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INTEGRATION POLICIES FOR REFUGEES

Italy as a Case Study

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Abstract:

Scarce attention has been given to the integration of refugees in Italy until recently, when the first National Integration Plan specifically focused on beneficiaries of international protection was approved in 2017. The aim of this research project is to assess the suitability of Italy's National Integration Plan as concerns the integration of refugees. To this end, an analytical framework is developed in this study, against which the plan's provisions are weighed. The plan will be analysed also in relation to Italy's existing law on integration, in particular dispositions in Title V of the Testo Unico and the Legislative Decree 251/07. Given the recentness of the plan, the focus of this research is on the policy on paper. Attention is placed on five selected areas, identified as critical for successful outcomes of integration: employment, housing, access to health and education and citizenship. The analysis shows that Italy's first National Integration Plan is an initial positive step toward the creation of more inclusive societies and favours the integration of refugees. Unlike integration legislation, where dispositions are quite generic, the plan mostly meets the requirements identified as necessary to take down refugees' barriers to integration. The research concludes with some recommendations to Italy, in light of the shortcomings evidenced by the study in the five domains of analysis.

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Chapter One – Opening Remarks

Introduction

According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), there are about 7.6 billion people on this planet today.¹ Europe is home to 9.8 percent of them (roughly 742 million), Asia and Africa being the most populated continents.² Out of the whole world’s population, it is estimated that 258 million were migrants in 2017³, a number in mostly constant increase since the previous century.⁴ The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) also reported that by the end of 2017 among these migrants there were 68.5 million forcibly displaced people, 25.4 million refugees, and 3.1 million asylum seekers.⁵

The term ‘forcibly displaced people’ refers to all those individuals who are pressured to leave their homes or even their countries of origin in response to uncontrollable external events, such as wars, persecutions, natural disasters, epidemics or large-scale development projects. Among this group of people, also known as ‘forced migrants’, are to be distinguished asylum seekers and refugees. Art. 1(2) of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, defines a refugee as a person who:

“owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country

¹ Data referring to mid-2017. United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, ‘World Population Prospects 2017’, 2017, https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/Publications/Files/WPP2017_DataBooklet.pdf, (accessed 05/04/2017), p. 1.

² United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, ‘International Migration Report 2017 [highlights]’, 2017, http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/MigrationReport2017_Highlights.pdf, (accessed 05/04/2018), p. 9.

³ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, ‘International Migration Report 2017 [highlights]’, p.4.

⁴ In its study on World Migration (see: International Organisation for Migration, ‘Integration and social cohesion: key elements for reaping the benefits of migration’, 2017, https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/our_work/ODG/GCM/IOM-Thematic-Paper-Integration-and-Social-Cohesion.pdf, (accessed 16/06/2018), the International Organisation for Migration reported a yearly increase of the number of international migrants by about 1.16 per cent between 1965 and 1975. This average rose to 2.59 per cent per year between 1985 and 1990, reaching about 3 per cent in 2017.

⁵ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, ‘UNHCR Global Trends Report 2017’, [web page], 2018, <http://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends2017/>, (accessed 25/06/2018), p.2.

of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear is unwilling to return to it”.⁶

Asylum seekers, in turn, are individuals who have applied for refugee status but are awaiting the final outcome of their application. Formal recognition of the refugee status is an important attainment: whilst, in principle, international human rights law protects all migrants as human beings, refugees enjoy a definite legal status deriving from international agreements, which entitles them to targeted protection and minimum standards of treatment from states because of the specificity of their condition. In this respect, the 1951 Convention (and its 1967 Protocol) is the most important legal instrument as concerns refugees at global level.

Still today, the majority of the world’s refugees are hosted in non-European countries: Africa and the Middle East with respectively 30 and 26 percent respectively are the regions where most of the world’s displaced people found respite.⁷ Taking the example of Syrians, about 80 percent of the 13 million who left their homes following the conflict are still in their region of origin, almost the half of them being internally displaced in Syria and the remaining located in neighbouring countries (Turkey (3.4 million), Lebanon (1 million), Jordan (660,000) and Iraq (250,000)).⁸ It is very important to bear in mind that neither migration nor the ‘refugee problem’ are a phenomenon exclusive to Europe but rather part and parcel of human evolution. As noted by the UNHCR in a video presenting the findings of its 2017 Global Trends Report, “the refugee situation will exist as long as wars do, and it might take years before refugees can safely return home”.⁹ The 2017 International Migration Report¹⁰ also highlighted that forced displacement is on the rise.

Of the total number of refugees, according to data provided by the UNCHR about 6 million were counted in Europe by the end of 2017.¹¹ Despite this relatively low proportion, however, migration and asylum seeking have become hotly debated topics in the European

⁶ Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) UNGA Res 429(V)

⁷ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, ‘Figures at a Glance’, [web page] 2018, <http://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>, (accessed 11/04/2018).

⁸ Connor, P., ‘Most displaced Syrians are in the Middle East, and about a million are in Europe’, January 2018, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/01/29/where-displaced-syrians-have-resettled/>, (accessed 08/06/2018).

⁹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, ‘UNHCR Global Trends Report 2017’.

¹⁰ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, ‘International Migration Report 2017’, p. 7.

¹¹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, ‘UNHCR Global Trends Report 2017’, p.14.

Union.¹² As a matter of fact, the past few years have been characterised by a noticeable increase in the number of migrants' arrivals to the European Union and an unexpected surge in asylum applications. In 2015, for example, the number of sea arrivals reached a total of 1,015,078¹³ and asylum applications of 1,322,825.¹⁴ Compared to the previous year, the former represented about five times the number of migrants' entries to the European Union by sea and the latter more than the double of the whole applications.

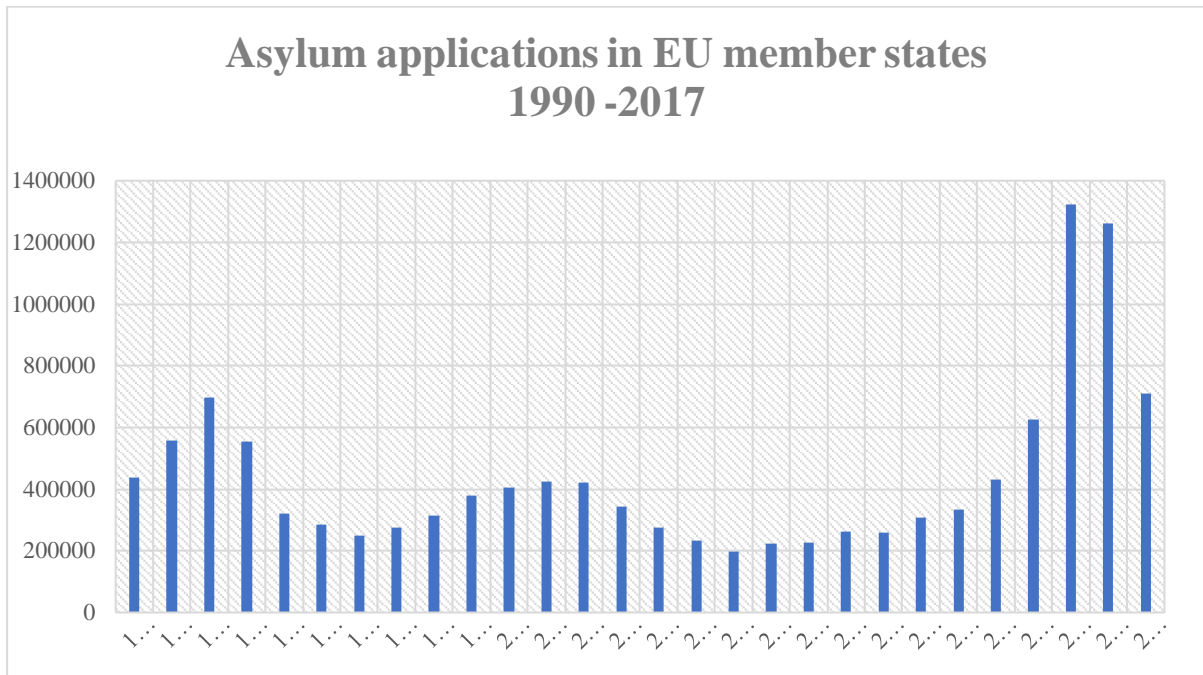


Figure 1 – Sources: Eurostat, 'Asylum applicants by citizenship till 2007' [web page] 2018; and Eurostat, 'Asylum and first time asylum applicants by citizenship, age and sex', [web page], 2018, (accessed 14/06/18).

Migratory movements also concerned land borders, whose irregular crossings increased as well. According to the European Parliamentary Research Service, for example, in 2015 the number of undocumented entries to the European Union was six-folds compared with 2014.¹⁵ Coupled with the dramatic numbers of deaths in the Mediterranean¹⁶ deriving from attempted border crossings via sea, these events also caught the attention of the media and the public

¹² European Parliamentary Research Service, 'migration and asylum' [website], <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/infographics/migration/public/index.html?page=intro>, (accessed 12/07/2018).

¹³ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [web page], 2018, <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5205>, (accessed 01/07/2018).

¹⁴ Eurostat, 'Asylum and first time asylum applicants by citizenship, age and sex', [web page], 2018, http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_asyappctza&lang=en, (accessed 14/06/18).

¹⁵ European Parliamentary Research Service, 'migration and asylum'.

¹⁶ International Organisation for Migration, 'Missing Migrants. Tracking Deaths Along Migratory Routes', [website], <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/>, (accessed 30/06/2018).

reinforcing their urgency on European and national political agendas. As evidenced by Kosho, “[r]ecent times have seen a *striking increase in public attention* to migration. [...] Coping with migration has become a serious challenge for the EU and its Member States”¹⁷, and will still be one of the ten challenges for Europe in 2018 and beyond.¹⁸

Nonetheless, migration and asylum are not new for Europe. On the contrary, “[a]t European level the issue of migration is of long standing. For [...] more than] twenty years, the EU has been building the foundations of an overarching and comprehensive migration policy”.¹⁹ The incompleteness and inefficacy of the agreements signed by the European Union and its member states in the past years, however, created the premises for the rapid forming of a situation of emergency when the continent faced the arrival of continuous groups of migrants and asylum seekers.²⁰ As noted by Scipioni, “[t]he combination of low harmonization, weak monitoring, low solidarity and lack of strong institutions in EU migration policy became increasingly unsustainable during the 2015 crisis”.²¹

The recent migratory phenomena thus brought back to the table a discussion over the reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS)²² and of the Dublin system in particular, whose obsolescence was already denounced by German Chancellor Angela Merkel and then-French President François Hollande in a joint statement in 2015²³. Based on the first-country-of-entry criterion²⁴, the implementation of the Dublin system in a time of migratory pressure rendered evident the unbalanced exposure of European member states to migration flows and,

¹⁷ J., Kosho, ‘Media Influence on Public Opinion Attitudes Toward the Migration Crisis’, *International Journal of Scientific & Technology Research*, Vol. 5, Issue 05, 2016, <http://www.ijstr.org/final-print/may2016/Media-Influence-On-Public-Opinion-Attitudes-Toward-The-Migration-Crisis.pdf>, (accessed 30/06/2018), p. 86.

¹⁸ European Parliamentary Research Service, ‘Europe’s Challenges In 2018: Ten Issues To Watch’, European Parliamentary Research Service Blog, January 2017, <https://epthinktank.eu/2018/01/17/europes-challenges-in-2018-ten-issues-to-watch/>, (accessed 30/06/2018).

¹⁹ R., King, and A., Lulle, ‘Research on Migration: Facing Realities and Maximising Opportunities. A Policy Review’, https://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/pdf/policy_reviews/ki-04-15-841_en_n.pdf, (accessed 01/07/2018), p. 5.

²⁰ M., Scipioni, ‘Failing forward in EU migration policy? EU integration after the 2015 asylum and migration crisis’, *Journal of European Public Policy*, 2017, <https://www.tandfonline.com.ezproxy.ub.unimaas.nl/doi/pdf/10.1080/13501763.2017.1325920?needAccess=true>, (accessed 01/07/2018).

²¹ Scipioni, ‘Failing forward in EU migration policy? EU integration after the 2015 asylum and migration crisis’, p. 9.

²² European Council, ‘Timeline: reform of EU asylum rules’, [website], 2018, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/ceas-reform/ceas-reform-timeline/>, (accessed 13/07/2018).

²³ European Parliament, ‘François Hollande and Angela Merkel face MEPs’, News European Parliament, 2015, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20150929IPR94921/francois-hollande-and-angela-merkel-face-meps>, (accessed 01/07/2018).

²⁴ This means that, as a general rule, the first country entered by an asylum seeker is the one that is responsible for the processing of his or her application as well as for the hosting of refugees.

consequently, to asylum challenges. Not just that, the lack of co-ordinated and rapid solutions from the European Union, further divided national positions and led member states to act independently in defence of their national interests: “[t]his issue is once again showing the weakness of the EU when it comes to sensible, common decisions to take in the field of security, solidarity and cooperation versus national interest”.²⁵ In the hope of limiting migrants’ inflows and asylum seekers movements among European member states, for example, some countries temporarily re-instated border controls within the Schengen area.²⁶ In light of this, the definition of a common solution to migratory pressures and the management of asylum at European level becomes of primary importance. Despite a more recent drop in migrants’ arrivals²⁷, growing divergent national priorities²⁸ and the increased politicisation of migration and asylum issues²⁹, however, are rendering the task particularly difficult. As a result, the European Council Summit of 28-29 June 2018 concluded with no final recast agreement signed yet.³⁰

As mentioned above, one of the most evident outcomes of the recent migration phenomena is the unbalance in the extent to which they impacted the different European countries. According to the European Council on Foreign Relations, countries in the Mediterranean regions have been the most affected.³¹ Italy, in particular, has been the target of continuous arrivals for much longer than other European countries, even among its Mediterranean counterparts, as highlighted in the figure below. Despite Greece saw a remarkably high number of arrivals in 2015, Italy faced rather steady arrivals during 2014, 2015, and 2016 (especially during the summer months), with a peak in October 2016.³² Italy, in fact, has been the main destination of the Central Mediterranean route. To give a sense of proportions, in

²⁵ As quoted in A., Ekin, ‘EU deeply divided over migration as key summit nears’, Aljazeera, June 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/critical-eu-summit-180626204015493.html>, (accessed 13/07/2018).

²⁶ Named after the Schengen Agreements, whose implementation started in 1995, the area includes all those countries among which people can travel without needing border checks. They can be temporarily re-introduced in the case of a serious threat to public policy or internal security.

²⁷ The Migrant Project, ‘Drastic drop in migrant arrivals to Europe in early 2018’, [website], 2018, <https://www.themigrantproject.org/drop-migrant-arrivals/>, (accessed 13/07/2018).

²⁸ Ekin, ‘EU deeply divided over migration as key summit nears’.

²⁹ H., Poschmann, ‘Divided EU leaders meet over migration at ‘mini-summit’’, Aljazeera, June 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/06/divided-eu-leaders-meet-migration-mini-summit-180624063852335.html>, (accessed 13/07/2018).

³⁰ European Council, ‘European Council, 28-29/06/2018’ [webpage], 2018, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/european-council/2018/06/28-29/>, (accessed 13/07/2018).

³¹ European Council on Foreign Relations, ‘Migration through the Mediterranean: Mapping the EU Response’, [website], http://www.ecfr.eu/specials/mapping_migration, (accessed 01/07/2018).

³² International Organisation for Migration, ‘Migration flows to Europe. 2017 Overview’, 2017, http://migration.iom.int/docs/2017_Overview_Arrivals_to_Europe.pdf, (accessed 14/06/2018)

2017 Italy faced the arrival of 119.369 migrants and asylum seekers by sea, out of the total 186.768 that arrived in Europe.³³ Inflows are reducing only now, mostly thanks to a contested agreement with Libya.³⁴

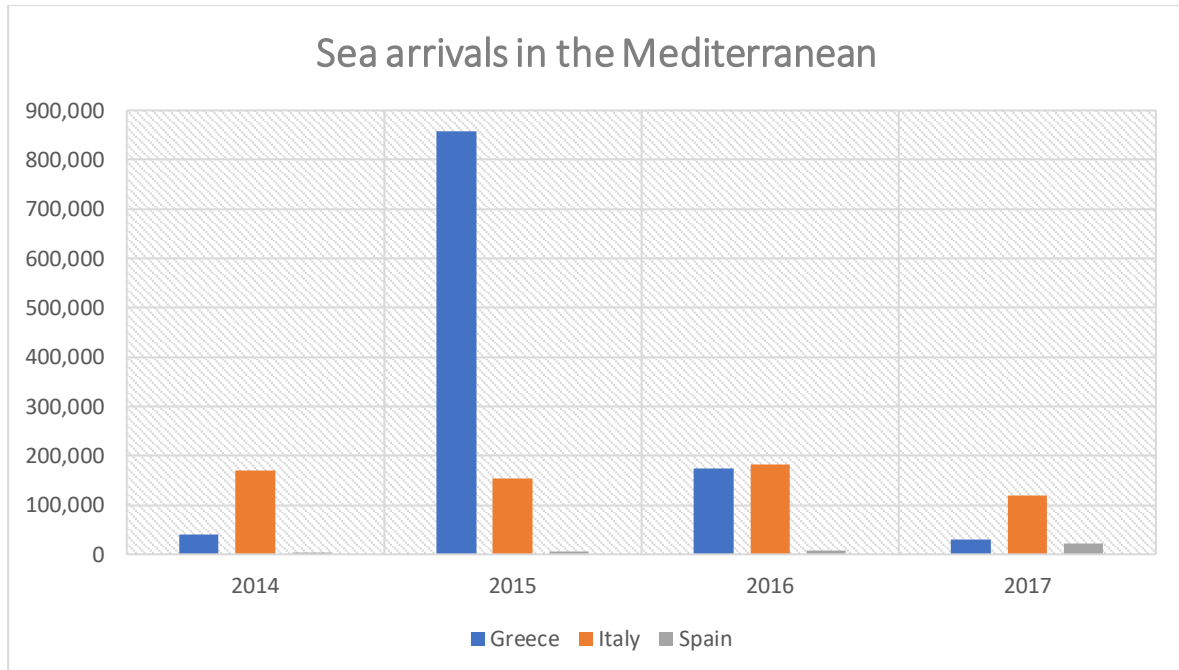


Figure 2 - Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [web page], 2018.

Traditionally a country of emigration, Italy has shifted towards being a destination for immigration only in the last decades. Over the years, its discipline of immigration has neither been coherent nor comprehensive, whilst attention towards integration has been almost non-existent. The fact that “Italy thinks of itself primarily in terms of being a transit country”³⁵ certainly contributed to the reinforcement of such an approach. The unexpected and continuous influx of migrants over the last few years, however, altered this course. The definition of a first National Integration Plan for beneficiaries of international protection in 2017 is an evident example thereof. Not only that, in the same year Italy approved its first National Pact for an Italian Islam (*Patto Nazionale per un Islam Italiano*) as well, with the aim of promoting institutional dialogue with Muslim communities in the country. Prior to

³³ International Organisation for Migration, ‘Migration flows to Europe. 2017 Overview’, 2017, http://migration.iom.int/docs/2017_Overview_Arrivals_to_Europe.pdf, (accessed 14/06/2018) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [web page], 2018, <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5205>, (accessed 14/06/2018).

³⁴ The Memorandum of Understanding was signed in February 2017 by Italy’s Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni and Prime Minister of the Government of National Accord of Libya Fayeze al-Sarraj.

³⁵ Scholten, P., et al., ‘Policy Innovation in Refugee Integration? A comparative analysis of innovative policy strategies toward refugee integration in Europe’, Rotterdam, Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2017, p. 28.

that, in 2015 Italy also passed its first National Action Plan against Racism, Xenophobia and Intolerance, demonstrating greater awareness in respect to external challenges and internal changes.

