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Programs on Inclusion for immigrants designed and implemented by NGO's in Italy.

A successful educational path for immigrant students?

Case Study of S. Home, a Sardinian NGO

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Abstract

As the refugee crises started in 2015, southern European countries had to deal with an increased number of immigrants arriving to their costs. Due to the still valid Treaty of Dublin, countries of arrival of immigration flows had to adapt their legal systems in order to manage the increased number of requests for protection. In Italy, actors such as NGOs gave their contribution in implementing the two integration programs designed by the Italian State for asylum seekers and refugees. An NGO in Sardinia is the case study of my research. Using literature on immigration issues, borders safety, NGOs partnerships and educational justice, this research questions whether the NGO was able to support the educational path of immigrant students in the period of time immigrants have to spend with the NGO waiting for their request to be accepted or rejected. It examines whether the policies decided at international, national, and especially local level – by the NGO – facilitate the educational path and consequently the integration process of immigrants.

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Introduction

22nd of September 2020. The press agency Adnkronos releases the news about 300 immigrants arriving to Italy from Lesbos, Greece. They will arrive through humanitarian corridor organized by the S. Egidio Community and the Department of Internal Affairs in Italy. The agreement is aimed to guarantee a safe and legal arrival of immigrants from the destroyed refugees camp in Moria. In addition, the agreement states that integration is as important as safety for the arriving immigrants and that a program guaranteeing social inclusion and cultural training will start as soon as the immigrants arrive in Italy (Adkronos, 2020).

27th February 2017. The Italian newspaper Avvenire informs that 50 Syrian immigrants are arriving from Beirut to Rome, through humanitarian corridor thanks to an agreement between S. Egidio Community, The federation of evangelic communities and the Department of Internal Affairs. This arrival happens one year after the first humanitarian corridor to Italy was allowed. The same organizations, together with the Waldensian Evangelical Church, will organize other humanitarian corridors in the following months, says the article, and they will receive up to 700 immigrants in 2017. All the expenses, including travel costs, are paid by the organizations. Children will be enrolled to public schools, the article continues, adults to language classes and professional training and medical care is guaranteed for everybody (Avvenire, 2017).

31st January 2019. Sardinia post, a local newspaper, titles: “Humanitarian corridor Ethiopia-Cagliari. Mother and daughter arrive in Sardinia”. The two immigrants arrived in Sardinia could finally meet again husband and son, who arrived few months before. The humanitarian corridor was organized by the Dioceses di Cagliari, Caritas, and the Department of Internal Affairs. The agreement between Ethiopia and Italy includes a safe and legal arrival for Ethiopian in need of protection and a program of cultural integration and professional training for all. About 500 Ethiopian arrived in Italy through humanitarian corridor in 2019 (Sardiniapost, 2019).

30th April 2021. Forty-nine people in a boat of the Marina Militare, other hundred-twenty-one in the Sea Watch and 4, 236 in the Ocean Viking owned by SoS Mediterranée. More than four-hundred migrants were saved in the last hours [...] in the international waters closed to the coast of Libya. (Repubblica, 2021).

In the last ten years media and scholars has given an increasing attention to the phenomenon of immigration in Italy, due also to the increasing number of arrivals to Italian coasts, especially during the worsening of the Syrian war (Dickinson, 2017). While many interventions by journalist and politicians, focused on the legal aspect of the phenomenon or on aspects linked to integration (Andersson, 2014), I decided to investigate how the educational path of immigrants – in my case asylum seekers and refugees – can be affected by their extremely precarious situation and which actors can play a role in facilitating their educational path. Do asylum seekers and refugees have the right to study in the hosting country? If yes, how this right is guaranteed? Who are the main actors in charge to decide the education policies as far as immigrants are concerned? Who implements these policies? These are the key questions of this research but the investigation is also directed to analyzing the context in which education policies are implemented and which are the facilitating factors that play a role in the success or failure of education policies for immigrants. In order to answer these questions, I chose a case study that could allow me to contextualize international and national policies and see closer which outcomes arrive when these policies are implemented locally. The case study that I chose is a group of asylum seekers hosted in a small town in south Sardinia and whose stay depends on the work of a local NGO, that I will call S. Home for anonymity.

I chose an Italian region, Sardinia, which was never a destination for immigration flows until the war in Syria began in 2011, and a local NGO, S. Home, that has started its work with asylum seekers and refugees as a result of the increasing need of specialists in the field of immigration at a local level. S. Home, however, was not a specialist in the field of immigration, but a specialist in working against poverty and marginalization at a local level. Its decision to expand its activity to the field of immigration and use its expertise to work with another type of (potential) marginalization makes this case especially interesting. I see, in fact, two main challenges for this local NGO working today with immigrants: will the local population continue to appreciate its work even when foreigners arrive for the first time in town? Will immigrants benefit from its expertise with local people in a situation of marginalization? In my thesis I will argue that education plays a key role in both cases. Potential tensions are not lacking, which is not a surprise when we consider the sudden arrival of new inhabitants in town and cultural homogeneity of the local community. Moreover, immigrants are -in this case – asylum seekers and refugees, in other words people in a very uncertain and unpredictable situation, whose future is rather impossible to imagine. However, coexistence was made possible by the work of the NGO thanks to – I will argue – its decision in the field of education. I will try to show that not only policies decided at an international and national level are important to define the educational path of asylum seekers and refugees, but a crucial role is played by the local NGO and its decisions. It is the importance given to education and what it

means in practice for an NGO to use education as a tool for integration that is central in my research.

During my research I could see that this phenomenon has many different aspects that deserve attention and an in-depth analysis. I tried to focus on the main aspect that I believe played a role in both define the situation that I wanted to study and played a role in the work that S. Home is carrying out. I, for example, started by reading the literature produced in the last years on migration and documents on the so-called refugee crisis that followed the war in Syria. The fact that immigrants arrived in the island Sardinia is, in fact, the result of a much bigger phenomenon that starts far away and where Sardinia is only the last ring of the chain. Asylum seekers and refugees are the unfortunate victims of war and poverty that impose them a journey to safer places, a journey that sometimes is even more dangerous than the situation they are escaping. In this big picture, asylum seekers and refugees are trying to find a way to survive within an international legal framework that defines if, where and how they will find safety. How the international and national legal system defines the status of asylum seekers and refugees and how these laws effect their life in the hosting country? This is the first aspect that I found interesting and worth an additional analysis. Italy is a first country of arrival because of geographical reasons (Dickinson, 2017) and, I will argue, the current Treaty of Dublin imposes to Italy and other countries in the south of Europe, which also are first country of arrival, to take the responsibility for the initial reception. In fact, the Treaty of Dublin aims to prevent an applicant from submitting applications in several states, by imposing the country in which the asylum seekers first apply is responsible for either accepting or rejecting the claim. This have two main consequences: first the Italian State had to act quickly in order to adapt its laws to the new situation. Second, asylum seekers and refugees have often no other choice than stay in the country where they applied for asylum. In fact, the initial reception often becomes a long-term residency.

The adaptation by the Italian State consists in a new set of rules that define the conditions for immigrants to apply for asylum, wait for the procedure to be finished and possibly stay. This set of rules is described in detail in my work and is the framework within S. Home plans its work.

The impossibility to choose where to apply for asylum is also a factor that can affect immigrants stay, their attitude towards the hosting community and future opportunity for integration. I will use data from field work to show how – for my researched group - this ended up being less problematic than it potentially could be due to the circumstances and the challenges.

The challenges represented by the sudden refugee crisis also found another type of answer internationally. Some countries decided to organize humanitarian corridor – a safer way to help the

population in war zones – instead of waiting for immigration flows to arrive unorganized to Europe. This was the case of people hosted by S. Home and I will argue that this initiative might have a positive effect on the perception that immigrants have of the hosting country.

Even though the case study of this thesis is the work of an NGO active at a local level, I will argue that international institutions also play a role in contributing to guarantee education to refugees the right to education when promoting ideas on global citizenship and working towards the right of education for all. I will argue that a decision taken locally, in addition to national impositions, by the NGO, comes from a cultural background that considers education for all a human right to be defended and guaranteed. I considered the debate on UNESCO idea of education for global citizenship and the article 4 on education contained in the Sustainable Development Goals 4 to be relevant for my case study. I will, in fact, argue that despite that relatively weak consensus on the Declaration of Human Rights, the idea of global citizenship and the difficulties to guarantee quality education for all globally, the international arena represented by the UNESCO and its work to promote these ideas are a relatively safe framework that can be used by national and local institutions to start programs aimed to guarantee the right to education for refugees. I will also argue that the opposition to the idea of global citizenship expressed by some scholars and put in practice by some states in forms of preserving traditional national curricula don't represent an obstacle in carrying out educational programs for refugees. In order to defend my thesis, I will show in which degree also the Italian school system hasn't renounced to its clearly national curricula and how this can represent an opportunity for inclusion, instead of an obstacle, for refugees attending Italian schools. I will argue that the global dimension in which asylum seekers and refugees live make them enjoy the right to education based on their status of non-citizens, but at the same time they can be considered global citizens by circumstances and their participation in the school life in the hosting country is in itself the realization of the ideas promoted by UNESCO.

In the same framework represented by the UNESCO and its initiatives for education, equity and educational justice are not less important than education for global citizenship or quality education for all. Especially for refugees this is even more relevant and the risk of not achieving educational justice when working with immigrants is high. Educational justice is the distribution of equitable learning opportunities and fairness and inclusion in education systems. Racial, ethnic and socioeconomic disparities persist and in order to work in the direction of avoiding unfairness, educational institutions need to adopt the right strategies and be able to contextualize and customize solutions and policies. In my research I will argue that S. Home has been able to identify the right strategies taken into consideration the nature of the phenomenon and the context in which the NGO works. In a relatively short period of time S. Home was able to adopt strategies at three different

levels in order to cooperate with the local public schools, coordinate the collaboration between schools and collaborate with local actors outside the school in order to provide an extra support to immigrants in form of extra-curricular activities. Using a model proposed in “Equity: The Big Challenge for Education Systems” by Mel Ainscow (2013), I will analyze the *modus operandi* of the NGO on these three levels, each one having its advantages and potential outcomes.

