Benvenuti? Migration and integration from a bottom-up perspective in Italy. Local action in Italy.

Introduction

Nowadays, countries face countless challenges and migration is one of the most current problems of these challenges.

Based on the most recent report of the UNHCR (The UN Refugee Agency), in 2017 68 million people were registered around the world to leave their homes. A record rate of 44 400 people decided to flee from their country every day. [1] This 68 million people who have opted for migration in the last year can also be perceived as an imaginary country with the twenty-first largest population of the world's countries. [2] One of the most populous "regions" of this "country" is Italy. From 2014 to 2015 Italy was subject to strong migratory pressures, that show a decreasing trend from the year 2017 onwards. [3]

At the summit of the crisis Europe was surprised and somewhat disinterested in looking at the masses of the migrants who had besieged the borders. Its inexperience and inertia is partly understandable as it had never had to count on this degree of migratory pressure so far. Whether a single migration policy could be successful at EU level would require a more specific study. However, one of the main stakeholders, at least in relation to the entry to Europe, Italy, is worth reviewing the migratory trends and the attempts to solution. On the one hand, this presentation would highlight the importance of integration policy in the management of migration. On the other hand, based on the Italian example, it would also seek an answer to the following question: would the civil sphere be able to tackle emerging and deepening problems if the integration strategy is lacking. That is to say, the presentation is also trying to demonstrate the activities of the grassroots civil society initiatives in Italy, especially focusing on the so-called centro sociales. So its aim is twofold: to draw attention to the importance of integration and the problems that lack of integration can cause, and on the other hand, with investigation from the bottom, to form a conception of the Italian migration situation and of the role of civil society organisations. The bottom-up perspective gives the opportunity to interpret the migration

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[1] https://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends2017/
[2] https://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends2017/
[3] https://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends2017/

situation in Italy from a new aspect and thus to explore new elements with a better understanding.

In other words, we seek answers to the following important questions: how has Italy tried to tackle the kind of migratory pressures that have had to be counted over the past period? What characterises the Italian migration policy in recent decades? What civilian responses can we see in terms of managing migration? Why are local measures important and what good practices can they provide? Due to the given timelimit of the presentation, this present study would like to examine these questions in details.

The challenges of migration in Italy, trends in recent years

To understand the full picture, first of all it is important to briefly review the migratory trends affecting Italy, i.e. how it has transformed to be from an issuing country to a host one. Currently, Italy is one of the countries most exposed to migratory pressures among the EU countries. However, it was not always this way.

Looking at the Italian migration trends, we can see that the country was clearly an issuing country at the beginning of the 20th century. Italians, especially the southern Italians, have left their homeland to a better life and have started a journey mainly overseas. At that time one of the main host countries was the United States of America, where a large number of Italian colonies were formed, [4] as well as the South American continent (Argentina, Brazil) allured with the hope of an attractive life. Approximately 26 million people emigrated between 1876 and 1976. [5] The main reason behind emigration was the uneven development of the areas and the unemployment that has hit mainly south Italy. The difficult Italian situation after the Second World War resulted in a mass emigration to northern and western Europe as main target areas. Immigration to the United States of America increased again in 1965 and 1990. In These years, mainly highly educated Italians migrated. [6] Those who research Italian emigration estimate an approximate 60-70 million people derived from the above mentioned mass imigrations with the largest community living in Argentina (around 24 million) and a significant in Brazilía (20.5 million) and in the United States of America (16 million).[7]

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[4] Dömös, 2016, pp. 72-90.
[5] Kun, 2012, pp. 91-97.
[6] Between 1946 and 1976, about 7.5 million Italians left their country and during this period, slightly more than half of the 3, 3 million returned to their home countries. Written material of Emigration Museum of Rome (Museo dell 'Emigrazione Italiana - MEI).
[7] MEI

Throughout the whole 20th century besides emigration there was also an intense *inner migration mostly from the south to the north*, that was stimulated by the Italian economic miracle. These were the so-called "Sun Trains" with which approximately 800 thousand Italians arrived from the south within only six years from 1955. [8] During this period, the main destinations were the major industrial centres, factories, namely Milan, Turin and Genoa. Industrially-developed cities attracted the southern people as a strong magnet. They fleed to the north with the hopes of a better life, however, they faced much discrimination and exclusion. We can find many comparisons and analogies between the contemporary cases and the current events in imgration. At those times notices such as "No rent for Southerners" or "Southerners and dogs cannot enter" could be read in many places. Although the close coexistance of the northern-southern caused frictions, it has inevitably shaped and transformed the image and customs of these cities. [9] At the same time, cities were initially unable to keep up with the sudden surge of numbers, which brought the degradation of certain districts and the marginalisation of their populations. Poverty and marginalisation have raised the crime rate. [10] Experts on this topic emphasise the duality of the process: while the downsides outlined above have existed, it should also be remembered that most of the Southerners' living conditions have improved and they could provide a future for themselves and their children that would not have been possible in the South.

