

**Analysis of media coverage:
the case of Leonardo – Padova (IT), 2012**

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Analysis

- Our analysis of the media coverage of Social Services continues with the presentaiton of another model case happened in 2012
- The research method, already been described by professor Allegri, has been applied to the newspapers:

“La Repubblica” and “IlGiornale”

LEONARDO'S CASE -2012

THE FACTS:

On 10th October 2012, a child was taken away from school by the security force, after a provision issued by the Tribunal of Minors of Venice that prescribed his custody exclusively to the father (also after the evaluation of a psychiatrist who noticed symptoms of PAS, Parental Alienation Syndrome)

The attempt to execute peacefully the removal are impeded repeatedly by the mother and her family, who patrol the school's surroundings. They film the scene of the police's intervention and make a media case explode.

The video is broadcasted in the evening of the same day on the TV show *Chi l'ha visto*. The images show **Leonardo taken away by the police with the use of force**, seized from the shoulders and the ankles and brought out of the elementary school, in front of fellow students and teachers, while the child screams and struggles.

- The police's intervention turns the interest on the case on, that becomes public.
- After the case, two points of order are held by members from different politic groups in the Parliament are held

SCUSACI



Il Governo chiede scusa al bambino maltrattato dalla polizia.
 Ma la guerra tra i genitori per l'affidamento del piccolo continua: la mamma denuncia il consulente tecnico del tribunale
 Per gli psichiatri americani la **Sindrome di alienazione parentale non esiste**
 Intervista a Federica Sciarrelli: "Per la polizia un lavoro infame, non dovevano agire loro"

Padova, kid taken away with force by. The police apologize. The police executed a provision from the tribunal, the child's custody has been given exclusively to the father. Controversy for the video broadcasted by *Chi l'ha visto?* Manganeli: "Apologies to the family"



...cine.
 «Mio figlio sta bene ed è sereno - ha detto il padre, che è un avvocato - l'ho salvato e l'importante è questo. Ho pranzato con lui e abbiamo giocato alla playstation: era anni che non lo facevo ed è stata una bella emozione». ● AGI

L'intervista

LEONARDO'S CASE

la Repubblica

- His father bolted him at home, for this I said no and impeded him to see his child' 'My ex wife wanted war, but I freed my son that now can have again two parents' (12/10/12)
- Kid sought after, auntie and grand-father sued (13/10/12)
- Video-shock of the kid taken away from school. Blizzard on the police, Manganelli: I apologize (12/10/12)

RELATED ARTICLES

Mom, now will the kidnap me too? The fear in Lorenzo's school (13/10/12)

- What a mistake to send the agents, but sometimes a judge has no choice (12 October 2012)

- ~~Padova, kid taken away with the use of force. The police apologize - (10/11/12)~~
- The last one from the police of Padova: «The kid reacted with violence» (13/10/12)
- One million views: Leonardo is a symbol – In the last three days the video is the most seen on YouTube. But it's not just morbidity: those images made us think (15/10/12)
- **RELATED ARTICLES:**
- Fabiola's denounce: "Also my 5 years old son taken away with the force, almost like if he were a terrorist" (10/11/12)
- How many tragedies in families for the «experts»' fault (14/10/12)
- Not just Leonardo: how kids removed from their family live – (19/10/12)

Video-shock del bambino prelevato a sc Bufera sulla polizia, Manganelli: chiedo scusa 12/10/2012

la Repubblica



- PADOVA LORENZO understands immediately, even if he's only 10 years old. He knows to be a «special» child. Not because he's the top of the class, with all 9-s and 10-s on the report card. SEGUE FERRO *** PADOVA LORENZO (made-up name) feels special because, from eight years, more than a child is a prey, sought after between mom and dad. A ball that bounces of from a house to the other, and it's always a judge to decide where he has to sleep, eat, study and play with the Playstation. It's a judge that decides whether during the weekend has to receive his mother's or his father's caresses. Lorenzo understands immediately, as soon as he sees the principal entering his classroom di quinta ***. «All the students have to go immediately in gym». But Lorenzo, Lorenzo is special. He has to stay still at his desk. **And understands that «they» are coming. He doesn't know their faces, but he knows what they've come for.** They have already arrived other times, at his mother's house. «We have to take away the child», they said. Second to the last time, together with the social workers, the military police were there. He threwed himself under the bed, the servicepeople saw his hands that grabbed the net and left. «It's not our job», they said. «We can't use the force with a child». The second time they were cops. From under the bed again, Lorenzo heard the agents saying: «We don't consider this appropriate». And heard their steps distancing. Fifth class of the school X of a big town in the Alta padovana area. Lorenzo sees his father enter the class, that smiles at him at says that he has to go away with him. As in many stories of separations, it's hard to divide the grain from the oil, right and wrong. But **now the father has a paper that states his right.** The Tribunal of Minors decided that the special child has to be brought to a special children shelter. because a psychiatrist stated that Lorenzo