The positive outcomes in terms of high grades, general satisfaction of the immigrant students and their participation in the social life of the hosting community are shown through the data collected on the field. This positive development in a relatively short period of time shows the capacity of S. Home to quickly adapt to the new situation and use its expertise in a new field. It shows also the capacity to identify the main needs, hire the right specialists and use its local knowledge in order to understand how to set priorities. What S. Home defined as priorities is not limited to what immigrants might need or what schools are able to provide but has to do with the context in its whole, including the local population. I will, in fact, argue that S. Home policies on education were not only inspired by the good intentions to provide immigrants the opportunity to study, but also by the need to avoid tensions with the local population. Again, the capacity to adopt a strategy *beyond school* has been so far the strength that facilitate a relatively quick success for the NGO and its new Office for Immigration.

A success of this type couldn't come from good intentions and hard work only. S. Home boasts a long experience *in loco*, and by consequences solid relationships and longstanding friendships with local actors and also with part of the local population. The contribution that S. Home gives in fighting poverty and marginalization locally has a social value in the community where the NGO operates and helped to create a network of families that received its services. This gave the NGO a reputation of an accountable actor and an important partner for local institutions. I will argue that this reputation and its experience gave S. Home the power to take decisions and make other partners collaborate also when working with immigrants. I will use classical and critical analysis of power to investigate the way S. Home was able to make decisions in order to make its new activity with immigrants successful and also in order to preserve its reputation and work within the local community.

The final part of my analysis is dedicated to the comparison with other types of integration programs for immigrants in Italy. I will argue that S. Home indirectly express its ideology through an approach that aims to inclusion instead of creating a division within the local community. Other integration programs adopted in the European countries since the 90s have, in fact, been inspired by an idea of “we” and “Others”, especially when non-western immigrants were concerned. I will

argue that this is not the case for S. Home. Moreover, S. Home was able to avoid this potential division within the local community, thanks to its policies on education. Once again, the role of education appears crucial to maintain a peaceful relation between immigrants and the local population. It was also the way that S. Home chose to provide education opportunities to immigrants that was effective in promoting inclusion instead of division.

I structured my work in five chapters, each one address a different aspect of the studied phenomenon.

In chapter **one**, I will give a description of the methodology I choose to carry out my research. I decided that mixed methods research (MMR) was the most appropriate approach for this kind of investigation and that the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods would help me to see the case of S. Home from several perspectives. I will give a description of each method that I used on the field (questionnaires, interviews, observation and documents analysis) and I will also dedicate a part of the chapter to ethical issues that I consider very important when investigating about a group of asylum seekers and refugees at S. Home.

In **chapter two** I analyze the literature used for my research. Every chosen text has been a contribution for a particular aspect of the thesis: I first analyze a few texts that I found an interesting a relevant contribution in the field of globalization and migration. These texts have been useful in my attempt to contextualize the phenomenon of migration and try to watch it from different perspectives. They have been also an important source of updated data. I will then refer to an expert scholar on borders and security. Again, the contribution given by this text is important to contextualize the phenomenon and understand the need to adapt the international and national legal frameworks to the new situation. I will then move on analyzing a text on education and the perception of support. It is a new study on how support and perceived support can improve school engagement. This text has been key to see the support given by S. Home in the light of the fact that support can have measurable outcomes in terms of school engagement and performance.

I will then analyze a text on equity and social justice. This contribution is important not only to find the reasons why it is important to work in order to achieve educational justice in the case of immigrants, but also how. Strategies and approaches are explained by the author and inspired a similar analysis in my research for the case of S. Home.

Then, I will focus on NGO, governance, and education. As I said, partnerships have been crucial for the success that S. Home had so far working with immigrants. I will go through a reading on power in partnerships and try to use classical and critical analysis of power in order to identify which elements of power contributed to the success of S. Home.

Finally, I go through a classical text on NGOs and integration in Italy. This last reading is an invitation to comparison. It is, in fact, a text on other types integration programs, the so-called civic integration programs – and I will try to understand which are similarities and differences between civic integration programs and the work of S. Home with immigrants.

In **chapter three** I will try to give an overview of the migration flows to Europe and especially to Italy in 2015, the year of the so-called refugees-crisis with some updated figures. I will then explain why the new situation has been a challenge for the application of the Dublin Treaty and I will continue showing how Italy has adapted its legal framework on immigration, designing two integration programs for asylum seekers applying for asylum in Italy and for refugees who already received the permission to stay in the country. Then, I will move on describing the NGO which is the case study of this research – S. Home – its mission and activities and how its worked moved from being only focused on local issues to expand in the field of immigration after the sudden arrival of immigrants in Sardinia.

In **chapter four**, I analyze closer the discourse about the right of education for all, with the contribution of different scholars in the field of education but also through some reflections and contribution on the problematics concerning the application of international agreements at a national level. I will see the right of education from three different perspectives: in a macro-level I will analyze what education for all means for the UNESCO, how this has been interpreted by different scholars and why this is relevant also for the case of refugees; at a meso-level I will analyze how education for all is presented in the Italian constitution and guaranteed nationally. Finally, I will explain how education for all is an central part of the policies at S. Home, how this decision has been made and how it is different from the basic requirements that the regional Prefecture impose to NGOs working with immigrants.

In **chapter five**, I will explain in detail how the NGO S. Home is organized, how the office for asylum seekers and refugees work, which are the activities provided for the two integration programs and which extra-activities are provided by S. Home itself. I will then move on showing the data on the population hosted at S. Home. The research group is a group of asylum seekers hosted at S. Home since 2019 and still part of the program for asylum seekers. I will give a description of the data collected on the field and an overview of the findings on educational outcomes in terms of attendance, grades, language knowledge. These elements will be combined with other elements such as previous school experience and professional ambitions and analyzed and contextualized taking into consideration the environment in which the educational path of the group develops, and which factors can affect their success.

In **chapter six** I will make an in-depth analysis of the findings. With the help of the literature used, I will try to answer some key questions: why are extra-curricular activities so important in this case? How can compulsory school attendance influence other aspects of immigrants' life? Is there a link between support and school engagement? What is the role of local partnerships in the success of S. Home? Is S. Home working towards educational justice? What are the differences between S. Home's approach and other types of integration programs?

The conclusions contain the main argument of my research, which is that the combination of the legal framework, which define the context in which immigrants live their life in Italy, and the policies decided by the NGO results in a favorable environment for people in a precarious situation to continue their studies and succeed in their educational and professional path.

Chapter 1: Theory and methodology

In this chapter I will explain the methodology chosen to collect data during my field work. While some of the texts presented in the literature review are readings that preceded the field work and inspired the research designed, other texts were analyzed as a result of information coming from the gathered data.

1.1 Methodology

This study adopts a mixed methods approach. Mixed Methods Research (MMR) is defined as research “which combines various elements of both quantitative and qualitative approaches (with regard to perspectives, data collection and data analysis) [...]. MMR enables a more comprehensive and complete understanding of phenomena to be obtained than single methods approaches and answers complex research questions more meaningfully, combining particularity with generality” (Cohen et al. 2018, p. 32-33).

An important characteristic of MMR is the combination of particularity and generality. In this case study, I tried to position the case of S. Home within a much broader phenomenon, which is the refugee crisis in 2015. Without this crisis and its features, no S. Home case would have existed and no policies on education for refugees would have been so important today in the Italian context. This research focuses also on multiple views on the phenomenon: the reason of the crisis, the options of the people arriving to Europe, the legal framework on education for all, and finally, the daily challenges for the refugees and the officers at S. Home in loco.

Moreover, as the research not only focused on hard data such as numbers of enrollments or drop-outs. but also, and especially, on students' aspirations and perceptions, MMR appeared to be the most relevant strategy for my research purpose.

Another reason of this choice is that the use of MMR is intended to make the data collection flexible, allowing an adaptation of the plans to new circumstances. In fact, in addition to policy review, documents and archival data analysis, a field work in loco was carried out with both planned data collecting methods such as questionnaires and interviews, but also with unexpected additional interviews and observations.

1.2 Case selection and data sampling

Having described the motivation for this research, it seemed relevant to find a case on an Italian

NGO's in a region which has never been a destination of migration flows, in other words a region with no previous experience in hosting and giving protection to refugees/asylum seekers. The lack of previous experience in hosting refugees poses additional questions when we analyze the context: how is the reaction of the population? Are dynamics in school influenced by the enrollment of the first foreigners in town? Are institutions ready to host refugees in a way that doesn't foster discrimination?

The level of a NGO was chosen because of its relevance, being non-governmental organizations in charge of programs for assistance and protection of refugees/asylum seekers.

Moreover, In Italy, policies on the right to education for all are implemented by the educational system which is divided in two levels: At a ministerial level curricula and type of schools are decided. At a local level, special projects and contributions are implemented by associations and NGO's, and this level appears to be more manageable and reachable.

This is a case study, and no generalization is intended. However, a transfer value of the work of this case study is not to be excluded. This can be an example of potential work to be done by other NGO's and a basis for future comparative works. Especially when we take into consideration the main aspect of this case which is the combination of the legal framework that defines immigrants' status, policies decided by the NGO and the previous experience from work with marginalized groups that resulted in a favorable environment for people in a precarious situation to continue their studies

The access to the case has been done through a contact with S. Home. Through it, communication was established via e-mail with the leader of Immigration Programs. This was an important start that gave me access to basic data necessary to further organizing my research.

In addition to the e-mail communication with S. Home, a connection was made with school principals of the town, in order to receive information about which type of data can be provided by public schools (according to the Italian law on privacy protection).

A field work was carried out in august 2020, questionnaires were delivered to the respondents, and interviews and observations were carried out. In point 1.4 I will explain more in detail how I used these methods for my research.

The sample of refugees/asylum seekers (40 people) currently hosted by S. Home and enrolled in public schools is not sufficient alone to carry out a purely quantitative research, but data on them can be potentially compared to aggregate data on foreign students results in Iglesias's schools.

1.3 Ethical issues

This research is on vulnerable and marginalized groups. This means that ethical issues have a special place when it comes to collect and analyze data on the respondents and their personal situation. Brydon (2006) writes:

[...] in the past ten to fifteen years in research contexts in the North, the idea of ethical social research has grown hugely in importance. This is partly as a response to criticism of earlier research that ignored local practices or had a covert goal, for example, of gathering information on security issues or to promote insurrection or to foster support for a particular political party or candidate, in addition to an overt research objective to investigate local needs in respect, say, water supplies, education, or health. It is also in accordance with changing contemporary ideas about the standards expected in all kinds of social research, whether accountability and transparency or, more generally, in recognition of the rights of the researched. (p.26)

In the light of this change, it is ethically mandatory to respect a code of practices that recognize the rights of the researched. Moreover, the researcher should not only inform the researched about the objective of the research, but also aim to collaboration with the respondents. This is because the research can cause a change for the researched community and respondents should be part of this change, being involved not only in the data collection phase but also in formulating questions.