In the 1960s and 70s another large wave of emigration began. In this period emigration was primarily directed to Germany, France and Great Britain.[11] Between 1958 and 1963 approximately 1.5 million Italians – of which three-quarters were southern Italian – abandoned their homeland. In addition, between 1977 and 2005, approximately 1.7 million Italian emigrated. In 2008, approximately 3.7 million Italian nationals lived abroad, mainly in Europe and in second largest numbers in the United States of America (1.4 million).[12]

From the second half of the century Italy receives more and more migrants and has become a *transit country* at first, and then *a country of destionation*. It is difficult to tell when the shift in emphasise exactly happened, but it is certain that, since the 1990s, immigration to

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[8] http://www.lastampa.it/2016/07/10/speciali/eravamo-tutti-meridionali-la-migrazione-sui-treni-del-sole-LQgU4hJ7FYOKNUsx9cUlEK/pagina.html
https://italiaexpress.wordpress.com/2012/07/20/lemigrazione-italiana-interna-negli-anni-50-e-60/ ()
[9] http://www.lastampa.it/2016/07/10/speciali/eravamo-tutti-meridionali-la-migrazione-sui-treni-del-sole-LQgU4hJ7FYOKNUsx9cUlEK/pagina.html
[10] See more http://www.lastampa.it/2016/07/10/speciali/eravamo-tutti-meridionali-la-migrazione-sui-treni-del-sole-LQgU4hJ7FYOKNUsx9cUlEK/pagina.html
[11] Póczik – Dunavölgyi, 2008. P. 214, Colombo –Sciortino, 2004, p. 13, Cseresnyés, 2005, p. 29.
[12] MEI

Italy has increased and this has increased further since the 2000s. The first date which is worth highlighting in the context of growth is 2011, when – thanks to international intervention – the Kadhafi system fails in Libya and the country ceases to function as an autonomous state. This is important because in the Mediterranean regions' migration Libya had been functioning as a kind of a "safety net" to Italy.[13] From then onwards boats with full of immigrants have arrived without interception to the coasts of Italy. The 2014 and 2015 years were outstandingly high in terms of immigration and record data. In the first four months of 2014, immigration grew by eight-fold compared to the previous year's data, then in the first half of 2015 this already very high figure has tripled.[14] Then, from 2016 onwards, the migratory pressure eased and in 2017 the coast of Italy was reached by far fewer immigrants.

Currently 8.4% of the country's population is immigrant,[15] which has caused more and more *problems* over the years, society has faced an increasing number of *tensions*. In this study there is no opportunity to take a detailed record of all the problems encountered to immigration, but it is important to mention some of its defining elements. Italians have found and find it difficult to accept the growing numbers of immigrants[16] and they mostly consider them as outsiders. It is typical to treat migrants as an array: to divide society into "*we and others*". As the phenomenon of immigration is a complex, multi-factorial process, the immigrants themselves cannot be regarded as one whole either, they have their different life histories, motivations, decisions and goals. It is not true that they would be unified, since many immigrants are similar to the majority of Italian society, and many are very different even from each other. Italy does not have an immigrant community, but it has several distinct groups. There is no need for lengthy explanation on whether this kind of 'we and the rest' subdivision is *exclusionary*. In this process the *mass media* also played a major role. From the 2000s the number of crimes with increasing immigration has also risen, which has often been linked and presented unilaterally and in an exaggerated way by the media.[17]

Separation and exclusion of immigrants occured more and more frequently in the media but also in everyday life. An increasing number of events also drew the attention of both politics

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[13] This is one of the main migration routes to Italy (mainly to Southern Italy: Lampedusa, Sicily and Naples) from the coasts of North Africa. The other way is traditionally across the Adriatic Sea from the Balkans and the main destinations are Bari and Ancona. The third main route is the mainland from the Balkans.

[14] Ld. UNHCR https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5205

[15] http://www4.istat.it/it/archivio/208951
 http://www.caritasitaliana.it/caritasitaliana/allegati/7824/Sintesi%20per%20giornalisti.pdf

[16] See more Pew Research https://www.pewglobal.org/2010/01/12/widespread-anti-immigrant-sentiment-in-italy/

[17] Immigrants have become the main perpetrators of violent and property crimes by the middle of the decade, as well as drug trafficking, thanks to the mass media which offten communicate in negative ways from these groups. At the same time, the offical data did not show this increasing trend." Nyusztay, 2011, p. 109.

and society that the issue is current and it needs an urgent solution. One of the first events was the creation of *Hotel Africa*. A black immigrant community formed part of the building of Rome's Tiburtina railway station into their residency. This was one of the first events that drew the attention of Italian politics and society more widely to the growth of immigration, the problems associated with it and the total marginalisation of these groups. Several Italian researchers noticed them and some geathered and started an archive (*Archivio Memorie Migranti*), where they geathered and shared the personal life histories and Odysseis of immigrants.[18] This organisation is still working today and it emphasises that Immigration can only be managed successfully if we know the personal stories of people behind it.

The first serious confront of the majority society and immigrants occurred in Rosarno in 2010. The Africans who were working under inhumane conditions and in full prospects in orange plantations marched into the streets to protest after an incident. Mass violence emerged. Due to the continuous media coverage the country confronted with the fact for the first time that immigration is a serious problem and integration is failing and racism is growing.[19] One of the "culmination" of the problems was finally in October 2013, when nearly 360 people were lost in the sea near *Lapedusa*.[20] This led to the renegotiation and alleviation of the immigration law, and the setting up of the *Mare Nostrum* program.[21] The purpose of the Government of Enrico Letta was to avoid a similar catastrophe and to help immigrants from Africa to Europe. The majority of Italian society considered it to Italy's shame that such a degree of catastrophe could have happened.