il Giornale



The police remove a ten years old child in front of a school, under the shocked eyes of fellow students and in the middle of the kid's tears. The video of the "kidnapping", broadcasted yesterday by Chi l'ha visto? and recovered today by all media cause a blizzard of denounces and accusations. A punch in the stomach of the sensitivity of the Country and its institutions. It happened at Cittadella, in the district of Padova, and it's a fact with traits of the unbelievable. An order of the Tribunal of Venice had stated that the child's custody should be given exclusively to the father. Before of the police interventions, apparently various attempts had been made, but ineffectively, because the child, at the sight of the police or of the social workes, succeeded in running away or hiding. The police intervened in the early morning, at around eight, under the father's supervision, took away the kid with the force to bring him to the community decided the the judicial authority. At the sight of the agents, the maternal grand-parents and the mother, that had accompanied the kids at school, they attacked the cops, while the minor succeeded escaping. Chased by some agents he was then recovered and brought away rusefully from the mother's arms. Today, attending "Mattino Cinque" broadcast, the mother highlighted she tried -vanely- to meet her son at the community. "My son was brought to a because the Appellate Court issued the decree on the ground of the diagnose of PAS". This acronym stands for a particular syndrome of parental alienation. According to the judges, the mother had influenced the kid's opinions about the father, executing sort of a "brainwash".

The Role of Social Services..

- The newspapers don't report any statements from the professionals involved, while do report those from the public prosecutor, Ministers, representatives of the security force (POLICE: «It's not our job»; MINISTER of INTERIOR: «I saw the video and as everybody I was schocked. I'm waiting the results from the inquest»)
- From the analysis of many articles on the subject, it can be noticed that the judgement of the SW is not explicit:
«They are coming» (Rep) and «the video of the kidnapping» (IIG.)

The other professionals quoted..

- Judges - Tribunal of Minors
- Lawyers
- Security Force
- Politicians
- Minors Authority
- Psychologists / Psychiatrist

«The cops – they're three, two of which are women – can report that the aim was achieved» (LaR)

«Maybe the case at least succeeded in uncover the hotchpotch of inefficiencies, superficialities, approximation» (IlGiornale)

You Tube

- **SKYTG 24** (https://youtu.be/l_1_Jvq7yug) **Child's custody to the father, the police take him away at school. The brawl goes off-video shock** **56.134** views 190 comments (social workers like some cops should be eliminated are very dangerous and destroy families)
- **ReporterNewVideo** <https://youtu.be/xdMyBVSiy9k> **10 years old child taken away from the police with force in Padova – my comment no video.** **37.866** views and 87 comments (when it's not up to the police, it's the social service's time, with the abuse of power remove other people's children, with their hearts of stone)
- **TG2** <https://youtu.be/6fqm5NDqKXY> **The union of the police sues the relatives of the child taken away from the mother: a “sheriffade”.** **23.770** views and 171 comments (these politicians/social workers are all ***)
- **RAI NEWS** <https://youtu.be/q55oCdDcE-k> **The parents of the child taken away by the police speak.** **38.628** views and 113 comments (apparently the school was the only occasion where the mother wasn't hiding the child from everyone, so the social workers, the psychologist,

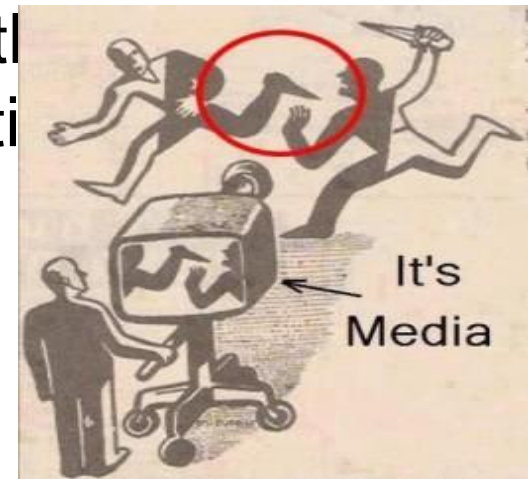
The net..

- <http://www.bambinicornaggiosi.com/CITTADELLA>, **The plea shows: “FREE LEONARDO, A SOUND CHILD”**
- <http://firmiamo.it/in-difesa-del-bambino-leonardo-di-cittadella>, another plea to sign
- <http://mobbing-genitoriale.blogspot.it/>, **“THE NIGHTMARE OF THE MUMS OF POMERIGGIO 5 IS ALSO OURS”**, blog for comparison
- <http://www.helpconsumatori.it/>, **“10.000 children sought after like Leonardo”**, blog for comparison
- <http://blog.donnamoderna.com/>, **“Cittadella di Padova case: let's save our children from us”**
- <http://www.crescoacasa.com/>, **“Petition in support of of the bill 595 to abolish the Tribunal of Minors and reform the Social Service”**

Discussion: the media coverage of the case of Leonardo

- The media coverage of the case “brought into focus” the final result, dramatic, of a path aimed to protect the minor much wider and complex, concentrating exclusively on the images of the video that started this massive media campaign.
- Newspapers and TV emphasized the aspect of eventfulness without deepening important related subjects such the daily pain of the people involved.

