



"Let the Bamboccioni Get Out of their Family's House!"

NONE NONE NONE (October 19, 2007)

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"Let the bamboccioni get out of their family's house, and push them to move out on their own!" If Tommaso Padoa Schioppa, the Italian minister of the Economy wanted to make a quip during the meeting of the Budget Commission regarding the main points of the Financial Act, the only effect it had was to start further controversy in the Italian political panorama. The minister was referring to the annual aid of 1,000 euros provided by the Financial Act and assigned to those young people in their 20s and 30s that decide to rent an apartment. In reality, this aid would vary between 495.80 and 991.60 euros, depending on their income. Those that have an annual income above 30,000 euros will not be eligible for any aid.

This means that the monthly aid would be between 41.31 euros and at most 82.60 euros: a sort of tip that cannot cover the expensive rents of apartments, especially in big cities like Milan or Rome, where the average rent is close to 1,000 euros per month. The situation is also not so good for those students who attend university far from their hometown: in Rome, for example, the monthly rent for just a room is 400-500 euros.

After Padoa Schioppa's statement, the press published statistics that clearly show the situation of young Italians, who are at the top of the European charts: a record not to be too proud of, though. In fact the Italian bamboccioni still tied to mamma's apron strings between the ages of 18 and 34 is 59% compare do 23% in France, 16.5% in Germany, 10% in Spain and 34.5% in the United Kingdom. The average in the European Union is 29% - about half of what it is in Italy. Not bad...really!

Of course this phenomenon should be analyzed in a more detailed way, because a large part of the young people still living with their parents are temporary employees who, even though are in their 30s and 40s don't have a steady job yet and could be defined as bamboccioni ob torto collo, forced by the negative situation of the Italian economy to wait for better income in order to have the opportunity to be independent, to have the money necessary to marry, in one word...freedom!

These bamboccioni per forza reacted furiously to the minister's wittiness reminding him that the bamboccioni cannot all be considered in the same way, because there are those who are forced to renew a contract every three months and have no job security. It is clear that without steady employment and income, it is impossible to rent an apartment or even a room. So, they are still living in the same room in their parents' home as they did in their childhood, sharing the room with boxes full of their old toys inside the closet. Not to mention the difficulties in having a normal relationship with a girlfriend, being forced many times to a miserable romantic evening with one's



beloved in the back seat of a car because there's no money to rent an apartment with.

On the other hand, there is a group of bamboccioni doc who have a good income and yet are still living in their parents' homes. In many cases they belong to a well-off family. I know many who belong to this category: some are relatives, some are neighbors. I started to "study" their habits, and after much observation I can say that their customs are somewhat similar, especially when it comes to the males: they live in their parents' house, go to work every day, in the evening they go out with their friends but try not to be late because of work the next day. In the morning they find a clean shirt perfectly ironed by their mother or by the help. Breakfast is always ready: on display on the kitchen table there are their favorite cookies, maybe even a warm and inviting croissant, and a strong espresso...the ideal way to start the day with lots of energy! Ditto for dinner after a hard day of work if there's no evening out with friends. Is there anything better than a tasty dinner waiting to be eaten? Another interesting habit of the bamboccioni doc is the weekend: in fact the wealthy spend it in their family's vacation home, usually not far from the city. After a busy week it is necessary to have a much deserved moment of relaxation alone with your sweetheart.

Why should a person want to live on one's own, having to prepare their meals every day, and, especially in the evening, after a day at work, trying to find the energy to cook, clean the house, do the laundry, iron the shirt for the following morning?

Furthermore, the bamboccioni doc know very well that, thanks to mamma's help, they can use the money they earn that would otherwise be used to pay the rent or the mortgage, to buy a Smart car, or to go regularly out to eat, or to go on extravagant vacations at least twice a year.

In conclusion, it is a social phenomenon that needs to be analyzed in all its many facets. Though it is clear that it is not simply a problem concerning those young people that do not have a regular job or a house. It is also an issue involving a hyper-affective family attitude, with parents coddling their kids and thus increasing their grown children's laziness. Amidst all these problems there is only one certainty: the Italian mamma is a real though cultural rock that cannot be easily tarnished!

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