The serious gap between immigrants and the majority society and the increase in inequalities were highlighted by a number of subsequent events, too. For example, the closure of the Roman Baobab Migrant Association's building by the prefecture, that resulted in hundreds of immigrants losing their shelters and living on the streets for months. The inhumane conditions upset the population, many of them feared infections, epidemics and the degradation of the area. Many others did not understand how this happened and how could so many people go to the streets without any state aid.[22] In 2017 another major storm of evictions took place, this time around Termini station. In this case, the United Nations High Commissioner for

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[18] http://www.archiviomemoriemigranti.net/presentazione?shareLang=it-IT, Triulzi, 2013, pp. 51-66.
[19]. http://kitekinto.hu/europa/2010/01/09/puskaval_lttek_rajuk_botokkal_vertek_ket/#.VRgMD_msU_Y
[20] http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/mar/22/lampedusa-boat-tragedy-migrants-africa
[21] Mare Nostrum was a military-humanitarian operation until 2014 and nearly 100,000 people were rescued. The cost of the program was about EUR 550 million. The project was later abolished and replaced by the EU Triton mission, which received much more criticism.
[22] https://video.panorama.it/news-video/nel-ghetto-di-via-cupa-dove-400-migranti-dormono-in-strada/)

Refugees and the Doctors Without Borders have emphasized that this is not a solution to the fundamental lack of integration. Since spring the new government has initiated several similar evictions and liquidations of colonies.[23]

The proportion of *hate crimes* that have been less prevalent in Italy has also grown.[24] The problem is that Italy has no official database and monitoring system to measure the exact number of cases, so there may be large variations in measurement data. In addition, they are very sensitive data and the number of cases that are hidden can be extremely high. However, it can be concluded that although there are numerically large variations, all statistics have indicated an increase in cases over the past period.

In connection to Italian migration there is a continuing debate over the *elements of the state host system*. On the one hand, it is a well-developed, articulated system, which, however, is overloaded to the extreme and therefore poorly functioning. On the other hand, some elements of the so-called CIEs are subject to constant debate.[25] The most frequently asked questions regarding to the organisation are the effectiveness of their operation, the violation of human rights, and the efficancy of deportation in general that is usually criticized by experts. It is not surprising that these centres operate with low efficiency. The ratio of actual deportations is around 46%.[26] Moreover, they do not have a deterrent effect. Lasciate CIEntrare, an organization led by Gabriella Guido has been fighting for years for the closure of CIE and for a more humane immigration.[27]

With the growth of migration more and more problems have occurred and these have brought together the response of the polic level. The next section gives a review of this by concentrating on the main features.

A brief overview of the political responses to the challenges

Italian policy has not really dealt with migration management for a long time. Some governments have explicitly treated the question "generously" and left it untreated, not fearing the problematic side of it but rather focusing on its possible advantages. For a long time it was

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[23]   Recently 'River Village' and the 'tent city' of Tiburtina were evacuated. http://www.ilgiornale.it/news/cronache/virginia-lasciaci-pace-protesta-rom-contro-sgombero-1558224.html http://www.romatoday.it/cronaca/tiburtina-chiusa-perche-sgombero-ex-penicillina.html

[24] https://www.euronews.com/2018/07/31/are-hate-crimes-on-the-rise-in-italy-)

[25] Center of identification and expulsion (Centro Identificazione ed Esplusione, CIE) Mazza, 2013. From 2017 Orlando-Minniti Act changed their names to CPR, i.e. Permanence Centres for Repatriations (Centro Permanenza per i Rimpatri, CPR).

[26] http://viedifuga.org/cie-cronache-ee-numeri-di-un-sistema-sempre-piu-inutile/

[27] http://www.lasciatecientrare.it/

looser and more permissive, focused only on the existence of residence permits and deportation statements. All of this has become a benefit for the country, as the other major host countries in Western Europe have already advocated the tightening of immigration laws.

If we review trends in more detail we can see that until 1986 only proof of identity and residence permits have been verified. The first major comprehensive law was reached in 1986, which wished to settle the legal situation of migrants and to guarantee their labour market equality.[28] The *Martelli Law* of 1990 was already a comprehensive law which brought several measures in relation to refugees.[29] In 1998 the so-called *Turco-Napolitano law* has already made efforts to settle this increased number of community. This law spacifies the conditions for admission and residence permits, sets quotas, and imposes stricter deportation standards and norms, in accordance with the Schengen requirements and the Tampere programme.[30]

The next turning point in Italian migration policy was 2002 when the European Union's strictest anti-immigration law was born, the so-called *Bossi-Fini law*. This, amongst other things, tightened the conditions for extending residence permits, and punished illegal immigration. According to experts, this law was controversial because it gave immigrants an opportunity to legitimise their situation but, on the other hand, introduced difficult conditions for extending residence permits for those who arrived in the country legally. The other main criticism of the law was that it treated the phenomenon of immigration as a criminality. From here onwards, the Italian migration policy has become *closed-up* and *restrictive*. From 1998 there was a steadily tightening tendency to halt immigration.

Then from 2006 the political situation changed, *Romano Prodi*'s two-year left-liberal governance cycle impacted Italy's immigration politics. Prodi became the Italian prime Minister from the EU presidency chair and he accordingly envisioned an EU-compliant migration policy for Italy. For example, he deleted the labour-immigration quotas for newly-entering states. However, after 2007, the growing problems and the emergence of their continuous media presence have again tightened the immigration policy. The Prodi administration continued its controversial policy of inclusive-caring politics and forced tightening. This more permissive policy of migration has undeniably contributed to the recent increase in migration in the second half of the 2000s. The number of crimes related to immigrants increased, which the media often presented unilaterally and exaggerated.

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[28] See more Nyusztay 2011, p. 107.
[29] Colombo –Sciortino, 2004, pp. 56-59.
[30] Obviously, the Italian regulations have to be in line with the legislation of the European Union, however, in this paper we cannot go into such details. Se more: Mohay, 2014, pp. 45-64.

Immigration become a topic of everyday politics and it was highlighted in the 2008 electoral campaign. The winning *Berlusconi government*, with the Northern League, taking advantage of this responsive public mood, tightened immigration laws. Amongst other things, they introduced financial penalty on irregular immigration, and expulson became a possible action against them, too.