In order to respect a code of ethical practices, I took into consideration several features. Firstly, the key aspect of informed consent. Informant consent means simply that we can carry out our research among respondents “only after we have explained to the people in the community why we are doing this and what are the indented outcomes, both for ourselves and for them” (Brydon, 2006, p. 26). In the specific case of immigrants hosted at S. Home, I included a letter in English and Italian to the questionnaires I submitted to the people hosted at S. Home, explaining in detail the research purpose, the key questions, why they were chosen as respondents and what the participation involves for them, who is responsible of the data collection and how they can drop-out at any time.

Since, as we mentioned before, there are sensitive issues at stake being these people a vulnerable group with already important limitations in freedom and rights, I guaranteed anonymity.

Another relevant feature is the power relationships between the researcher and the researched. Paraphrasing Brydon (2006), despite the idea that the role of the researcher is “value neutral”,

he/she always has an agenda on his/her own. This can be a genuine interest to find out more about what is happening in a specific community – which is the case of this study – or showing a particular phenomenon or outcome of some development intervention. In any of these cases, the researcher should “[...] be context-sensitive, honest and up front about her/his own interests and how they affect the research and the kinds of relationships s/he has with member of the research(ed) community” (Brydon, 2006, p. 28). In addition, a good knowledge of the context is crucial in order to find the strategies which are appropriate.

In this case study it has been crucial to be aware of the power relationship between me, as a researcher grown up in the context where S. Home works, and the immigrants. Also, the power relationship between S. Home and the immigrants is to be taken into consideration, when analyzing data collected about the immigrants via S. Home. The questionnaires have been, for example, submitted in Italian and filled in by the immigrants with the help of the officers at S. Home. The understanding of the questions is dependent on how the officers explained them.

1.4 Methods

Speaking more generally about the methods used to collected data, I used questionnaires, interviews and observation.

1.4.1 Questionnaires

The questionnaires are aimed to gather the following information: age, nationality, mother tongue, other spoken languages, knowledge of Italian at the arrival, previous educational title (accepted or not in Italy?), grade of enrollment, results last year, results last semester, activities taken with S. Home.

A questionnaire is, in many ways, “an intrusion into the life of the respondent” (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 471). Therefore, the involvement of the respondents is likely to be in function of, first and foremost, their informed consent, and this is why all questionnaires, as I explain before, have been accompanied by a detailed explanation of the research purpose. Also, respondents have the rights to withdraw at any moment or not fill out parts of the questionnaires. The potential of the research is to improve their situation, for example being a useful tool for S. Home. Respondents must have the guarantee that the research won't harm them and in order to do this the researcher will guarantee confidentiality, anonymity and non-traceability in the research.

In the planning phase, I used a flow chart in order to get an overview of the type of responses that

the questionnaires were likely to answer. Firstly, I formulated research questions and defined the target population. Then, I defined the purpose/objective of the questionnaires, which is to try to identify correlations between several personal features such as mother tongue, other spoken languages, grades in Italy, extra-curricular activities, and job ambitions. Once the sampling frame and the sampling were decided, I wrote the questionnaires, making sure that every issue which is relevant for the research is addressed with a correspondent questionnaires item.

Once again, this research is about vulnerable groups and I needed to find a good balance between planning the data collection with the data analysis in mind and avoiding to put too much pressure on the respondents.

Taking into consideration the small-scale research carried out at S. Home, I choose both closed and open-ended questions.

There are some practical advantages linked to the choice of open-ended questions: quoting Cohen, Manion and Morrison, “Open-ended responses might contain the gems of information that otherwise might not be caught in the questionnaires. Further, it puts the responsibility for, and ownership of, the data much more firmly into respondents’ hands” (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 475).

The small size of the sample prevented the research to be affected by problems of data handling, such as too many answers to be summarized or data overloading.

I decided to quantify part of the qualitative data, still aware that word-based data are not validly susceptible of aggregation. This has been done with the only purpose to give a better overview of the sample as a group.

Closed questions are useful because “they can generate frequencies of responses amenable to statistical treatment and analysis [...] and, often, they are directly to the point and deliberately more focused than open-ended questions” (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 476).

Not only, as I mentioned before, I tried to avoid to put too much pressure on a vulnerable group while asking to answer the questionnaires, but I have been also aware that any questions could potentially be a sensitive question. Even details of age, educational background, qualifications, and ambition can be regarded as private or sensitive matters.

As suggested by Sudman and Bradburn (1982), I choose open instead of closed questions for more sensitive issues. I also used familiar words, taking into consideration the language skills of the respondents, and I located more sensitive topics within a discussion of other less sensitive matters.

1.4.2 Interviews

Interviews are widely used instrument for data collection and during the field work at S. Home this has been the core of the field work, allowing me to get a first idea of how the office for immigrants at S. Home work, to have a direct contact not only with the director but also with his officers and the people hosted at S. Home. This method, in fact, should be seen as a “inter-view, an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest” (Cohen et al. 2018, p. 506) and therefore it is important that the people hosted at S. Home were partially involved in the process.

The first part of the interview that I conducted with the director of the office for immigrants at S. Home was initially a pure information transfer. The main goal was to understand how the office for immigrants at S. Home works and in which way it positions itself in the Italian legal framework.

During the conception of the interview, I had to take into account the potential bias, since I was going to talk to workers who are highly ideologically committed to the mission of S. Home and I knew that this bias needed to be recognized and controlled. Not only a pure transfer of information was the outcome of the interview, but also emotions, ideas and personal influences were expressed during the interview.

The form of the interview was an informal conversational interview, with its strengths and weaknesses. The interview was built on observations and could be adapted to the circumstances. The precision with which the interviewees answered the questions minimized the difficulty in organizing and analyzing data.

In the same moment and place, I interviewed the director of the office for immigrants at S. Home and his officers as well as some of the people hosted there. This group interviewing method was cost-efficient, time-efficient and generated a broader conversation of different topics of interest for my case.

1.4.3 Observation

After the interview, I was shown the house where refugees and asylum seekers live. This observation was carried out together with one of the officers, who introduced me to some of the people hosted. It was what can be defined as a naturalistic and ethnographic observation, during which I could observe the participants in their everyday social setting, and their everyday behavior in this. As for the other methods, also this observation had to be carried out taken into account the vulnerability of the group researched, especially because this type of observation can be intrusive and unpleasant for the people researched. That is the reason why I wasn't allowed to enter the

private rooms of the refugees unless they wanted to show me them, and I was introduced to them in the common spaces of the house.

1.4.4 Documents analysis

Both the project design phase and the data collection wouldn't be possible without a previous analysis of documents about national policies on education and S. Home's policies. Also, public schools' registers on grades and enrollment were referred in order to contextualize data from questionnaires and interviews. These sources can also be defined as secondary data or “data that were originally collected for a different purpose” (Glaser, 1963, p. 11).

Reports, technical reports, official websites and data archives are often a fundamental contribution to a research, providing additional information or helping to answer additional questions that can arise during the analysis. Another important advantage of using this type of data is that “the scale, scope and amount of data are usually much larger and more representative than a single researcher could gather” (Cohen et al, 2018, p. 587).

Secondary data “provide materials for useful descriptive analysis” (Cohen et al, 2018, p. 587). In my case the website of the NGO provided additional information to what I directly learned from the director of the Office of Immigration during the interviews and it also provided information that were not part of the interview but appeared to me to be relevant in a second phase of the analysis. I also tried to consider the ethical responsibilities connected to secondary sources and the original participants. For example, I didn't collect grades from the classes attended by the immigrants, even though these grades are public and easily accessible to everyone. I decided, instead, to access aggregate data on average grades in some of the schools attended by the immigrants. This is because I didn't want to collect information about group of students (classes) that weren't not directly participating to the research and therefore were not giving any informed consent. In a small town such the one where I carried out my research, this could have meant an additional difficulty to anonymize data, since the classes attended by immigrants might be easily recognizable.

1.5 What is a case study?

It could be argued that any research in social sciences is a case study. A case study might have several different definitions. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018) define a case study as a “unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply by presenting them with abstract theories and principles” (Cohen et al, 2018, p. 376). This definition is very appropriate for my research. I, in fact, try to make clear my unit of analysis

(immigrants hosted by a specific NGO), the level of the analysis (educational path in local schools), and I argue that S. Home constitutes a case which boundaries are geographical (the town in which the NGO operates) and demographic (the immigrants who are hosted in a specific period of time).

This research is descriptive in the sense that it provides narrative accounts and doesn't aim to test any theory. In fact, being my research based on a new phenomenon, in a place where not only immigrants, but foreigners in general are more than a rare case, I think it is relevant to use an approach that doesn't require testing an existing theory. This is because no previous cases are available for comparison and testing in the chosen context for the field work.

I believe my research presents some of the typical advantages of a case study. Firstly, the result can be more easily understood by a wide audience. Second, the case study catches unique features that may otherwise be lost in a larger scale. Third, case studies can be taken by a single researcher. Finally, case studies can build in unanticipated events and uncontrolled variables.

The case study of S. Home has been chosen with no ambition for generalization, but I believe it contains a potential for comparison for similar analysis of NGO working with immigrants both in other parts of Italy and in other European countries.

Chapter 2: Literature review

In this chapter I analyzed the literature used for this research, which is divided in five categories and is relevant for the different level of analysis I choose to use for my thesis.

The literature review of this thesis includes texts which are relevant for different aspects of the studies phenomenon. Education for immigrants and the case of S. Home are seen, in this research, from several angles and with different lenses. First, the general topics of globalization and migration are analyzed, been the background of this research. I then saw closer the problematic concerning borders and security and tried to understand how the situation as changed since 2014 and how this affected the legal framework in which the arrival of asylum seekers at S. Home happened. Then I moved to the main topic of education and analyze an interesting text on education and perceived support. This has been especially relevant for the question I want to answer with my research “Is S. Home supporting asylum seekers and refugees in their educational path and how”. I have finally chosen a text on integration programs in Italy in order to compare the approach used by S. Home with other initiatives for immigrants in the same country.

2.1 Globalization and migration

My research is partially located within a broader research field of inquiry concerning the reasons and the effects of a new wave of immigrants to Europe in the last ten years. For this part of my research, I found a solid support in previous studies on globalization and migration such as the book of Eliot Dickinson (2017). This book gives an interpretation of the phenomenon of global migration which could be useful to set in a wider context the subjects of my research. Dickinson (2017, chpt. 4) analyses the Italian situation in the five years before 2017 as far as immigration is concerned and offers updated data on migration in Italy, which I used in the background part of this thesis.