Greater institutional attention towards the presence of immigrants reflects the deep transformations that continuous and unexpected arrivals of migrants and refugees of the past few years exerted on the host society. Research conducted by the European Network Against Racism evidenced that “[s]everal anti-migrant protests were organised, in particular (but not only) against asylum seekers and their accommodation, with a higher rate of incidents in Northern Italian localities, where far-right movements have further fuelled emerging tensions”.³⁶ In addition, “[t]here have [...] been accusations that the large number of migrants has given rise to increased crime in Italy [...] and] that humanitarian organisations involved in rescue operations in the Mediterranean are actually colluding with people-traffickers in bringing migrants to Italy”.³⁷ The findings of a 2017 report by Ipsos also revealed that 71% of Italians thought immigrants living in the country were too many; 23% were instead of the opinion that borders should be closed; and 65% advocated for a fairer re-distribution of migrants in the different European countries. As concerns refugees, 50% agreed on accepting only those fleeing from wars and conflicts, rejecting economic migrants; whilst 17% argued that they should be all sent back.³⁸

Societal tensions translated also in racist killings and the rise to power of anti-immigrant populist parties in the March 2018 national elections, most notably the Northern League, a strong advocate for limiting immigration and for the expulsion of illegal immigrants on the territory. The increase in asylum applications and immigrant numbers in the context of an uneven European asylum system that places most of the responsibility for the processing of asylum applications on the country of first entry, in fact, resulted in strong political responses too. Fella notes that “Italian political leaders have complained about the lack of EU attention and assistance in dealing with these arrivals [...] and former] Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni accused other European nations of "looking the other way" following a spike in

³⁶ European Network Against Racism, ‘Racism, racial discrimination and migration in Italy 2015/16: Research briefing’, http://www.enar-eu.org/IMG/pdf/italy_research_briefing_final.pdf, (accessed 01/07/2018).

³⁷ S., Fella, ‘The new Italian government’, House of Commons Library, No. 8357, June 2018, p. 13.

³⁸ Ipsos, ‘Italia 2017. La realtà su misura’, 2017, https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/publication/documents/2017-11/Ipsos_Flair_2017.pdf, (accessed 04/07/2018), pp. 71-73.

arrivals early last year”.³⁹ Not just that, Italy’s perception of being left alone in the management of a very difficult situation also negatively affected Italians’ support for the European Union project. As a matter of fact, “[g]overnment and public opinion alike feel that Italy has done its part in dealing with the persistent crisis, while the EU has shown a deplorable lack of solidarity”.⁴⁰

A country of recent immigration, which over the years adopted an unsystematic approach to its discipline and which still today lacks institutional experience with integration (particularly when compared to other European countries), but was also heavily affected at both political and societal level by the migratory pressure of the most recent years, Italy was chosen as a case study as concerns the analysis of the dispositions for the integration of refugees on paper. In particular, the aim is to assess the suitability of Italy’s National Integration Plan in addressing the integration challenges of refugees as concerns five specific domains, further discussed in the study. Attention will also be drawn to the existing legislation disciplining refugees’ integration for those specific fields, drawing a comparison between the law and the plan. In doing so, this research aims at offering a case study for an integration policy specifically tailored to refugees. It contributes to the existing literature with an analytical framework created for the purpose of assessing the suitability of integration policies for refugees, in light of the needs of this specific group. Additionally, this study also draws attention on the most recent policy interventions for the integration of refugees in Italy, which are minimally addressed by the existing literature for now.

The Link Between Immigration and Integration

“Immigration raises a number of concerns about how a society deals with and incorporates newcomers”.⁴¹ A recent Eurobarometer survey highlighted that immigration is considered by Europeans as the most important issue faced at regional level.⁴² The continuous arrival of

³⁹ Fella, ‘The new Italian government’, p. 12.

⁴⁰ C., Hermanin, ‘Immigration Policy in Italy: Problems and Perspectives’, 2017, Istituto Affari Internazionali, <http://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/iaiw1735.pdf>, (accessed 01/07/2018), p. 2.

⁴¹ D., Birman and E., Bray, ‘Immigration, Migration and Community Psychology’ in M. A. Bond et al. (eds.), *57 APA handbook of community psychology Methods for community research and action for diverse groups and issues*, Vol. 2, American Psychological Association, 2017, p.313.

⁴² European Commission, ‘Standard Eurobarometer 89 – Spring 2018 “Public opinion in the European Union, First results”’, 2018, <http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/STANDARD/surveyKy/2180>, (accessed 30/10/2018), p. 4

group of migrants from other continents than Europe in the most recent years, bringing with them diverse cultures and customs, has posed distinct challenges for European member states and frequently led to strongly hostile responses. In a briefing note of 2016, the UNCHR was already noticing that:

“[t]he arrival of over a million refugees and migrants to Europe [...] has also given rise to hostility and tensions within the societies hosting them. Refugees and migrants have suffered racist and xenophobic attacks, prejudice and discrimination.”⁴³

Notorious are the cases of social unrest and street killings of immigrants in Italy, for example, and the spread of populist rhetoric taking advantage of feelings of fear and insecurity among the public, resulting from continuous immigration flows, to advance political agendas.⁴⁴ The European Network Against Racism evidenced a rise in “racist incidents targeting immigrants”⁴⁵ across the European Union in 2015 and the existence of a “number of barriers in the labour market [...] that] result in an employment gap between migrants and nationals and in many migrants falling victim to exploitation”.⁴⁶ Lack of ability to include foreigners in receiving societies could, therefore, endanger peaceful cohabitation, foster social exclusion, and lower the standards of human rights’ protection in Europe. Already back in 2002 a report from the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), for example, highlighted that:

“where refugees are marginalised – through negative media reports, lack of educational and employment opportunities and hostility from local communities, there is less socio-cultural integration and those who feel threatened or excluded from the host society, instead of striving “to belong”, may seek to emphasise their difference through cultural or religious expression”.⁴⁷

⁴³ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, ‘A year on from Alan Kurdi’s death, Mediterranean drowning rates soaring’, UNCHR Briefing Notes, 2016, <http://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing/2016/9/57c938b97/year-alan-kurdis-death-mediterranean-drowning-rates-soaring.html>, (accessed on 30/06/2018).

⁴⁴ W.A. Galston, ‘The rise of European populism and the collapse of the center-left’, Brookings Institution, March 2018, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/03/08/the-rise-of-european-populism-and-the-collapse-of-the-center-left/>, (accessed 23/05/2018).

⁴⁵ European Network Against Racism, ‘Racism plays a key role in migrants’ exclusion and violations of rights in the European Union’, 2016, <http://www.enar-eu.org/Racism-plays-a-key-role-in-migrants-exclusion-and-violations-of-rights-in-the>, (accessed 06/06/2018).

⁴⁶ European Network Against Racism, ‘Racism plays a key role in migrants’ exclusion and violations of rights in the European Union’.

⁴⁷ European Council on Refugees and Exiles, ‘Position on the Integration of Refugees in Europe’, 2002, https://www.ecre.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/ECRE-Position-on-the-Integration-of-Refugees-in-Europe_December-2002.pdf, (accessed 16/04/2018), p.8.

Whilst examining the Italian case, Bratti and Conti also argued that “[c]ultural and language differences raise communication costs; reduce trust, cooperation and social capital; and increase social conflict”.⁴⁸ Hence, a discourse on the management of immigration cannot ignore the notion of integration. Importantly, Penninx stressed that “the experience and policies of different countries with integration reflects their experience and policies of immigration”⁴⁹: how a country considers and manages immigration directly impacts on its ability to handle the inclusion of foreigners in its society. Ager and Strang also note that “an immigration policy driven by an imperative to limit the number of people coming into a country can undermine attempts to project a message of welcome through integration policies”.⁵⁰ As in a vicious circle, a weak integration policy contributes “to negative perceptions of immigrants, which in turn [...lead] to the reinforcement of defensive immigration policies”.⁵¹ Contrarily, an open immigration policy leads to an increased receptivity of the population for further immigration and hence, better integration outcomes.

An aspect worth consideration is also the fact that the European Union is facing a decline of its population over the next years. As a result, there will be an increased need for labour force in specific sectors.⁵² The consequence will be an increasing labour shortage in certain sectors. Migrants, be they voluntary or forced, thus embody a potential of resources from which the receiving society could benefit.⁵³ Worth bearing in mind is also the fact that, for example, immigrants often take on jobs that natives do not want to perform any longer, thus contributing to the endurance of the economic system but also to social equilibrium, such as in the case of home-care assistance.

⁴⁸ M., Bratti and C., Conti, 'The effect of immigration on innovation in Italy', *Regional Studies*, Vol. 52, Issue 7, pp. 934-947, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00343404.2017.1360483>, (accessed 06/06/2018).

⁴⁹ R., Penninx, 'Integration of migrants: economic, social, cultural and political dimensions' in Miroslav M, MacDonald AL and Haug W (eds.) *The New Demographic Regime Population Challenges and Policy Responses*, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 2005, http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/_docs/pau/PAU_2005_Publ_NDR.pdf, (accessed 20/05/2018), p. 137.

⁵⁰ A., Ager and A., Strang, 'Refugee Integration: Emerging Trends and Remaining Agendas', *Journal of Refugee Studies* Vol. 23, No. 4, 2010, pp. 589-607, <https://academic.oup.com/jrs/article/23/4/589/1532136> (accessed 08/06/2018), p. 599.

⁵¹ R., Penninx, 'Integration: The Role of Communities, Institutions and the State', Migration Policy Institute, October 2003, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/integration-role-communities-institutions-and-state>, (accessed 20/05/2018).

⁵² H., Schneider, 'Towards a European Migration Policy: from Maastricht to Amsterdam, from Tampere to The Hague', in Schneider H (ed.) *Migration, Integration and Citizenship. A Challenge for Europe's Future*. Volume 2, Forum Maastricht, 2005, p. 18.

⁵³ A., Giunti, 'Immigrati, quando l'integrazione è una realtà', *L'Espresso*, August 2016, <http://espresso.repubblica.it/attualita/2016/07/28/news/immigrati-quando-l-integrazione-e-una-relta-i-dai-del-rapporto-sprar-1.278715>, (accessed 06/06/2018).

Nonetheless, a survey conducted by the Pew Research Centre in 2016⁵⁴ in view of the first UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants revealed that back then most Europeans were concerned by the large numbers of refugees who had reached Europe in the previous months and believed that increasing diversity of the European population would not have contributed to an improvement of overall conditions: “[i]n no EU country surveyed did more than four-in-ten say that having an increasing number of people from many different races, ethnic groups and nationalities makes their country a better place to live”.⁵⁵ In other words, the overall perception was that Europeans hold “generally negative opinions of refugees”.⁵⁶ In contrast with that, a 2018 Eurobarometer survey suggested that “today Europeans’ views of migrants are [...] relatively positive”⁵⁷, as about 57% of the respondents declared to feel comfortable in interacting with them. This is a good indicator that gives hopes for positive change. In fact, as stressed by OECD-Secretary General Gurría, “[i]f migration is to be successful, integration is THE key!”.⁵⁸

Integration: A Definition

Before delving into the specifics of integration policies, a definition of integration itself is required. In the Global Trends Report 2017 the UNCHR identifies integration as one of the foreseeable durable solutions as concerns refugees. In particular, the document defines it as:

“a complex and gradual process comprising separate but equally important legal, economic, social, and cultural dimensions. Over time the process should lead to permanent residence rights and, in some cases, the acquisition of citizenship in the country of asylum. The objective is for integrated refugees to be able to pursue sustainable livelihoods and

⁵⁴ J., Poushter, ‘European opinions of the refugee crisis in 5 charts’, Pew Research Centre, September 2016, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/09/16/european-opinions-of-the-refugee-crisis-in-5-charts/>, (accessed 20/05/2018).

⁵⁵ Poushter, ‘European opinions of the refugee crisis in 5 charts’.

⁵⁶ Poushter, ‘European opinions of the refugee crisis in 5 charts’.

⁵⁷ ‘Europeans remain welcoming to immigrants’, The Economist, April 2018, <https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2018/04/19/europeans-remain-welcoming-to-immigrants>, (accessed 06/06/2018).

⁵⁸ A., Gurría, ‘The Integration of Migrants and Refugees: Challenges and Opportunities’, speech in Georgetown University, 7 October 2016, <http://www.oecd.org/migration/integration-of-migrants-and-refugees-challenges-and-opportunities.htm>, (accessed 06/06/2018).

contribute to the economic life of the host country, and live among the host population without discrimination or exploitation”.⁵⁹

In other words, the UNHCR envisions integration as a multidimensional process, which is realised in the long-term. Sometimes it can even last a lifetime, especially for the severely traumatised and the elderly, who might find comfort and safety in past traditions and their country of origin’s way of living.⁶⁰ From a human rights perspective, the operational definition provided by the UNCHR also identifies lack of discrimination and equal treatment as end results of a successful integration process, also essential for the process of integration itself. Another policy-relevant definition of integration is offered by the International Organisation for Migration, according to which “[w]hile the term “integration” is understood differently depending upon the country and context, it can generally be defined as the process of mutual adaptation between the host society and the migrants themselves, both as individuals and as groups”.⁶¹ Put it differently, even if the notion of integration is not universal, undeniably it is a two-way *process* (and not an endpoint) that targets both newcomers and host societies.

At academic level, a clear definition of integration is provided by Süßmuth and Weidenfeld, who go straight to the point: “integration is the process of becoming an accepted part of a foreign society and of accepting that society, based on the principles of equality, human rights, diversity and inclusion. The most important factor of integration is acceptance and that means maintaining a positive perception and appreciation of diversity”.⁶² Along the same lines, Carrera affirms that:

“[i]ntegration is by nature an elusive concept. Instead of worrying about the need to conceptualise this notion, any policy intending to frame this field should instead look at it as a compendium of processes of inclusion tackling social exclusion. These processes should seek to guarantee equal rights and obligations to those not holding the nationality

⁵⁹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, ‘UNHCR Global Trends Report 2017’, UNHCR, 2018, <http://www.unhcr.org/5b27be547.pdf>, (accessed 25/06/2018), p.30.

⁶⁰ European Council on Refugees and Exiles, ‘Position on the Integration of Refugees in Europe’.

⁶¹ International Organisation for Migration, ‘IOM and Migrant Integration’, 2012, <https://www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/What-We-Do/docs/IOM-DMM-Factsheet-LHD-Migrant-Integration.pdf>, (accessed 19/05/2018).

⁶² R., Süßmuth and W., Weidenfeld, *Challenge integration: Living together in a Europe of diversity*, Bertelsmann-Stiftung and Migration Policy Institute, October 2015, <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/librarydoc/the-integration-challenge-living-together-in-a-europe-of-diversity>, (accessed 24/05/2018), p. 12.

of the receiving society. Facilitating equality of treatment and full access to a set of economic, political, social and cultural rights and duties should be the real goal pursued”.⁶³

A limitation of the interpretation of integration as a phenomenon rooted in reciprocity is the consolidation of an idea of ‘us’ versus ‘the other’, where the former is a uniform entity. “The notion of a ‘two-way’ process [...] does bring with it the inherent danger of an implicit assumption that integration concerns the relationship between two distinct, but homogenous groups: the established population and the incomers”.⁶⁴ As stressed by Carrera, in fact, the notion of integration:

“rests on the subjective idea of an already integrated receiving society that is composed by citizens who are also integrated, and which form a whole. [...] Rather,] our societies are witnessing a wide variety of life styles that diversify the very concept of community and call into question claims of an homogeneous society of shared cultural values that need to be defended and made secure against those labelled as ‘immigrants’”.⁶⁵

Not just that, as argued by Pelliccia⁶⁶, the historical period in which we are living is witnessing a re-establishment of cultural hierarchies and hegemonic practices through a rhetoric of identity and culture. In other words, the supremacy of a national or, at most, of European identity and culture to be protected against non-indigenous influences. As a matter of fact, despite the European Union being founded on the motto *United in diversity*, “[t]he arrival of new comers in either large numbers or from different ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic backgrounds often irritates citizens and residents of the receiving States”.⁶⁷ The question whether Europe really is a tolerant place where ‘the diverse’ is unconditionally accepted or rather a land where underlying beliefs in the superiority of its people is just hiding behind a different face, comes thus to the foreground.

⁶³ S., Carrera Nuñez, ‘Integration’ as a Progress of Inclusion for Migrants? The Case of Long-Term residents in the EU’, in Schneider, H., (ed.) *Migration, Integration and Citizenship*, Forum Maastricht, 2005, p. 109.

⁶⁴ Ager and Strang, ‘Refugee Integration: Emerging Trends and Remaining Agendas’, *Journal of Refugee Studies* Vol. 23, No. 4, 2010, pp. 589-607, <https://academic.oup.com/jrs/article/23/4/589/1532136> (accessed 08/06/2018), p. 601.

⁶⁵ S., Carrera Nuñez, ‘Integration’ as a Progress of Inclusion for Migrants? The Case of Long-Term residents in the EU’, in Schneider, H., (ed.) *Migration, Integration and Citizenship*, Forum Maastricht, 2005, p. 2.

⁶⁶ A., Pelliccia, ‘La prospettiva ibridista per una politica dell’integrazione in una società interculturale’ in Bonifazi C (ed.) *Migrazioni e integrazioni nell’Italia di oggi*, Istituto di Ricerche sulla Popolazione e le Politiche Sociali, 2017, pp. 307-320, Available from: Research Gate, (accessed 04/06/2018).

⁶⁷ F., Düvell, ‘Migration, Minorities and Marginality: New Directions in Europe Migration Research’, in Rumford C (ed.) *The SAGE Handbook of European Studies*, London: SAGE Publications Inc., 2009, p.329.

As highlighted by Stevenson it seems that “there is no place for otherness in [European societies] understood through metaphors of war and conquest”.⁶⁸ It is the role and responsibility of the institutions to ensure these attitudes are countered: if on the one hand they have to respect public opinion, on the other they are the embodiment of the values and principles that they serve in the name of their citizens. For example, in the preamble of the Charter of Fundamental Rights the European Union (and thus each one of its member states) recognises that “the Union is founded on the indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity”. Under Art. 22, in particular, the Charter recognises the importance of cultural, religious and linguistic diversity, which is increasingly characterising its societies. In other words, states have pledged to the observation and promotion of certain fundamental rights, enshrined in supra-national agreements and, as a consequence of that, they are responsible for their realisation.

Integration, Human Rights and The Legal Framework

Besides immigration, the notion of integration intersects with a variety of other domains. In particular, good integration practices are important for a sound protection of human rights: when integration is successful, individuals enjoy the lack of a series of discriminatory and racist practices that limit their freedoms, condemned by many international human rights instruments. Nonetheless, a right to integration as such does not exist. Murphy, in fact, notes that:

“[i]t cannot be taken for granted that integration is, of itself, a moral imperative. If migrants are guaranteed an effective protection of their civil and other rights including, most pressingly, the right to equality, then arguably there should be no need to ‘integrate’ them into society”.⁶⁹

In other words, integration is not necessarily the ultimate goal. Rather, the respect of human rights and equality of treatment. In her book, Murphy also noted that “NGO representatives commented that integration seemed to represent a kind of medicine that newcomers should take in order to ‘fit in’, rather than a process which ensured that they had rights and access to

⁶⁸ N., Stevenson, 'Multiculturalism and Public Culture: A Historical Critique' in Rumford C (ed.) *The SAGE Handbook of European Studies*, London: SAGE Publications Inc., 2009, p. 385.