The Berlusconi government sought to combat immigration internationally. They signed agreements with Libya and Egypt, as well as with other 28 countries to reduce immigration. In particular, they also agreed on joint coastal patrol and the deportation of irregular immigrants. These got tough criticism and caused tensions within the European Union, too. Many people did not like that the issue of immigration was seen only as a matter of public security and completely its social and cultural aspects were absolutely ignored.

The immigration policy was tightened further by the *Maroni-Tremonti Act* in 2012. They also had a financial penalty for the lawmaking of irregular immigration, which meant a fee of EUR 80-200. Finally, under the influence of protests and the boat tragedy in Lampedusa in 2013 the Italian House of Representatives eased the immigration law *in the spring of 2014*.

They were peek years between 2014 and 2016 in relation to immigration (with record data), partly due to the alleviation of Italian immigration policy and partly by international events. This intensifying migratory pressure then led the current Italian government again to tighten its immigration policy. During This period the govermnent began re-negotiations and closer cooperation with Libya (which has ceased to function as an autonomous state since 2011 due to the international intervention against the Kadafi system). This cooperation did not conceal the purpose to persuade Lybia to impede the immigrants arriving to mostly Italy since 2011. In this context Italy offered Libya assistance in providing equipment and training for the Libyan coastal patrol.

In 2017 Italy developed a new *Code Of Conduct and Civil Society* for civilian lifeboats, which aimed to coordinate the rescue protocol and to provide a controlled framework to it, so the human trafficing in the Mediterranean could be reduced.[31] The code has triggered a major wave of protest from NGOs.[32]

It can be seen that immigration policy had tightened well before the new coalition government (the League and the 5 Stars Movement) was formed in 2018. The current situation

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[31] Code of Conduct http://www.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/codice_condotta_ong.pdf)
[32] https://euobserver.com/migration/138656, https://www.lastampa.it/2017/08/15/esteri/migranti-lesperta-onu-con-il-codice-di-condotta-per-le-ong-si-rischiano-pi-morti-in-mare-idun96vsT9jlD5aujaowHP/pagina.html

is due not primarily to the new Minister of the Interior, Matteo Salvini, but also to the former interior minister of the Gentiloni government, Marco Minniti. He was the one who carried out a series of talks with Libya from 2016 onwards, including the various tribal groupings, and who the new code made it difficult to cross the Mediterranean Sea as the main migratory route. The impact of these acts could be felt and the number of people arriving to Italy fell to the third,[33] however, this was only symptomatic treatment. The measures did not have any impact on the root causes, i.e. the push-factors of migration: local problems that cause people to emigrate were not solved. Overall, these measures and the latest, so-called Salvini's decree[34] are mainly focused on the interception of migration and on keeping it beyond national boundaries.

The role of Italian civil society organisations in managing migration

The problems presented above also show that, from 2000 onwards, Italy was no longer able to turn away from the immigration issue. It was present and became a part of everyday life, which drew the attention of politics, the media and society as well, that the issue is topical and resolving is becoming more urgent.

A strong civil society is an integral part of *Italian political culture*, which roots can be tracked back to several elements. For example, trade unions, sindikalism and the strengths of revolutionary powers were always characteristics of Italians. Familiarism is also an important element: family centrism is manifested not only in traditional terms, but also in community, thinking and action, which also gives a strong foundation for civil society. In addition, the presence of localization – the area, whether a city or a larger municipal unit, such as a region – is displayed as an identity building factor. Active participation in local affairs is also an indispensable basis for civil organisations. Furthermore, religious and historical traditions must be taken into account: the existance of altruism related to Catholicism or various movements and organizations derived from historical traditions. There are also historical reasons for the existence of a "weak state" in Italy and a strong civil society in parallel.[35] „Citizen disobedience and revolutionalism that brings public issues out on the streets are values that are shared – at

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[33] http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/country.php?id=105
[34] Salvini Decree is a migration security bill and it was passed by the Italian Parliament on 7 November 2018. See more: http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2018/10/04/18G00140/sg
[35] Szabó, 2003, pp.135-155.

least in principle – not only by conscious opposers, but also by most of the majority of society."[36] Although, this quotation was originally about France, it is also true for Italy.

The existance of different bottom-up organisations are significant, too, as they deal with important (public) issues that affect life on the local level. And with the increasingly problematic migration, civilian initiatives are also emerging which seek to tackle the problems of large-scale immigration. In other words, some NGOs have begun to deal with migration, and they are trying not only to approximate cultures, but also to capture the issue along the deeper layers of integration, and to make incoming people an integrated part of Italian majority society. So a strong NGO layer is becoming established in the coutry, that is willing to act on the issue of migration and point out the importance of integration in the same time. These are communal spheres that are deeply rooted in the basic minds of Italian society and the Italian political culture, previously mentioned. These social co-operations working in smaller districts help to present the Italian language and culture to the immigrants at a local level, and through various events they also try to approximate the majority society with the migrants living there. In other words, they seek to tackle the shortcomings of state immigration policy. One of the reasons for their effectiveness is that, they realised that the main obstacle to immigration, exclusion and racism is not economic, but it is rooted in the cultural gap between the majority society and migrants, in the remotiness of the two and in the resulting fear. Their activities try to reduce inequalities between immigrants and the majority society, to marginalize, to exclude these groups and to make them useful members of the community instead.

Empirical research methodology and difficulties

This part of the research is based on the empirical experience of field research gained through different scholarships of the past three years.