The book focuses on the intersection between globalization and migration, finding the contradictions inside these phenomena and underlining how the countries of the Global North are putting barriers to immigration while it becomes easier and easier for goods and capital to move around the world.

Dickinson positions the migration phenomenon in the wider context of globalization and defines globalization as “a process that has been ongoing for more than five hundred years. It is linked to the sixteenth-century emergence of capitalism in Europe and the subsequent expansion of the capitalist world-system around the globe” (Dickinson, 2017, p. 5). It is relevant for my study to contextualize migration in time and space and to find a connection between different studies from different authors. Also Ruben Andersson (2014), in his book *Illegality Inc.* - that I will analyze later - bases his research on migration on the wider phenomenon of globalization, finding contradiction between the two main types of travelers of the globalized world: the more privileged expats and the

poor migrants.

Dickinson (2017) also gives useful definition of migration: immigration (to enter, or in-migration), emigration (to depart, or out-migration), remigration (to return, or return migration). He also makes a difference between short- and long-term international migration.

What appeared useful for my research is this attempt by the author to divide immigrants in different categories based on their destination and the length of their residence permission. This is because it gave me some tools to define my unit of research and understand that my researched group is composed by immigrants whose residence permission can be short or long depending on two elements: the status of their country (which gives them – or not – the right to asylum) and their legally accepted need for protection.

Each type founded by Dickinson (2017) is the base of a different legal treatment in the international legal framework. It has been observed by other authors that different types of migration received also a different type of mediatic and political attention.

As Andersson (2014) states, the type of migration that received the biggest mediatic attention in the last years – boat people – has a statistical little relevance compared to other type of migration such as migration related to seeking employment and overstay visas. Nevertheless, more attention was given to asylum seekers and refugees and undocumented travelers. Some other groups, such the one I decided to focus on, are invisible for the media. They are asylum seekers arrived legally through humanitarian corridors organized by destination states with the collaboration of NGOs in the country of depart and the country of destination. Insignificant media coverage is given to this phenomenon. I have, then, moved to analyze the role of partnership in NGOs, with the goal to investigate the facilitating factors that could be identified in S. Home's work within the local community.

2.2 Borders and security

Another contribution on the topic of migration, comes from Ruben Andersson's studies on migration, borders and security in West African Sahel and southern Europe (Anderson, 2014).

While the media, populist politicians and bureaucrats have described the immigration flow as the new enemy stalking the border of Europe, Andersson's book adopts a different perspective, when he focuses on the illegal activities linked to the phenomenon, taking place in the Euro-African border.

This book is useful to my research for several reasons. Firstly, the perspective adopted by Andersson focuses not only on the immigrants as a research objects, but on the whole system that contributes to transform migrants' journey into an illegal condition. As the author says he tries to “casts an eye on the observers and investigates the working of what I will call an illegal migration industry – or illegality industry – in the emerging Euro-African borderlands” (Andersson, 2014, p. 3).

The book was published before the refugee crisis in 2015 and developments in the following year might seem not fitting for his version. I believe his contribution is still valid in the sense that he was able to point out how a whole system, including the rescue operations that were carried out by the European Union member states before and after the 2015 crisis, have been influenced by an interpretation of the phenomenon that is well described by Anderson.

According to the author, the illegality industry has been built based on the fear for an “invasion”, as the media have chosen to describe the migration flows of these recent years, while no invasion has materialized: “In Europe, fears of Africa pushing upwards expressed by border workers and fueled by reports of the continent's swift demographic growth, remain spectacularly unfulfilled” (Andersson, 2014, pg.5). The story that has been told by media, politicians, border officers is very different from the evidences, which show us the phenomenon's small statistical importance. “The majority of Europe's irregular migrants are visa overstayers – something even recognized by Frontex, the E.U. Border agency. The political impact of the boat people approaching Europe's southern borders greatly surpasses their actual numbers” (Andersson, 2014, p.5).

When I say that his observations are still valid today, I refer for example to the rescue operations such as Mare Nostrum, Triton and all the activity carried out by Frontex. In chapter three I will give an explanation of what these operations are. Here I would like to explain why I think that Anderson has a good point when he underlines that immigration as a phenomenon was managed by border officers, European agencies, and national member states under the fear of the invasion. In fact, the fear of invasion never abandoned the decision-makers in Europe when it was time to decide whether to continue or stop rescue operations in the Mediterranean. In chapter three we will see that the main argument used to stop Mare Nostrum, for example, was the fear that such an operation could have the side effect of inviting even more people crossing the Mediterranean to reach European coasts. I believe that Anderson gave a contribution that is important, when he shows the discrepancy between figures of arrivals by boat to Europe from African countries and the mediatic exposure that the phenomenon received.

My research focuses on immigrants legally arrived in Europe and their case is not comparable to those who arrived by boat illegally to European coasts. However, what I would like to show is that also a legal arrival of asylum seekers/refugees to Europe in the years of the refugees crisis can be perceived as illegal or unwished by the public opinion, because of the atmosphere created by the mediatic coverage that was well described by Anderson.

In other words, while Andersson (2014) focuses on the excesses of an illegality industry, I take into account the existence of such an industry and I focus on alternative way to manage migration flows, for example humanitarian corridors. At the same time, I keep in mind that even when these alternative ways are used, the idea of illegality is probably prevalent in the public opinion still today.

Another contribution that I found useful in the book by Andersson (2014) is that he chooses to put the phenomenon of the migration in the wider context of globalization, underlying at the same time the contradiction between the admiration for other type of travelers – expats or tourists – and the dislike for “migrants”: while some travelers [...] are celebrated for their powers to shrink distances and connect territories, others are fretted about for the same reasons” (Andersson, 2014, p.4). According to the author, migrants have become the scapegoat of the economic crisis, where “not the mobile banker or trader with his squandered billions, but the impoverished, immobilized migrant stuck in the borderlands” (Andersson, 2014, p. 6) are blamed. This is the case of my researched group. They are not expats or tourist and they arrived not only with very limited financial resources, but they are also partially supported economically by the Italian State for a period of time. From Anderson's perspective, they are potentially the scapegoat of any frustrations that might arise among the hosting community. I will argue, in chapter five, that S. Home has been aware of this context and these potential perceptions of the immigrants among the local population and was able to find a solution to avoid tensions at a local level.

Finally, Andersson (2014) gives an important methodological contribution when he tries to focus on the systemic instead of on undocumented migrants and their experience as the object of his research. This is because otherwise migrants can easily be reduced “to an ethnographic gaze beholden to a state-centric vision” (Andersson, 2014, p. 12). For my research this example has been crucial and gave me, I believe, a more ethical correct direction where I see the phenomenon from different actors' perspectives: migrants, NGO, schools, locals.

2.3 Education and support

In 2019 Louise Ryan, Alessio D'Angelo, Neil Kaye and Magdolna Lorinc published an article titled “Young people, school engagement and perceptions of support: a mixed methods analysis”. Based on data about levels of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) in the UK, the article aims to investigate the processes of school disengagement and the role played by the perceptions of support. According to the authors, the article is a contribution to show that “increasing perception of support can positively influence school engagement” (Ryan et al., 2019, p. 1).

This piece of literature is important for my research at many levels: firstly it provides useful definitions of school engagement/disengagement, perception of support and differentiated, diffuse and dynamic support that can easily apply to my researched group and their experience as immigrants students supported by S. Home. Secondly, it uses theories of social capital and shows the dynamics between diffuse actors and this is relevant in the context of S. Home where immigrants, the NGO, schools and national institutions are all involved in the educational path of immigrants at different levels and with different resources at their disposals, including economic, social and cultural resources. Finally, the mixed methods approach gives an example of how different methods can be combined to build a theory (or in the case of the article to verify a hypothesis) on the topic.

According to the authors, “the concept of school engagement [...] has been proposed as a tool to assess the likelihood that students will leave education early and without the necessary skills and qualifications to succeed in the labor market” (Ryan et al., 2019, p. 1-2). In their research conducted between 2013 and 2018, the authors sought to verify the hypothesis that school engagement is highly correlated with young people's perception of support from their teachers, parents, and friends. In the case of immigrants at S. Home, support comes only from the NGO itself, being the Office for Immigrations at S. Home responsible not only for the enrollment at school, but also of a close relation with schools attended by immigrants in a similar way parents are for their minor children.

Perceptions of support, “rather than a quantifiable measure, are interpreted through layers of symbolic meaning and underpinned particular expectations” (Pina and Bengtson, as cited in Ryan et al., 2019, p. 1274). “In the context of education, it is not simply the availability of support but rather the ways in which young people interpret and respond to support which may shape outcomes”

(Ginevra 2015, as cited in Ryan et al., 2019, p. 1274). Social support is not only an “ act of giving or receiving help, but rather as a series of social interactions that generates interpretations and meaning by which social actors develop a new understanding of their social reality and identity” (Ng and Sorensen, as cited in Ryan et al., 2019, p. 1274).

These definitions are important to understand the role of S. Home in relation to refugees/asylum seekers' educational path. It is, in fact, not possible to find a measure of the support given by the NGO to the students, besides some explicit actions such as taking care of the enrollment process or being the contact people for teachers. However, these actions may also not be perceived as support by the students who are in a situation of obligation to attend school.

The article uses theories on social capital, defining social capital as the “benefits that one derives from participation in social groups and by mobilizing resources available through these groups” (Bourdieu 1985, as cited in Ryan et al., 2019, p. 1275).

In educational contexts, “social capital comprises the set of social resources that contribute to the cognitive and personal development of a child” (Coleman 1988, as cited in Ryan et al., 2019, p. 1275). These definitions are also an important guidelines when I try to define and evaluate the support given to refugees/asylum seekers by S. Home not only in terms of opportunity to attend school, but also in terms of extra-curricular activities organized or coordinated by S. Home. These activities are, in fact, a chance for the hosted people at S. Home to gain a potential social capital connecting with people with same interests and skills.

The article is also a useful example as far as methodology is concerned. It uses both quantitative and qualitative methods and

the sequential design of our study allowed each methodological approach to be used towards a specific end: the quantitative survey to identify factors related to school engagement; the qualitative stage to elicit specific examples of how perceptions of support impact on academic outcomes and transitions beyond compulsory schooling (Ryan et al. 2019, p. 6).