⁶⁹ C., Murphy, *Immigration, Integration and the Law: The Intersection of Domestic, EU and International Legal Regimes*, EBSCOhost: Routledge, 2013.

services they needed”.⁷⁰ To better understand how states’ interventions could conciliate the notion of integration with the promotion and respect of human rights, a look at the international legal human rights framework is thus essential. In particular, attention will be paid to four main documents: the UDHR, the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR), The Charter on Fundamental Rights (The Charter) and the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

The first article of the UDHR recognises that “[a]ll human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights”.⁷¹ Art. 14 of the ECHR, in turn, establishes a prohibition of discrimination “on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status”⁷² in the enjoyment of all the rights set forth in the document. On the same grounds (sex, race, colour, ...), the Charter prohibits any forms of discrimination (Art. 21) with universal application. As noted by Ager and Strang, “where there are not equal rights, there is less respect. For example, refugees commonly reported distress at having been described as ‘scroungers’ when, as asylum seekers without the right to work, they had had to depend on benefits”.⁷³ Also very important, under Art. 7(1) the 1951 Convention establishes that “[e]xcept where this Convention contains more favourable provisions, a Contracting State shall accord to refugees the same treatment as is accorded to aliens generally”.⁷⁴ In other words, the Convention makes it clear that refugees should not be penalised on grounds of their status. A provision of non-discrimination is also expressed under Art. 3 of the same document, where it is affirmed that the Convention applies “without discrimination as to race, religion or country of origin”.

All four human rights instruments also expand on other crucial aspects of one’s life, that range from civil and political to economic, social and cultural rights. For the purposes of assessing how the promotion of human rights principles can be translated in practical terms through the application of integration policies for refugees, consideration will be given to the dispositions of the 1951 Convention, which has been developed in line with the UDHR. In

⁷⁰ Murphy, *Immigration, Integration and the Law*.

⁷¹ Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) UNGA Res 217 A(III)

⁷² European Convention on Human Rights (1950) OJ C 303

⁷³ A., Ager and A., Strang, ‘Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework’, *Journal of Refugee Studies* Vol. 21, No. 2, 2008, <https://academic.oup.com/jrs/article/21/2/166/1621262>, (accessed, 10/04/2018), p.176.

⁷⁴ Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) UNGA Res 429(V). The following quotes from the Convention in this section are taken from this source.

particular, five domains will be taken into account: employment, housing, education, access to health and status. Employment is disciplined by chapter three of the document, starting with Art. 17, expressly requiring states to grant favourable conditions in employment for those in possession of a refugee status. In fact, in para. 2 the Convention establishes that, upon fulfilment of specific clauses linked to residence and family life, “restrictive measures imposed on aliens or the employment of aliens for the protection of the national labour market shall not be applied to” refugees. Para. 3 further evidences the need for more favourable conditions as concerns refugees’ rights, by stating that “[t]he Contracting States shall give sympathetic consideration to assimilating the rights of all refugees with regard to wage-earning employment to those of nationals”.

Chapter three importantly gives also attention to self-employment and liberal professions, expressing the requirement to grant refugees “treatment as favourable as possible and, in any event, not less favourable than that accorded to aliens generally in the same circumstances”. Further issues related to employment, are to be found under Art. 24, which disciplines labour legislation and social security. Housing and education are instead disciplined by Art. 21 and 22 of the Convention respectively. Both recognise the importance of favourable treatment and the latter, in particular, also as concerns the recognition of “foreign school certificates, diplomas and degrees, the remission of fees and charges and the award of scholarships”. Access to health, instead, is not expressly disciplined, if not as concerns social security under Art. 24(1)(b). Lastly, under Art. 34 the Convention recognises that states should “facilitate the assimilation and naturalization of refugees [... and] make every effort to expedite naturalization proceedings and to reduce as far as possible the charges and costs of such proceedings”.

As highlighted, to consider the provisions of international and regional treaties is crucial when discussing the integration of refugees. In fact, such documents evidence that states’ efforts towards improving the equality of treatment for refugees with targeted dispositions as well as supporting their adjustment in the host society and fighting discrimination against them is not only a moral obligation. In addition to international documents that protect migrants’ rights as human beings (e.g. the UDHR), both the European Union and the member states have a legal commitment to the promotion and respect of refugees’ specific needs, in light of their condition and vulnerabilities.

The Research Question

Having highlighted the topicality of the migration discourse in this time of history and considered the relationship between immigration and integration as well as the importance of the latter to be successful in the light of the promotion of human rights principles, the aim of this research project is to look at what is currently being done for the integration of refugees in Europe at national level. As a matter of fact, the mainstreaming of integration policies in European states, further discussed in chapter three, leads to a risk of refugees becoming invisible for the state once their status is obtained. Given the vulnerability of the refugee group, lack of target integration policies can negatively affect their ability to integrate and successfully rebuild their lives in the host society.⁷⁵ Looking at how states are responding to the arrival and settlement of new groups of migrants through their integration policies is, therefore, a first step to ensure successful outcomes and consequently contribute to the improvement of refugees' levels of integration. Having explained the exceptionality of Italy's role in the recent migratory events and the impact the continuous arrival of migrants and refugees had at national level, it is on the interventions on integration of this country that the core of the research will focus.

Hence, the main question addressed in this project is: how suited is Italy's National Integration Plan in enabling the integration of refugees? In light of the previous definitions of integration, and specifically the one offered by the UNCHR, to answer that the project will focus on an evaluation of the provisions regarding four main elements of Italy's National Integration Plan: employment, housing, education and access to health. Additionally, given the key role played by the legal status in the realisation of integration, citizenship will also be an object of study. The assessment and relevance of the provisions of the National Integration Plan are defined in relation to the existing legislation on integration, discussed in the national chapter as well.

⁷⁵ D., Groll, and N., Laurentsyeveva, 'Labor Market Integration of Refugees', in Mercator Dialogue on Asylum and Migration, Assessment Report on Asylum and Migration Policies in Europe. Sharing responsibility for refugees and expanding legal immigration, Kiel: Kiel Institute for the World Economy (IfW), 2017, pp. 57-67, <http://www.medam-migration.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/2017-MEDAM-Assessment-Report.pdf>

Outline of the Thesis

The project is divided in five main chapters. This introduction provided some definitions and clarified the link between both immigration and human rights to integration. These evidenced why refugees' integration is an important subject to discuss. In addition, this introduction offered a definition of the international legal framework within which the discourse of integration is framed, under a human rights perspective. Lastly, it presented the research question, being it the thread that links all clusters together. Moving forward, chapter two focuses specifically on the European context, from an historical and operational perspective. It mostly explains the role played by the European Union in the domain of refugee's integration and how it is intervening to support its member states, also financially. Chapter three, instead, offers a theoretical background in respect to integration frameworks, starting with a presentation of what the role of public policy is. In addition, it addresses the various integration models existing in Europe and the developments that these have undergone in the recent years. Most importantly, it defines a framework for refugees' integration policies and the elements that make it up as well as explains which are the indicators to be taken into account when defining their efficacy and assessing integration outcomes. Chapter four, is oriented towards the specific analysis of the national case study, starting from some historical remarks, over to the legislative framework and the National Integration Plan. The chapter concludes with observations that draw a comparison between the existing legislation and the plan, providing an assessment of the state-of-affairs. Lastly, chapter five, offers some conclusive remarks, wrapping up the findings of the research project and providing some recommendations to Italy.

Chapter Two – The European Union

Introduction

Art. 79(4) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) affirms that the European Union “may establish measures to provide incentives and support for the action of Member States with a view to promoting the integration of third-country nationals⁷⁶ residing legally in their territories”.⁷⁷ However, “[w]hile the EU has a mandate to promote integration, as well as to support and coordinate Member State efforts to integrate third-country nationals, the responsibility for actually implementing relevant strategies, measures and actions lies with the Member States”.⁷⁸ In other words, the European Union has no legal competence as integration is concerned as it remains, first and foremost, a domestic competence of member countries:

“[w]hilst the domain of integration was considered a key strategic priority for the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (ASFJ) by The Hague Programme of 4-5 November 2004, the principle of subsidiarity has so far prevailed. The Member States have conceived integration as one of those areas at the heart of national sovereignty”.⁷⁹

In line with this, Art. 79(4) TFEU formally rejects the idea of an intervention of the European Union in the “harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States”.⁸⁰ Nonetheless, as discussed in this chapter, the European Union is nowadays an important actor in the field of immigration and asylum, sharing the management of this area with its member states.⁸¹ Considering the positive relationship between the implementation of immigration policies and integration outcomes, the non-legislative interventions of the European Union in the field of integration can thus not be disregarded. In other words, even though “[t]he European Union cannot deliver integration [...] no account of immigrant integration in

⁷⁶ A third-country national who is not a citizen of the European Union.

⁷⁷ Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union (2012) C 326/01

⁷⁸ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, ‘Together in the EU. Promoting the participation of migrants and their descendants’, Publications Office of the European Union, 2017, <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2017/migrant-participation>, (accessed 05/06/2018) p.15

⁷⁹ S., Carrera Nuñez, ‘In search of the perfect Citizen? The Intersection between Integration, Immigration and Nationality in the EU’, PhD Thesis, University of Maastricht, 2008, p. 3.

⁸⁰ Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union (2012) C 326/01

⁸¹ See Art. 4(2) and Art. 67(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

Europe could be complete without some account of [its] role”.⁸² This becomes particularly evident if it is considered that, despite having no formal legal competence to discipline integration, the European Union has already started doing so, most notably through the adoption of “[a] number of legislative instruments [...] as part of the Union’s common policy on asylum and immigration, several of which contain clauses on integration requirements”.⁸³

Over the years the discourse over immigration and integration has changed considerably in the European Union: “in the last decades, immigration matters have got an increasingly negative connotation in Europe. [...] The question of how to integrate the growing numbers of aliens with a different cultural and ethnic background into their host societies has become a heatedly discussed issue”.⁸⁴ Despite that already in the Tampere Conclusions a vision for “[a] common approach [...] to ensure the integration into our societies of those third country nationals who are lawfully resident in the Union”⁸⁵ was promoted, there is still a long way to go in that respect. The following pages portray an overview of the interventions of the European Union in both fields of immigration, asylum and integration, focusing particularly on the developments of the organisation’s approach to the latter. On a side note, despite its relevance for the respect of fundamental rights in Europe, and the definition of human rights compliant policies, the impact and work of the Council of Europe will not be discussed here as such analysis would go beyond the available resources for the project.

The Development of a Common Immigration Policy

The strengthening of the leading role of the European Union in the areas of immigration and asylum was not straightforward. Rather, it has consolidated only gradually over the years as “[t]he progressive establishment of a common immigration policy has encountered constant resistance from certain Member States attempting to keep intact their power over these

⁸² A., Geddes and C., Boswell, *Migration and Mobility in the European Union*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, p. 224.

⁸³ K., De Vries, ‘Integration Requirements in EU Migration Law’, European University Institute, 2012, http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/23427/MWP_2012_20_DeVries.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y, (accessed 02/07/2018), p. 1.

⁸⁴ H., Schneider, ‘Towards a European Migration Policy: from Maastricht to Amsterdam, from Tampere to The Hague’, p. 11.

⁸⁵ See for instance: European Parliament, ‘Integration of Refugees in Europe’, News European Parliament, June 2017, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20170629STO78628/integration-of-refugees-in-europe>, (accessed 10/04/2018).

policies”.⁸⁶ The increased involvement of the European Union in the field of immigration dates back to the early 1990s, when it entered the list of shared competencies between the organisation and its member states, namely with the Treaty of Maastricht (Art. K(1)) in 1993.

In practical terms, the most significant provisions were introduced by the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1999: “[f]rom being a matter for inter-governmental co-ordination under the “third pillar” of the Maastricht Treaty, competencies were now moved into the “first-pillar”.⁸⁷ Importantly, the Treaty of Amsterdam established that “within five years of its entry into force, the Council should adopt measures on a number of fronts”⁸⁸ in the field of asylum and migration, ranging from the assessment of asylum applications to visa issues. These premises were further reinforced in the Tampere Conclusions, later in the same year. Importantly, in this document the European Council affirmed that it “agreed to work towards establishing a Common European Asylum System, based on the full and inclusive application of the Geneva Convention”.⁸⁹ The document also affirmed that “the legal status of third country nationals should be approximated to that of Member States’ nationals”⁹⁰ and recognised the intention of the European Union and its member states to work towards a common, “efficient management of migration flows at all levels”.⁹¹ However, the legislative activity that followed the Council in Tampere altered its course after the terrorist attacks of September 2001⁹²: As a matter of fact, “[a]fter 9 September 2001 the goal of the legislative programme as well as the majority of political activities have changed quite considerably. Legal migration was not anymore in the centre of legislative attention, all emphasis turned towards the fight against illegal migration and terrorism”.⁹³

The aim for a co-ordinated management of immigration and asylum was re-consolidated in the Treaty of Lisbon of 2009. In particular, Art. 61(2) affirmed that the European Union

⁸⁶ S., Carrera Nuñez, ‘In search of the perfect Citizen? The Intersection between Integration, Immigration and Nationality in the EU’, p. 3.

⁸⁷ H., Schneider, ‘Towards a European Migration Policy: from Maastricht to Amsterdam, from Tampere to The Hague’, p. 23.

⁸⁸ European Parliament, ‘Migration and Asylum: a challenge for Europe’, 2018, European Union, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/PERI/2017/600414/IPOL_PERI\(2017\)600414_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/PERI/2017/600414/IPOL_PERI(2017)600414_EN.pdf), (accessed 27/06/2018).

⁸⁹ European Council, Tampere Conclusions, (1999), para 4.

⁹⁰ Tampere Conclusions, para. 20.

⁹¹ Tampere Conclusions, para. 22.

⁹² H., Schneider, ‘Towards a European Migration Policy: from Maastricht to Amsterdam, from Tampere to The Hague’, p. 25.

⁹³ R., Faure, M., Gavas, and A., Knoll, ‘Challenges to a comprehensive EU migration and asylum policy’, Overseas Development Institute, 2015, <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/10166.pdf>, (accessed 02/07/2018), p. 12.

“shall frame a common policy on asylum, immigration and external border control, based on solidarity between Member States, which is fair towards third-country nationals”.⁹⁴ Since then, the European Union has thus been increasingly working towards the harmonisation of its legislative and operational interventions.⁹⁵

The most recent migratory events, however, evidenced the shortcomings of the European migration legislation currently in place, especially as concerns asylum. Great pressure has thus been placed on the need for a reform of the CEAS, for which a final agreement was expected to be signed at the latest 28-29 June 2018 European Council Summit.⁹⁶ The final aim of the planned changes is to ensure a more efficient European and harmonised migration system, better able to cope with migratory pressures and support member states, but also capable of reducing pull factors for asylum seekers and their secondary movements among member states.⁹⁷ Among the most important proposed amendments are: the standardisation of reception measures across the European Union, which include ensuring “the right to work for asylum seekers no later than 9 months after lodging their application [and the protection of] education rights for minors”⁹⁸; and the definition of a common procedure for the granting of international protection to “better safeguard applicants' rights and better protect vulnerable individuals [and] establish faster application examination on certain grounds”.⁹⁹

Instruments of Soft Law for Integration

Even though not a new subject by then, greater engagement of the European Union in the domain of integration goes back to the late 1990s, when in an atmosphere of increased racist and xenophobic events in Europe that were threatening the development of the European project, the Treaty of Amsterdam was signed. Art. K(1) of the document, in fact, established that “the Union’s objective shall be to provide citizens with a high level of safety [...] by preventing and combating racism and xenophobia”.¹⁰⁰ Followed by the Tampere Conclusions

⁹⁴ Treaty of Lisbon (2009) OJ C 306

⁹⁵ R., Faure, M., Gavas, and A., Knoll, ‘Challenges to a comprehensive EU migration and asylum policy’.

⁹⁶ A final agreement was not signed. There are seven legislative proposals being discussed.

⁹⁷ European Council, ‘Reform of EU asylum rules’, [website], 2018, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/ceas-reform/>, (accessed 13/07/2018).

⁹⁸ European Council, ‘Reform of EU asylum rules’.

⁹⁹ European Council, ‘Reform of EU asylum rules’.

¹⁰⁰ Treaty of Amsterdam (1999) OJ C 340

in 1999, the presence and need for integration of third country nationals started being increasingly at the centre of attention. The Tampere Conclusions, in particular, affirmed that:

“[t]he European Union must ensure fair treatment of third country nationals who reside legally on the territory of its Member States. A more vigorous integration policy should aim at granting them rights and obligations comparable to those of EU citizens. It should also enhance non-discrimination in economic, social and cultural life and develop measures against racism and xenophobia”.¹⁰¹

In line with the Tampere Conclusions are the Thessaloniki Conclusions of 2003, in which the European Council called for the definition of “a comprehensive and multidimensional policy”¹⁰² on integration at Union level that “should cover factors such as employment, economic participation, education and language training, health and social services, housing and urban issues, as well as culture and participation in social life”.¹⁰³ The Conclusions also highlighted the importance of recognising the heterogeneity of migrant groups and, therefore, of the need for the development of integration strategies that took into account group-specific demands. Notably, the European Council further affirmed that “[w]hile primary responsibility for their elaboration and implementation remains with the Member States, such policies should be developed within a coherent European Union framework, taking into account the legal, political, economic, social and cultural diversity of Member States”.¹⁰⁴ The creation of National Contact Points for Integration (today converged in the European Integration Network) in 2003 “is considered to be a key initial step in developing a coherent EU dimension for integration policies”.¹⁰⁵ In recognising common patterns of integration challenges among the European Union’s member states, in fact, these were envisioned as instruments to facilitate the sharing of information and practices among member states in the field of integration.

Along the same lines, the European Council’s The Hague Programme (2004) stressed on the need for a co-ordinated response to the challenges of integration at European level, calling among the many, for the protection and active promotion of human rights as well as the fight

¹⁰¹ Tampere Conclusions, para. 18.

¹⁰² European Council, Thessaloniki Conclusions (2003)

¹⁰³ European Council, Thessaloniki Conclusions.

¹⁰⁴ European Council, Thessaloniki Conclusions.

¹⁰⁵ H., Schneider, ‘Towards a European Migration Policy: from Maastricht to Amsterdam, from Tampere to The Hague’, p. 27.

against discrimination;¹⁰⁶ but also for the definition of a guiding framework grounded on common basic principles¹⁰⁷ to ensure a concerted response, the maximisation of the potential benefits deriving from immigration and to “prevent isolation and social exclusion of immigrant communities”.¹⁰⁸ In 2004 the first Annual Report on Migration and Integration was also published as well as the Handbook on Integration for policy-makers and practitioners, which demonstrated the increasing relevance for the subject at European level.

In 2004 were also adopted the Common Basic Principles (CBPs), a set of agreed-upon notions aiming at guiding member states in the definition of their integration policies and actions. Unlike the Thessaloniki Conclusions, the preamble to the CBPs stressed on the fact that as a “successful integration policy must engage at the local, regional and national institutions, [... their] development and implementation is [...] primary responsibility of individual Member States rather than of the Union as a whole”.¹⁰⁹

The Common Agenda came into being in 2005 with two major aims: in line with The Hague Programme, to build a coherent response to the integration challenges faced by member states, posed by the increased presence of third-country nationals in the European Union, and to further the implementation of the CBPs. In its introduction, the Common Agenda highlighted the prominence of the immigration and integration debate at European level; the existing of challenges brought by arrivals of third-country nationals to the European Union; the importance of giving attention to the “promotion of fundamental rights, non discrimination and equal opportunities for all”¹¹⁰, labour integration and the gender perspective; and the importance of providing financial support to member states. One by one, the document addresses all CBPs providing a list of required actions at both national and European level. Positively, under CBP 11, the Common Agenda affirmed the intention to increase capacity for monitoring and evaluation of integration interventions. Nonetheless, still in 2016, Huddleston was affirming that “most European countries lack systems for

¹⁰⁶ The creation of the Fundamental Rights Agency was a means through which to respond to this objective.

¹⁰⁷ Common basic principles were already envisioned in the Thessaloniki Conclusions (para 31).

¹⁰⁸ European Commission, The Hague Programme. Ten priorities for the next five years (2005) MEMO/05/153.

¹⁰⁹ Council of the European Union, Common Basic Principle (2004) Press Release 14615/04 (Presse 321).

¹¹⁰ European Commission, A Common Agenda for Integration. Framework for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals in the European Union (2005) COM 389 final.

monitoring integration or evaluating the impacts of their policies”.¹¹¹ Also important to notice is the fact that no specific provisions for the integration of vulnerable groups was mentioned.