The main empirical method of research in the NGO section is the *interview preparation*, which is a *qualitative empirical method*. The interview is important because, in order to credibly present the current Italian immigration situation, primary, first-hand sources are also needed. Throughout the course of the interviews it is important to compare the experience with the previous literature findings and to explore the similarities and contradictions. Following the processing of the literature these "deep drillings" help to categorize social action and perceptions into types, and to provide a broader view on the subject. The qualitative method can be used to understand society from the perspective of its doers. It helps to learn about the

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[36] Szántó, 2006, pp. 254–270.

knowledge, speaking methods, and interactions that people are acting upon. We can answer questions that illuminate the dense network of politics and society through a specific question (on immigrants) and explore ways of speaking, interactions and hidden content, which can make us see things in a new light or strengthen us in our previous hypotheses. In other words, much richer, deeper, and "softer" data can be gained.

So the main methodological element of the research is the preparation of interviews with civil society organisations: their history, the reasons for their establishment, their current situation and areas of operation. During the research trips I spent several months in Rome and interviewed several civilian organisations who talked about their own motivations and insights on the immigration situation in Italy. Subsequently, several interviews were made with major Italian NGOs and prominent experts of the Italian migration research. The number of interviews currently being processed is about thirty. In further research, it would be important to interview policy-level actors. I consider it important that the analysis of the political level based on literature should also be complemented by a part based on empirical experience.

Interviews are also difficult. The interviewer must remain in the background, should aim neutrality instead of expressing opinion and resolution, while he or she is as close to the interviwee as a psychologist. Since the interview is quite a personal act, it depends very much on the relationship between the researcher and the interviewee. It is very important that the researcher's personal position should be a matter of self-reflection. Interviews should also take into consideration the exact situation and respond to changes. Of course, it is important to have pre-structured questions, but you should be able to differ from it. In the course of the interviews with immigrants, it is necessary to pay attention to the order of questions, whether they are appropriately thematized, and not to start the interview with the strongest questions letting time to "warm up" and to build the right atmosphere. This is a hard and time-consuming genre, and you need to be aware that a lot of questions will be answered only from meta-communication signals that you will have to successfully decode. You also need to know when to let the speaker talk freely about memories or what it means when a subject is repeatedly occuring in the conversation. The interviewer must be open and inclusive, but should not be biased. It is important that you try to deal with the situation with neutrality. That is why I consider to start with a more casual, effortless conversation, and then the collection of general data, so everyone has time to ease. It is also very important that at the very beginning of the interview it is necessary to clarify who the person is and why he is doing the interview. Since I have prepared these interviews abroad, I have always devoted enough time to explain what I am doing and

what my goal is. I have always asked from my interviewees if they are contributing to the use of their names, and it has calmed them and gave them a sense of security in the very first place. Another difficulty is the distance: to get wider views from interviewees, you must travel. Because it is another country, it is a different town, it requires the creation of serious logistical and financial conditions. Moreover, in order to be able to create a credible picture, you must do a lot of intervies and all in a foreign language aiming to be as natural as you can be. However, despite all its drawbacks, the great advantage of interviews and the life interviews I have made is that through the people's experiences and refelxions social processes can be explored. In this way I could be informed about the Italian immigration situation, the maladministration and the difficulties of the regulations.

Another important element of the research methodology is the analysis of secondary sources, which in this case is a rich, constantly expanding literature, mainly in Italian. Finally, other important elements were the various conferences, roundtable discussions, and forums that have also provided opportunities for deepening and communicating on the topic during the research trips.

Grouping of NGOs – based on interviews so far

On the basis of the interviews, I tried to group the learned NGOs along key features. Of Course, these are not representative data, since I did not take into account all the civilian initiatives on migration, but based on empirical research, the main traits how they could be categorised are also crystallized.

One characteristic that I started along with is the *scope of their activities*. Empirical experience has shown that some of the organisations are organised from the bottom, focusing on a local matter. So it does not become a national organization, but is retained in that city or district. The most obvious examples for this are the centro sociales, of which countless exist in Italy, but they are independent of each other, motivated by the specific district or city. So there are no two same centros and they do not deal with all the public affairs, neither with migration. However, the centers that I visited are centres in Roman districts or cities (Parma), which also try to tackle local problems related to immigration. Nevertheless, there are also national organisations, such as Arci and Sant'egidio.

There are some among the organisations that had their original purpose specifically to manage migration, these were quasi-"specific" initiatives – for example the already mentioned Archivio Memorie Migranti or LasciateCIEntrare. Some were originally developed for other

cases and started to deal with migration only later. A lot of them can be found: Arci, Sant'egidio, Centro Sociale.

NGOs can be characterised and grouped by their *activities*. There are organisations dealing with a more specific topic in the context of migration, or they mainly have a kind of activity (language and culture education), and there are some that are far more complex in approach to managing the problem. I. e. they maintain not only language schools, but also centres where immigrants receive many other assistance from legal assistance, to job-search and medical care. In addition to solving everyday problems, there are also organisations carrying out scientific activities (Centro Astalli, Asinitas).

Organisations can also be grouped according to whether they are *ecclesiastical NGOs* or "laymen". Civil society organisations with a church background are actively involved in managing migration. Some of them are only ecclesiastically established such as the Centro Asinitas, and there are organisations that are more familiar with religious attitudes, such as the Centro Astalli, which is an especially Jesuit organization. These initiatives are very exciting and new to migration research. Academic life has not really dealt with these so far, so it is a fresh area of migration research that can present many novel research results. Also civil initiatives created by immigrants could also be listed to this group of devision.

Of course, the grouping is not complete, it reflects the current state of research. In The next subsection I will pick one exact examle and describe one of the most exciting NGOs.