This approach inspired also my design in the way that, as I will explain later, each method used aimed to investigate a different aspect of the phenomenon. I didn't have the chance to recruit the sample for qualitative interviews based on answers to the questionnaires – as the authors of the article proceeded - but I collect quantitative data through part of the questionnaire while let open

questions in the questionnaires and interviews being the mean to collect qualitative data, especially ones about refugees/asylum seekers' professional and educational ambitions.

Findings in the article confirm the hypothesis that school engagement is highly correlated with social support. Correlation between school engagement and perceived teacher support is strong, while moderately strong relationship with perceived parental support and lesser strong yet still statistically significant correlation is found between friends' support and engagement. These findings are a relevant framework when analyzing the support given to people hosted at S. Home not only by the NGO, who takes the role of parents in relation to schools, but also by friends and classmates from extra-curricular activities.

The article, then, focuses on the three different sources of support separately. As far as parental support is concerned, quantitative data analysis shows that perceived parental support has a moderately strong importance. However, qualitative data shows that the situation is more nuanced, and that parental support may be enhanced by the availability of economic capital. Besides, while the survey focused on parental support, “the narratives revealed a more diffuse array of actors providing valuable cultural and social capital” (Ryan et al. 2019, p. 13).

Finally, the research shows that “the physical presence of families does not necessarily mean that young people perceive them as supportive [...]. The potential social capital available through parents is irrelevant if the parent is not an importance part of their children's lives”. (Ryan et al., 2019, p. 13).

As I will argue later, S. Home is a substitute of parents in the relation with immigrants' schools. In this perspective, S. Home is an important actor that provides support, encouraging students to do their best at school, but also providing social and cultural support in form of extra-curricular activities, knowledge about the school system and which opportunities immigrant students have and also in terms of social capital represented by the wider network in which S. Home works and the potential contacts in professional and educational sectors.

The research shows also that “changing circumstances associated with family breakdown, geographical mobility and relocation to a new environment can all impact on young people's perceived support, levels of engagement and outcomes” (Ryan et al., 2019, p. 15). To take into consideration circumstances in the case of S. Home is crucial, being the researched people in a very precarious situation, where the NGO plays an important role in create a more stable context that can influence also the educational path of immigrant students.

2.4 Education and equity

In Ainscow (2013) we find an interesting contribution in a paper dedicated to the topic of equity and educational justice. Aiming to address the idea of “Education for all” and the promotion of equitable learning opportunities, this part of the book offers a critical analysis of equity and educational justice across the globe. Especially interesting for my research is the essay by Mel Ainscow “Equity, The Big Challenge for Education Systems”. Ainscow argues that students' educational experiences are dependent on a range of interacting processes inside and outside the school context. He concludes that the ways to approach equity entail understanding local circumstances and choose context specific strategies. He refers to an ecology of equity defined as the external contexts and environment and the historical, cultural and socio-economic components which play a role in the learning experiences of students outside the school. The author offers three factors that play a role in student learning experiences: within school, between school and beyond school factors. *Within the school factors* refers to the policies and practices that already exist, *between school factors* are the characteristic of the local school system and beyond the factors are the external context including the demographics, economics histories of local areas. *The within school factors* even if they might be relevant also for my research, were not possible to observe since classroom observation wasn't allowed in my field work. Between school factors refer to the possible collaboration between schools and how this can add value to the processes of improvement and how it can help reduce inequity. The author presents a case study of the Greater Manchester Challenge project aimed to help students from disadvantaged background. The goal of the project was to make resources available to as many students as possible. In order to do so Families of Schools were created. About 12 schools were grouped on the basis of the socioeconomic background of the students. These groups connected with schools in other part of the city that served similar communities. Being in contact with similar situations encouraged schools to share expertise and explore more effective ways of reaching students who were underperforming. Other examples of successful partnership between schools are presented by the author, that show how collaboration between worse performing schools and better performing schools resulted in an improvement in the examinations taken by students from a disadvantaged background. It was also shown that collectively, these improvement strategies led to a positive learning gains by students in all participating schools. In the case of S. Home, the collaboration between the school in charge of Italian classes for foreigners, the NGO and the public schools were the researched group is enrolled has been defined as crucial for the learning process of people hosted.

The *beyond school factors* are even more relevant for my case study. The author argues that student's learning is not only impacted by what happens inside the classroom and school, but also

by demographic and environmental circumstances. This external context can be defined in terms of access to health care, after-school programs, tutoring, college preparation and social opportunities. The author points out the need for schools to collaborate with community partners and families in order to customize support for all students and underlines the importance of contextual analysis in order to understand local dynamics and personal needs and characteristics.

2.5 NGOs, governance and education

When it comes to the role of NGO's, a good account comes from “Power in partnership? An analysis of an NGOs Relationships its partners” by Lister (2000). I chose this article as an inspiration. I will, in fact, try to do something similar as the author did in her paper and try to engage Dahl's theories on power in my research.

The article analyses partnership relationships between NGOs and donors, using a framework adapted from Dahl (1957) to explore issues of power in the relationship of a US-based development NGO, it questions whether the current emphasis on organizational partnership is useful or whether in practice and theory greater recognition should be given to the importance of individual relationships. What is interesting here for my research is the investigation on the role of individuals. After presenting some definitions of partnership, Lister (2000) quotes Brown (1990) who defines partnership as “a synergy [...] produces results that partners could not obtain without collaboration” (Brown 1990, as cited by Lister, 2000, p. 228). This is the first element which is relevant for my research. As I will explain, my researched group is, in fact, for the most part a group of Syrian asylum seekers who arrived in Sardinia via Lebanon and Rome, thanks to the collaboration between S. Home and a partner NGO based in Beirut. Without this collaboration, with the Lebanese partner giving first support in Beirut, the group wouldn't have been allowed to arrive through humanitarian corridor and receive all the advantages that this legal practice includes. Collaboration in the case of S. Home is not limited to the partnership with the Lebanese NGO, but it's a key element in its work locally. I will explain that, in addition to support asylum seekers/refugees in their educational path taking care of school enrollment and contact with schools, S. Home organizes its own extra-curricular activities together with a range of local actors. This implies different levels of collaboration with other organizations. The type of partnership at a local level can be defined using Pugh et al. (1987, cited in Buchanan, 1994, p. 9, cited in Lister 2000, p. 228) as “a working relationship that is characterized by a shared sense of purpose, mutual respect and the willingness to negotiate”. The reason will be explained in detail in chapter 5. Lister quotes again Brown (1996) to point out the importance of personal relationships: “the stronger personal relationship, the higher level of social capital available for co-operative problem-solving and the more easily gaps created

by different levels of power and knowledge can be bridged”. (Brown, as cited in Lister, 2000, p. 3) Lister uses Dahl's (1957) theory on power as framework to her investigation of power in partnership and applies this framework to her case study. I try to use the same framework with a slightly different purpose which is to see which type of power relationship exists between S. Home and the local actors they cooperate with and if these power relationships have an impact on which support S. Home gives to immigrants.

Since a lot happened after Dahl, I will also use two other theories on power: Lukes' (2005) *Power: A Radical View* and Stoppino's (2000) *Potere e teoria politica* (Power and Political Theory).

Dahl's (1957) “Concept of Power” is an important contribution in political sciences to define power and investigate its characteristics. Power is defined “in terms of a relation between people, and expressed in simple symbolic notation” (Dahl 1957, p. 201).

The main definition of power that Dahl gives and that is the basis for further critics is formulate as following: A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do. A and B are, for Dahl, actors instead of only human being, which includes individuals, groups, governments, nation-states, or other human aggregates.

In order to specify who are the actors in a power relationship, the statement A has power over B is not accurate. A more complete statement should, according to Dahl, include: (a) the source, domain or base of power, (b) the means or instrument used by A to exert power over B, (c) the amount or extent of his power over B (d) the range or scope of his power over B.

In my analysis of partnership, I will use this schema in order to investigate power relationships existing between S. Home and its partners in town.

Another important contribution to the definition of power is Lukes' (2005) *Power: A Radical View*, which is a critic to Dahl. In this book Steven Lukes criticizes the one-dimension approach to power by Dahl and the two-dimension approach to power by Bachrach and Baratz for being too focused on individualistic behaviors and proposes a three-dimensional view of power (Dahl, 1957, cited in Lukes 2006, s. 17; as well as Bachrach and Barratz, 1962, cited in Lukes, 2005, s. 15).

In this analysis of power he criticized as well the behavioral focus of the mentioned authors and states that the main definition of power – “A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do” (Dahl, 1957, p. 202-203) – under certain circumstances: A can affect the behavior of B both (a) through a decision making process or controlling the

political agenda (not necessarily through decision), concerning (b) issues and potential issues, in presence of (c) a observable (overt or covert), and latent conflict on (d) subjective and real interests. I will try to show that this scheme as well is relevant when investigating power relationships existing between S. Home and its partners and I will try to show that, by applying Lukes, several aspects of S. Home's decision making process and interests in working locally with immigrants can emerge and give a better idea of the NGO's policies and actions.

A last contribution that I would like to use for my analysis of power relationships in partnership is Mario Stoppino (2000) *Potere e teoria politica* (“Power and Political Theory”). In his book, Stoppino focuses on which role interests and intentions play in the exercise of power.

He states that there is a consensus in political sciences on the fact that power is a social causal relationship, or in other words a relationship between the actual or potential behavior of A and the actual or potential behavior of B. The question here is: can we consider as power all causal relationships between behaviors, or should we consider the state of mind of the actor exercising power? Stoppino tries to find a way in order to underline a difference between social causal relation and power relation. He argues that the state of mind of A, or in other words, the intentions of the actor exercising power are crucial in defining power. There is a power relationship if “the behavior *a* by A causes the behavior *b* by B and if the behavior *b* corresponds to the intentions of A”. (Stoppino 2000, p. 37). Intentions are important in defining power, but not sufficient, according Stoppino. The *a* behavior can also derive from an instinct or intuition more than from a intention. We can say that there is a power relationship when the *a* behavior which is not intentional causes a *b* behavior which is compatible to A's interests.

The reason why I choose Stoppino's theory of power is that, based on the data collected on the field, we cannot be sure of the nature of power exercised by S. Home in relation with its partners. In fact, its initiative to cooperate with local actors might come from an intention to make them useful for the NGO, but it can also be the result of informal relationships with local actors who decide to contribute to S. Home or even “imitate” – as Stoppino would say – the actions of S. Home in a way that corresponds to S. Home's interests.