Following the adoption of the Common Agenda, a European Agenda for Integration was approved by the European Commission. Covering the period of intervention 2011-2015, the agenda’s main aim was to further promote the economic, social and cultural integration of immigrants, as the outcomes of member states’ interventions were still considered inadequate. To do so, the Agenda identified three key areas on which to focus states’ interventions: active participation of migrants in host societies (thus stressing on language skills, education, employment, equal treatment, to name a few); greater engagement of all stakeholders at local level; and the involvement of countries of origin in the facilitation of learning and understanding of destination communities. In line with previous documents, the Agenda also recognised the increasing ethnic and cultural diversity of European societies and, drawing from the Stockholm Programme of 2010¹¹², the importance of equal treatment. It also highlighted that newcomers can represent a potential for the thriving of European economies, especially in the light of a projected decline of the European population’s growth on the continent for the coming years. Positively, as concerns the integration of refugees, the document also highlighted that “[a]ctions targeting especially vulnerable groups of migrants are also needed”.¹¹³ In particular, the Agenda noticed that:

“The integration of beneficiaries of international protection requires particular attention. They have often had traumatic experiences, which require specific social and psychological care. Policies should, therefore, be designed to minimise isolation of beneficiaries of international protection and restrictions to their rights, and provide for effective language learning, access to accommodation, access to health care in health systems that promote integration and culturally adapted health promotion programmes. Access to vocational training and assistance in seeking employment should also be targeted”.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ T., Huddleston, 'Integration indicators. The difference between monitoring integration and evaluating policies' in Triadafyllidou A (ed.) *Routledge Handbook of Immigration and Refugee Studies*, New York: Routledge 2016, p.191.

¹¹² See Para 6.1.4 of the Stockholm Programme, for example.

¹¹³ European Commission, European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals (2011) COM(2011) 445.

¹¹⁴ European Commission, European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals.

Despite the efforts made so far, in an opinion drafted of on behalf of the European Economic and Social Committee in 2014 Rapporteur Rodríguez García-Caro was still noticing that “intolerance, racism and xenophobia towards immigrants [... were] on the rise in Europe and also that in some Member States the protection of fundamental rights [... was] being eroded”.¹¹⁵

To further the goal of immigrants’ integration in June 2016, a new Action Plan was delivered. Contrarily to the previous documents, the paper contained clear and extensive provisions directed to the specific category of refugees. In fact, having not built upon past experiences but rather looked at the immediate, the former Agendas were mostly considering actions to further integration of economic immigrants. The new Action Plan, instead, besides the challenges that are common to foreign immigrants on a general level, linguistic barriers and risk of stigmatisation being some examples of them, recognised the existence of refugees-specific ones, “such as vulnerability resulting from traumas suffered [that can thus prevent their immediate integration in the labour market], lack of documentation including as regards qualifications [as well as heterogeneity of possessed skills], [and] inactivity prior to and during asylum procedure”¹¹⁶ that needed to be addressed in order to adequately facilitate their integration, ultimately making “Europe a more prosperous, cohesive, and inclusive society in the long run”.¹¹⁷

Financial Interventions

To be implemented policies and integration measures need to be adequately supported financially. “EU funds account only for a small share of total migration-related spending in the EU; much larger amounts are provided directly by EU member states. However, EU funding has increased and EU agencies have been given new competencies, meaning the EU plays an increasingly important role in this policy area”.¹¹⁸ To the support of the implementation of national integration measures, the European Union has mostly contributed

¹¹⁵ G., C., Rodríguez, ‘Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee An open and secure Europe: making it happen’, European Economic and Social Committee, 2014, <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/open-and-secure-europe>, (accessed 13/06/2018), p. 2.

¹¹⁶ European Commission, Action Plan on the Integration of third country nationals (2016) COM(2016) 377 final, p.4.

¹¹⁷ European Commission, Action Plan on the Integration of third country nationals, p.4.

¹¹⁸ Z., Darvas, ‘EU funds for migration, asylum and integration policies’, 2018, <http://bruegel.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/EU-funds-for-migration.pdf>, (accessed 02/07/2018), p. 10.

through part of the European Structural and Investment funds (ESI) and through money allocated for the support of targeted initiatives. Under the ESI funds for the purposes of integration are specifically: the European Social Fund (ESF), which is aimed at fostering economic and educational opportunities as well as combating poverty, discrimination and promoting equal opportunities (with particular attention towards refugees as clearly stated in the Reg. 1304/2013) in European member states; and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The ESF was allocated a budget of 86.4 billion Euro for the period 2014-2020¹¹⁹, about 21 of which are specifically aimed at programmes targeting vulnerable groups which include refugees. For the same timeframe 183 billion Euro were allocated to the ERDF instead¹²⁰, to further interventions for the benefit of refugees and migrants. To complement the ESF was also the European Integration Fund (EIF)¹²¹, implemented by member states through national annual plans as part of a broader multiannual framework programme on solidarity and management of migration (2007-13). The EIF, counting on 825 million Euro (for the period 2007-13), aimed at promoting the integration of primarily newly arrived immigrants, without having though a specific focus on refugees. Importantly, however, the Action Plan on the integration of third-country nationals highlighted that “the [EIF’s] mid-term evaluation [...] demonstrated that in most Member States the projects financed under the Fund would not have been carried out otherwise”.¹²² Besides the EIF, under the same multiannual framework was included the Refugee Fund¹²³, to which 630 million Euro for the period 2008-13¹²⁴ were assigned to specifically assist member states in carrying out asylum procedures, resettlement operations as well as of integration measures for those granted refugee status.

¹¹⁹ S., Kraatz, and M., Dimova, ‘Labour Market Integration of Refugees: EU Funding Instruments’, 2016, European Parliament, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/570005/IPOL_BRI\(2016\)570005_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/570005/IPOL_BRI(2016)570005_EN.pdf), (accessed 13/06/2018).

¹²⁰ Kraatz, and Dimova, ‘Labour Market Integration of Refugees’.

¹²¹ Pilot projects (INTI) were first launched in 2002 and proved successful. See: European Commission, Boosting growth and cohesion in EU border regions (2017) COM/2017/0534 final.

¹²² European Commission, Action Plan on the Integration of third country nationals, p. 15.

¹²³ The European Commission has been financing pilot projects for refugees, which included integration measures, since 1997. This led to the creation of the Refugee Fund. See: EUR-lex, ‘European Fund for Refugees (2000-2004)’, [web page] 2005, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM:l33078>, (accessed 19/04/2018).

¹²⁴ The Fund was first launched in 2000 and then further extended twice.

The primary fund in place today is, instead, the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), endowed with 3.137 billion Euro to cover a 7-year timespan (2014-2020)¹²⁵, plus potential emergency funding. Among the many purposes, and besides asylum, return and solidarity measures, the budget is aimed at the support of legal migration and the integration of non-EU nationals in European societies. Under the AMIF, member states have an obligation to invest at least 20% of their national allocation on programmes supporting legal migration and integration measures.¹²⁶ In her report *Follow the Money* Westerby argues that National Programmes funded through the AMIF “have extended and improved integration service provision in several MS”.¹²⁷ Nonetheless, a lack of transparency and poor-decision making has been detected in the awarding of national projects, thus highlighting an issue in relation to the final use made of such funds. A last fund available to European member states for the implementation of integration measures for the benefit of refugees, is also the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD), which, however, is a type of shorter term funding, limited to very specific interventions which might include measures to the benefits of refugees.

¹²⁵ European Commission, 'Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)' [website] https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/financing/fundings/migration-asylum-borders/asylum-migration-integration-fund_en, (accessed 16/04/2018).

¹²⁶ G., Konle-Seidl and G., Bolits, 'Labour Market Integration of Refugees: Strategies and good practices', 2016, European Union, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/578956/IPOL_STU\(2016\)578956_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/578956/IPOL_STU(2016)578956_EN.pdf), (accessed 02/07/2018), p.8.

¹²⁷ R., Westerby, 'Follow the Money. Assessing the use of EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) funding at the national level', United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and European Council on Refugees and Exiles, 2018, <https://www.ecre.org/follow-the-money-a-critical-analysis-of-the-implementation-of-the-eu-asylum-migration-integration-fund-amif/>, (accessed 13/06/2018), p.28.

Chapter Three – An Analytical Approach

Introduction

The previous chapters have offered an introduction to the issue of integration of refugees. In particular, they highlighted the reasons why integration is a topical issue as well as the major controversial aspects that make of it an interesting subject for further research. In addition, they described the role played by supra-national institutions (i.e. the European Union) through instruments of soft-law and funding. This chapter will move forward by considering the specific dimension of policy-making. Specifically, it presents the existing models of integration according to which existing integration policies in various European member states have been framed so far. Secondly, it considers a framework for integration and present the elements that constitute it. Next, the indicators on which grounds the efficacy of an integration policy is assessed are explained. The chapter then concludes with an explanation of the relevance of Italy as a case study. The content of the following pages represents the theoretical background for the understanding of the analysis of the fourth chapter.

Models of Integration

Integration policies are not a new concept: before the constant arrival of groups migrants and refugees in the most recent years, many European states had already faced the question of how to best respond to the presence of non-European residents established on their territories. Mostly states with a colonial past, countries such as the United Kingdom, The Netherlands and France developed their own national models of integration policies, which are mainly distinguished in two types: the assimilationist and the multicultural. The former requires immigrants “to actively take on the culture and language of the majority population and renounce their own ethnic or cultural identity”¹²⁸; the latter, instead, recognises the intrinsic diversities of individuals, hence promoting regulations that grant equal opportunities to all but still expects them to conform to a set of core values. An assimilationist policy can, for example, prohibit the wearing of cultural-specific items not belonging to the host state, whilst in a multicultural system, “public funding for separate schools for racial, ethnic, or religious

¹²⁸ Murphy, *Immigration, Integration and the Law*.

minorities”¹²⁹ might be provided. Lutz argues that these two models respond to two very distinct normative goals: “policies of multiculturalism recognise a lack of opportunities as the policy problem and the policy intervention is designed to increase capabilities [for immigrants], whereas policies of assimilation recognise a lack of motivation as the policy problem and the policy intervention is designed to increase aspirations”.¹³⁰ An analysis of the three classical dimensions of integration¹³¹, namely the cultural/religious, the socio-economic and the legal/political, evidences that the assimilationist model limits individuals’ access to cultural and social rights, whilst the enjoyment of those related to the legal/political dimension are strictly related to the ability of mirroring the values of the host society. Differently, the multicultural model confers ample cultural/religious and legal/political rights to immigrants. At socio-economic level, whilst an assimilation policy can be more favourable for immigrants’ acquisition of country-specific skills, a multicultural policy is more likely to provide in anti-discrimination regulations.

“Nevertheless, fundamental research questions such as what type of policy regime produces more favourable integration outcomes remain empirically disputed, and results are inconclusive”¹³². In other words, regardless of whether states adopt one model or the other, there are no conclusive findings that confirm either produces better integration outcomes. Generally speaking, however, these models of integration are grounded on an underlying assumption of the existence of a predominant group, which imposes its norms and practices on the others: minorities exist but they cannot undermine the mainstream culture.¹³³ Hence, integration became strongly linked to the notion of identity and nationhood, namely the existence of certain shared values in which the individual must identify to be accepted by the host society. Because of this, responsibility for successful interaction with the host society still today mostly rests on the shoulders of immigrants who are required to uniform to the majority group. As noted in a European Commission’s 2016 report, “integration policies tend

¹²⁹ I., Bloemraad, ‘The Debate Over Multiculturalism: Philosophy, Politics, and Policy’, Migration Policy Institute, September 2011, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/debate-over-multiculturalism-philosophy-politics-and-policy/>, (accessed 10/06/2018).

¹³⁰ P., Lutz, ‘Two logics of policy intervention in immigrant integration: an institutionalist framework based on capabilities and aspirations’, *Comparative Migration Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 19, 2017, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/29242782>, (accessed 11/06/2017), p. 2.

¹³¹ See for example: R., Penninx and B., Garcés-Mascareñas, ‘The Concept of Integration as an Analytical Tool and as a Policy Concept’ in Penninx R and Garcés-Mascareñas B (eds.), *Integration Processes and Policies in Europe. Contexts, Levels and Actors*, Springer Open, 2016, p.14.

¹³² Lutz, *Two logics of policy intervention in immigrant integration*, p.5

¹³³ S., Choquet, ‘Models of Integration in Europe’, *Foundation Robert Schuman, European Issues* Vol. 449, 2017, <https://www.robert-schuman.eu/en/doc/questions-d-europe/qe-449-en.pdf>, (accessed 16/04/2018), p.1.

to represent the expectations and demands of the host society, not those of migrants”¹³⁴, which clearly contradicts the principle of integration as a two-way process.

Progressively, the assimilationist and multicultural models have been surpassed by a new paradigm of integration policy: the civic integration model. “Civic integration emphasizes the importance of immigrant’s integrating more fully into mainstream society”¹³⁵, ability to be proven through the succeeding in certain tests or the compliance with specific agreements. As a matter of fact, “[c]ivic integration policies express the idea that successful incorporation into a host society rests not only on employment (economic integration) and civic engagement (political integration), but also on individual commitments to characteristics typifying national citizenship, specifically country knowledge, language proficiency and liberal and social values”.¹³⁶ The civic integration model secures the link between immigration and integration as well as the relationship between rights and responsibilities for immigrants. As a matter of fact, this model establishes a:

“formal obligation for immigrants to acquire the language of the host society and to familiarise themselves with its political institutions, history, and culture (‘civics’). Not meeting this obligation bears punitive consequences, from losing social benefits to forfeiting one’s legal residence status or even first entry, as in the case of ‘integration from abroad’”.¹³⁷

This transformation has been accompanied by a gradual ‘mainstreaming’ of integration policies as well, namely “a shift from policies that are targeted at specific groups to more generic policies adapted to address the ‘whole of society’”¹³⁸, which is also perceived as clear-cut rupture with the assimilationist and multicultural models of integration of the past. Importantly, mainstreaming frames diversity as something that concerns the entirety of

¹³⁴ European Commission, 'Migration Conference Report. Understanding and Tackling the Migration Challenge. The Role of Research', Brussels, 4-5 February 2016, https://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/pdf/other_pubs/migration_conference_report_2016.pdf, (accessed 04/04/2018), p. 17.

¹³⁵ W., Kymlica, 'Multiculturalism: Success, Failure and the Future', Migration Policy Institute, 2012, Washington DC: Migration Policy Institute, (accessed 10/06/2018), p. 16.

¹³⁶ S., Wallace Goodman, 'Integration Requirements for Integration's Sake? Identifying, Categorising and Comparing Civic Integration Policies', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 5, 2010, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13691831003764300>, (accessed 10/06/2018), p. 754.

¹³⁷ C., Joppke, 'Civic integration in Western Europe: three debates', *West European Politics*, Vol. 40, No. 6, 2017, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01402382.2017.1303252?needAccess=true>, (accessed 11/06/2018), p. 1155.

¹³⁸ P., Scholten, E., Collet, and M., Petrovic, 'Mainstreaming migrant integration? A critical analysis of a new trend in integration governance', *International Review of Administrative Article Sciences*, Vol. 83, No. 2, 2016, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0020852315612902>, (accessed 11/06/2018), p. 284.

society. Positively, it avoids the problematisation of specific groups of immigrants, as “[c]ategorizations may become stereotypes, prejudices, and ultimately part of immutable racist ideologies”¹³⁹, and it reflects an intercultural approach that promotes constructive dialogue and inter-ethnic engagement. Also, “mainstreaming is associated with a communication strategy or policy discourse that can help migrants to bond to their host societies to create a shared sense of belonging”.¹⁴⁰ According to Scholten, Collet and Petrovic, mainstreaming responds to an increasing tendency towards a multi-level and poly-centric management of immigrants’ integration as well, seen as a shared responsibility, in contrast to the older state-centric national models.

The problem that lies with the mainstreaming of integration policies is that, because of the very nature of this model, the needs of specific groups are not addressed directly. As highlighted by Scholten et al., for example, “[a]lthough there is a growing sense of awareness on the need for refugee integration, there has been only little research to and evaluation of actual strategies to address this renewed need [... as many] countries have ‘mainstreamed’ their integration policies, which involved the abandoning of targeted group-specific measures and the embedding of integration measures into generic policies”.¹⁴¹

Integration Models for Refugees

Referring back to the definitions of integration provided in chapter one, it could be affirmed that integration is a process, the realisation of which develops over time though progress in the ability of individuals to freely conduct their lives in the host society. The success of integration relates to multiple domains, which include, for example: having access to equal employment, enjoying a stable legal status that allows for future planning, interacting with other social groups, and not being subjected to discrimination as an individual. Since the realisation of integration is also dependent on the context, it is important that a policy focuses on the specific barriers that prevent integration from developing. In light of this, it is also essential that a policy considers the specificities of target groups. As recognised by the

¹³⁹ R., Penninx, and B., Garcés-Mascareñas, ‘The Concept of Integration as an Analytical Tool and as a Policy Concept’ in Penninx R and Garcés-Mascareñas B (eds.), *Integration Processes and Policies in Europe. Contexts, Levels and Actors*, Springer Open, 2016, <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007%2F978-3-319-21674-4>, (accessed 10/06/2018), p 15.

¹⁴⁰ Scholten, Collet, and Petrovic, p. 287.

¹⁴¹ P., Scholten et al., ‘Policy Innovation in Refugee Integration? A comparative analysis of innovative policy strategies toward refugee integration in Europe’, p. 4.

European Parliament in a 2016 study, refugees “are a particularly vulnerable group who clearly require targeted, co-ordinated and comprehensive [...] responses”.¹⁴²

Ager and Strang¹⁴³ developed a conceptual framework for the definition of integration policies specifically oriented to refugees, looking at those elements that are to be addressed for a successful outcome. In their model, they specifically divide these various components into four main categories, further constituted by sub-domains. The first group is named *means and markers*, reflecting the fact that it is composed of elements that not only enable but also reflect the achievement of integration. Specifically, these are: employment, housing, education and health. As a matter of fact, these, Ager and Strang note, are “widely acknowledged by diverse stakeholders to be key aspects of integrating into a new society”.¹⁴⁴ The second group is that of *social connections*, further subdivided in social bridges, social bonds and social links. Important to bear in mind is the fact that, the ability of an individual to develop social connections, which is key for a satisfactory life, is also dependent on the attitudes and openness of the receiving society. As noted by Coussey, legal measures against racism, xenophobia and discrimination are, therefore, also a fundamental part in a framework of integration as they encourage “immigrants to feel more confident and safe”.¹⁴⁵ Thirdly is the category of *facilitators*, those elements that are instrumental for facilitating the integration process. Language and cultural knowledge as well as safety and stability make up this group. Lastly, are rights and citizenship, the *foundation* category. Since the analysis of the Italian National Plan for Integration focuses specifically on the first and fourth categories, which are deemed to be the most crucial and more directly related to the enforcement of human rights, the following sections will expand on their meanings.

¹⁴² European Parliament, ‘Labour Market Integration of Refugees: strategies and good practices’, 2016, European Union, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/578956/IPOL_STU\(2016\)578956_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/578956/IPOL_STU(2016)578956_EN.pdf), (accessed 11/06/2018), p. 20.

¹⁴³ A., Ager and A., Strang, ‘Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework’, *Journal of Refugee Studies* Vol. 21, No. 2, 2008, pp. 167-191, <https://academic.oup.com/jrs/article/21/2/166/1621262>, (accessed, 10/04/2018).

¹⁴⁴ Ager and Strang, *Understanding Integration*, p.173.

