac


Political Participation of Women Migrants in Deutschland in the late 20th Century.

Grazia Prontera
(Austria):

Resumen: La participación femenina en las organizaciones auto gestionadas italianas más activas sobre la escena social y cultural de Múnich desde los años setenta hasta hoy, es el objeto de este estudio que pretende comprender las transformaciones de la historia del asociacionismo italiano y el papel específico jugado por las mujeres en el mismo.

A través del estudio de las entrevistas en profundidad a seis protagonistas del asociacionismo italiano, pertenecientes a generaciones diversas que han cubierto o cubren funciones de dirección o coordinación en las tres mayores organizaciones auto gestionadas italianas, ha sido posible indagar en los temas de identidad y género en relación con el esfuerzo en el asociacionismo y delinear los caracteres principales del activismo femenino.

Abstract: The subject of this study is female participation in the most active self-organised Italian associations on Munich’s social and cultural scene from the 1970s to the present day. The study aims to understand the changes in the history of these Italian organisations and the role played by women within them.

Through the study of narrative interviews with six protagonists belonging to different generations in the association movement who hold or have held management or coordinating roles in the three major self-organised Italian organisations, it has been possible to investigate the themes of identity and gender in relation to involvement in the association movement and to delineate the principle characteristics of female activism.
In the history of political integration in the city of Munich the self-organised migrant associations have over time gained a more and more important role to the extent that their activities, in the social and cultural spheres, have become essential to Munich.

The patterns of three Italian self-organised organisations and the characteristics of female participation will be analysed against the background of migration policies and the Italian presence in Munich.

1. MIGRATION POLICIES AND THE ITALIAN PRESENCE IN MUNICH FROM THE POST-WAR PERIOD TO THE PRESENT DAY

The history of migration in Munich in the post Second World War period was characterised by three great waves of immigration: the first, immediately after the war, saw the arrival of a large influx of German refugees from Eastern Europe, the second, in the Southern Europe, and the third wave, in the early the former Yugoslavia, saw the arrival of many immigrants from Eastern Europe. Currently Munich has once again become the destination of a strong influx of migration from Southern European countries struck by a prolonged economic and political crisis.

In 1955 Italy signed bilateral agreements for the recruitment and placement of workers with the Federal Republic of Germany and if in 1950 the number of Italian workers formally registered in Munich was less than a thousand, by the end of the following 23,000 (see graph). The Italian workers who arrived were initially employed as seasonal workers on farms in Bavaria, then as labourers employed by construction companies engaged in the reconstruction of the city and later as workers in the city industries, among them BMW, Siemens, Bosch, and Agfa. Throughout the largest group of foreign workers (25%) followed by workers from the former Yugoslavia (16.5%), Turkish workers (15.5%) and Greek workers (13%).\(^1\) The Italian presence in the early years was substantially one of only male workers; a stable community was established only after the arrival of their wives and children in the early of each year (see graph). In the same year the combined presence of foreign workers in Munich reached 230,000 or 17% of the resident population.\(^2\) The stable presence of the families of foreign workers forced the city to confront important problems which had thusfar only been dealt with in a relatively modest way. Housing, school, training, services and political representation were awaiting structural solutions. In 1974 the City of Munich signed its first plan of migration policies (Ausländerprogramm) with which it inaugurated the so-called (non-EU) in accordance with the blocking of recruitment (Anwerbestopp) launched by the German government in 1973 and on the other to improve the living conditions of the resident foreign community.\(^3\)

The support network constructed around foreign workers in the problems of the growing foreign community. In the assisted almost exclusively by organisations such as Caritas (a Catholic organisation which supported Italian, Spanish and Portuguese immigrants), Diakonische Werk (a Protestant association which supported Greek immigrants) and Arbeiterwohlfahrt (a lay association which supported Turkish, Yugoslavian, Moroccan and Tunisian immigrants).\(^4\)

In the and the first migrant associations joined this support network. The latter groups were often politically aligned with the

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2 Franziska Dunkel, Gabriella Stramaglia-Faggion, Für 50 Mark einen Italiener. Zur Geschichte der Gastarbeiter in München, Munich 2000, Buchendorfer Verlag, p. 10
3 Ibidem.
left. Political activism however, especially of the communist variety, was strictly prohibited both in the workplace and in company housing.\(^5\)

Despite this, Italian workers formed Rinascita in 1972/73 which brought together all the workers registered with the Italian Communist Party and in 1980 founded il Circolo Cento Fiori which was also politically aligned to the left.\(^6\) In the many regional associations were formed and became active, among these

\(^7\)

A decline in the growth of Italian associations was recorded between the final years of the beginning of the returning to Italy (see graph) and on the other to political changes caused by the fall of the Berlin Wall.

By the mid-residents, the Italian community was made up of 20,100 people.\(^8\) In the same period a thorough study on the living and working conditions of residents of foreign origin, commissioned by the City of Munich, brought the disparities between them and German citizens in access to services, training and work clearly into focus.\(^9\) In order to change the disadvantages which struck above all the second generation, in the later years of the 2000s the city devised its new integration policy (Interkulturelles Integrationskonzept) encouraging the participation of residents of foreign origin in all areas of the social, cultural, economic and political life of the city.\(^10\)

Politicians and municipal institutions, migrant support organisations and self-organised migrant associations were all called upon to participate in the building of a between citizens.\(^11\)

By the end of the 2000s, 36% of the population and 53% of children below six years of age had foreign origins.\(^12\) The Italian community had begun to increase once again by the end of the 2000s and the new influx of migrants brought the recorded presence of Italians to 23,500.\(^13\) This new influx didn’t influence the form of the already existing associations. The organisation Un an example, having gathered to it both the experience gained through the 30 year history of the associations and the energy and non-dogmatic approaches brought by newly arrived immigrants to Munich in the preceding years.\(^14\)

\(^5\) Ivi, p. 224.
\(^6\) I thank the President of Rinascita, Sandra Cartacci, for allowing me to consult papers from Rinascita presidents of Circolo Cento Fiori, Pierangela Hoffmann-De Maron and Gianfranco Tannino, for making documents from the private archive of Circolo Cento Fiori (henceforth APCCF) available to me.
\(^7\) APCCF: Italian Consulate General, Munich, oggetto: 1989: Richiesta consuntivo e relazione sulle attività svolte.
\(^8\) Landeshauptstadt München, Lebenssituation ausländischer Bürgerinnen und Bürger in München, München 1997, p. IV.
\(^9\) Ivi, pp. 33-34.
\(^11\) Ivi, pp.7-9.
\(^12\) Landeshauptstadt München, Interkulturelles Integrationsbericht, Munich 2011, p. 45 e p. 51.
\(^13\) Statistisches Amt München, Bevölkerung, Mai 2013, Munich 2013.
\(^14\) I thank Serena Chillemi for making documentation from the private archive of Un
2. THE PRINCIPAL SELF-ORGANISED ITALIAN ASSOCIATIONS IN MUNICH

With the term -organised migrant associations groups, networks, movements and non-formalised projects. Of these self-organised associations those excluded [unions, religious associations, social promotion organisations etc.], although they attract a high number of migrants and offer specific immigration services, are not defined principally or exclusively as migrant organisations.

