
Albanians in Italy thirty years later. They were not “invaders”

Leonard was only ten years old when he left Albania with his family in 1994 and arrived on the shores south of Bari, during the years of the mass exodus from the Balkan country. His parents had decided to emigrate to Italy to offer Leonard and his sister a brighter future. They immediately noticed stark differences in small things, for example there was never a power outage. They moved to a small town in Molise, Portocannone, mostly inhabited by the descendants of Albanian 16th century migrants.

"They were still speaking the old Albanian dialect, so immigrants were not seen as strangers,"

Leonard Berberi recounts to *Scarp de' tenis* magazine. "It was a small village with few inhabitants, and immigrants were not perceived as a threat. We relocated in the year 2000: my parents had chosen Italy to give us children the opportunity to study, and the Molise region offered hardly any prospects. We thus moved to Milan, so that my sister and I could finish high school and attend university. Today, Leonard is a journalist at Corriere della Sera.