¹⁴⁵ M., Coussey, ‘Framework of integration policies’, Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing, 2000, p. 13

“Labour market integration emerges as a key variable in the overall integration success of refugees”.¹⁴⁶ As employment is concerned:

“a major barrier to securing [it for refugees] is difficulty relating to the non-recognition of qualifications and previous work experience. Many refugees are unable to produce proof of previous qualifications and even when they can employers may not recognize them. Consequently, under-employment [...] is a common factor in the experience of refugees in the labour market”.¹⁴⁷

Importantly also, as noted by Scholten et al., “different refugee categories differ significantly in terms of the qualifications and (material/immaterial) resources that they bring”.¹⁴⁸ In other words, whilst some groups might be literate and highly qualified, others might lack sufficient literacy skills or the required competences to easily fit into the host society’s labour market. In light of this, tailored integration policies should target not only barriers to the recognition of qualifications but also ensure refugees the means to bridge competences gaps, when necessary. As a matter of fact, the 2016 European Parliament’s study also highlighted that “in the past refugees found it particularly difficult to enter the local labour market and their outcomes generally lagged well behind those of other migrant groups”.¹⁴⁹ Worth consideration is also the degree of access to self-employment options for refugees, who might have the skills but not the means to start an activity from scratch.

Housing is also of primary importance for refugees’ integration as it is linked with a feeling of safety and stability. “The effect that housing has on refugees’ overall physical and emotional wellbeing, as well as on their ability to feel ‘at home’, is well established”¹⁵⁰, argue Ager and Strang. Sound psychological health is particularly important for integration outcomes and self-sufficiency: as affirmed by Baker, Dagevos and Engbersen “[a] good mental health is positively related to employment chances and negatively associated with the

¹⁴⁶ Scholten et al., ‘Policy Innovation in Refugee Integration?’, p. 11.

¹⁴⁷ Ager and Strang, *Understanding Integration*, p. 170.

¹⁴⁸ Scholten et al., ‘Policy Innovation in Refugee Integration?’, p. 7.

¹⁴⁹ European Parliament, ‘Labour Market Integration of Refugees: strategies and good practices’, pp. 21-22.

¹⁵⁰ Ager and Strang, p. 171.

propensity for social benefits dependency”¹⁵¹, demonstrating that a lengthy stay in first reception accommodations negatively impacts on an individual’s ability to integrate once their status has been granted. Rather, “research suggests that it is very important that refugees move into a regular housing situation as soon as possible [... which also] allows refugees to get in contact with the host society”.¹⁵² Importantly, asylum seekers who are hosted in accommodations in rural areas, where they have limited contacts with the ‘external’ world and are prevented from immediate work, tend also to face greater barriers to integration if they are granted the refugee status.¹⁵³ This interdependency among housing, well-being and employment renders the need for the development of holistic integration policies.

“The circumstances and experiences of forced migration have profound effects on refugees’ health and integration into the host society”.¹⁵⁴ Possibly victims of tortures but also suffering from the most disparate illnesses as a consequence of their displacement, refugees’ immediate access to comprehensive health services is also of paramount importance. “Language difficulties may make it difficult for refugees to communicate with health care professionals; a lack of information about services available may prevent some from taking up services [... and] gender and cultural perceptions of health care delivery may present problems for specific groups”.¹⁵⁵ A sound integration policy must take these potential barriers into consideration ensuring, for example, availability of interpreters and cultural mediators as well as of translated materials that address refugees’ specific health issues (e.g. PTSD, sexual violence, ...).

Education is a fundamental right.¹⁵⁶ A position paper on the role of education for integration of migrants and refugees edited by Maletic clearly highlights that equal access to good quality education for anyone is “a precondition for social inclusion and protection, full participation in social and civic spheres of life, long-term integration into the labour market

¹⁵¹ Bakker, L., Dagevos, J., and Engbersen, G., 'The Importance of Resources and Security in the Socio-Economic Integration of Refugees. A Study on the Impact of Length of Stay in Asylum Accommodation and Residence Status on Socio-Economic Integration for the Four Largest Refugee Groups in the Netherlands', *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, Vol. 15, Issue 3, 2014, pp. 431–448, <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12134-013-0296-2>, (accessed 12/06/2018), p. 441.

¹⁵² Scholten et al., ‘Policy Innovation in Refugee Integration?’, p. 9.

¹⁵³ On the other hand, early integration might pose different challenges if the status is not granted, e.g. unwillingness of the person to leave the host society, absconding, ...

¹⁵⁴ M., Robila, ‘Refugees and Social Integration in Europe’, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), 2018, https://www.un.org/development/desa/family/wp-content/uploads/sites/23/2018/05/Robila_EGM_2018.pdf, (accessed 04/07/2018), p. 3.

¹⁵⁵ Ager and Strang, *Understanding Integration*, p. 173.

¹⁵⁶ See article 26(1) of the UDHR, for example.

and prevention of exploitation”.¹⁵⁷ The provision of courses to enable the youngest in particular to acquire new competences and skills is essential: “if host countries ensure quick access to quality education and training opportunities, they can equip this young, but disadvantaged, generation of refugees with the tools to succeed”.¹⁵⁸ At the moment, however, “[r]efugee children and adolescents are five times more likely to be out of school than their non-refugee peers”.¹⁵⁹

Maletic’s report also highlights that:

“Eurostat, OECD and European Commission data all indicate that both foreign born and second generation young people are at greater risk of poverty, more likely to leave school early and to be out of employment, education or training, and are less likely to have acquired basic skills (literacy, maths and science) by the age of 15”.¹⁶⁰

Education also means acquiring language proficiency. Targeted courses for refugees of all ages should be envisioned by a comprehensive integration policy, which takes into account that one of the first barriers to educational attainment (as well as access to the labour market) is indeed the knowledge of the language of the host country. Research conducted by Bansak, Hainmueller, and Hangartner also shows that the host society itself “attach high importance to language skills, such that asylum seekers are about 12 percentage points less likely to be accepted when they do not speak the host-country language than when they speak it fluently”.¹⁶¹

What emerges from the analysis of the means and markers is the definition of specific elements that have to be addressed by a sound policy that promotes the integration of refugees, also summarised in the table at the end of the next section. Firstly, the recognition

¹⁵⁷ A., Maletic, ‘Integrating Refugees and Migrants Through Education. Building Bridges in Divided Societies’, Lifelong Learning Platform, 2016, <http://lllplatform.eu/lll/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/LLL-Platform-Policy-Paper-Refugees-and-migrants-and-inclusive-education-Sept-2016.pdf>, (accessed 03/07/2018), p. 4.

¹⁵⁸ C., Bodewig, ‘Education is the key to integrating refugees in Europe’, Brookings Institution, November 2015, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2015/11/23/education-is-the-key-to-integrating-refugees-in-europe/>, (accessed 28/05/2018).

¹⁵⁹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Global Education Monitoring Report, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ‘No more excuses: Provide education to all forcibly displaced people’, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002448/244847E.pdf>, (accessed 04/07/2018), p.3.

¹⁶⁰ Maletic, ‘Integrating Refugees and Migrants Through Education’, p. 5.

¹⁶¹ K., Bansak, J., Hainmueller, and D., Hangartner, ‘How economic, humanitarian, and religious concerns shape European attitudes toward asylum seekers’, *Science*, Vol. 354, Issue 6309, 2016, <http://science.sciencemag.org/content/354/6309/217>, (accessed 11/07/2018), p. 218.

of professional qualifications as well as the assessment of prior skills should be targeted to enhance employment opportunities. Together with that, interventions to bridge skills gaps and vocational training should be planned and made accessible, together with facilitation to allow for self-employment. As housing is concerned, among the most important aspects is the rapid access to housing solution. Equally relevant, is the definition of tailored measures to assist refugees in the transition from reception centres and independent housing opportunities once the status is granted, which includes facilitations to access housing options. Consideration should also be given to the location and condition of housing solutions, especially in terms of contact opportunities with the local population. Thirdly, the extent of access to health is also to be given particular attention, including the availability of targeted support and, to maximise its benefits, of assistance with cultural and language mediation. Lastly, as education is concerned, integration policies should aim at ensuring equal access for all to the education system of the host country, with a specific focus on measures for children and underage refugees in general. Tools to enable the acquisition of language proficiency also come to the forefront, being the ability to speak the local language a first step towards successful integration.

The Foundation

The base for successful integration in Ager and Strang's model relies on rights and citizenship. "Refugees, and workers and volunteers involved in the support of refugees and asylum seekers, were generally clear that in an 'integrated' community, refugees should have the same rights as the people they are living amongst".¹⁶² The attribution of equal rights and citizenship to refugees can especially be considered a sign of respect for human rights and dignity: refugees are, in fact, forced to leave their country. Their migration is, by definition, not a choice but forced, which means that integration is not only a necessity for the receiving society but often a survival need for refugees themselves:

"Living in another country as a refugee is very difficult. We were forced to leave our country. We have not chosen to come here ourselves. I don't say that it is not a good place to live but I want the government to treat us like other citizens. We are human beings and have the right to live".¹⁶³

¹⁶² Ager and Strang, *Understanding Integration* p. 176.

¹⁶³ Ager and Strang, p. 175.

Worth consideration is also the fact that there is often a prejudice associated with the refugee status. As argued in an article by Baranik, Hurst, and Eby “[t]he most difficult part of being a refugee is the negative stigma that comes with it. Refugees leave everything behind in pursuit of a better life but often are ostracized”.¹⁶⁴ Research conducted in the Netherlands also proves that having a refugee status impacts negatively on the propensity for employment and ‘positively’ on the propensity for social benefits dependency.¹⁶⁵ In turn, Dag Tjaden notes, “naturalised migrants are more often employed, less often overqualified for their jobs, have better housing conditions and have less difficulty paying household expenses”.¹⁶⁶ In other words, the obtaining of citizenship is not just a formality of status, rather it is linked to broader dimensions of integration outcomes. As clearly explained by Coussey:

“[a]cquiring citizenship is a means of facilitating integration. [...] Once they are settled, feel secure and begin to feel part of society, immigrants can make social and political commitments to their adopted countries, and accept its obligations. [...] Having political rights is important because it encourages a sense of belonging and participating in national life”.¹⁶⁷

Research conducted by Kabber¹⁶⁸ highlights that there are also specific ‘values and meanings’ that people link to the idea of citizenship, especially those who experienced exclusion. Among there are a sense of justice, namely fair and equal treatment, and self-determination, specifically having control over one’s own life. Besides, from an immigrant’s perspective “[c]itizenship is an important measurement of integration because it [...] represents a deliberate choice [...] to link their future with that of the host country”.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁴ L.E., Baranik, C.S., Hurst, and T.L. Eby, 'The stigma of being a refugee: A mixed-method study of refugees' experiences of vocational stress', *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 105, 2018, pp. 116-130, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0001879117300933>, (accessed 12/06/2018).

¹⁶⁵ L., Bakker, J., Dagevos, and G., Engbersen, *The Importance of Resources and Security in the Socio-Economic Integration of Refugees*.

¹⁶⁶ Dag Tjaden, J., ‘Access to citizenship and its impact on immigrant integration. Handbook for Italy’, EUDO Citizenship, http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/32271/ACIT_Handbook_Italy_ENGLISH_.pdf?sequence=2, (accessed 06/07/2018), p.18.

¹⁶⁷ Coussey, *Framework of integration policies*, p. 12.

¹⁶⁸ Kaaber, N., ‘Introduction. The search for inclusive citizenship: Meanings and expressions in an interconnected world’, in N Kaaber (ed.) *Inclusive Citizenship. Meaning and Expressions*, London: Zed Books, 2005, pp.1-29.

¹⁶⁹ M.P., Vink, ‘Citizenship and Legal Statues’, Conference on the Integration of Migrants and Refugees, EUI, Florence, 29-30 September 2016, <https://www.eui.eu/Projects/TheForum/Documents/Keynote-lecture-citizenship-and-legal-statuses.pdf>, (accessed 12/06/2018), p. 1.

Having said that, the temporariness of the refugee status is one of the most crucial reasons why naturalisation becomes so relevant in the discourse of refugees' integration. In fact, the obtaining and maintenance of the refugee status is generally linked to the situation in the country of origin: if conditions there improve, refugees might be asked to go back. Because of this, "the refugee is situated in a condition of social and civic limbo, unable to commit to building a new life because they may be returned to the old, unable to commit to the old life because they may never be able to take it up once more".¹⁷⁰ Uncertainty deriving from a lack of stability and sense of direction, can thus severely affect refugees' mental health and, consequently, their integration into society.

Considering the stigma linked to the refugee status, the negative impact it has in terms of propensity for employment, the feeling of lack of stability its temporariness triggers, but also bearing in mind the positive values associated with the acquisition of citizenship, the greater inclusion to which it leads in terms of participation in the life of the host country, it can be affirmed that obstacles towards a rapid and facilitated naturalisation for refugees should thus be addressed by a comprehensive integration policy.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Elements of analysis</i>		
<i>Employment</i>	Recognition of qualifications and assessment of prior skills	Interventions to bridge skills gaps, professional training	Accessibility to self-employment
<i>Housing</i>	Rapid access to housing solutions	Tailored measures to assist refugees in the transition	Contact opportunities with the host society
<i>Access to Health</i>	Accessibility of services	Availability of targeted support	Cultural and language mediation
<i>Education</i>	Equal access to education	Tailored measures for children and underage refugees	Acquisition of language proficiency
<i>Citizenship</i>	Temporariness of the refugee status	Facilitations for refugees' naturalisation	-

Table 1 – Categories and elements of analysis of a policy for the integration of refugees.

¹⁷⁰ D., Owen, 'Citizenship and the marginalities of migrants', *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, Vol. 16, No. 3, 2013, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/13698230.2013.795702?needAccess=true>, (accessed 12/06/2018), p. 334.

The Indicators of Integration

The elements that constitute an integration policy are then used as an assessment tool for determining the efficacy of the implemented framework. The more specific such indicators of integration are, the more elaborate the analysis of integration levels. An accurate assessment of integration outcomes will, in turn, enable the improvement of the integration policy itself. At European level, the development of common indicators for the assessment of integration policies was particularly encouraged in the 2007 Council of the European Union meeting. In fact, in that occasion the Council invited the National Contact Points on Integration to “promote the development of common indicators and indexes that could be used by Member States on a voluntary basis in order to assess integration policy outcomes”.¹⁷¹

Following that, an expert meeting took place in 2009 in Malmö, where European common indicators were thus identified. In the subsequent Zaragoza Declaration¹⁷², the Council of the European Union lists these common integration indicators, divided in four main policy areas of intervention: employment, education, social inclusion and active citizenship. A closer look at the indicators chosen for each dimension reveals their inadequacy, namely the lack of attention towards specific integration challenges of certain groups such as refugees, as discussed above. Integration in education, for instance, is assessed by looking into the highest educational attainment, the share of low-achieving 15-year-olds in reading, mathematics and science, the share of 30–34-year-olds with tertiary educational attainment, and the share of early leavers from education and training. Social inclusion, instead, is monitored by looking into the median net income, the risk of poverty, the share of population perceiving their health status as good or poor, and the ratio of property owners to non-property owners among immigrants and the total population.

Another tool available for the measurement of integration levels is the MIPEX (Migrant Integration Policy Index), which “evaluate[s] and compare[s] what governments are doing to promote the integration of migrants”.¹⁷³ This Index particularly looks at: labour market mobility; family reunion; education; health; political participation; permanent residence;

¹⁷¹ Council of the European Union, Council meeting (2007) Press Release 10267, p.26.

¹⁷² Council of the European Union, Declaration of the European Ministerial Conference on Integration (Zaragoza, 15 & 16 April 2010) 2010

¹⁷³ MIPEX, ‘What is MIPEX’, [website], 2015, <http://www.mipex.eu/what-is-mipex>, (accessed 04/07/2018).

access to nationality; and anti-discrimination. In an article written for Human Rights Watch, Sunderland (2016) reminds her audience that “MIPEX researchers have concluded that ambitious integration policies do work, and that countries with “inclusive integration policies” tend to provide the best conditions for social cohesion, to the benefit of both newcomers and general society. Similarly, restrictive policies can lead to xenophobic attitudes and the inability to see the benefits of diversity”.¹⁷⁴ These indicators, however, are not exclusively envisioned to consider the elements that are specific of refugee experiences.

A project specifically focused on the evaluation of integration outcomes of refugees-specific policies is instead offered by NIEM.¹⁷⁵ In line with the elements identified by Ager and Strang’s model, NIEM relies on a broader range of indicators, classified under four main categories: general conditions, socio-economic integration, legal integration, and socio-cultural integration. Each of these groups are further divided into sub-areas that expand on the above: the first group includes impact of reception on integration and mainstreaming and integration governance; the second is about health, employment, training, public relief and social security; the third concerns residency, family unity, and access to nationality; whilst the latter looks into children’s education, language learning and social orientation, building bridges and fostering participation. In a report drafted for a NIEM analysis, Tánczos delves into an evaluation of the meaning of such indicators. For example, the author stresses on the importance of a secure residence status from a psychological perspective, for both refugees and the receiving society, as well as on the importance of family reunification. Interestingly, Tánczos also notes that “[q]uality housing is a basic condition for a decent living. Housing offers not merely a shelter, but also a space for personal development and family, a local community and enhanced interaction with locals, which is one of the EU’s Common Basic Principles”.¹⁷⁶ Indirectly, this further reinforces the relevance for refugees to secure a long-term status as soon as possible: once a sense of stability is achieved, further integration is more likely to happen.

¹⁷⁴ J., Sunderland, ‘For Europe, Integrating Refugees Is the Next Big Challenge’, Human Rights Watch, January 2016, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/01/13/europe-integrating-refugees-next-big-challenge>, (accessed 24/05/2018).

¹⁷⁵ ‘NIEM, all in for integration’, [website] <http://www.forintegration.eu/pl/about-the-project>, (accessed 16/06/2018).

¹⁷⁶ T., Tánczos, ‘Lost in transition? The European standards behind refugee integration. NIEM analysis’, Institute of Public Affairs 2017, http://www.forintegration.eu/uploads/drive/publikacje/pdf/lost_in2.pdf, (accessed 16/06/2018), p. 7.

To sum up, the previous sections have delved into integration policies. It was noted that these are not a novelty of the most recent times, rather an instrument already in use in many European countries. There are three main models of integration policies: the assimilationist, the multicultural and the civic integration model. Integration policies have undergone important changes, one of the most evident being their mainstreaming. The necessity for targeted integration policies, however, is given by the specific and heterogenous needs of the different immigrant groups. Refugees' integration, in particular, needs to be addressed through ad-hoc regulations. Ager and Strang's model was here taken as main reference. They identify four main categories as constituent of integration policies, each of them characterised by specific sub-groups. These various elements tend, in turn, to be used as indicators of integration levels as well as means to improve integration policies themselves. For the purposes of the analysis of the Italian National Integration Plan and the preceding legislation the categories 'means and markers' and 'foundation' will be considered.

Chapter Four – Italy as a Case Study

Introduction

Italy, as other South-Mediterranean countries, has gone through a transformation in the last decades, transitioning from being a country of emigration to one of immigration: the country is indeed characterised by a “relatively recent nature of the switch from an immigrant-sending to an immigrant-receiving society, with major waves of immigrants arriving only in the 1980s, and in relatively low numbers”.¹⁷⁷ As highlighted by Paparusso¹⁷⁸ in her article on immigration and integration in Italy, the country fits in the migratory and integration model of those of most recent immigration, known also as Mediterranean or South-European model. This model is characterised by the absence of a solid integration approach: in other words, a lack of clear and defined integration policies. It is only in the most recent years, with the uninterrupted arrival of consistent numbers of people by the sea, as by-product of regional and national instabilities and wars, that greater public and political attention in Italy has been given to the issue of migration. As a result, greater institutional interventions have taken place also regarding the implications of immigrants’ presence at societal level, i.e. newcomers’ integration into Italian society. Notably, in 2017 the first National Integration Pact for beneficiaries of international protection.