The characteristics of and changes in the Italian community in Munich are reflected in the history of the three principal Italian self-organised migrant associations: Rinascita; Circolo Cento Fiori; and Un Italia.

Rinascita was officially formed in 1973. Its founders were migrant workers of the PCI who wanted to actively follow Italian political life from abroad. German legislation, however, forbade foreign citizens to found parties or sections of foreign parties in federal territory; Rinascita was thus founded as a recreational cultural club relying solely on the registration fees of its members. Rinascita gave rise to numerous cultural and recreational activities and offered an important advice and support service. The international political events put in motion by the fall of the Berlin Wall did not fail to alter the nature of the association. In fact, in 1991 Rinascita abandoned its political character and enrolled in the register of public utility associations of Munich Magistrates Court. The association, as in the past, was inspired by the democratic principles of non-violence, value for the role of women, respect for the environment and the construction of a society open to diverse cultures.

The impetus for the transition was a group of women who, having always been active in political circles, had steered the transformation to a socio-cultural association.

Twenty years ago the bi-monthly newsletter Rinascita flash efforts of Egle Maguolo-Wenzel and which currently receives the Italian state subvention for Italian publications abroad. Sandra Cartacci, current president of Rinascita, tells the story of the association and the role played internally by women:

When I arrived there had already been the upheavals of the late-80s, when the situation for the parties and obviously for the associations had changed completely. In fact, Rinascita had also threatened to fall apart in 1989; there were strong conflicts. It was just at that time that a group of women who were involved with supporting and helping the many Italian wives of worked (the female part of the population is the one which always lags behind, which has a harder time integrating). From the initiatives. They had, in fact, the capacity to identify more and more new issues such as: integration problems, bilinguilism, health of course; in short, all of the inherent problems of daily life.

Marinella Vicinanza, who was on the board of Rinascita from 2010 to 2012, describes the activities undertaken by the association:

With the Italian laboratory I began to play an active role in Rinascita, which is the oldest of the Italian associations in Munich, it was founded 41 years ago and is the mother of the association movement in Munich, the entire experience of the Italian association movement was born with Rinascita or Rinascita has a part to play in it in some way. Many groups

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16 Vereinsregister des Amtsgerichts München, Rinascita e.V., VR 13838.
19 Interview conducted 16 May 2013.
20 Interview conducted 28 May 2013.
developed from Rinascita, one of the strongest groups from the beginning was the so-called
Women
in Germany and also the possible parallels. Then the cinema group and the theatre group
were founded. Now there is also another theatre group called I-Talia. From within Rinascita,
Folk
short, there has always been great activity around Rinascita.

Sandra Cartacci describes the direction of the association

One of Rinascita
for artists here, Rinascita in principle doesn’t from Italy [...] the association
money is money for its members; if a member wants to write, to sing, to paint, to do
whatever it is that they want. Clearly it
German and so we try to create opportunities to put on shows etc. The association acts as a
springboard.

Thanks to its transformation Rinascita continues to be, after 40 years, a reference point for the Italian
community and an important actor on Munich

The issues dealt with and initiatives organised have time and again responded to the changing needs of
the community. And so it has gone from <<Rinascita all Italian [early 1970s], whose objective was to
shorten the Gastarbeiter sojourn to Rinascita European [early 1990s] which asserted full political, social and cultural citizenship in the country of residence>>.21

Circolo Cento Fiori was founded in 1980 thanks to the will of a group of Italian workers politically aligned
to the left. The circle, as can be read in its first statute, based itself on democratic and anti-fascist
principles and proposed <<to develop relations between Italian and German workers and workers of other
nationalities, to foster cultural and social growth in such a way as to respond to the needs and situations of
Italian emigrants, to maintain contact with Italian cultural life and current events>>.22 The activities
organised were social, cultural and recreational.

Members subscribed with a monthly registration fee. The circle registered with the Italian Consulate after
its constitution23. The USCCF (Unione Sportiva Circolo Cento Fiori) football team was founded almost
immediately after and participated in championships and tournaments.24 In the late 1980s, Circolo Cento
Fiori gained a secure place on Munich

filmmakers every Sunday.25

From the early 1990s onwards, thanks to the initiative of women active within the organisation, the circle
began a fruitful cooperation with the Munich Federation of film clubs (Filmstadt Munchen e.V.). The circle
also decided to subscribe to the German register of associations active in Munich, a choice which allowed
it to more easily access funds allocated by the city for cultural activities.26

Circolo Cento Fiori therefore became the principal organiser of Italian film festivals in Munich and
collaborated with the Greek, Turkish, Spanish and French cinema associations to organise Mediterranean
film festivals.27 Pierangela Hoffmann-De Maron28, president of Circolo Cento Fiori from 1989 to 1995,
summarises the story of the circle and the role played within it by women:

21 APR: Rinascita è Maggiorenne, 1 May 1991, Munich. The content in square brackets is by the author.
22 APCCF: Statuto, 1 January 1980.
23 APCCF: Atto Costitutivo del Circolo Cento Fiori, Registered letter sent to the Italian Consulate, 19 May 1980.
24 APCCF: Richiesta contributo straordinario per costituzione squadra calcistica, 31 May 1983.
25 APCCF: Zuschuß für kulturelle oder sportliche Aktivitäten ausländischer Vereine und Übrige Bereich, Landeshauptstadt München, 27
26 Circolo Cento Fiori becomes member of Filmstadt München e.V. in 1991 and joins the register of Associations of Munich in 1994.
27 APCCF: Cultural event Settimana del Film e della Cultura del Mediterraneo. Viaggio senza frontiere, Munich, 9 – 26 October 1997.
In the beginning the circle was a men companions. [...] When I met them first, before 1981, there were many members, one hundred more or less, [...] with time, as always, the association wanes, membership drops scarily, they weren and after we women arrived, myself among them, we saved the circle by persisting with cinema work.