2.5 NGOs and integration in Italy

An important contribution to understand how different actors in Europe use the anti-Islam rhetoric in order to position themselves against migration in general is the book *In the Name of Women's Rights* by Sara R. Farris. The book was published in 2017 and tries to explain the rise of

“femonationalism”, in other words how nationalists, feminists and neoliberals use the rhetoric of women's rights in order to carry out anti-Islam and anti-migration campaigns. Farris (2017) argues that this heterogeneous anti-Islam front presents sexism and patriarchy as the almost exclusive domains of the Muslim Other and tends to generalize its claims against Islam to all non-Western migrants from the Global South. The common denominator of the anti-Islam stance is a fundamental agreement that gender relations in the West are more advanced and must be taught to Muslim women who are otherwise objects at the mercy of their patriarchal culture.

This reading is interesting for my work because it gives an example of how different actors can deal with migration as a human phenomenon, according both to different ideologies and economic logic. What described by Farris here is a very different approach from what I found at S. Home.

Farris (2017) analyzes the convergence between nationalists, feminists and neo-liberals who agree in the idea that gender inequality is an issue affecting mostly non-western women and tries to understand which interests these three actors are expressing. She says “[...] femonationalism must be understood as an ideology that springs from a specific mode of encounter, or a convergence, among different political projects and that is produced by a specifically economic logic” (Farris, 2017, p. 5). In particular, she analyzes civic integration programs for third country nationals and finds how these programs include both neoliberal economic components and the ideological representation of the Muslim Other. Migrants in the countries analyzed by Farris were encouraged to integrate economically by seeking employment outside the household. “Economic integration for non-western migrant women in particular (Muslim and non- Muslim alike) has effectively functioned through the application of neoliberal workfare devices” (Farris, 2017, p. 15).

As in the case of S. Home, also migrants participating in other types of integration programs were encouraged to integrate through work. This “westocentric” feminist notion of emancipation through work, as defined by Farris, is common in the case of S. Home and in the civic integration programs the author analyzes in her book. However, in the case I study, the premises are very different and the ideological beliefs as well. Farris (2017) found out also that non-western migrant women participating in civic integration programs have been systematically directed towards the following job types: hotel cleaning, housekeeping, child minding and caregiving. In the case of S. Home, the approach is different. Firstly because, as I will explain, migrants are first and foremost directed to go to school, secondly, because as far as job ambitions are concerned, S. Home seconds migrants’ ambitions instead of directing them to specific type of jobs.

Chapter 3: Background

In the previous chapter I gave a detailed description of the methodology chosen for this research, explained how mixed methods were chosen as more adapt to the design of this investigation and how I carried out interviews, observations in the field and designed and analyzed questionnaires. I also explained how I took into consideration the vulnerability of the researched group and given even more attention to ethical issues both when collecting data and analyzing them.

In this chapter, I will give an overview over the relevant dimensions of the phenomenon of migration. Firstly, I will give some figures of the so-called migration crisis in 2015 and a description of which operations were carried out in order to rescue immigrants arriving in Europe via the Mediterranean. Secondly, I will talk about the legal challenges that the situation in the Mediterranean and in Europe needed to be faced by European countries which are member of the Treaty of Dublin. Third, I will show how Italy has decided to face the arrival of migrants and how the Italian State adapted some of its laws to the new situation. I will finally explain that at the end of this chain, the practice job to host immigrants and implement international and national laws is carried out by a local NGO, with a long experience in working with other types of marginalization, which in the middle of the refugees crisis decided to open its Office for Immigration and expand its activities.

3.1 Migration flows since 2010

According to data gathered by Eliot Dickinson and published in his book *Globalization and Migration*, more than half of global migration involves the countries of the Global North (Dickinson, 2017). According to the World Bank, in the years preceding the so-called refugee crisis, 45 percent of the world migration went from South to North, 35 South to South and 20 North to North” (World Bank, 2021). In other works, still today, over half of the global migrations has the Global North as a destination, while only a third of the migration flows concern only the Global South.

As a consequence of the worsening of the war in Syria and other conflicts in the African continent, in 2015 migration flows to the European continent increased drastically.

Italy, far from being the country that hosted the biggest group of refugees, is still the first port for many of the refugees hosted in other countries in Europe. The country's geographical location makes it, in fact, a prime destination for flows coming from Africa and Middle East. According to UNHCR, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2015, cited in Dickinson 2017) “in

the five-year period from January 2010 to December 2014, a total of 157,140 asylum applications were submitted in Italy [...] In 2015, the refugees crisis worsened considerably, with approximately 10,000 migrants arriving every month.” (Dickinson, 2017, p. 96).

Still today figures provided by the UNHCR show that the flow towards Italy continues and only in the month of March 2021 2,067 people arrived to Italy and were assisted and informed about asylum procedures by the UNHCR while 3700 enquires were received and followed-up (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2021).

Figures relative the month of March 2021 show that 15% were children unaccompanied, 4% were children accompanied, 10% women and 70% men. “In March, 2,386 refugees and migrants arrived in Italy by sea, a decrease compared to the almost 4,000 arrivals recorded in February, but a significant increase over the same month in recent years. Year to date, 7,489 refugees and migrants have reached Italian shores, compared to less than 2,800 in the same period last year and just over 500 in the January-March 2019 period” (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2021).

Arrivals by sea, as those registered by the UNHCR, represent a risk for migrants and a very high number of deaths in the Mediterranean were registered in the last six years.

A symbolic date of the worsening of the refugee crisis is the 3rd October 2013, when about 366 people died trying to reach the Sicilian island of Lampedusa (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2013, cited in Dickinson 2017, p. 96). The tragedy wasn't the only one: Weeks later dozens of Syrians died in the attempt of reaching Italian coasts. As a consequence, the Italian government decided to start a search-and-rescue program, called Operation Mare Nostrum, that saved about 150,810 people (Italian Ministry of Defense 2013). Despite the partial success of Mare Nostrum, many other people died in the Mediterranean in the next year, mainly from Syria, Egypt, Palestine and Sudan (Dickinson, 2017). The operation continued despite the critics for being a “migrant pull factor” and was defended by The International Organization for Migration: “IOM does not believe that Europe is faced with an invasion along its southern coast, not that the safety net provided by Mare Nostrum represented a pull factor” (International Organization of Migration, 2014).

Mare Nostrum was terminated in 2014 because of national budget issues (the operation in total costed 10.7 billion euro annually), but according to some author, also because the public opinion started to consider the situation unsustainable for the country (Dickinson, 2017).

Despite the praise received by the Italian State, from IOM, UNHCR and other organizations for the

effort in rescuing lives in danger, Italian public opinion and the government in charge started to consider the search-and-rescue program too expensive and the idea that the operation could become an incentive to human traffickers bringing migrants to Europe was re-proposed by some politicians. This was the main argument used also in the media in the same period, echoing worries that the civil society was expressing and that politicians tried to address ending the operation.

Once the Operation Mare Nostrum was terminated, the duty of protecting Europe's southern borders was delegated to the *European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union*, known as Frontex. (Dickinson, 2017). The agency started a smaller and cheaper operation called Triton, which goal was mainly control and security.

Frontex has been defined as “purveyor of solutions and best practice on the one hand and as a quick-footed emergency deployment force on the other” (Andersson, 2014, p.77). The Agency's main tasks are: training border guards, create arenas for officers to talk in joint operations and collect data from immigration liaison officers stationed in transit countries. A big part of its work is risk analysis and intelligence, such as collecting information of those who “do the transferring and reactivation – the people smugglers – are known in Frontex as facilitators, a catch-all terms covering anyone from taxi drivers on the Greek-Macedonian frontier to organized trafficking rings”. (Andersson, 2014, p. 78). Through interviews to migrants in detention, Frontex tries to understand which are the routes, who are the facilitator’s modus operandi and prepare risk assessments based on these data. In other words, Frontex focused more on intelligence work than rescue operations and was considered not as efficient as previous types of operations. Moreover, Frontex operated with an initial weakness which was its lack of independence: its performance was based on the political agenda of single member state (Andersson, 2014).

This operation was even more, weakened by the fact that it didn't receive the support of all European member states, which considered all search-and-rescue operations an incentive for migrants to attempt to reach European coasts (Dickinson, 2017). A debate with human rights organizations followed, these ones predicting a worsening of the situation if Europe wouldn't actively engaged to save lives in the Mediterranean. This last prediction was confirmed by the refugee crisis in 2015.

According UNHCR, sea arrivals to Italy between 2014 and 2015 were 323.942. In addition, 6006 people died during the journey. Figures were even higher in 2016, when 181,436 people arrived by sea and 4,578 people died during the journey (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,

2021).

Despite the number of arrivals decreased between 2017 and 2021, the lack of initiative of search and rescue is still considered a problem and the role of NGOs became increasingly important in the last four-five years.

Limited search and rescue capacity vis-à-vis increasing sea arrivals is an issue, as various NGOs are subject to seizure of their vessels, investigations or post-rescue quarantine requirements: in March only two NGO rescue vessels, namely Ocean Viking and Open Arms, were operating in the Central Mediterranean. Since this is known to be the deadliest sea crossing for refugees and migrants worldwide, a predictable and reliable search and rescue system is essential to avoid deaths at sea (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2021).

This lack of initiative by European states was compensated by the intervention of NGOs which started to carry out operation of search and rescue, sometimes also in contrast with European government. The 29th of June 2019, Carola Rakete, a 31-year-old German activist entered the port of Lampedusa with the vessel Sea Watch 3 transporting rescued migrants without authorization and was arrested by the Italian police afterwards. While the spokeswoman of Sea Watch Italy, Giorgia Linardi, described the Italian authorities' treatment of migrants as inhumane and degrading”, the Italian Minister of Interior said he “wanted the arrest of any unlawful person who even put at risk Italian law and order officials, a fine for this foreign NGO, the seizure of the ship to stop it going around the Mediterranean breaking the laws and the distribution of all the migrants on board in other European states” (*Voanews*, 2019).

This episode and its development show at least two main problematics that arose after the worsening of the refugee crisis. First, we see an increasing importance of the role of NGOs in searching and rescuing refugees that compensate the increasing disengagement of national states and European governments. Second, the statement of the Italian Minister of Interior at the time, Matteo Salvini, expresses a discontent for the legal framework concerning the right to political asylum and immigration in general. The refusal to according the permission to enter the port with a vessel transporting immigrants was accompanied by a claim of the necessity that also other European countries contribute in managing these arrivals and welcome part of the people arrived in Italy. The challenges for the application of the current international law on migration is the topic of next paragraph.