The debate generated around immigrants’ influxes and forced migration, both in the press and on the news, also contributed to an intensification of the perception of immigrants’ presence on the territory and its problematisation. A recent survey conducted by Eurispes indicated that the majority of Italians overestimate the number of foreign presence on the territory: for 60% of the interviewees the number of non-nationals ranges between 16% and 24%, whilst only 28,9% of the respondents correctly provided an 8% figure.¹⁷⁹ As a matter of fact, the portrayal of migrants’ arrivals in the media has generally been accompanied by an alarming

¹⁷⁷ J.A., Hellman, 'Immigrant 'space' in Italy: When an emigrant sending becomes an immigrant receiving society', *Modern Italy*, Vol. 2, 1997, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/modern-italy/article/div-classtileimmigrant-space-in-italy-when-an-emigrant-sending-becomes-an-immigrant-receiving-societydiv/E4BC896198631DBDD48DD81B05D26987>, (accessed 19/05/2018), p.36.

¹⁷⁸ A., Paparusso, 'L'immigrazione e l'integrazione in Italia: il cammino delle politiche' in Bonifazi C (ed.) *Migrazioni e integrazioni nell'Italia di oggi*, Istituto di Ricerche sulla Popolazione e le politiche sociali, 2017, pp. 295-306, Available from: Research Gate, (accessed 04/06/2018), p. 296.

¹⁷⁹ Eurispes, '30° Rapporto Italia', 2018, http://www.eurispes.eu/sites/default/files/Eurispes_Sintesi_Rapporto_Italia_2018.pdf, (accessed 18/06/2018), p. 48.

and fear-triggering tone, which contributed to the spread of a sense of ‘invasion’ among the public. As stated in the Italian governmental website integrazioneimmigranti.gov.it in reporting about the work conducted by the European Joint Research Centre that focused on busting nine myths about immigration¹⁸⁰, the media have contributed to the dissemination of prejudice towards migrants and refugees as well as to a shift of the immigration debate towards exclusionary attitudes, calling for the retrieval of borders’ control.

As a matter of fact, cases of discrimination against refugees are on the rise in Italy.¹⁸¹

Generally speaking, a study of the European Parliament reveals that:

“[t]he attitude of Italians towards immigrants is becoming less and less tolerant. Mistrust and, in some cases, hostility is increasing. According to a recent national survey the share of Italians who agree with ‘accepting only a pre-defined quota and not more’ rapidly increased from 46% in September 2016 to 50 % in January 2017, while the ‘open’ position ‘we need to host everybody’ decreased from 26 % in September 2016 to 19 % in January 2017”.¹⁸²

Aiming at providing clear information on the state-of-affairs as concerns racism against immigrants in Italy, the online database *Cronache di Ordinario Razzismo* (Chronicles of Ordinary Racism), registered 1197 episodes of verbal violence in the past three years (611 in 2015, 415 in 2016 and 171 in 2017), 84 of physical violence (41 in 2015, 28 in 2016 and 15 in 2017), of which 2 in 2015, 4 in 2016 and 5 in 2017 were deadly.¹⁸³

¹⁸⁰ Ministero dell’Interno, Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, Ministero dell’Istruzione, dell’Università e della Ricerca, ‘Nove miti sulla migrazione da mettere in discussione’ [web page], 2017, <http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/Attualita/Notizie/Pagine/Nove-miti-sulla-migrazione-da-mettere-in-discussione.aspx>, (accessed 18/06/2018).

¹⁸¹ Terre des hommes, ‘Allarme razzismo: in Italia almeno 7 casi di discriminazione al giorno’, Terre des hommes, February 2018, <https://terredeshommes.it/comunicati/allarme-razzismo-in-italia-almeno-7-casi-di-discriminazione-al-giorno/>, (accessed 22/05/2018); and Camera dei Deputati, ‘La piramide dell’odio in Italia’, 2016 http://www.camera.it/application/xmanager/projects/leg17/attachments/shadow_primapagina/file_pdfs/000/007/099/Jo_Cox_Piramide_odio.pdf (accessed 22/05/2018).

¹⁸² European Parliament, ‘Integration of refugees in Greece, Hungary and Italy. Comparative analysis’, 2017, European Union, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/614194/IPOL_STU\(2017\)614194_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/614194/IPOL_STU(2017)614194_EN.pdf), (accessed 11/06/2018), p.81.

¹⁸³ ‘È possibile misurare il razzismo in Italia?’, Open Migrations, October 2017, <http://openmigration.org/analisi/e-possibile-misurare-il-razzismo-in-italia/>, (accessed 22/05/2018).

Alongside episodes of social unrest¹⁸⁴, one of the most evident outcomes of the intensification of the migratory phenomenon is the rise to power of anti-immigrant populist parties following the March 2018 elections¹⁸⁵, determined to alter the status quo by limiting entries, expelling irregular migrants, and by making Italy's stance better heard at European level.¹⁸⁶ The European Union, in fact, was also heavily criticised by both Italian institutions and public for its failure to support Italy in a situation of emergency and need. The newly appointed Prime Minister Conte, in fact, "called for a radical change in EU asylum rules"¹⁸⁷ to be addressed in the June 2018 EU Summit. This stance is in line with an even clearer message sent by the leader of the Northern League (the party that makes up the new government together with the 5 Star Movement) Matteo Salvini at the beginning of the same month. In fact, he denied access to the Aquarius, a migrant rescuing boat, affirming that "Italy has stopped bowing its head and obeying".¹⁸⁸ Remarkably, "Salvini's actions have proved popular with the Italian public. The results of an opinion poll published on 18 June showed that 58% supported his decision to block access to the Aquarius".¹⁸⁹

Given these considerations, the focus of this chapter is on Italy's National Integration Plan for beneficiaries of international protection, with a specific focus on refugees. Italy's existing legislation to discipline integration will also be presented to evidence how the two relate together. The aim of the analysis is to understand how Italy is managing their integration, more specifically whether the newly developed policy can be considered suitable to address refugees' obstacle in their adjustment in the host society. In order to do these, five aspects will be assessed: the means and markers of Ager and Strang's integration framework, i.e. employment, housing, access to health, and education as well as citizenship rights, as part of their foundation category. The chapter starts, however, with some historical remarks, to contextualise the present situation.

¹⁸⁴ F., Caccia, and S., Morosi, 'Macerata, spartoria in centro, feriti sei stranieri: «Fermato italiano»', *Il Corriere della Sera*, February 2018, https://www.corriere.it/cronache/18_febbraio_03/macerata-spartoria-centro-sei-feriti-sindaco-restate-casa-3104db2a-08d2-11e8-8b93-b872f63dbb4d.shtml, (accessed 05/07/2018).

¹⁸⁵ Fella, 'The new Italian government'.

¹⁸⁶ Mudde, C., 'The EU helped create the Italy crisis. If it doesn't learn, worse will follow', *The Guardian*, May 2018, https://amp-theguardian-com.cdn.ampproject.org/v/s/amp.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/may/30/eu-italy-crisis-refugees-populism?amp_js_v=0.1#amp_tf=From%20%251%24s&share=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.theguardian.com%2Fcommentisfree%2F2018%2Fmay%2F30%2Feu-italy-crisis-refugees-populism, (accessed 04/06/2018).

¹⁸⁷ Fella, 'The new Italian government', p. 34.

¹⁸⁸ As quoted in S., Fella, 'The new Italian government', p. 36.

¹⁸⁹ Fella, 'The new Italian government', p. 36.

Historical Remarks

Whilst the tradition of emigration is rooted in the history of Italy, immigration is still quite a recent phenomenon, especially if compared with other northern European countries. It is in 1981 that the first national census assessing the numbers of foreigners on the Italian territory was conducted, evincing the presence of 321.000 non-nationals, of which about a third were stable residents and the remaining only temporary.¹⁹⁰ Today, ISTAT counts 5.047.028 foreigners residing in the country, who represent the 8.4% of the total population¹⁹¹, a number slightly inferior to European average.¹⁹² One of the reasons is the fact that, unlike other European countries that have an older immigration tradition, “apart from the occupation of Ethiopia and Somalia under Fascism [and prior conquest of Eritrea], Italian history does not include a fully developed and enduring period of colonial rule, and therefore contemporary Italy does not have to deal with the claims of former colonial subjects”.¹⁹³

Asylum trends, however, follow a different trajectory. Italy, in fact, has been dealing with forced migration on a regular basis for a longer time, over 50 years now. Also, the right to asylum has been present in its fundamental text since the creation of the Republic: it is enshrined in Art. 10 of the Italian Constitution (1948), which establishes that foreigners, who cannot freely enjoy those same democratic freedoms that are recognised by Italian fundamental laws in their countries of origin, have a right to asylum in the territory of the Republic.¹⁹⁴ Nonetheless, for many years the country has almost ignored the issue of forced migration and avoided its discipline¹⁹⁵: a national asylum law has never been developed and the awarding of refugee status has always been based on the 1951 Convention¹⁹⁶, which Italy

¹⁹⁰ Ministero dell’Interno, ‘Dati statistici sull’immigrazione in Italia dal 2008 al 2013. E aggiornamento 2014’, 2014, http://ucs.interno.gov.it/FILES/AllegatiPag/1263/Immigrazione_in_italia.pdf, (accessed 17/06/2018), p.4.

¹⁹¹ Istituto Nazionale di Statistica, ‘Stranieri residenti al 1° gennaio’, [web page], 2018, http://dati.istat.it/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DCIS_POPSTRRES1, (accessed 17/06/2018).

¹⁹² OECD, ‘Foreign-born population’, [website], 2018, <https://data.oecd.org/migration/foreign-born-population.htm>, (accessed 05/07/2018).

¹⁹³ Hellman, *Immigrant ‘space’ in Italy*, p.36.

¹⁹⁴ Those who are granted the right to asylum represent a different group of people from refugees. It might be that who is granted the right to asylum also qualifies as a refugee and, in this instance, the status of refugee would take prominence, as a generator of greater rights.

¹⁹⁵ See for example, Campomori, F., ‘Le politiche per i rifugiati in Italia: dall’accoglienza all’integrazione. Missione impossibile?’ Social Cohesion Papers Osservatorio Internazionale per la Coesione e Inclusione Sociale, 2016, https://www.socialcohesiondays.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/OCIS_SCPAPER022016DEF.pdf, (accessed 04/06/2018).

¹⁹⁶ ‘Asilo Politico e Diritto d’Asilo’, http://www.parlarecivile.it/argomenti/immigrazione/asilo-politico-e-diritto-di-asilo.aspx#_ftnref2, (accessed 17/06/2018).

ratified in 1954.¹⁹⁷ As a matter of fact, 60 years ago it was assumed that the refugee issue, as a by-product of the second World War, was going to be a temporary phenomenon.¹⁹⁸ Also, for a long time, Italy was not perceived by migrants as a country of asylum, namely as a place where to settle and integrate, but rather as a country of transition where to stop whilst waiting for resettlement in other more traditional immigrant destinations.¹⁹⁹

Still today, nonetheless, Italy is one of the few European countries that does not have a comprehensive asylum law yet²⁰⁰: over the years the arrival of large numbers of immigrants has always been handled through provisional and ad-hoc regulations that proved inadequate to manage the following crisis²⁰¹, and were also often following contradictory lines. As noted by Lotto²⁰² in her commentary to Hein's book on the asylum system in Italy, the lack of a comprehensive asylum law is the biggest barrier to ensure adequate protection to asylum seekers and to facilitate refugees' integration processes. In addition to this, the increasing difficulties to clearly distinguish between forced and economic migrants, further compromise the state's ability to respond to humanitarian needs. As a matter of fact, the report of the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SMSG) on migration and refugees of the Council of Europe evidenced that "[i]n some places, [at the moment of identification and registration] migrants are asked whether they wish to work in Italy, and if they answer that they do they are treated as economic migrants even though they may have fled their home countries for other reasons"²⁰³, and the UN Human Rights Committee "criticized [Italy for]

¹⁹⁷ Its 1967 Protocol was, instead, ratified in 1972 (UNHCR, 2015). Also, the geographical limitation of the 1951 Convention was lifted only in 1990 with the Martelli Act (Law 39/90): until then asylum seekers who were not citizens of European countries could not be automatically granted refugee status in the sense of the Convention but ad-hoc legislations were required.

¹⁹⁸ Jolles, L., 'Preface' in Hein C (ed.) *Rifugiati Vent'anni di storia del diritto d'asilo in Italia*, Consiglio Italiano per i Rifugiati, Roma: Donzelli Editore, 2010, p. IX.

¹⁹⁹ See for example: Hein, C., 'Storia del diritto d'asilo in Italia' in Hein C (ed.) *Rifugiati Vent'anni di storia del diritto d'asilo in Italia*, Consiglio Italiano per i Rifugiati, Roma: Donzelli Editore 2010, pp. 33-86 and Campomori, *Le politiche per i rifugiati in Italia*.

²⁰⁰ Suprano, A., 'Storia del diritto d'asilo in Italia dal dopoguerra ad oggi. Quadro normativo' [web page, <http://www.altrodiritto.unifi.it/rivista/2016/suprano/index.htm>, (accessed 04/05/2018).

²⁰¹ See for example: Pugliese, E., 'Migranti rifugiati e politiche sociali', *La rivista delle politiche sociali*, 2015, <http://www.inchiestaonline.it/osservatorio-internazionale/enrico-pugliese-migranti-rifugiati-e-politiche-sociali/>, (accessed 17/06/2018), and Campomori, *Le politiche per i rifugiati in Italia*.

²⁰² Lotto, A., 'Rifugiati. Vent'anni di storia del diritto d'asilo in Italia, a cura di Christopher Hein', *Deportate, Esuli, Profughe (DEP)*, No. 15, 2011, http://www.unive.it/media/allegato/dep/n11-2011/Recensioni/29_Hein.pdf, (accessed 17/06/2018), p. 405.

²⁰³ Boček, T., 'Report of the fact-finding mission to Italy', Council of Europe, 2016, https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016806f9d70, (accessed 17/06/2018), pp. 5-6.

the lack of safeguards against the incorrect classification of asylum-seekers as economic migrants”.²⁰⁴

Italy’s first ‘encounter’ with a high number of refugees is, in the broader context of world’s dynamics, in the second post-war era. Between 1945 and 1952 the country, in fact, became home to 120.000 refugees, almost entirely relocated in the then immigration countries, namely USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.²⁰⁵ This is roughly the same number of the total amount of individuals who sought asylum on the Italian territory in the following 40 years²⁰⁶: it is estimated that by the end of 1989 the number of refugees in Italy was around 11.500 units²⁰⁷, whilst official data confirm that 4.573 applications for asylum were submitted in the following year.²⁰⁸ However, in response to political actions and socio-economic events in the neighbouring region, the situation began to change and Italy to increasingly turn into an end destination for asylum seekers.²⁰⁹ The numbers of applications for asylum fluctuated continuously, varying from a lowest of 844 in 1996 to a peak of over 37.318 in 1999.²¹⁰ However, arrivals became a constant: not only Albanians, Somalians, and Ethiopians, from the mid-90s the nationality of asylum seekers started to become more and more diversified.

Nonetheless, in a period of economic difficulties, the arrival of higher numbers of people claiming asylum (or with the hopes of finding a job to settle down), contributed to the spreading of a perception among the Italian population of immigrants as a problem.²¹¹ In 1997, Hellman was arguing that “Italians, confronting a relatively recent immigrant influx,

²⁰⁴ Amnesty International, ‘Amnesty International Report 2017/18. The State of the world’s human rights’, Amnesty International Ltd, 2018, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/POL10/6700/2018/En/>, (accessed 05/06/2018), p. 163.

²⁰⁵ Suprano, *Storia del diritto d’asilo in Italia dal dopoguerra ad oggi*, p.2.

²⁰⁶ Ferrari, G., ‘Rifugiati in Italia. Excursus storico-statistico dal 1945 al 1995’, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 1996 https://www.unhcr.it/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Excursus_storico-statistico_dal_1945_al_1995.pdf (accessed 04/05/2018), p. 2. However, this is only an approximation: official data (specifically on asylum applications and their outcomes) start being registered only from 1990 onward, further confirming how, until the end of the 20th century, Italy was neither ready to deal with nor paying particular attention to the phenomenon of forced migrants.

²⁰⁷ Hein, *Storia del diritto d’asilo in Italia*, p. 34.

²⁰⁸ Commissione Nazionale per il diritto d’asilo, ‘Quaderno statistico per gli anni 1990-2016’, Ministero degli interni, 2017, [quaderno_statistico_per_gli_anni_1990-2016_.pdf](https://www.commissioneasilo.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/quaderno_statistico_per_gli_anni_1990-2016_.pdf), (accessed 04/05/2018).

²⁰⁹ See, for example, Lotto, *Rifugiati*; and Jolles, *Preface*.

²¹⁰ Commissione Nazionale per il diritto d’asilo, ‘Quaderno statistico per gli anni 1990-2016’.

²¹¹ Campomori, *Le politiche per i rifugiati in Italia*, p.4.

have [...] displayed a persistent reluctance to come to grips with a new situation”.²¹²

Importantly:

“[l]acking a fully developed colonial history, Italy differs from [other immigration countries] in receiving almost no immigrants who arrive speaking the language of the country, with the exception of a small number of educated Ethiopians, Eritreans and Somalians. [...] This means that] relatively few people who claim any similarity to the host culture come as immigrants to Italy [...] Rather they are] culturally distinct from the dominant society in almost every respect”.²¹³

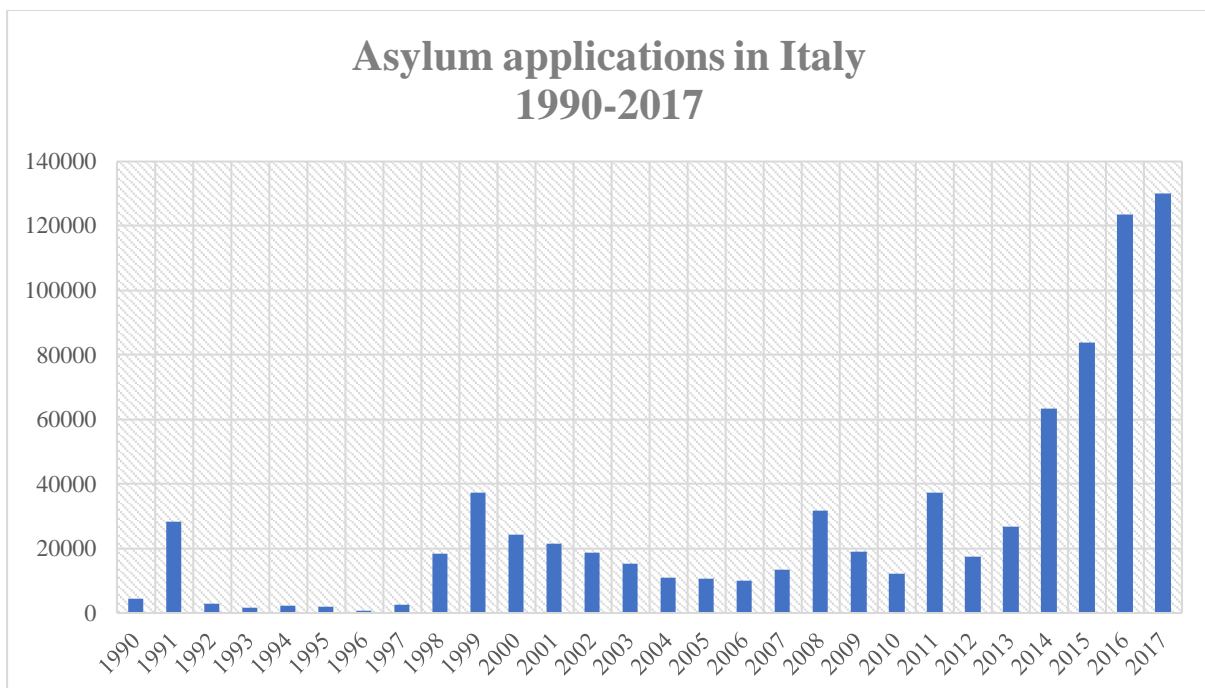


Figure 3 – Sources: Commissione Nazionale per il diritto d’asilo, ‘Quaderno statistico per gli anni 1990-2016’, Ministero degli interni, 2017; and Ministero dell’Interno, ‘Riepilogo anno 2017’.