Ambra Sorrentino29, one of the members in charge of the Circolo Cento Fiori film group describes the activities of the circle and the relationships forged with the city and other film associations:

The Kulturreferat [Department of Culture of Munich] organised a series of events to celebrate 50 years since the pacts for Italian immigrants in Germany and among the many events they chose us to do a film retrospective on Italian immigration in Germany, it was they who asked us, that is to say, they came to us at Circolo Cento Fiori to ask us to do this retrospective which I then organised at the Museum of Cinema. So, we have a great reputation, our events are always well-attended, there is always a large audience, we also have a great relationship with other organisations which make cinema at the migrant level, the Greeks, the Turkish, the Spanish, the French [...] once every two years we organise the Festival of Mediterranean Countries together.

Cinema was certainly the spearhead for the circle Italian directors, showcases of Italian directors, to political films.30 In the 2000s the club also became a member of the FICC [Italian Federation of Film Clubs].31

Un was founded in 2009 thanks to the common work of Rinascita and Circolo Cento Fiori and the active involvement of many new migrants. The common objective of those active in Un to raise awareness of and to support important initiatives of Italian civil society from abroad.32 Up to the present day, there have been three projects undertaken by Un a Italia: a cycle of initiatives on the issue of the struggle against the mafia in 2009, on peace and human rights in 2012 and on the image of women in 2013.

Through film screenings, debates and concerts, Un rly rich cultural programme managing to bring associations and personalities involved in each particular field to Munich.

Thanks to the network built over the years by the two important associations which constitute Un Italia, its events have found support both from German and Italian institutions and achieved great public success. As an association, Un Italian community and the city of Munich but in promoting the image of Italy itself.

Marinella Vicinanza, active in Rinascita and in Un organisation:

Un’altra Italia is still an open group and is based completely on the collaboration between Rinascita and Circolo Cento Fiori and people who are outside the world of the association movement but want to be active in it. Let movement in a different way from the world. [...] Depending on the initiatives, there is a core group but, in short, we are the ones

28 Interview conducted 25 April 2013.
29 Interview conducted 2 May 2013.
30 APCCF: Il Circolo Cento Fiori e.V. si presenta 1997.
31 APCCF: Il Circolo Cento Fiori e.V. si presenta 2005; Il Circolo Cento Fiori e.V. si presenta 2011; Il Circolo Cento Fiori e.V. si presenta 2013.
who are always there, there are about 10 of us: but then, when we worked on legal issues, there were definitely at least thirty of us; when we worked on Emergency, there were more; this year we are working on women to do it, when to do it, we had, let specific and people really need to invest their work, their time, their effort, the more people drop off, but this is natural [...].

The role played by women in Un Italia is also crucial: it is they who time and time again play a part in coordinating groups and, investing experience and energy, contribute in a decisive way to ambitious projects built on their ability to create and to nurture networks within the Italian community; between the association and the city of Munich; and between Germany and Italy.

3. FEMALE ROUTES WITHIN THE ITALIAN ASSOCIATIONS OF MUNICH

It has been possible to investigate the themes of identity and gender in relation to duties in the association movement and to delineate the principle characteristics of women interviews with six protagonists in the Italian association movement. These protagonists belong to different generations and have held or hold a managerial or coordination function in the three major self-organised Italian associations.

While the individual paths of the women interviewed and their reasons for emigration were different, what links these women from various generations is the common path they followed in Italy. In fact, all had attained a high level of education and had, in principle, gained first-hand political experience either in student movements or political associations in periods characterised by serious events at both national and international level, such as, the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968 or the mafia killings of the early 1990s.

Ambra Sorrentino of Circolo Cento Fiori recounts:

I was always involved in the association movement from, I don't, it was an enormous disappointment when at an international convention of young European socialists convened in Florence, I was on the Czech delegation by Russia, there was the Czech delegation and also the Russian one I believe, and I remember that they talked all night about whether to distance themselves from the invasion of Czechoslovakia, and in the end decided not to [...] and I said: enough! I won’t realise at that point that I only wanted to be politically involved in non-profit organisations because it because you don’t.

Serena Chillemi, one of the co-ordinators of Un

I was always involved, even from when I was in high-school, for example, as school representative: I participated in all the occupations and demonstrations against the mafia [I was fifteen when the mafia killings took place in Sicily], I was active in the student...
collectives in Catania, we organised demonstrations and other activities. Besides this, as a musician, I always tried to communicate strong messages through my music, for example, I took part in a concert against the death penalty.

The women interviewed share an active political involvement which, born and cultivated in their early years, has left a profound mark which motivates them to this day. Examining the motivations for which the women interviewed decided to engage actively, one notes important similarities such as the desire to continue to maintain strong ties with their country of origin and at the same time the urge to introduce the Germans to an Italy which differs from the usual clichés.

Ambra Sorrentino of Circolo Cento Fiori explains:

For me it was also a way to not lose contact with my culture, [...] with the Italian language, with what is happening now in Italy, and to show the other Italy which would otherwise not be seen here in Munich, to be a mouthpiece for a different Italy.

Sandra Cartacci\textsuperscript{36} of Rinascita recounts:

I was very interested in rediscovering the language, interested in doing activities in that language in which I couldn’t my two identities a little.

The association movement is a place of sharing and growth as Pierangela Hoffmann-De Maron\textsuperscript{37} of Circolo Cento Fiori recounts:

The circle friends who came from the south, the centre, the north, which I hadn’t grown up in a valley which had been part of Switzerland for three centuries, not everyone knows that, a valley very restricted by the River Adda which flows into Lake Como and which had also restricted my mentality because at that time there wasn’t The second advantage, an intense cultural exchange helped me to grow [...] it helped me to grow in every way. Contact first with German culture, later with others greatly enriched me.

Serena Chillemi of Un

At the end of my studies, I realised that I had really emigrated! [...] For me this type of association has meant the chance to rediscover my Italian side, has meant meeting people who are living in the same situation, we had things in common, and this clearly did me some good, it does me good to meet Italians in Munich.