The Centro Sociale and a specific example – the CSOA eXsnia

The Centro Sociale is a peculiarly Italian formation, which can be interpreted as a kind of Italian squat. The phenomenon of squat is not new to scientific thinking. The phrase means "occupied houses", which began to spread in high numbers in the second half of the 20th century. From the 1980s the phenomenon of squat became a movement that soon became a cultural phenomenon. There are "squat initiatives" in several countries, when the civilian courtesan takes possession of a deserted, depreciated building in a district of the city. These buildings were made habitable by self-financing and were in many cases filled with community content. The two most famous examples are Berlin's occupied houses or the Christiania district of Copenhagen.[37]

Italy is no exception, where in the 1970s similar movements began to be created and established the first so-called centro sociale. The oldest and still-active centro is the

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[37] From the squat see more Dömös, 2016, pp. 12-26.

Leoncavallo in Milan. These centro sociales are very similar to the squads or occupied houses discussed above, but cannot be fully classified into this category. In many ways they are unique in nature. In Hungarian they could be named 'a community or social space/centre'.

In the beginning, these places were characterised by a much stronger ideological, mainly left-wing political content[38], which was taming out to the 90s, but is still present in the defence of privatisation or neolibral culture. The centres remain the meeting points of the progressive intellectuals, who consider it important to maintain these autonomous urban spaces. Culture and social consciousness are essential elements of the Italian community life and are important in these centres.

Their role was assessed when welfare states were disassembled, but public assistance continued to be a strong social need. The centro have had important tasks, absolutely free of charge, such as migrants, the unemployed, helping low-income people, and the legal aid for those in need. The centro sociale was the place where there was always a dish of warm food, a helping hand in job search or the legalization of immigrants ' residence. Although the ideological purport of the centros in the '90s has fallen, the important societal issues, transformations have responded more strongly. However, this period also caused difficulties in the life of the centros, as they could not avoid privatization either, however, politically they gained more important roles. In comparison to the earlier, generally more closed period (the '80-90s), the centros were once again open as community spaces and became more widely available. The walls have fallen down literally and in a figurative sense: a clear theme, transparent and open throughout the day community place was born. Since then, the courtyard of the Centro Sociale has been open to everyone, where they are free to meet the people living in the district. In this way, everyone is free to access the community space, which ensures free development, the emergence and strengthening of social relationships, and the direct interaction between the people who are turning there. Important principles include respect for the individual (e.g. basic human rights) and community values (e.g. reciprocity, "face to face" relationships). At the same time, the market (the provider-client relationship) and the state approach (bureaucratic mechanisms) are discarded. The objectives of the centros are to bring the politics and culture into active, to form the incoming participants important political and social actors. The centros, though not a non-profit organization, has an impact on local economic life, as it also carries out business activities (e.g. the operation of bars) where migrants are employed primarily to help their social integration.

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[38] http://isole.ecn.org/leoncavallo/storic/molena.htm

The centres are embedded in the fabric of Italian society and play a decisive role at local level. The best example of this from recent past is the great comic that was popped out from Claudio Calia's pen, which shows the history and features of the Italian centros over 100 pages.[39] Of course, this does not mean that centros have a unified acceptance, their activities are criticized by many. Lately, they have become important targets in the context of the increasing anti-immigration.[40]

The centres are managed everywhere by *a plenum*, who decide about the centros at their general meetings (*Assemblea di gestione*). Thus, about the areas of activity, the management of the centres and the economic issues. The centro sociales are fully self-financing, self-supporting associations, i.e. they do not enjoy any state or local government support. De jure they are illegal organizations, as they often occupy abandoned buildings and use them illegally.

These bottom-up buildings are restored and filled with important community content for example, with countless topical and important issues and attempts to solve them, which are acute in the micro and macro levels of Italian society. One of the outstanding branches is the organisation of *programmes to assist the social integration of migrants*, one of which is the most important language course for free and accessible to all. An other important element is the awareness and approximation of the majority society and immigrants, for example through festivals, summer universities, where people in the district are mutually acquainted with each other and then later they can cooperate in their everyday life. It may seem like an idealist thought, but the centros can be seen as a successful example in this field and a distinctly Italian blend where culture and politics do not become sharply separate and for many these centro sociales are a close alternative towards each other either in space or in thinking. This idea is also supported by the fact that in the 2000s several representatives of the centro activists entered the scene of "official" politics.[41] That is to say, these community spaces also serve as a parallel political scene, where less public gain, but an alternative thinking, a bottom-up social network, a political and cultural alternative is realized. In addition, the natural evolution of this is, after all, the appearance of the "official" political level (representation).[42] There is also a growing

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[39] http://www.panorama.it/cultura/fumetti/atlante-centri-sociali-italiani-fumetti/
[40] For example, there was a larger demonstration against the centro sociale in the Centocelle district of Rome. On the boards, among other things, it was read "enough of immigrants, we want security". The protest was caused by the fact that three immigrants attacked an Italian woman in the park http://centocelle.romatoday.it/tor-sapienza/manifestazione-viale-morandi-11-novembre.html
[41] For example in Venice, Milan and Rome. http://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/jun/08/globalisation.comment
[42] An example of Rome: http://garbatella.romatoday.it/amedeo-ciaccheri-chi-e.html There are a number of questions that in this paper do not be relevant, but it is important. Among other things one of the most important:

number of urgent voices in the need for a foundation that would develop financial instruments and thus, instead of illegal occupations, would be able to conclude legal lease agreements with the owners of the area. So many say that the omission of state bureaucracy and market logic is impossible and it would be necessary to develop a new strategy for the more successful operation of the Centro Sociale.

It can be seen that the future of the Centro is not hassle-free, but its unique and important role is undisputed.