This might certainly have contributed to negative attitudes towards incoming groups, as the country by then was still counting a fairly homogenous population. Relevant to note is also the fact that, as Hein pointed out, for decades the general public was not aware of the presence of refugees among the population but they were rather assimilated to the wider migratory groups. From the 2000s onward, the number of asylum applications in Italy oscillated again, reaching a peak of 37.350 in 2008.²¹⁴ It is only from 2014 that number quickly increased however, drawing popular attention to issues of migration in an

²¹² Hellman, *Immigrant ‘space’ in Italy*, p.37.

²¹³ Hellman, p. 36.

²¹⁴ Commissione Nazionale per il diritto d’asilo, ‘Quaderno statistico per gli anni 1990-2016’.

unprecedented manner: 63.456 applications for asylum were submitted in 2014, 83.970 in 2015²¹⁵, followed by 123.600 in 2016 and 130.119 in 2017.²¹⁶ Also, nationalities of applicants diversified even further, the higher number of applicants coming from Nigeria, Bangladesh, and Pakistan.²¹⁷

The Legislative Framework

The first proper attempt of the government to discipline migration matters in a coherent manner started towards the end of the 80s when the Foschi Act (Law no. 943/86) was adopted. This piece of legislation aimed, in fact, at regulating immigration and the presence of foreigners on the Italian territory but also at granting equal treatment of legal migrants.²¹⁸ It, however, lacked specific attention to the phenomenon of forced migration that, as seen above, was still numerically marginal. Such approach thus makes it already evident how Italian policy-making is not rooted on a long-term vision but it is rather strongly reactive to events. It is, in fact, following the racist killing of Jerry Essan Masslo in 1989, a South African immigrant who was denied asylum because of the application of geographical limitations to the 1951 Convention, and, in response to that, following one of the most important popular protests against racism and in favour of the concession of residence permits to refugees and immigrants, that a greater political intervention in the management of the ongoing social transformation took place: on the 28th February 1990 the Martelli Act (Law no. 39/90) was thus promulgated. Despite its emergency character, this law marks the transition of Italy into a country of asylum²¹⁹ a term, ‘political asylum’ that for the very first time also makes its overt appearance in an Italian piece of legislation²²⁰. Despite its symbolic role, however, a clear reference to the subject of forced migration was only made in Art. 1 of the provision, the remaining of it mostly disciplining the entry, the stay and the expulsion of other categories of immigrants. Importantly, however, the law abolished the geographical limitation of the 1951 Refugee Convention and allowed foreigners from non-European

²¹⁵ Ministero dell’Interno, ‘Riepilogo anno 2014-2015’, [web page] http://www.libertaciviliimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/allegati/riepilogo_dati_2014_2015.pdf, (accessed 17/06/2018).

²¹⁶ Ministero dell’Interno, ‘Riepilogo anno 2017’, http://www.libertaciviliimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/allegati/dati_asilo_2017_.pdf, (accessed 17/06/2018).

²¹⁷ Ministero dell’Interno, ‘Riepilogo anno 2017’.

²¹⁸ Paparusso, *L’immigrazione e l’integrazione in Italia*.

²¹⁹ Suprano, *Storia del diritto d’asilo in Italia dal dopoguerra ad oggi*, p.4.

²²⁰ Hein, *Storia del diritto d’asilo in Italia*, p. 39.

countries under the protection mandate of the UN to apply for the status of refugee. Besides, it entitled refugees entering the Italian territory after the entry into force of that Law to an up-to-45-day support. To be noted is also the fact that the turn represented by the Martelli Act was not only a response to internal issues and the sudden realisation of the ongoing changes in demographical dynamics: if Italy wanted to become part of the Schengen area, asylum and immigration had to be better regulated too. In those same years, a first intervention to respond to the problem of forced migration in Italy also came from the UNHCR that supported the creation of the Italian Refugee Council: established in 1990, still today it operates for the promotion of access to protection, reception, integration, and support of asylum seekers and refugees.

Despite attempted governmental interventions in regulating the Italian asylum system, during the 90s it was put under further strain and the inadequacy of the existing laws clearly revealed. Even if, as mentioned above, asylum applications fluctuated over the years, the decade opened with the arrival of consistent groups of people from Albania. In fact, out of the total 28.400 asylum applications submitted in 1991, 21.404 were submitted by Albanians who, for the first time reached Italian shores via boat, carrying no document, luggage nor any possessions with them, but the desire of leaving their country.²²¹ The decade then closed with the unexpected arrivals of nationals of the former Yugoslavia (Kosovo, in particular), who as well were reaching Italy in search for sanctuary from regional and national crises. Again, Italy was not prepared to deal with group arrivals: new provisory and ad-hoc measures had to be designed to grant these individuals some form of recognition and protection. The lack of coherent and consistent responses to the migratory inflows particularly burdened local realities, left alone in the implementation of reception projects.²²² In Puglia, for instance, largely affected by the arrival of Albanians in 1991, there were no receiving facilities, except for the few places rendered available by the local churches and volunteers.²²³ On the one hand, local actions both of municipalities and of NGOs, demonstrated a spirit of humanity and solidarity; on the other, they showed a lack of ability of the Italian government to discipline and intervene in the delicate matter of forced migration one time again. When,

²²¹ Hein, *Storia del diritto d'asilo in Italia*, p. 48.

²²² In Puglia, for instance, largely affected by the arrival of Albanians in 1991, there were no receiving facilities, except for the few places rendered available by the local churches and volunteers (Hein, 2010, p.49). See http://www.repubblica.it/solidarieta/immigrazione/2011/03/06/news/1991_il_primo_grande_esodo_dall_albania_verso_l_italia-13263392/, for example.

²²³ Hein, *Storia del diritto d'asilo in Italia*, p. 49.

towards the end of the 90s, new arrivals of Turkish and Iraqi Kurds²²⁴ added to the number of refugees, it became apparent that the Martelli Act had to be changed. This time, political attention also started to be directed towards integration issues.

The newly promulgated *Testo Unico* (TU) on Immigration (Law no. 40/98), also known as Turco-Napolitano Act, not only introduced the residence permit for humanitarian reasons and temporary protection measures for situations deriving from conflicts, disasters, or other severe events in non-European countries²²⁵; but it also contained a distinct Title dedicated to specific issues of integration and social cohesion and even envisioned the establishment of a Commission for Integration Policies (*Commissione per le politiche di integrazione*, Art. 44). Among its tasks, the Commission has to assess the state of implementation of integration policies for immigrants, put forward ideas for further improvement of such policies and support the government in its interventions on immigration as well as actions for the promotion of cultural exchanges and fight against racism. In addition, the Turco-Napolitano Act contributed to the consolidation of the idea that legally residing immigrants should benefit from national social policies. Even though the law was modified by other regulations in the following years, it represents the only legal reference in matters of integration in Italy still today.

The next legislative intervention as concerns migration and asylum took place few years later with the Bossi-Fini Act (Law no. 189/02), promulgated on the 30th of July 2002. The most well-known interventions of such piece of legislation were those in respect to the management of the entry, the presence and the expulsions of illegal immigrants in Italy. However, the law also marked the formalisation of the SPRAR (*Sistema di Protezione Richiedenti Asilo e Rifugiati*) into governmental projects. The SPRAR is a voluntary association of municipalities that, also through collaborations with NGOs, are committed to supporting national authorities in the management of immigration and integration challenges. Born out of individual practices, the SPRAR is the first public system for the reception of asylum seekers and refugees active at national level, which requires a synergic partnership between the Ministry of the Interior and local entities. As of March 2018, the number of

²²⁴ In 1998, 5.195 asylum applications were submitted by Iraqis and 2.911 by Turks.

²²⁵ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Ministero dell'Istruzione dell'Università e della Ricerca and Comitato 3Ottobre, 'L'asilo in Italia' [website], <http://www.viaggidaimparare.it/backend/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Lasilo-in-Italia-FINALE.pdf>, (accessed 05/05/2018).

supported projects is 876, delivered by 755 local entities²²⁶, for a total of 35.869 targeted individuals.²²⁷ To ensure the sustainability of the infrastructures and the project itself, each region and municipality has a cap on the number of people they can receive. However, out of the more than 7.900 municipalities existing in Italy, only about 1.200 have been engaged with the SPRAR project for now, certainly less than 50% of the total.²²⁸ Whilst the work of the SPRAR system is extremely important, since 2015 there has been, in fact, an increase in the reluctance of municipalities to join the network²²⁹ as this, in the broader context of a controversial political discourse on immigration, could negatively impact on mayors' chances of election.²³⁰ Access to the SPRAR system was further disciplined by the Legislative Decree 142/2015.

Another important piece of legislation relating to refugees and their integration is the Legislative Decree 251/07, which disciplines the attribution of the refugee status as well as conditions for access to employment, education, access to health and housing, to mention the most relevant aspects for this project's analysis. This piece of legislation was then further amended by the Legislative Decree 18/2014. Importantly, this Legislative Decree established by law the need for a National Integration Plan, which has to be delivered by the National Coordination Council (*Tavolo di Coordinamento Nazionale*). Its aim is to define guidelines on action for the integration of beneficiaries of international protection.

The National Integration Plan

Having clarified the legislative developments as concerns immigration and integration in Italy, which set the scene for the empirical study, the following part is focused on the empirical analysis of integration provisions and, specifically, the National Integration Plan.

²²⁶ Specifically, 654 municipalities, 19 provinces, 28 groups of municipalities, and 54 local institutions.

²²⁷ SPRAR, 'I numeri dello Sprar', [website] 2016, <http://www.sprar.it/i-numeri-dello-sprar>, (accessed 09/05/2018).

²²⁸ SPRAR, 'I numeri dello Sprar'.

²²⁹ See for example, F., Curridori, 'Accoglienza migranti, allo Sprar aderiscono solo 1000 comuni su 8000', *Il Giornale*, October 2017, <http://www.ilgiornale.it/news/politica/accoglienza-migranti-sprar-aderiscono-solo-1000-comuni-su-1455145.html>, (accessed 21/05/2018) and Bagnoli, L., 'Migranti, accoglienza nei Comuni (Sprar): "il progetto migliore per l'integrazione", ma lo sceglie 1 Comune su 8. E solo al Sud', *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, November 2017, <https://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2017/11/12/migranti-accoglienza-nei-comuni-sprar-il-progetto-migliore-per-lintegrazione-ma-lo-sceglie-1-comune-su-8-e-solo-al-sud/3940287/>, (accessed 21/05/2018).

²³⁰ Campomori, *Le politiche per i rifugiati in Italia*, p.20.

The National Integration Plan is a programmatic policy responding to a perceived need for action, which has been put together for the first time in 2017. Importantly, as per Legislative Decree no. 18/2014, the document is to be updated every two years, or less if necessary, which demonstrates the increased institutional awareness about adequate planning and monitoring of integration interventions. The plan specifically targets the measures for the integration of beneficiaries of international protection, including refugees, recognising an interdependency between immigration and integration outcomes. This is quite relevant, considering that unlike in other European countries, the joint analysis of immigration and integration policies has been rather limited.²³¹

In its preamble, on the one hand the plan defines the importance for newcomers to accept the values enshrined in the Italian Constitution as well as learn the Italian language and actively contribute to the economic, social and cultural life of the country; on the other, it encourages the adoption of a governance that works on the inclusion of immigrants at a local level, to ensure the responsibility of integration processes is shared among all actors and is sustainable. The priorities identified by the plan are religious and cultural dialogue, together with language teaching and education. Next, the integration strategy outlined in the plan rests on social and labour integration. It also identifies access to health for all refugees as essential, alongside the necessity to support them into leaving the SPRAR and become autonomous as concerns housing.

On practical terms, the plan is divided into 8 sections. Importantly, it refers back to the TU on Immigration, which still today is the main body of legislation that disciplines governmental action in respect to immigration and integration. In particular, as affirmed by the Legislative Decree 18/15, which amended Art. 29 of the Legislative Decree 251/07, the implementation of Art. 42 of the TU should consider and promote the removal of all barriers to the integration of beneficiaries of international protection. Hence, the programmatic response of the National Integration Plan. The aim of the analysis is to specifically look into its provisions as concerns employment, housing, access to health, and education as well as citizenship. Each domain will be introduced by the specific provisions of Italian legislation, specifically the dispositions of the TU and the Legislative Decree 251/07, which are the most relevant as concerns the discipline of integration in Italy. In fact, the aim is also to provide a direct

²³¹ Paparusso, A., 'L'immigrazione e l'integrazione in Italia: il cammino delle politiche', p. 295.

comparison between the previous legal dispositions and the more recent interventions envisioned by the plan.

Elements' Analysis

Employment

Art. 37(1) of the TU recognises that foreigners legally residing in Italy have the opportunity to register to professional associations (or similar), when in possession of qualifications legally recognized in Italy for the practice of such occupations, in derogation from the requirement of Italian citizenship. In case of subordinate work, foreigners are entitled to equal remunerative conditions and social security contributions as nationals (Art. 37(4)). More specifically for refugees, Art. 25 of the Legislative Decree 251/07 (as modified by Art. 1(q) of the Legislative Decree 18/2014) extends the right to equal treatment for refugees beyond subordinate work, to self-employment, registration to professional associations, vocational training (including upskilling courses), internships, and access to services offered by employment centres. Refugees are also given access to public employment in line with conditions and limitations envisioned for European citizens.

Employment is disciplined by section 3.4 of the National Integration Plan. It stresses the importance of verifying and taking advantage of previous professional experiences and qualifications, in order to best satisfy the needs of the labour market but also to ensure targeted professional training. Besides that, it emphasises the need for homogeneous interventions that link reception measures with employment opportunities. It also highlights the need for creating platforms for self-employment. As concerns the latter, in fact, the plan evidences a difficulty for refugees to access necessary support measures (i.e. loans) to start their own business. In light of this, the plan calls for the promotion of interventions which increase the ability of refugees to take advantage from fiscal facilitations as envisioned by the legislation concerning social co-operatives, at least for the first two years after the obtaining of their status. Along similar lines, the document calls for the support of refugees' entrepreneurship, especially in innovative sectors, for example by facilitating their access to specific tools, such as micro-credit and support services for start-ups. With respect to subordinate employment, the plan recognises the relevance of the link between education and employment. It puts the stress on the creation of an educational system able to support

individuals in the completion of their mandatory education cycle and training. Through this, individuals benefit from labour market policies that facilitate access to employment. In doing so, the plan aims to target labour integration barriers from a young age. In addition, it encourages the promotion of internship opportunities as well as traineeship opportunities.

Housing

In Italian legislation, housing provisions as concerns immigrants are disciplined by Art. 40 of the TU, which foresees that Regions, in partnership with provinces, municipalities and NGOs, set up reception centres for those who find themselves in the territory of the Italian Republic for reasons other than tourism and cannot autonomously provide for an own place of residence and their own subsistence. These measures of social integration are exclusively available for non-European citizens, who are legally residing in Italy. The aim of such centres is to ensure the autonomy of individuals as quickly as possible and facilitate their social integration. To this end, centres might also offer opportunities for the learning of the Italian language, professional training, cultural exchanges with the Italian population as well as health and social assistance. According to Art. 40, immigrants holding at least a two-year residence permit and regularly employed (or self-employed) have the same right as Italian nationals to access council housing and intermediation services provided by social agencies that facilitate access to housing rentals and subsidised credit (Art. 40(6)). With regards to refugees, Art. 29 of the Legislative Decree 251/07, defines that this last provision is to be applied to this specific category as well. This is further affirmed by Art. 3(3-ter) of the Legislative Decree 18/2014.

As concerns housing, the National Integration Plan affirms that once leaving the accommodation provided as part of the SPRAR, refugees should be supported in reaching self-sufficiency and suitable housing solutions. Being housing a national emergency rather than a specific problem of refugees in Italy, the plan aims at ensuring the latter the ability to benefit also from available support to Italian citizens. It is therefore asked from regions and local entities to give attention to refugees as well in their housing emergency plans. The plan also recognises the link between housing and integration by encouraging cohabitation initiatives and good neighbourhood practices. Housing, the plan highlights, is a key aspect for further social integration also because residence registration is linked with access to a set of services that facilitate social inclusion. In light of this, the aim is to ensure access to residence

registration on the whole national territory and acquisition of residence to all beneficiaries of international protection by the end of 2018.

Access to Health

As stated by Art. 34(1)(b), refugees have the duty to register to the National Health System and a right to full equal treatment to Italian citizens when accessing the health system, as well as the same duties as concerns to contributions. Access to health is also disciplined by Art. 27 of the Legislative Decree 251/07, which establishes that refugees have the same rights as Italian nationals in respect to accessing social and health assistance. Art. 1(s) of the Legislative Decree 18/2014, importantly, affirms that the Ministry of Health adopts guidelines for the planning of assistance, rehabilitation and treatment of mental disorders for refugees who have experienced tortures, rape or other forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence. Interventions include training and upskilling courses for practitioners.

Ensuring greater access for refugees to health services is also the aim of the National Integration Plan. As a matter of fact, the government admits that still today “access to health services by international protection holders proves to be heterogeneous, with inequalities which burden the most vulnerable subjects, such as victims of trafficking, torture, rape, exploitation, unaccompanied minors and survivors of shipwrecks”.²³² The aims become, therefore, to put in place a stronger implementation of the 2012 Agreement between the State and the Regions for the health of migrants²³³; to better identify the needs of the most vulnerable; to expand the services offered in order to respond to more specific conditions, such as the PTSD; to strengthen prevention measures; as well as to further the training of health personnel, also in relation to intercultural dialogue. Greater access to information on their rights and the existing health services together with a review of the national legislation as concerns exemption for ticket payments are also part of the goals of this first National Integration Plan.

²³² Piano Nazionale d'Integrazione dei titolari di protezione internazionale, Ministero dell'Interno Dipartimento per le Libertà Civili e l'Immigrazione, 2017 (IT), English Version, p.26.

²³³ The agreement responds to research evidence of a failure to ensure adequate health assistance to migrant groups. Greater uniformity in the offers of the health services was deemed essential, also for more social justice and the respect of people's rights. See also, 'La conferenza Stato-Regioni sancisce un accordo per l'applicazione delle norme in materia di assistenza sanitaria a cittadini stranieri e comunitari, SIMM, 2012, <https://www.simmweb.it/le-norme/799-la-conferenza-stato-regioni-sancisce-un-accordo-per-l%E2%80%99applicazione-delle-norme-in-materia-di-assistenza-sanitaria-a-cittadini-stranieri-e-comunitari>, (accessed 18/06/2018).

Education

Art. 38(2) of the TU disciplines education provisions for foreigners. It establishes that the effectiveness of the right to study is guaranteed by the State, the Regions and local authorities, also through the activation of specific courses and initiatives to facilitate the learning of the Italian language. Importantly, para. 3 recognises that the education system embraces linguistic and cultural diversity as underlying value for mutual respect, cultural exchanges and tolerance. To this end, the State promotes and encourages initiatives that are oriented towards the acceptance and the protection of different languages and cultures as well as the implementation of common intercultural activities. Such actions are to be tailored to local needs and to be supported by foreign associations, diplomatic or consular delegations and NGOs. Responsibility (Art. 38(5)) is also placed on the role played by educational institutions, seen as key players in the promotion of didactic projects and the above-mentioned values. Paragraph 5 of Art. 39 specifically establishes that refugees can access university studies or specialisation courses offered by higher education institutions on an equal basis with Italian citizens. Along the same lines, Art. 26 of the Legislative Decree 251/07 affirms that underage refugees have access to all kind of educational courses, as Italian citizens do; whilst adult refugees have a right to access the general education system, upskilling courses and professional training as recognised to legally residing foreigners. The same article also establishes that the applicable provisions for the recognition of refugees' qualifications are the same as for other foreigners. Art. 1(r) of the Legislative Decree 18/2014, however, expands on this imposes on administration the duty of envisioning specific means to recognise qualifications when refugees are not able to provide proof of acquired titles.