Being active in the Italian associations means not only playing a role in the Italian community but also the German community with which solid and viable bridges are constructed.

Ambra Sorrentino of Circolo Cento Fiori describes the network created by the association movement:

From the time you do an activity within the Italian community which lives in Munich, you have contact with everyone, because it invited to events by other associations, I mean that, yes, it makes you feel that you belong.

\textsuperscript{36} Sandra Cartacci, president of Rinascita was born in Florence in 1958, has lived in Munich since 1983 and is the mother of one son, she works as an Italian for the school for adults in Munich (VHS).

\textsuperscript{37} Pierangela Hoffmann-De Maron was born in Valtellina in 1945 and has lived in Munich since 1970, she is the mother of two children. She graduated in Foreign Languages and Literature at the Cattolica University of Milan. She has taught at the School for Interpreters and Translators in Munich.
that you belong in this Italian community and automatically Germans who are interested in Italy, those who are interested in Italy and speak Italian.

Marinella Vicinanza\textsuperscript{38}, active in Rinascita and Circolo Cento Fiori, explains how the association movement responds to the need to connect Italian origins with the life lived in Germany:

\begin{quote}
In reality it is in order to receive, to open yourself to receive openness, to not close yourself so as to not to receive closure, for me this is an essential way of being, that is to say that in my identity there are three aspects which are connected, being Italian, truly Neapolitan, having become German, I have also taken dual citizenship and wanting to be both, the point of the argument is to want to be both and to continually find a connection between these two ways of being, this passes to the activities in the association and to my work [...] I chose to teach Italian to adults [...]. So whether through work, the association or other, they are very linked: the two aspects have a valence of identity for me, I could not define myself without both things. [...] My work opens me more to the German world, the association movement more to the Italian world, and I keep both within myself.
\end{quote}

It is also interesting to note the working methods chosen by women active in central positions within the organisations. Women, in fact, do not use vertical hierarchies but prefer horizontal organisation, choosing informal communication and mutual support. Sandra Cartacci recounts her role in Rinascita and the work which exists around the newspaper

\begin{quote}
Within Rinascita I am the President but I am equal to all the others, I prefer concentric circles instead of the pyramid and you rarely find this in Germany [...] The newspaper grew up over the years, in 2002 there were already 24 pages which is our maximum because obviously it is a job done at night, on Sundays, in free time, it is not paid in any way, neither those of us who do editorial or page-setting work, nor the columnists, journalists. [...] In Rinascita there is constant work, [...] this type of work is done mostly by women, men a little less. It is to a woman and say: Listen, we need something, can you give us a hand?
\end{quote}

Pierangela Hoffmann-De Maron recounts the work carried out by the Cinema Group of Circolo Cento Fiori:

\begin{quote}
There are three of us actively working in the cinema [...]. We women are left to move this project forward, the next project is on the regions of Italy, this is possible because we have time and have accumulated a lot of experience [...] we are, however, supported by an office, the Filmstadt, [also a woman], which passes on all the addresses to us and helps us when we need it.
\end{quote}

The emotional aspect also plays an important role in the work of Italian women as recounted by Serena Chillemi of Un

\begin{quote}
Within these associations, Rinascita and Circolo Cento Fiori and Un’altra Italia, there is a strong emotional component which comes from our status as immigrants. This component brings everything we organise to life with a much more powerful energy. If we organise an event on an Italian topic, we want to make a good impression at all costs, it has to succeed, it has to be something unforgettable. For example, the events organised by Un every time we managed to do it successfully, it was very emotional for everyone [...]. For me, from an emotional point of view, it is very different to work in an Italian association to a
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{38} Marinella Vicinanza was born in Naples in 1969, has lived in Munich since 1998, is the mother of one son. She studied Philosophy receiving her research doctorate from the University of Naples Federico II. She works as a teacher of Italian at the Munich school for adults (VHS). Marinella Vicinanza is a member of Rinascita and coordinator of Un
German association [...]. I collaborate in another two associations [Gedok e Pianistencub] but there the emotional component is missing, I miss for example, that type of inspiration, instinct which makes the events we organise more explosive, more -rich instead it Obviously, I don say that it

Daniela Di Benedetto explains how the association commitment is an essential component for her own fulfilment:

I work full-time for a private company. [...] For me, in my life, everything is rather integrated. Outside of work, whatever happens after that, my family life; the associations; my political life is all more or less in symbiosis. I often bring my children to meetings, next week, there is the neighbourhood council and I will bring my little boy who is breastfeeding. Vittoria, my daughter, has been to Rome many times to the PD national assembly meetings. Often the meetings of the associations I other contexts where children can participate without there being any problems. Vittoria has often come to PD meetings, my husband is also passionate about politics and has to accept me for who I am, at the end of the day it dedicate two or three hours to it every day, I dedicate a couple of hours every day to my political and association commitments.

The commitment of these women within the associations is enormous and the ability to combine work, family and the associations is a function of the importance attributed to the latter, as Daniela Di Benedetto of Un

I am a person who lives actively on one hand [in Germany] and on the other [in Italy], as a woman who has a family, two children, I tell you that it would be already difficult on that front, being involved in politics on both fronts is really, really hard, [...] I feel the need, for my own sense of personal achievement, because I cannot see myself being fulfilled only in family life, work life, there which for me is important, what I learned at AGESCI, to leave somewhere a little better than how you found it, a Utopia, a presumption, that more than anything it can be translated into making a personal contribution to the situation you find yourself in. But how can I do this if I lose ties with one of the two realities I am a part of?

To what extent the commitment to the association movement is a conscious choice and how complex this choice can be is highlighted by Marinella Vicinanza, active in Rinascita and Circolo Cento Fiori:

We can say that at least in my case, the association movement is one way of life for me and those who live with me are integrated into it. Alexander, my son, came with me for years to my evenings for Rinascita, it possible otherwise, it becomes a way of being, a way of life and family takes part in this way of life, if they decide not to take part in it or if one part of the family decides that it annoys them, it creates problems and I cannot tell you that problems weren it, therefore this time, energy and thought have a cost.