3.2 Legal challenges and the application of the Treaty of Dublin

The Dublin Regulation, known also as Dublin III or Dublin Convention is a European Union Law that determines which EU Member State is responsible for the examination of an application for asylum, submitted by persons seeking international protection under the Geneva Convention (Council of European Union, 2015).

The Dublin Regulation was adopted in 2003, replacing the Dublin Convention in all EU member except Denmark. An agreement with Denmark on extending the application of the Regulation to this country came into force in 2006 (Council of the European Union, 2014).

This regulation is still valid in the European Union, that rules immigration issues aiming to prevent an applicant from submitting applications in multiple Member States and imposes that the country in which the asylum seekers first applies for asylum is responsible for either accepting or rejecting the claim, and that the seeker may not restart the process in another jurisdiction (Dickinson, 2017).

In practice, this translated in an unusual number of asylum seekers starting the process in the Italian jurisdiction and in the presence of asylum seekers in regions that are usually not a destination for immigration flows (Dickinson, 2017).

In 2018 new arrivals via the Mediterranean to Europe were 72.200. In Italy 18.500 persons arrived in the same year, half of them between May and July (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2021). This represents 25,6% of all arrivals to Europe only via the Mediterranean. The current regulation imposes to Italy to take the responsibility of all application for asylum that may be submitted by the immigrants arrived in the country. Immigrants have to stay in the country where they submitted their request for asylum and wait for the whole procedure to be finished. An exception was made in 2015 when the European Commission proposed a relocation scheme. The relocation scheme established by the Council Decisions 2015/1523 and 2015/1601 (“Relocation Decisions”) to assist Italy and Greece over a two-year period from September 2015 has sparked heated debates at the EU level, wasn't renewed and formally expired on 26 September 2017.

The other legal aspect which became relevant, the protection of refugees during the process of seeking asylum, is more generally ruled by the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, supported the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugee from 1951 and the Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugee from 1967 (see United Nations, 1951, and United States, 1967, respectively).

These conventions are implemented at a national level by national laws.

3.2 The Italian context: C.A.S. And SPRAR programs for asylum seekers and refugees

The Italian government decided that the Prefecture – which is the local office of the Department for Internal Affairs – is in charge of the legal process, while non-state entities were delegated the role of protection and assistance of asylum seekers and refugees. The two categories (refugees and asylum seekers) are better defined by the Italian law: those who are entitled of international protection and unaccompanied minors (DL. 113 of 4th October 2018) and those who are waiting their claim to be processed.

The first category has the right to be part of a program called CAS (Centro Assistenza Straordinaria), promoted by the prefecture and including not only being hosted in the community center but also the participation to courses and workshop organized by the center. This program has a limited time since only people waiting for an answer by the tribunal can attend, but it can vary from few weeks to up to five years. This is because the legal process can be very slow and include several steps. The consequence is that participants live in a limbo without knowing exactly how much time they will spend in the community center.

The second category can be part of a program called SIPROIMI and promoted by the Servizio Centrale SPRAR, a local office of the Ministry of the Interior. As the CAS, it includes living in a community and participating to courses and workshops, but it lasts only 6 months even though they can be extended under certain conditions up to one year. This is because this program is for those people who already have been entitled the refugee status and need a program focused on prepare them to start an autonomous live in the country where they are refugees.

NGO's in charge of the protection and assistance of asylum seekers and refugees organize their activities according to the regulations mentioned, for one or more of the categories recognized by the law, according to their capacity. Which activities NGOs decide to organize are also respecting other criteria imposed by the law. One of those criteria is that minor asylum seekers and refugees have to be enrolled to a public school. This means that the NGOs have a role to facilitate the compulsory education process, providing all necessary means to be able to actively participate to school activities. Italian classes are an example of these activities. As we will see later, NGOs can have their own policy, in addition to the law, as far as activities provided are concerned. This often depends on the profile of the NGO and the beliefs behind the organization, as in the case of S. Home.

3.3 What is S. Home

S. Home is a local NGO situated in a small town in Sardinia and started in 1996. Its core activity is hosting and supporting people suffering marginalization and – as specified in the website – especially people belonging to these categories: very poor people, people suffering psychiatric illnesses, imprisoned people, drug addicted, and immigrants. The main goal of S. Home is to facilitate the re-integration of people into society, through expert support.

In order to support the integration of immigrants in the new context, S. Home gives material support such as housing and pocket money. In addition, other types of activities are used, such as intercultural education and psychological support. At the same time, S. Home is part of a wider network of social actors which facilitates the contact between immigrants and the school system.

As the description in the website says:

S. Home is an association of volunteers (*impresa sociale*), that started its activity in Sardinia the 12th November 1996. The association has been a home for about 6000 people during the last 30 years. S. Home works using the infrastructures provided by the Sardinian administration and managed by S. Home with a multiprofessional and qualified team. Methods used in their activities are: cognitive-behavioral approach, transnational, systemic-relational, and medical-biological. In order to achieve the goals of autonomy and socialization of the people hosted at S. Home, the team uses psycho-educational tools aimed to teach new skills. The philosophy of the association is to focus on people and cooperate with other local stakeholders, in order to value people's abilities and address their problems. [my translation]

S. Home publishes its donors, as imposed by the law (ex art. 1, comma 125, della legge 4 agosto 2017 n. 124). All donors are local entities, especially municipalities, public health organizations and the local church.

The profile of the NGO is not specifically religious, however the name recalls the movement started by l'Abbé Pierre in Paris in 1946 in order to give hope to young people after the 2nd WW and foster reconciliation among people in the world.

The NGO in Sardinia was also founded by a deacon and inspired by Christian morality in its approach with marginalization. In addition, as we will see later, the NGO works in cooperation with public institutions and in harmony with the values of the republican Constitution.

The work with immigrants is relatively new. It started in 2015 as consequences of the so-called “immigration crisis”. In the town two centers were opened: the one managed by S. Home and another public managed community center.

In S. Home the categories of refugees and asylum seekers are divided into two different programs: the center for temporary residence and the program of the protection of asylum seekers. Both programs include course-like activities of different types (i.e. Language classes, work-oriented workshop). These activities take place at S. Home or in other institutions that cooperate with S. Home.

3.3.1 Marginalization according to S. Home

S. Home is an NGO that hasn't worked with immigrants before 2015, which means that the NGO didn't have a specialized expertise on immigration issues before starting its new activity with immigrant arrivals after the refugee crisis.

The core expertise of S. Home is marginalization, interpreted as social marginalization due to poverty, psychiatric problems, illegality, and drugs problems. The brochure of the NGO explains in detail which approach is used for each type of marginalization and which activities are part of the path to go from a situation of marginalization to a situation of social inclusion. In addition to medical expertise and psychological help, work and training are essential parts of the path towards social inclusion for each category. This means that the inability to contribute to society through the participation to work activities is considered for S. Home a typical feature of marginalization.

In this context, immigration can be considered a form of marginalization when hosted immigrants don't have the tools yet to participate in the local community by taking part in work activities and be economically dependent. This finds a confirmation in what the director of the Office for Immigration said during the interview. He explained that especially the SIMPOIMI program, that is designed for those who received the status as refugees, has a clear goal of helping refugees to become independent both socially and economically. Once the program is finished, refugees should be able to live their everyday life in autonomy and be able to find a job. It is an important aspect, because the immigrants shouldn't find themselves in a new situation of marginalization at the end of

the program, for example because of poverty or psychiatric issues. All the programs, including programs for immigrants, at S. Home aim to find a way out of marginalization for the people helped by the NGO.

The whole structure of the NGO seems to be fitting the needs of the immigrants. In fact, medical and psychological help is needed also by immigrants arriving to the island, who may be suffering traumas due to the war, the journey to Europe and their stay in a foreign setting. Some professional profiles needed to be hired *ad hoc* for the work with immigrants, such as interpreters and intercultural mediators who are able to communicate with immigrants, especially in the beginning of their program at S. Home and support them in their everyday life by explaining them aspects of the life that may be different from their country of origin.

In addition to this help, immigrants can have access to the same type of activities as people belonging to other categories. This includes working activities but also other type of activities such as volunteering or Italian classes in support to their educational path. A part of my analysis will be dedicated to these activities and in which way they are a support for the success of the educational path for immigrants.

3.3.2 Immigrants and Education

The peculiar aspect of the policy of S. Home is that its policy for the new immigration sector includes the school attendance as a compulsory activity for all people hosted, and not only for minors. This decision was motivated by the belief that school attendance would be the best way to achieve several goals: (A) promoting integration for people hosted at S. Home with the local community, (B) giving them additional chances to find a job later, and (C) avoid complains by local population in front of jobless foreigners in the streets of the town.

A deep analysis of this policy will be made in the next chapters of this research. Here I would like to underline that the support to the educational path of people receiving the help of S. Home is not limited to immigrants. In the case of other categories, education is considered a key factor for the success of the work towards social inclusion. For example, the Office of the NGO working with pregnant women or young mothers with drugs issues, one of the main activities offered is support at school for the children and professional training for the mothers.

We can see that the importance given to education and professional training is not something that started with the work with immigrants, but an approach that the NGO used in its previous work with other marginalized categories and that the new office decided to use also in the case of

immigrants.

Providing education for all its hosted people has been key for S. Home and the case of S. Home can be considered as an example of how the more general principle that education for all is key for personal and social development can be put in practice. Before showing my own data and analysis of the case, I will dedicate the next chapter to the academic debate on education for all as interpreted by UNESCO, by the Italian Law and again by the NGO S. Home.

Chapter 4: Education for all

In chapter three I gave a background for this research on immigrants and education. I, first, gave an overview over migration flows since 2010, with some updated figures on immigrants arriving to Europe and also a description of the main rescue and salvage operations carried out by European state members after the refugee crisis. I have also, explained the principles of the Treaty of Dublin and why this international law results, in practice, in increased responsibilities for southern European countries which are the first land of arrival for many immigrants. Then I moved on explaining how Italy has decided to face the situation at a legal level, by designing to programs for immigrants applying for asylum. In practice, these programs are often implemented by NGOs locally and I gave a description of the NGO I studied works in order to implement programs for immigrants.