The National Integration Plan is specifically focused on effective language learning, the ability of speaking Italian being considered both a right and a duty, and a crucial element for a successful integration process. To this end, the plan aims at promoting the learning of the Italian language since the reception phase and at delivering tailored support by adequate language knowledge assessment, assistance to the illiterate but also by making initial participation to language courses offered in reception centres mandatory. Alongside with language learning, a second focus of the plan is access to education, considered one of the pillars for successful integration, especially for the youngest. In light of this, suggestion is made for the provision of specialist support to refugee families for educational progression of

their children. Together with support for the completion of the education cycles, immediate access of underage refugees to the schooling system is also among the priorities of the plan. By doing so, the aim is to render effective educational paths that link minors' right and duty to education with opportunities for employment at a later stage. Possible illiteracy of refugees and need for specific support in this respect to the benefit of educational attainments is also considered. Importantly, attention is also given to the recognition of educational achievements and qualifications, another of the aims envisioned by the plan being the definition of standard alternative procedures in case official documentation for qualifications is not available.

Citizenship

Once obtained the refugee status, individuals are in possess of a residence permit of five years, which is subject to renewal, as per Art. 23(1) of the Legislative Decree 251/07. Unlike other categories of immigrants, who can submit their request for naturalisation after 10 years of continuous residence on the Italian territory, refugees can submit their application for citizenship after five years. This is defined on the grounds of Art. 16(2) of Italy's Citizenship Law (Law 91/92), which equates refugees to stateless people. Importantly, "the beneficiary's registration at the registry office must be uninterrupted. This is particularly challenging for beneficiaries of international protection, as [for now] the law does not ensure to them an accommodation after getting a protection status and, due to the precarious situation they come to face, they will be hardly able to maintain a residence".²³⁴ With regard to National Integration Plan, no reference is made in respect to naturalisation.

If on the one hand, Zincone and Basili note that "[t]o date the status of Italian nationality is not a fundamental asset for legal immigrants as [t]hey already enjoy all civil rights and almost all social rights."²³⁵ On the other, as noted by Tintori, "non-EU foreign residents do not enjoy any kind of political rights, not even at the local level, unless they naturalise".²³⁶

²³⁴ ASGI, 'Naturalisation. Italy', Asylum Information Database, [web page] <http://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/italy/content-international-protection/status-and-residence/naturalisation>, (accessed 06/07/2018).

²³⁵ Zincone, G., and Basili, M., 'Country Report: Italy', EUDO Citizenship Observatory, 2009, <http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/19619/Italy.pdf?sequence=1>, (accessed 06/07/2018), p. 6.

²³⁶ Tintori, G., 'Naturalisation Procedures for Immigrants in Italy', 2013, EUDO Citizenship Observatory, http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/29787/NPR_2013_13-Italy.pdf?sequence=1, (accessed 06/07/2018), p. 1.

This is quite relevant, if considered that a right to vote especially at local level, namely regional and municipal elections, could re-balance the discourse on the integration of immigrants²³⁷, give refugees the chance to make their voices heard and their needs to be better represented. Having said that, there seem to be agreement on the fact that the obtaining of the Italian citizenship is a lengthy process and very discretionary.²³⁸ “[P]ossession of all the requirements by the applicant is a necessary but not automatically sufficient condition to be granted nationality. [...] The “grey zone” where the authorities retain most of their discretion in interpreting the legal conditions is about the degree of language and social/civic integration of the applicant”.²³⁹ Also importantly, as part of the naturalisation process “Italy requires proof for several years of residence, identity and income. Proving identity requires certified and translated paperwork from the country of origin. There are no clear alternative means for providing identity documentation for cases where obtaining origin country documentation is difficult or impossible”²⁴⁰, which might be often the case for refugees.

Comparative Observations

As concerns employment, both the TU and the Legislative Decree 251/07 equal refugees to Italian nationals in many respects. This is a positive aspect that is worth highlighting as equal treatment and non-discrimination in the labour market are essential conditions for successful integration. However, no clear provision is defined with respect to ascertaining refugees’ occupational qualifications (especially when proof is difficult to produce), assessing competence levels and ensuring skill gaps are addressed. These, as seen in the description of the analytical framework are particularly relevant aspects to address when targeting refugees’ labour integration and under-employment. Also, no specific reference is made as concerns the heterogeneity of refugee groups and the need for tailored assistance in accessing the job market, especially in light of their employment integration lagging behind other immigrant groups. Despite recognition of equal treatment in self-employment, no specific provision is envisioned either as concerns self-employment.

²³⁷ Blanco Gregory, R., Maddaloni, D, and Moffa, G., ‘Le migrazioni nell’Europa meridionale: l’incorporazione periferica in crisi’ in Bonifazi C (eds.) *Migrazioni e integrazioni nell’Italia di oggi*, Istituto di Ricerche sulla Popolazione e le Politiche Sociali, 2017, pp. 283-294, Available from: Research Gate, (accessed 04/06/2018), p. 292.

²³⁸ Tintori, ‘Naturalisation Procedures for Immigrants in Italy’ and Dag Tjaden, ‘Access to citizenship and its impact on immigrant integration. Handbook for Italy’.

²³⁹ Tintori, ‘Naturalisation Procedures for Immigrants in Italy’, p. 12.

²⁴⁰ Dag Tjaden, ‘Access to citizenship and its impact on immigrant integration. Handbook for Italy’, p. 15.

The relevance of the National Integration Plan as concerns employment lies in the fact that it addresses some of the legislative voids: it recognises the importance of qualifications' assessment and of making best use of them, for example. Importantly, the plan also evidences the need for homogeneous interventions. This applies not only to the recognition of professional qualifications, but also to systematic approaches to favour employment integration of refugees at a broader level. The guidelines of the plan also link successful labour integration with education, responding to the identified necessity of backing the former with the latter as well as providing training and practice opportunities to increase employability and fill in skills gaps. Importantly, the plan also addresses barriers to self-employment, which has been recognised as a flaw as concerns full employment integration of the general migrant group in Italy. As argued by Hellman, in fact:

“What is distinctive [of the Italian labour market] is the near-exclusion of immigrants from self-employment in the service sector. [...] The legal avenues to self-employment remain very few [... and immigrants] come to be seen [...] as a ‘problem’ rather than a resource; as charity cases, rather than energetic, inventive, hard-working people. [...] Immigrants have little opportunity to reshape Italy: instead they have to fit in to the painfully narrow space afforded them”.²⁴¹

What emerges from the analytical framework is that one of the most important aspects as concern housing is the ability of refugees to access stable housing solutions in the shortest time possible once they have obtained their status. Housing is an important component of their well-being and as such impacts on refugees' ability to integrate. Apart from stability, regular housing solutions create more opportunities for refugees to have contacts with the local population and feel part of the community. Through Legislative Decree 251/07 Italian legislation positively envisions some facilitations for refugees in finding adequate housing solutions. Specifically, according to the law, refugees can access council housing and subsidised credit on an equal footing with Italian citizens. The fact that they are equalled to nationals is certainly a positive aspect, however, concerns arise in respect to the length of the waiting list and whether any consideration is made as concerns the location of such accommodations and their conditions. There seems to be a lack of attention from the

²⁴¹ Hellman, *Immigrant 'space' in Italy*, p. 46.

legislation towards the specific needs of refugees and no consideration of possible coordination with the SPRAR and the support role it could provide in the phase of transition.

Positively, the National Integration Plan fills some gaps. On the one hand, it takes advantage of legislative provisions in defining the aim to ensuring refugees can access the broader housing support available at national level; on the other, it also recognises the necessity for tailored support towards independent housing solutions for refugees through the SPRAR. In other words, not only refugees are treated equal to Italian nationals but their specific needs are also taken into account through tailored assistance. Importantly, the plan also references to cohabitation initiatives and good neighbourhood projects, recognising the relevance of interactions among refugee groups and the local population for integration outcomes. No reference, however, is made in respect to housing conditions in hard-to-reach areas and the impact that similar solutions have on integration outcomes. Also, no indication of timeframes within which to aim at ensuring accommodation for refugees is provided by the plan.

The analytical framework recognises access to health as a fundamental component of a sound integration policy. The legislative system in Italy recognises equal access to refugees to the health system as Italian citizens. Given the experiences they go through, however, refugees might have the need to access specific support services not only in respect to physical but also psychological health. The only mention in this respect at legislative level is provided by the Legislative Decree 18/2014, which leaves the planning of targeted interventions to deal with psychological disorders to the Ministry of Health. Not only specific services tailored to their needs, also cultural and linguistic support are an important component for effective access to health services. No clear provisions are made in this respect. The National Integration Plan gives more attention towards the specificities of refugee experiences and the physical as well as mental impact deriving from them. Importantly, the plan evidences the need for the Italian health system to better meet the requirements of refugee groups and support the most vulnerable. However, also in this case no clear address towards the cultural and linguistic specificities of health assistance is made.

Italian legislation differentiates its provisions between underage and adult refugees, as education is concerned. Provision for the former are to be equalled to those for Italian nationals, whereas for the latter to legally residing foreigners. As seen in the analytical framework, education is a fundamental right and as such access to it should be granted

without any discriminations for anyone. In respect to integration outcomes, certainly giving attention to the educational development of young people is of primary importance, given the impact that this has on their lives and their opportunities to thrive in the host society. Their ability to access the education systems as other nationals is, therefore, particularly welcomed. It seems, however, that adult refugees might be penalised by being compared to foreigners in their ability to access the general education system, training and upskilling courses, even though this does not apply for the higher education. As concerns the recognition of their previous academic qualifications, also in this case the procedures valid for foreigners are those applicable to refugees. No specific reference is made, instead, in regard to the teaching of the Italian languages to refugees (either underage or adult), for which general provisions valid for all foreigners also apply. As seen, however, the learning of the local language is essential for successful integration.

Also in this instance, the National Integration Plan contributes to filling the legislative void. In fact, it gives attention to the issue of language acquisition as well as literacy challenges and envisions the delivery of tailored support to address them. It also encourages making language courses available from the very start of the reception phase and rendering them mandatory too, to ensure results are achieved in practice. As concerns education, also in this instance great attention is given to the youngsters, being the prevention of drop-outs and non-completion of educational progression one of the main aims. Education is, in fact, key for integration in the longer term and measures to ensure good participation in it particularly important, especially in the light of data revealing poorer attendance rates as concerns refugee children. To be positively appreciated is also the link made in between education attainments and employment opportunities for successful integration and a long-term view of refugees' participation in the host society. Importantly, the plan gives attention to the recognition of qualifications as well. Even though no provision clarifies how to ensure qualifications are correctly assessed when no official document is available, the adoption of a homogeneous approach at national level is encouraged.

As seen in the definition of the analytical framework, citizenship has an important role in the integration outcomes of refugees. Citizenship, in fact, is considered by Ager and Strang to be the foundation of successful integration outcomes. Also, citizenship can have a strong impact on the psychological perception of refugees as concerns their feeling of belonging to the host society, self-worth and dignity. Importantly, the uncertainty often deriving from the fact that

the refugee status is mostly linked to the situation in the country of origin, negatively affects their ability to settle down and adjust in the new environment. Italian legislation as concerns the acquisition of citizenship for refugees does not envision particular facilitations. Generally speaking, the rate of naturalisation of foreigners who do not have any familiar link with nationals is already quite low. As a matter of fact, MIPEX ranks Italy 19th out of a list of 38 countries as concerns easy accessibility to nationality.²⁴² MIPEX also reported a 1.8% of naturalisation rate of immigrants for 2012.²⁴³

²⁴² MIPEX ‘Access to Nationality’ [website], 2015, <http://www.mipex.eu/access-nationality>, (accessed 08/07/2018).

²⁴³ MIPEX ‘Access to Nationality’.

Chapter Five – Conclusions

This project aimed at exploring the policy framework as concerns the integration of refugees in Italy. The main question it aimed at answering was whether the existing integration framework, identified in the National Integration Plan, is adequately tailored to address the challenges of refugees' integration and promote successful outcomes. This analysis has been developed in comparison with the current legislation on immigration and integration, mostly deriving from the TU, the backbone of the immigration legislation system in Italy, and the Legislative Decree 251/07. The importance of looking at Italy's stance towards the integration of refugees is particularly relevant in light of the latest migratory events.

Italy is traditionally a country of emigration, which has been transforming into a destination for migrants only in the last few decades. Because of its own historical perception as a country of transition, rather than a place where immigrants would have aspired to settle down, Italy's immigration provisions have mostly been responsive to unexpected but temporary arrivals rather than envisioned with a long-term perspective. Along the same lines, attention towards integration has been very limited, particularly when compared with Northern European countries. Nonetheless, the most recent migratory phenomena urged a change of direction. The continuous arrival of migrants and asylum seekers over the years coupled with the inadequacy of the existing European and national systems to face the related challenges, in fact, resulted in social and political transformation in Italy, most notably evidenced by episodes of social unrest and the rise to power of anti-immigrant populist parties.

Greater institutional attention has thus been given to threats for social cohesion (e.g. racism and intolerance) as well as obstacles to successful integration. In particular, increased consideration has been directed towards the presence of asylum seekers and refugees, whose treatment and protection is not only a moral but also legal obligation for Italy, under international and regional treaties. As discussed in this research, integration itself is also an important element as concerns the protection and promotion of human rights. In light of this, the specificities of the refugee experience make it particularly necessary to address the integration challenges of this specific group through tailored interventions. This is why the definition of a National Integration Plan for beneficiaries of international protection by Italy is particularly welcomed: the normative analysis conducted evidenced an increased

awareness from the Italian government in respect to the need for targeted integration measures that address the needs of the refugee groups.

In many instances, the National Integration Plan addresses the voids left by the legislative provisions, which are generally not comprehensive enough. Neither of them, however, can be considered sufficiently appropriate if self-standing. On the one hand, the plan targets four out of five aspects of analysis (i.e. it leaves out naturalisation) and introduces forward-looking provisions that address practical obstacles specific to refugees, with the objective of ensuring their adjustment into Italian society in a long-term perspective. This becomes particularly evident as concerns provisions for education for the youngest. Nonetheless, the plan is also evidently limited by the fact that it represents a set of guidelines. In other words, there is no obligation of compliance for authorities with it. On the other hand, the existing legislation sets specific standards in the entitlements for refugees for the areas of analysis. Positively, it equals them to Italian nationals in many instances. However, legislative interventions appear to be unsystematic and still not comprehensive enough, to ensure adequate targeting of the obstacles for a successful integration of refugees into the Italian society. This becomes even more evident if looking at the oldest disposition, namely the TU, which mostly considers the broader category of immigrants rather than the specific group of refugees.

Another aspect that emerges from the analysis conducted is the limited comprehensiveness of the elements of integration that are targeted by the plan itself. Despite responding more appropriately to the elements identified in the analytical framework than the legislation, the provisions defined in the plan are still discussed in a generic manner in most cases. It seems, in fact, that there is a lack of a systematic formulation of the aspects to be addressed and of a clear direction in the long-term as concerns the expected results. This is further confirmed by the fact that, as expressed in the preamble to the programmatic text, the current plan is conceived as an initial response to the state-of-affair, aiming at co-ordinating existing provisions and clarifying priorities of interventions. Having a two-years life span, the National Integration Plan's adequacy will thus be proven in practice by an assessment of integration outcomes through specific indicators, once its first phase of implementation is delivered. Evaluation of the goals achieved will thus evidence even more clearly the areas where improvement is required.

At the moment, there is minimal literature available as concerns the most recent interventions in Italy for the integration of refugees. As said, the National Integration Plan is a very recent innovation in the country, welcomed both because it evidenced greater institutional awareness towards the specific integration needs of the plan, but also because of the potential it embodies in tackling down barriers in the adjustment of refugee groups in the country, with a long-term perspective. In other words, it is a first positive step toward the creation of more inclusive societies and favours the integration of refugees. However, there is still space for improvement as concerns its interventions. In particular, by drawing a comparison between it and the existing legislation, the underlying aim is to promote further improvement in this field. For this reason, the following section will present some recommendations to Italy to tackle the shortcomings evidenced above through both the law and the National Integration Plan.

Recommendations:

- *Development of integration guidelines that are supported by adequate and comprehensive legislative interventions.* In other words, there should be mutual reinforcement between the National Integration Plan and the dispositions of the law. To this end, the government should promulgate a tailored act aimed at the integration of refugees, which tackles the barriers to their adjustment in the host society, as outlined in the analytical framework of the study, and firmly backs the National Integration Plan. The latter, in turn, should then further support the legislation by defining the lines of action through which ensure correct and homogenous legislative application at national level. Legal and operational dispositions should, in other words, go hand in hand, be coherent and to the point.
- *Definition of clear targeted results and indicators of assessment for their achievement to enable the improvement of integration levels.* In supporting the legislation through operational guidelines, the aim of the National Integration Plan should also be of rendering clear the expected results from the implementation of the law. In other words, there should be a list of unambiguous goals against which to assess the outcomes at the end of every implementation cycle. The definition of expected results will enable a rapid definition of the indicators of assessment and, consequently, of the identification of areas where improvement is required. In turn, this will enable the

improvement of the National Integration Plan, to ensure its dispositions are suited to address the challenges of refugees' integration over time.

- *Increase labour integration opportunities for adult refugees.* To this end the government should clearly define the responsibilities of authorities and entitlements of refugees as concerns the recognition of their qualifications. A tailored system that guarantees that refugees with specific skills can make the best use of them, or acquire new ones, should be promoted through legislative interventions. In light of this, the institution of specific centres (or areas within existing centres) and the formation of operators capable of providing tailored support for refugees' integration in the labour market (taking into account the needs of the latter too) should be envisioned at national level by law. The role of the National Integration Plan should be of defining the operational guidelines to ensure homogeneous application of legislative dispositions on the entire territory and enhance the effects of legislation with operational support. For example, the systematic distribution of information of support services available, also through collaborations with NGOs, should be envisioned by the National Integration Plan.
- *Establish timeframes in which housing solutions should be provided for refugees.* Governmental dispositions should introduce minimum standards as concerns the timeframe within which refugees should be granted housing solutions, to avoid prolonged situations of instability once their status has been granted. To this end, the legislation should clarify priorities and the taking into account of specific vulnerabilities in allocation procedures. The National Integration Plan should envision a programmatic line through which to ensure the application of such dispositions. It should also envision solutions for a harmonised collaboration with the SPRAR as well as guarantee smooth adjustment into local neighbourhoods.
- *Envision solutions for target cultural and linguistic support to refugee groups when accessing to health services.* Legislative interventions aimed at ensuring the presence of trained and qualified cultural and linguistic mediators in health centres should be introduced. The purpose is to ensure that no one is excluded from accessing health services, especially for reason related to linguistic competences or cultural practices. The National Integration Plan should thus back governmental dispositions through

programmatic interventions that guarantee the application of homogenous resources at national level and a support network to avoid over-burdening of the health system in facing such challenges.

- *Extend access to all forms of education to the entirety of refugee groups on equal level with Italian citizens.* In particular, the government should modify the existing legislation to ensure access to all refugees to any form of educational opportunity at the same level as Italian nationals. No distinctions as concerns typology, level of access, or age should be made. Additionally, the government should envision dispositions, such as the establishment of specific departments to that end, targeting the recognition of academic qualifications aimed at facilitating the assessment of the qualification, especially when their obtainment is difficult to prove. In this respect, the National Integration Plan should strengthen the legislative provisions through the envisioning of clear steps aiming at the assessment of the qualifications as well as ensure alternative options when paper documents are not easily obtained.
- *Simplify access to naturalisation for refugees.* The Italian government should further reduce timings for refugees to access naturalisation procedures. In light of the challenges specific to refugee groups, acquisition of citizenship should be encouraged rather than hindered, for example also by reducing costs and bureaucratic procedures.

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