Women consciously choose the association movement which becomes an essential part of their lives. For all of them, the association movement is a place of sharing, growth and self-fulfilment. For all of them,

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Di Benedetto was born in Palermo in 1974 and has lived in Bavaria since 2001. She is the mother of two children. She studied Statistical Science at the University of Naples Federico II where she also received her research doctorate. She has worked as a Postdoc researcher at the University of Ausburg and since 2004 works in Munich for a private company. Daniela Di Benedetto is secretary of the PD (Partito Democratico) of Munich and represents the SPD [Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands] as a member of the Social Commission for schools and sport of District 25 of Munich. She is president of the sicilian association Le Zagare: Siciliani e non solo. The interview was conducted on 29 May 2013.
being active in the association movement means nurturing the diverse elements of their own Italian and German identities. Through the association movement, in fact, ties with Italy are re-inforced, passion for politics and social commitment is shared, synergies between associations and institutions are created and a contribution is made which characterises the cultural offering of Munich. Women engage and support each other becoming in a few short years the protagonists of the association movement. Thanks to their competence, experience and passion, new places where meeting, comparison and growth are constructed and made available to all, ultimately contributing to societal change.
The Right Order of Things
Liberal Public Sentiment and the Experiences of Lesbian Mothers in Contemporary Australia.

Christin Quirk
(Australia):

Resumen: El historiador oral Nan Alamilla Boyd sostiene que la comprensión personal del yo sexual siempre se construyen en torno a las normas y significado históricamente específicas, particularmente en relación con las fuerzas sociales más amplias. Para las madres lesbianas en Australia esta declaración es significativa, con dichas fuerzas sociales que se expresan en dos perspectivas opuestas. En 2013, el discurso político discriminatorio en relación con los derechos de las parejas de gays y lesbianas y sus hijos (especialmente en relación con el matrimonio, la adopción y el acceso a la fecundación in vitro) se ha convertido cada vez más en contraste con la opinión pública liberal. A través de entrevistas de historia oral con madres lesbianas, este documento cuestiona el impacto de esta divergencia en la comprensión de la identidad y la (re)construcción de la experiencia narrativa. Asimismo, este documento tratará de responder a cómo las madres lesbianas navegan las tensiones entre la discriminación legal y el apoyo del público, sobre todo en vista de los enfoques socio-culturales a la historia oral y estudios mnemotécnicos que consideran la memoria individual y entendimientos personales de uno mismo como socialmente mediada por el contexto cultural dentro de los cuales se crean.

Abstract: Queer oral historian Nan Alamilla Boyd maintains that personal understandings of sexual selves are always constructed around historically specific norms and meaning, particularly in relation to larger social forces. For lesbian mothers in Australia this statement is significant, with such social forces being expressed in two opposing perspectives. In 2013, discriminatory political discourse concerning the rights of gay and lesbian couples and their children (especially with regard to marriage, adoption and access to IVF) has become increasingly contrasted with liberal public sentiment. Using oral history interviews with lesbian mothers, this paper will question the impact of this divergence on understandings of identity and the [re]construction of narrative experience. This paper will also seek to answer how lesbian mothers navigate the tensions between legal discrimination and public support, particularly in view of socio-cultural approaches to oral history and mnemonic studies that consider individual memory and personal understandings of self as socially mediated by the cultural context within which they are create.
INTRODUCTION
As Western countries have legislated in favor of same-sex marriage and further rights to place homosexual relationships on equal legal footing with heterosexual couples, Australia has been persistent in its opposition. That same-sex couples continue to have their choices limited by discriminatory legislation, particularly with regard to access to Artificial Reproductive Technologies (ART). In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) and adoption is troubling in light of the increasing openness and acceptance seen in comparable countries around the world, as well as the visibility of lesbian-parented families in the Australian community. The battle for legal recognition is being fought in a political climate that fails to acknowledge contemporary realities. The voices of critics with socially conservative agendas and beliefs about the primacy of lesbian-parented families. On the other hand, recent research by the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) recognizes that family structures are more varied than the image of a 1950s suburban archetype touted by the media and in political debate. Same-sex marriage also enjoys a relatively high degree of public support. Within this framework, this paper proposes to examine the experience of lesbian mothers and explore the ways in which these women challenge the construct of the idealized nuclear family and the rhetoric of family values in Australia by rejecting a marginalized identity.

This paper will begin by briefly tracing the historical context of the family in the post-war period. I suggest that concerns with nation building and moral panics about homosexuality and extra-marital sex combined to position the heterosexual nuclear family as the ideal solution. Fears and anxieties about predatory lesbians and the influence of lesbian mothers on their children were equally prevalent. Despite an apparent surge of rights and moves towards equality for women and homosexuals in the wake of the social movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s, the exclusion of all traditional current debates about family. Woven throughout the historical context and contemporary debate, I will locate the emergence of a discrete identity around lesbian motherhood. I will then analyze the contemporary constructions of narrative identity by placing the experience of lesbian motherhood within Australian discourses of family.

THE PROJECT AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH
Firstly I would like to provide a brief overview of the larger PhD project in which this research is situated and some notes on the methodological approach. Focused on the state of Victoria in the period 1973 to 2009, my thesis proposes to explore the historical development of mothering beyond heteronormative ideals of parenting. By exploring the experiences of lesbian and single mothers, I hope to provide further understandings of the history of gay rights movements of the early 1970s marked the beginning of an increased visibility of these mothers within the community. At the time, activists hoped that newly won legislative and medical recognition1 would be the first step toward greater social acceptance; the thesis will examine whether this has been the case.

Despite a range of divergent experiences endured by single and lesbian mothers during this timeframe, the research aims to locate and explore the shared space(s) in terms of the wider impact of heterosexist norms of motherhood on women who parent outside of this framework. For example, until July 2009 the Commonwealth Department of Social Services did not recognize same-sex relationships. Lesbian mothers were legally viewed as single mothers, regardless of their relationship status. Within this shared space, my thesis proposes to explore the impact of legislated discrimination on parenting choices and question how and why attitudes toward single and lesbian mothers have changed. This research is pivotal in understanding the persistence of idealized family forms, despite evidence that suggests a more varied experience of family in Australia. Ultimately, the objectives of my research are to inform contemporary debates, as well as federal and state policies toward single- and lesbian-parented households.

1 In 1973 the Supporting Mothers Benefit was introduced and the Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists made the world-first pronouncement that homosexuality should no longer be considered a mental illness.
Using a feminist perspective, this historical study will focus on recovering the untold stories of women lives. This silencing has been a result of socially mediated fears and anxieties, which have translated into punitive policies and practices. The use of oral history in this project is driven by a desire to provide empirical evidence about the undocumented experience of marginalized mothers and to understand the impact of ongoing conservative hostilities toward these families. Anna Green and Megan Hutching remind us that oral history can provide unique insights into the meaning of the individual what happened, but how it was understood and experienced by the narrator. Such advice is critical in navigating the impact of contradictory and competing social forces.