Andrea Membretti gathered the following important elements, with the help of which its unique character is very well-grasable.[43] It is always necessary and important to have a concrete physical space, where people can meet and where a community of individuals is created, which is " outwardly " formed into a society. Membretti attaches importance to physical proximity, which makes it possible to establish a togetherness, i.e. the existence of the Centro Sociale particularly for those people who live in the district. He also highlights the importance of participation and self-organisation, which allows the individual to integrate into social structures and to become political and social actors. Moreover, universalism is an important idea, which is one of the all-encompassing range of the centro services and, more broadly, equality, the validity of universal human rights, the rejection of market, aid and business logic. The author also mentions the essential role of autonomy, which means the independence of space and organisation from all other political and economic organisations.

The officially known Centro Sociale Autigestione eXsnia Viscosa is a community space in the Roman Prenestina district, which has existed for nearly 20 years. Within the framework of the centre, a community School (Scuola Popolare) has been operating since 1998.[44] This counts as a "young" centro in Italian relation.[45] The objectives of the centro range from a very wide scale, including ecological, social and cultural objectives. The centro is operating in a former factory complex. [46] After the closure of the factory, it became the main target of land speculations, but eventually the area was never incorporated.

The centro is also managed by a plenum that decides on important issues at regular meetings. This centre is also self-sustaining, self-financing, i.e. it does not receive any public,

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does the centro sociale preserve its alternative character, or how can it avoid the integration into the political scene and its games?

[43] http://eipcp.net/transversal/1203/membretti/en

[44] Based upon a field interview, which was recordedd on 1. october 2014. And see more: http://www.exsnia.it/csoa-exsnia/

[45] In Rome one of the oldest and most popular centro is the CSOA FortePrenestino: http://www.forteprenestino.net/

[46] From the factory Viscosa see more http://www.archivioviscosa.org/la-fabbrica/ http://www.reporternuovo.it/2014/04/10/lex-snia-storia-di-un-giardino-tra-relitti-di-cemento/)

urban or district financial support, it is based on the direct participation and volunteering of people. The School operates in one of the buildings of the former factory, which they have reconstructed and operated. In addition, there is a larger building complex in the management of the centro. One of the main aspirations of the centre is the integration of immigrants, in particular with *language courses* held every day of the week. The school in the centro cannot be considered as a language school only. The teachers Themselves are working for free in the framework of volunteer work, and most of them are not teacher graduates, which in most cases does not matter. The work is much more diverse, their role is more various, not only teaching, but also mentoring. People arriving here and often without a family background and for them the school functions as family. They help them to learn about the Italian culture, to overcome the cultural differences, starting with what is located in the district or in the city, up to the steps of legal immigration and legal assistance. The school does not only hold evening courses but also organises various events, festivals: for example three years ago there was a festival open for everyone, where immigrants held classes in the district, encouraging understanding of each other's languages, cultures and views on the world and thus strengthened integration and acceptance.[47] As the programme description of the event shows, the main goal was to bring people close to each other, so they could meet and get to know each other.[48] This approach is also true for everyday language courses: teaching is never from textbook and is not exclusively language training. The introduction of Italian culture and customs, and even meeting with local Roman specificities are always in a great focus. This also works "backwards", the immigrant always has to tell about his or her own culture and the country of nationality. This also raise awareness of differences and similarities between different cultures, making integration easier. In 2006 the school organized a course only for women, but these lessons were held in another location. Otherwise the teaching is in mixed classes on three levels of education: the first level is the absolute beginner course, where they often begin the courses with learning the alphabet and the letters.

As you can see, the centro sociales are perfectly integrated into local society, on the one hand they are the place to experience community life, and on the other, they strengthen these social networks and address acute problems that politics does not want or is unable to act upon.

Conclusion – Importance of integration and local action

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[47] University of Language:
 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R0vHcjUMgwU
[48]https://scuolapopolarepigneto.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/universitc3a0-delle-lingue-programma.pdf

Migration is not a new phenomenon, it is the same age as humanity, and historically there have been regular periods of mass migration.[49] However, the high migration of recent years presents enormous challenges for the countries concerned. Italy had to face one of the strongest migratory pressures of the past perid. Migration was difficult to address by politics and Italy had rolling migration strategy: it was often a sling in extreme, some times it introduced the principle of the open gates, and others one of Europe's strictest immigration laws, but was essentially unsuccessful in trying to settle the issue. All of this has never been part of a well thought-out, long-term integration politics. And with regard to immigration, an increasing number of problems have occurred, with events that are indelibly confronging society with its problematic nature and unmanageability. This was further deepened by a migratory wave rising from 2014. Extremes, alien hatred and exclusion have also grown more and more in The Italian society, which was formerly more inclusive. It is difficult to respond to the additional events that this will entail. Anyhow, it is indicative that, from the spring of 2018 a member of the coalition government of the country is the populist and anti-immigration League (and the leader of the party, the country's interior minister, Matteo Salvini). The immigration policy of Italy is accordingly: to control illegal migration, to take immigrants out of the country, to close borders, to accelerate procedures, to make deportation more efficient and to overshadow the issues of integration. However, these steps are likely to be few to solve the tensions already present in society.

Conflicts can be explained by a myriad of reasons, what is common is that the immigrant is different from the host society, and if these problems and deficits cannot be solved by integration – for example, there is no integration programme, as there are too many Additional costs that the host society is reluctant to take –, the spatial and structural separation is permanent, *segregation* and *ghetto* are established.[50] Obviously, much depends on the adaptability and management capacities of the host society. Their instruments are the public institutions at the central and local level, and the civil society organisations. Due to the specificities of the Italian political culture Italy has a strong civil society actively involved in tackling emerging problems, particularly local issues.