- For example, only when the emotional impact of the media campaign lowered, the newspapers deepened what P.A.S. is and the normative procedures to protect minors including various referential professional categories (psychiatrist and lawyers in primis).
- Misinformation in this case showed a drama, intense, to which the protagonists lent themselves to continue their private family war, keeping in the background the appointed authorities involved and the appointed authorities in the background.



Analysis: identified criticalities

- In no article it was mentioned that social workers cannot release statements on the situations of people they follow, according to the Social Service Regulations and following the Code of Conduct of the profession.
- Furthermore, social networks and websites give the faculty to comment with an easy “click”, instant and not filtered of what it's possible to read/see/listen to, creating a media chain that can augment the media wide appeal against someone.
- The media scene of the case of Leonardo (like for many others) increased the stereotypes about the profession of the social workers among those impersonal/banal *** (uno dei due, non ho capito il senso dell'originale) but powerful digital pages, contributing to the sedimentation of prejudice.

Last example

Senza più soldi, l'aiutano al bar

Sannazzaro, una donna 52enne "sopravvive" grazie ai clienti

► SANNAZZARO

A 54 anni di età è disoccupata, senza alcun reddito.

Vive in un'abitazione priva di riscaldamento e corrente elettrica perchè non ha soldi per pagare le bollette arretrate. La vita per A.O., separata dal marito da sei anni e con due figli fuori casa con i loro problemi di sopravvivenza, è diventata da qualche mese a questa parte un autentico tormento, una lotta ormai quotidiana per una normale sopravvivenza.

Anche il pranzo e la cena sono un problema per lei. Il vitto minimo su cui può fare affidamento è quello che racimola da tanti piccoli gesti solidali. Un caffè, un cappuccino, una brioche, un panino, una bibita: quello che l'altrui generosità si sente di offrirle.

La donna, infatti, passa l'intera giornata al Bar Portone dove la titolare Azziza Assouli e gli avventori le offrono a tur-



Il bar Portone a Sannazzaro

no un caffè, un panino.

Insomma, a di A.O. dipende chi conosce di donna sola. Racconta con la situazione

vere: «Sono stata nella crisi. Lavoravo e poi ho perso l'attivi lavori domestici di meno. L'ultima e provvisoria qualna fa; il padrone di se di dover fare i

conti con la sua povera pensione ed era costretto a cavarcela da solo. Da quel momento non ho più trovato nulla».

La donna ha ricevuto l'assegno per gli alimenti dall'ex marito; poi il Comune minacciò di chiuderle il gas di casa sen

non avesse sanato i debiti pregressi. Ed allora fu l'ex coniuge a pagarle il gas, l'ultimo gesto solidale.

«Ma dopo aver estinto il debito»

Non posso contare sull'aiuto di nessuno, anche i miei figli hanno i loro problemi. Non posso pretendere nulla».

Insomma, un autentico dramma per una donna disponibile a qualunque lavoro pur di uscire da questo stato di incubo in cui si trova. Ed ammette: «Devo ringraziare gli amici del Bar Portone, anche tanti nuovi arrivati, se no non avrei di che mangiare. Il 19 novembre, dopo aver incontrato l'assistente sociale, mi riceveranno in comune per analizzare il mio caso. Ma io sono alla ricerca di un piccolo lavoro». Dignitosamente, con un piccolo lavoro, A.O. vorrebbe tornare ad essere autosufficiente. Intanto nel bar dove ci passano tanti stranieri una sannazzarese trova la solidarietà altrimenti perduta. (p.c.)

Conclusions: the effects of the research on my professional practice

- The commitment in this research highlighted also a series of further personal observations:
- It's appropriate to beware of media such as it's necessary to be transparent, clear and proper with the citizens/user involved
- The media arena can become the chosen field for the confrontation/collision between the various subjects involved (public and private) also at a local level
- Media can be the instrument (sometimes blackmail) used by citizens to summon attention on their own situation. It's favorable to ask ourselves of the reasons of this choice

The social workers has always a name..

- During the works of our reaserch it happened to me in person to be involved in a controversial media case. A woman released an interview to a local newspaper about her problems asking the Authority to help her. I was the social worker mentioned in the article.
- After some time, I asked her the reason of this choice of hers:

“because I wanted people to notice me and to help me soon...”

- The article summoned the attention also of her relatives, and of the administrative directors, who, after a first “give and take” on the same newspapers, consciously collaborated with the Social Service in the project to help

Conclusions

The research offers the spark for many considerations and could be developed further after some questions:

- How can the professional participate to the media process at their advantage without failing towards the professional ethics and without risking to turning themselves into a show?
- Who and how can give voice to the social workers position?
- On which levels does the image of a strong profession move today?

***questa non la so, potresti rifarla in italiano

“If you're not careful, the newspapers will have you hating the people who are being oppressed, and loving the people who are doing the oppressing”

(M.X)