Over the course of this coming year I will conduct in-depth interviews of sixty to ninety minutes with approximately twenty participants in order to reconstruct a range of mothering experiences that span the timeframe from 1970 to the present. Ideally the interviews will be evenly split and represent the stories of ten mothers who identify as lesbian (regardless of partnership models) and ten mothers who are single parents (regardless of sexuality), acknowledging the likelihood of crossover in the two groups. Recruitment of participants has been facilitated through the Council for Single Mothers and Their Children Victoria (CSMC) and the Rainbow Families Council, as well as by word-of-mouth. In the age of the Internet e-news distribution lists, forums and social media have provided the highest response rate.

CONSERVATIVE POLITICS, LIBERAL PUBLIC SENTIMENT & LESBIAN MOTHERS

In Australia, in the immediate post-war period, government concerns with nation-building placed the value of the nuclear family at the forefront of population policy and practice. At this time, Australians were operating within a system of strict social values, underlying moral assumptions upheld the sanctity of marriage and the nuclear family model with a male breadwinner and dependent wife. Throughout this period, women who worked continued to earn significantly less than their male counterparts, compromising the ability to remain self-sufficient, especially with the responsibility of a child. Speaking at the 1988 International Conference on Adoption and Permanent Care, relinquishing mother Deborah Lee reflected on the limited opportunities available to a single woman raising a child at this time.

In Australia until the early 1970s the nuclear family was held sacrosanct and rules were rigid. Women were expected to be housewives and raise children whilst their husbands were the financial providers definition poor economically, socially and sexually.

Such rigid views about gendered roles were even more problematic for the lesbian woman trying to articulate and understand the implications of her same-sex desire. According to Rebecca Jennings, the 1970s marked a turning point in the development of lesbian identities and cultures in Australia with an This period also saw an increasing visibility of lesbians in the law courts as mothers contested the custody of children from previous heterosexual relationships. Jennings argues that these mothers were advised to hide their sexuality if they had any hopes of retaining custody. At this time the courts did not recognize the lesbian mother as a viable social role, instead viewing the outcome of the case. Two new models of lesbian identity emerged from this debate: political lesbian, whose sexuality rendered her a believable lesbian,

2 Alistair Thomson argues that the use of oral history is driven by the desire to evidence about undocumented experience, and to empower social groups that have been hidden from history. The Empirical and Subjective Value of Oral History. Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, Sixth Series 9(1999): 295.
7 Ibid., 506-07.
whose maternal instincts triumphed over her sexuality, enabling her to be a single mother in the interests of securing the custody of her children. These findings would suggest that at least some women were concealing their sexual identity and thereby marking the emergence of new family forms.

The early 1970s were characterized by a mood of hope and anticipation, a concern about Australia in the world, and great social change. The election of the Whitlam Australian Labor Party (ALP) government in 1972 is seen to represent the culmination of social agitation by the Women that had been in power for twenty-three years. Significantly for women, the sweeping social changes that were introduced included legislating no-fault divorce and welfare support for single mothers. The increasing affluence and expanded educational opportunities that had arisen out of the post-war boom provided fertile ground for the blossoming of a newly radical and extraordinarily idealistic generation. The greater autonomy this afforded women corresponded with growing workforce participation, a falling birthrate, and an increased rate of births outside of marriage. These tensions are often cited as having unsettled thereby marking the emergence of new family forms.

Some sources point to the establishment of an identity and politics around the experience of lesbian motherhood in the 1980s. Barbara Baird identifies *Bridge the Gap: A Feminist Forum for Lesbian Mothers, Lovers, Supporters, Friends and Children*, a 1984 conference in Melbourne as the first public national gathering of lesbian mothers. Baird contends that the newly consolidated identity was built around this is not to say that women were not raising children with other women prior to this time. What makes such evidence difficult to find is a combined result of heteronormative ideals and the pathologization of lesbians in the past in which same-sex attracted women faced enormous social pressure to marry a man and repress their feelings for other women. Subsequently, it has been argued that many women lived as heterosexual women and bore children before coming out as lesbian.

However, difficulties in articulating an identity around lesbian motherhood were ongoing within the lesbian feminist community. At the conference, one participant remarked:


For example see O’Neill, “‘A Lesbian Family in a Straight World’: The Impact of the Transition to Parenthood on the Couple Relationship in Planned Families.”


Although rarely questioned, motherhood can be seen as contrary to early radical feminist objectives. New feminist approaches to lesbianism that emerged from the WLM of the 1970s influenced the way in which lesbian identity would be expressed within a gender-based politics, as opposed to earlier attempts to articulate lesbian issues within the male-dominated gay rights movement. Women were encouraged to

Mothering per se was to be a mother is positive and even natural! The majority of and there was no acknowledgement that these same children although dearly loved may represent an enormous responsibility that does not sit well with our feminist aspiration to learning to be

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resist social pressure toward marriage and motherhood. The lesbian mother was problematic both in the Family Law courts and within early models of lesbian identity.

Since that time, census data shows reported numbers of lesbian-parented families has gradually increased, despite continued concerns over under-reporting. Attacks on so-called -traditional families have become routine in political debate over the last fifteen years. Throughout the 2000s, this was achieved by setting the interests of the child in opposition to those of the mother, particularly those single and lesbian mothers who fail to fulfill the criteria associated with good citizenship.16 Baird argues that the neo-conservative years of John Howard -2007] were distinguished as a period centered on policy about families, and that this was 17 It is therefore the absence of the father that has become central to policy debates about the family and its most appropriate form in Australia. According to Jennifer Lynne Smith, the significance of parliamentary discourse as a social force impacting the experience of lesbian mothers is twofold: firstly because of its ability to produce legislation, and secondly because the personal opinions of members are uttered from a position of influence.18

The expression of personal views on the seemingly private matters of family have become commonplace in Australia. In 2010, then opposition leader Tony Abbott declared: challenges 19 This statement followed on the heels of another in which he claimed to feel threatened by homosexuality, as did many other people.

life, 20 Tony Abbott has been the Prime Minister of Australia since 2013 and has never rescinded his views. In fact, members of his party continue to express homophobic opinions in parliament. During a 2012 Senate debate on marriage reform, Senator Cory Bernardi asked where the radical campaign to overturn the fabric of Australian society would end. In opposing a Bill to redefine marriage to include same-sex couples, Bernardi suggested that the next step on this slippery slope towards equality would ultimately end with a social endorsement of bestiality.21 While these beliefs are no doubt ridiculous and, it has been suggested, his extreme views represent a minority position, that he remains a member of parliament professing to speak on behalf of the Australian public is evidence of the impunity with which members can voice such degrading sentiments.