It is also Easy to see that a well-functioning *integration policy* is essential to reduce and mitigate conflicts, which "tries to do something with immigrants" reduces perceived or real friction and is an integral part of a complex immigration policy. If all this is lacking or not

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[49] L. Rédei (2014) pp. 29- 43.o.
[50] About the scales of the adaptation of the migrants see more: Póczik– Dunavölgyi 2008, pp. 94-102.

sufficiently thought out, the aforementioned risks will be increased, there will be scapegoat mechanisms, the marginalisation of these groups will be triggered, while in society there will be gaps that can eventually become unbridable. It is unfortunate if the integration policy due to the diversity of the situation wants to tackle the issue with "Endlösung type" solutions. In other words, the development of consensual, integrative solutions, rather than one-sided categorical policy, is a good practice, which envisages a long-term perspective and favours (at least initially) a positive discrimination, equal opportunities stimulation measures. In the development of the integration concept, it is worth thinking about long-term solutions, since the process of integration takes a long time, takes place at different levels and requires adequate programmes.

The *language* issue is one of the most fundamental elements of the right integration polic. For those who arrive in a foreign country and wish to remain there in the long term it is essential to acquire the language of that country. Fundamental human rights such as education or the *right* to work and the ease of achieving them are also important. In other words, assuring the appropriate rights that will guarantee integration. In connection to this comes the already mentioned positive discrimination, which initially facilitates the emergence and rise of disadvantaged groups (including immigrants). Integration is also an important cornerstone in confronting and make an end of *fears*. More empirical research has shown that fear of immigration is not based on economic or rational foundations, but primarily on fears.[51] Fear of the stranger, the unknown, is a characteristic of humans that also occurs in the context of immigration. Therefore, it is important that integration policy includes *sensitising programmes* that can successfully bridge cultural differences and eliminate mutually existing fears.

Although integration requires a general state framework to be defined, it is also important to develop *local programmes*, as the more they manage the problems locally the more successful and the best solutions can be developed. NGOs have a very important role in this, because they can develop local action programmes. In addition, in the event of success, local action plans can stimulate local and high-level policies in a more successful manner, and the experience gained may be integrated into, adapt, transform, and add new elements into integration policy, also they might make a contact between different political actors. The effectiveness of the local Act is also proved by the solidarity of people living in the same place of residence with each other.[52] In all of this, Italian NGOs have an obsolete role. It seeks to

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[51] Brugnoli – Matteini, 2018, pp. 253-254.
[52] Póczik – Dunavölgyi. 2008, p. 105.

tackle the problems arising from the lack of state integration policy at least at local level. The above discussed Centro Socaile showed an example: these civil society organisations, which are among people, are at the heart of the problems and thus can help to overcome prejudices, xenophobia, and, more, have a significant community-forming force. The successful integration of immigrants can lead to a pattern, a path and a pressure to the government: tackling illegal immigration as a criminal offence does not solve the problems that already exist in the country, those who are already in the country must be integrated to be useful members of the community.

The role of the civil society in managing migration (better) – even if there are good examples in a well-established but overburdened state reception system – is essential. NGOs play a significant role in breaking down walls, be either physical or psychical. And the walls are often there "around each individual migrant, keeping them secluded like in *a Doll's House.* This is particularly true when applied to the new stream of African migration to Europe, flowing mainly through Italy."[53] These metaphorical walls keep migrants out from competing for jobs and being part of social integration. Brugnoli and Matteini have identified six walls, which are dividing and enclosing migrants: paper, fire, air, chalk, gold and glass walls. The names are symbolic, the paper wall means legal-status division what it involves, for example, the power of the passport or the conditions of entry (ease of access, range of rights). The fire wall is the conflicts divide, and it means such basic things as peace and stability help people to stay in their countries or the existence of humanitarian corridors and the lack of these makes higher the wall and increases migration. Where war and violence escalate we need to guarantee a safe transit and how to leave the war-ridden territory.[54] Climate change, the pollution of the environment, natural disasters are building the air wall, i.e. the ecological divide and obviously it is one of the main reasons of migration. If the education is not vital in the development plan of a country, then this deficit increases poverty and migration. Economic differences also affect migration even if people, mainly, do not migrate from the poorest areas. The relationship between inequalities and migration is much stronger and it builds up the gold wall.

Last but not least exists *the glass wall*. From the aspect of our paper maybe this is the most important, the see-through wall which divides migrants from the Western countries. When others watch migrants' struggles on TV and worry about just one thing, everything is fine in their backyards. This also means that in the debate over migration policy the aspects of the West often are more important. As well as the "right" migration policy is that justifiable but only

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[53] Brugnoli – Matteini, 2018, p. 253.
[54] For the Italian example see: Attias – Silvestrini, 2018, pp. 125-129.

with those who already are in their new home country. It also means that the migration policy is usually fair only to those who are already in their new destination country. The media also play a major role in building this wall, which have recently been spreading more fake news in Italy, too.

Policy makers often do not remember that not only unilateral agreements, but also international cooperation, complex national migration policies and local actions are also needed. You can see it on the wall from both sides, break it down, get close to each other with only a common intention.

The organizations presented in the paper grew out from local societies, they are around the people, bringing the problems closer to them so that they understand them better, thus help to defeat prejudice and xenophobia, and what is more, they form a collective. By integrating immigrants successfully, they show a good example, and they can pressurize the government: treating illegal immigration as a crime does not solve the problem, those who are already in the country should be helped to become useful and valuable members of society. This can effectively contribute to cracking and then breaking down the glass wall. All these are even more important in times when a Eurocentric perception of an 'African exodus towards Europe' is high on the political agenda and the social mindset of societies. In addition to all the presented local efforts to better integrate immigrants (also) in Italian realities, more proper communication is required in order to make people realize that Europe is "one of many possible destinations for sub-Saharan Africans instead of *the* destination."[55] The Italian example has a lot to offer for further research also from this angle.

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[55] De Clerck, 2015, p. 272.

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