Conservative political discourse in Australia continues to glorify a 1950s ideal of family as being in the be more varied. The is a direct consequence of marketing during the post-war economic boom, which saw almost full employment, high wages for male breadwinners and low-cost housing. These particular circumstances have not been replicated since. Over the past forty years, social trends have resulted in more single parent, step and blended, multiple household and same-sex families. Addressing this diversity, family studies literature that has emerged in the past fifteen years has consistently shown no adverse effect on children, reporting that contribute to determining children -being and 22

Conservative political pressure for families to conform to particular models of normativity impacts not only the experiences mothers choose to share during the interview, but also the way in which these

16 Jennifer Lynne Smith, "Idealised and Demonised: The Construction of Motherhood in the IVF Policy Debate in Australia" (PhD, University of Queensland, 2004), 141. Smith maintains that good citizens are those who are employed and that much of the demonisation stems from a flawed logic that links all single and lesbian mothers to the negative stereotype of the welfare-dependent single mother.
19 Tony Abbott on *Q & A*, Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) television, 8 March 2010.
20 Abbott on *60 Minutes*, Network Nine, 7 March 2010.
21 Cory Bernardi, Senate Hansard, 18 September 2012, 7245.
experiences are constructed. These narrative identities reveal much of the culture within which single and lesbian mothers conceived and raise their children. Queer oral historian Nan Alamilla Boyd makes the timely reminder that personal understandings of sexual selves are always constructed around historically specific norms and meaning, particularly in relation to larger social forces.23 Similarly, Ken Plummer points to the cultural and historical moment at which stories enter public discourse as one of four key processes that take place during the construction of personal narrative.24 These points are particularly salient in view of socio-cultural approaches to oral history and mnemonic studies that consider individual memory and personal understandings of self as socially mediated by the cultural context within which they are created.

The other side of the Australian cultural context for lesbian mothers is that they are visible members of the community and enjoy some degree of public support: for instance, Senator Penny Wong is an openly gay lesbian mother, and opinion polls conducted between 2009 and 2012 by Galaxy Research and Roy Morgan show 64 per cent and 68 per cent support of marriage equality respectively. The disconnect between public backing and political prejudice is reinforced by the findings of clinical psychologist and researcher Liz Short who maintains that lesbian mothers support and that discriminatory laws and policies lag behind the attitudes of most people encountered in day-to-day life.25

Indeed political prejudice and legal prohibitions have not prevented lesbian women from choosing motherhood. With regard to the women I interviewed, the experience of Martina, a 38-year-old lesbian mother with a 13-year-old son is evidence of this point.26 In the late 1990s, Martina made the conscious and deliberate decision to become a mother. Unsure of how to go about conceiving, she consulted the local gay press and discovered Prospective Lesbian Parents (PLP), a group based in Melbourne. Martina described how the group provided single and lesbian women with a support network as they negotiated the path to conception. In the monthly meetings, the women would chat about the range issues they were facing, meet prospective donors, and sometimes hear from guest speakers. It must be noted that at this time single and lesbian women in the state of Victoria had no legal access to IVF, nor was it legal to self-inseminate at home. However, Martina assures me that many women were doing this, often with the help of GPs who were willing to supply the necessary equipment. Another popular alternative was for women to travel interstate, usually to Canberra in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) where these procedures have been available to single and lesbian women since 1985.

The matter of legislation with regard to same-sex rights is complicated in Australia. State and federal governments legislate on different issues. For example, discrimination laws are legislated at both a federal and state level; marriage and inheritance laws are legislated at a federal level only, however domestic partnerships can be legislated at a state level; and adoption and parenting rights are legislated at a state level. In the state of Victoria, women have only had legal access to IVF since January 2010, while medically infertile lesbian women were only included in this earlier legislation by default of their legal status as single women; the same-sex partners of these mothers were not recognized and had no rights at this time. Victoria (as with some other states) also continues to bar same-sex couples from jointly adopting children.

Running in Melbourne since 1996, the PLP allowed women to imagine motherhood in a less conflicted and contradictory way than was evident at the 1984 lesbian motherhood conference or even earlier within the Family Law courts in the 1970s. Here and now, lesbian women were making deliberate choices towards

26 Martina, interviewed by author, January 2014, audio held by author.
lesbian motherhood. While a lesbian feminist discourse had informed the early articulations of lesbian motherhood, this later incarnation was based on a discourse of choice.\textsuperscript{27} The PLP, a lone group operating out of a single central location, attracted women from around Victoria and even interstate to share stories, donors and support. The importance of this group, particularly in the late 1990s cannot be understated.

Another mother I interviewed recounted her experience as the PLP 990s. Trudy has been involved in community development work for the past twenty-five years. For Trudy, community work and group work is important, not only as a process, but as a key tool for social change and support. She had been accessing ovulation induction therapy for a year when she was alerted to the group facilitator through the gay press. Her own personal knowledge of attempting to conceive along with her professional skill set and beliefs led Trudy to volunteer with the PLP for three and a half years. She recalls:

\begin{quote}
I used my skills to try and grow the community. It was a very important time. We used to get 30 or 40 women. They were fantastic meetings in terms of sharing information. There was a lot of change going on at that time and a lot of interest. It was just after the big surge in interest. It was very early in that time where people felt that this was a real option that just because you were a lesbian didn\textsuperscript{'t} say you couldn\textsuperscript{'t} be a mother. It was a fantastic forum to talk about the choices we had in a way that no other forum offered.\textsuperscript{28}
\end{quote}

The group was quite specifically targeted at supporting women in the lead-up to conception, however two of the mothers I interviewed reported that some women did come back to the group for one-off visits. Martina recalls:

\begin{quote}
Some of us went back with our babies and said, around talking about it. This is the end result! That Northcote/Fairfield area.
\end{quote}

While these visits functioned to provide hope to the members of the group and show that the dream of motherhood was possible, there appears to have been less follow-on support for the new mothers. Martina notes that the Rainbow Families playgroup began from this association, but unfortunately like its predecessor, it was a lone group in a single location. For those mothers who lived outside the Melbourne inner northern suburbs, access was difficult. The busyness of motherhood, the tyranny of distance and the obstacles of travelling with babies and small children conspired to isolate the new mother from regular contact with this established support network.

Martina was not one to be put off by the sense of isolation she felt in the Eastern suburbs. Her frustration at the lack of support for lesbian mothers prompted her to organize her own Rainbow Family playgroup in early 2001. The group was moderately successful, and she has made at least one enduring friendship with another lesbian mother. Having been drawn together from a relatively small population of women living in a confined area, the ages of the children vary tremendously in such groups. It can be difficult for mothers to relate to one another when the priority is placed on understanding a child -appropriate stage of development. Martina now finds support through the families of her son -friends, most of whom are heterosexual.

Another participant, Louise, described briefly attending another localized Rainbow Family playgroup, but found she had little in common with the other mothers.\textsuperscript{29} Louise insisted that a shared lesbian identity did not necessarily mean a shared view of other family values or parenting styles. What Louise describes is consistent with early models of identity for lesbian mothers, which saw maternal instincts triumph over

\textsuperscript{27} Baird, “An Australian History of Lesbian Mothers: Two Points of Emergence,” 849-65.
\textsuperscript{28} Trudy, interviewed by author, April 2014, audio held by author.
\textsuperscript{29} Louise, interviewed by author, January 2014, audio held by author.
sexual identity. In seeking support, lesbian mothers have been drawn toward other mothers, regardless of sexual identity. Support is found through the childcare center, the kindergarten, or the school in which the lesbian mother is a minority based on her sexual identity, but in which she can find common ground in her role as a mother.

In 2010, social scientist Margot Rawsthorne interviewed seventeen lesbian-parented families living in Sydney, New South Wales. These narratives gave voice to some of the ways lesbian women who parent disrupt the multiple scripts concerning women what she has termed \(^30\) Indeed the concept of motherhood can be viewed as a social construct in which women are bound by the available cultural scripts.\(^31\) Rawsthorne argues that seeking to create.\(^32\) The availability of language is an important factor in formulating identity.

One space in which minorities (that is, those whose experiences do not conform to a dominant narrative) have found a voice is within support groups. With a mantra of safe place within which counter-experience can be acknowledged. The shared experience assists in the development of a language with which to express experience, but also in the articulation and revisioning of personal identity. Although there is some evidence to suggest that there was a support group for lesbian mothers operating out of Sydney as early as 1976, no other early groups have been documented to date. The number of support groups continue to be limited with three notable exceptions being the PLP, a handful of localized Rainbow Family playgroups, and the Rainbow Families Council which operates mainly as a cyber-network and umbrella organization. Despite the existence of such groups, and the obvious support provided, the interviews I have conducted so far also suggest serious limitations. The narratives constructed by lesbian mothers indicate that the articulation of discrete identity around lesbian motherhood continues to be problematic.

While revisiting her work on *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold* on the 25th anniversary of Stonewall, Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy reflected on the practice of oral history in the writing of gay and lesbian history. In particular, she notes that the narratives of working-class lesbians were not being told for the first time (in contrast to those middle-class lesbians who did not discuss their lesbianism with each other). Kennedy argues that because these women spent a lot of time socializing together in an explicitly lesbian space, they were thus able to develop shared stories. These stories operated as a means of support and a strategy for living with -gay environment of the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s.\(^33\) However, in the case of lesbian mothers in Australia, the lack of an explicitly lesbian space for mothers has seen women turning to alternative spaces to share stories and experiences of motherhood. In this sense, lesbian mothers are rejecting their identity as a minority group and claiming a space with all mothers.

Regardless of the space within which an identity is articulated, there is no doubt that the personal memory is engaged in the creation of an individual sense of self and identity. The creation of personal identities involves a selective process and active choice in the consolidation of memory. Valerie Yow has argued that meanings in their lives.\(^34\) Although anchored in the past, memories (in the form of stories or narratives) are continually re-worked to reinforce meaning that is relevant to the present situation and to protect the individual

CONCLUSION

Memory is one of many resources or tools available to individuals in order to make sense of and feel a belonging to the world in which they are living. Lesbian mothers in Australia have been guided by the memories of earlier articulations of this identity. In the 1970s, the judicial concept of the discreet, respectable lesbian mother emerged: that is, one who adopted a less overt sexual identity. While the 1980s saw the emergence of a more explicit identity and politics around the identity of lesbian motherhood, contradictions were ongoing within the lesbian feminist community: motherhood was contrary to early radical feminist objectives. At this time too, most lesbian-parented families were the result of earlier heterosexual relationships. However by the 1990s, lesbian mothers were making deliberate decisions to form families of their own.

According to socio-cultural approaches to memory, the very act of encoding and consolidating personal memory is controlled by the dominant cultural discourses and the individual configuration. In describing this model, Geoffrey Cubitt contends that remember cannot be coherently understood unless the influences that govern those contexts and the terms of their engagement in them are thoroughly examined. But perhaps in the case of lesbian mothers it is in fact a subjectivist approach to memory that provides the most useful tool for analysis. Cubitt declares that such an approach to memory is we give to our psychic experience... [and] the primary locus of our sense of self. Therefore, central to the function of memory is its ability to provide justification and reinforcement for the ways in which we want to see ourselves, as well as the ways in which we want others to see us.

Without memory, individuals would have a limited understanding of their role or place within their community. When questioned about the impact of conservative politics on her life and life choices, Trudy explained that for her the debate was she recalls that then Prime Minister John Howard was seeking a High Court challenge to the recent legislation that granted access to medically infertile single and lesbian women. As she attended her weekly appointments, she never knew if her treatment would continue or would be terminated if the challenge were successful. For Trudy, engaging in IVF at that time was a political statement in which she claimed her right to be a mother and she did become a mother. Toward the end of our interview Trudy succinctly expressed both her defiance of and her contempt for the current conservative political discourse:

The old adage of the personal is political is absolutely understood in our house. They [conservative politicians] don’t even have a clue about the stories and the lives they are affecting. They simply do not care. They think that their own personal values and their own capacity to discriminate is much more important. It like Australia can continue to put up with this crap.

36 Cubitt, History and Memory, 72.
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