In this chapter I would like to insert the topic of education for immigrants in a more general discourse about education for all. In order to do so, I will present a debate that is both interesting and inspiring, about the ideas promoted by UNESCO in the field of education. Both the right of education for all, contained in the art. 4 of the SDG and the idea of education for global citizenship have been discussed in academia and in this chapter I will argue that those ideas, even though problematic in their application, are relevant when it comes to guarantee education for refugees and asylum seekers. I will argue that, even though these ideas have been criticized and the maintenance of national curricula are preferred by several scholars and school systems, the only fact that education is guaranteed for immigrants is in itself the application of these ideas.

At the end of the chapter, I will also move from analyzing these ideas promoted internationally by UNESCO, to explain how they are implemented at a national and local level by the Italian State and the NGO S. Home.

4.1 According to the UNESCO

The rise of mass education started in the 19th century. We can partially consider that mass education was boosted by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), which includes the Right to Education (art. 26, Universal Declaration of Human Rights).

Since then UNESCO proposed several joint programs such as MDG2, the SDG4 (Sustainable Development Goals 4) and the Global Citizenship Education (GCED), aiming to achieve higher literacy rate and the spread of quality education all over the world. Not only do these programs aim

to promote quality education for all, but they also identify the promotion of global citizenship as a tool to achieve development and peace (UNESCO, 2021).

Quoting the UNESCO's Constitution “these programs aim to build peace in the minds of men and women” (UNESCO, 2021). Moreover, UNESCO's programs are based on some beliefs/premises i.e. that the way to more education is to develop more schooling and so that more schooling is good (UNESCO, 2021).

Talking about education in the 21th century and which goals all UNESCO member countries should achieve, we cannot avoid to take into account the fact that the school systems in many countries have been based on the idea of the modern nation-state building and have been the tool to educate good national citizens. The role of education and national curriculum in the spread of nationalism is a cornerstone in Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*. Anderson has also the merit to have pointed out that “the 'end of the era of nationalism,' so long prophesied, is not remotely in sight. Indeed, nation-ness is the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time” (Anderson, 1991, p. 3).

Although one might intuitively think that the more the countries became interconnected, the more the education goes in the direction of educating global citizens, the historian Eric J. Hobsbawm points out that globalization resulted also in the “anguish and disorientation which finds expression in this hunger of belonging, and hence in the politics of identity [...] can create the illusion of nations and nationalism as an irresistibly rising force ready for the third millennium” (Hobsbawm, 1990, p. 177). This means that globalization might result in more interconnection as well as it might trigger an increased need for belonging to a national or even subnational community and trig social and political processes aiming to satisfy this need for belonging and to create a safe and familiar context.

This aspect of the globalization underlined by Hobsbawm already in the 90s concerns also education and examples of curricula becoming even more national as a reaction to globalization are not lacking. Sardinian Administrative Region introduced the teaching of Sardinian language in schools in June 2018. The same law introducing the teaching of Sardinian language at school aims also to protect four other local languages that will be optional subjects at school for students living in the areas where these languages are spoken.

Mass education in the 21st century doesn't seem to be achieved through a unilateral approach that privileged international curricula. On the contrary, we see also subnational communities able to lay claim to their right to insert local languages and local histories in national curricula. These are

educational projects sustained by politicians and intellectuals in order to protect local culture from the risk to homogenization inherent the globalization process.

The process of mass education has been interpreted differently from different perspectives, since its start. For example, according to the Marxist perspective, this process is actually accompanying the geographical spread of capitalism and the functional role of mass schooling is shaping an ideological apparatus for the needs of capitalism, in other world education is functional to shape the new good workers of a capitalistic system, more than educating global citizens (Wallerstein, 1997).

According to the UNESCO, mass schooling's goal is to prepare global citizens' ability to respect human rights and be part of peace-building processes (UNESCO, 2021). The ways how this goal should be achieved and which should be the content of education in the perspective of preparing students to think globally and understand which issues are global and which not, is still an open question and maybe the most interesting part of the debate also in academia. In fact, on one hand, international curricula do exist, and international schools are spread all over the world, providing teaching programs in the most spoken languages globally. On the other hand, it seems hard to argue that it does exist a world history or a world cultural heritage which doesn't have a local cultural anchorage. Even UNESCO cultural heritage centers tell us stories which are locally anchored and contextualized in a more national frame. The UNESCO center for rock carvings in Alta, Finnmark, is an example of how a world history from the stone age cannot be told without taking into consideration the environment in which rock carvings were found. In fact, even though the rock carvings were made long before any notions of ethnicity or nation could be formulated and we can consider the rock carvings as the product of the humanity living in the stone age in that part of the world, still the center cannot disregard the sensibilities of local communities and their perception of this cultural heritage. What is represented in the rock carvings is, in fact, a material culture from the region such as tools, animals that were hunted, dances that were probably performed during celebrations and even religious rituals. Part of this material culture continued to exist until today, especially among the indigenous people but not only. It is not surprising then, that local communities might feel represented by the carvings and might be able to interpretate the content of the carvings better than a person who is not familiar with the natural environment in the part of the world the carvings were found. Again, this shows how even what is today considered a world cultural heritage is not separated from the local context in which it was produced or found.

This may be one of the reasons why, in the academia, the ideas promoted by the UNESCO on education were so much debated and the difficulties to implement these ideas were underlined by many authors.

Another aspect of the topic is that, the ideas promoted by UNESCO, with the best intentions to

guarantee education opportunities for everybody, need to be implemented by member states according to their national laws. National laws are valid for national citizens, unless the law establish the inclusion of other categories and other citizens. Mass schooling, and especially the idea of the right of education for all, as defined by UNESCO and the Declaration of Human Rights, include in theory the right to education for refugees/asylum seekers, but this principle need to be put in practice through a national law or sometimes an international agreement.

Before discussing how the implementation of these idea promoted by UNESCO is problematic, but at the same time can have an impact on the situation of refugees/asylum seekers, and can be a framework to guarantee refugees the right to be educated also during their legal limbo, I would like to open a parenthesis about the concept of global citizenship, as education to refugees in guaranteed based on their right to be refugees/asylum seekers, in other words indirectly based on citizenship.

The concept of global citizenship and associated understandings of (universal) human rights and responsibilities has been discussed by Wallerstein (1997) in his article “Integration to what? Marginalization from what?”, where he explains how the development of capitalism and nation-state building contributed to the development of the idea of citizenship. He states that citizenship, which starts to be relevant as a concept after the French Revolution, had important consequences: firstly, it started pressures for citizen participation in governance, also it created the idea of non-citizen, in other words, it creates the migrant as a new social actor. Citizenship has been so far a stabilizing element, that give people rights and duties across classes, gender, ethnicity. Being a source of rights, citizenship has also become something very valuable, that people hardly would give up or grant to others.

Wallerstein (1997) tries to answer a main question, which is can we dispense with the concept of citizenship, and if so, to replace it with what? (Wallerstein, 1997). This question become relevant when we want to discuss about global citizen and understanding of human rights, also as far as migrants – non-citizens or global citizens by circumstances – are concerned.

Our understanding of rights and responsibilities, and also the legal implementation of rights and duties, are based on citizenship, in the sense of belonging to a nation state. It is the nation-state and its institution that approves laws and entitles its citizens to rights and duties (Giuliano, 1950).

Global citizenship is the idea that people have rights and duties that come from the fact of being part of the world community. This idea has been put into practice through the ratification of the Declaration of Human Rights from 1948 and the adaptation of national laws to the principles stated

in the Declarations. Education is one of the main rights included in the Declaration (art.26). Even though the effort to go beyond the element of citizenship (art.2), as Wallerstein (1997) asked, the Declaration of Human Rights goes beyond the element of national citizenship only in theory, because the implementation must go through a decision-making process which is still nationally based. There is here a conflict between the philosophical ideals and the legal definitions of citizenship which makes problematic the understanding of Human Rights. Also, the lack of a powerful international institution with enough authority to forge a world-wide consensus on the content of the Declaration through sanctions is a limit of the Declaration. Still, this conflict is not enough to state that a consensus on the topic of Human Rights doesn't exist, since the Declaration got the majority of votes in favor at the General Assembly, the 10th December 1948.

In spite of the official international consensus, many studies still focus on the universality of the idea of Human Rights, and consequently, on the need to promote education programs based on this idea. Some scholars consider to be more desirable to contrast human rights education, with other more traditional models (Piattoeva, 2009), while other take into consideration the limits of an education focused on global issues, underlying that even if desirable, a global perspective in education is not free from tensions: global education needs to examine controversial issues relating to global and local identities (Niens & Reilly, 2012).

Mass schooling has been a main tool for nation-state building, and its good results, such as higher literacy rates, inclusion of a larger part of the population in the political life of the state, relatively peace over years, contribute to influence the debate and to produce skepticism towards programs and guidelines coming from the international arena and perceived as alien to the national context. The consensus on education and human rights is, in fact, not a problem-free reality. Even in member countries of the UNESCO, which in theory engage themselves to work in the direction of an education to global citizenship

by empowering learners of all ages to understand that [human rights violations, inequality and poverty that is still threaten peace and sustainability] are global, not only local issues, and to become active promoters of more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable societies (UNESCO 2021)

the tendency to foster national and traditional models in the curricula is still strong. It might be argued that national anchorage is not an obstruction to peace and tolerance and that there is no contradiction between promoting peace and foster traditional models and this is true in many cases. However, in presence of geopolitical tensions in some area of the world, fostering national models

that indirectly promote national interests to the detriment of other communities or of relationships with neighbor countries, might be in contradiction with promoting peace and tolerance. Here we see that the promotion of human rights through education, when applied by different state members, presents different challenges and the sole statement that more education is good is not a general recipe to achieve UNESCO goals.

The consensus on human rights presents practical challenges concerning implementation. Moreover, the principle itself has been challenged theoretically by some authors. Skepticism towards the influence that international organizations might have on national member states is the motivation behind these critics. Some scholars, in fact, argue against the teaching of human rights, claiming this is an agenda that UNESCO tries to set, but that we should contrast (Piattoeva, 2009). Other reasons are a skepticism towards the meaning of global citizenship itself and by consequence towards the idea of being entitled of rights based on a belonging that is not national: the notion of citizenship is linked to the relationship between the individuals and the nation state, the concept itself becomes meaningless when transferred to the global (Heater, 2004).

UNESCO initiatives, although being expression of remarkable values and intentions, in practice challenge curricula and school systems which are consolidated around the idea of national interests, shared language, common beliefs, what Anderson (1991) called imagined communities. Even where the transition from “national citizen education” to “global citizen education” has been started, with an emphasis on multiculturalism, inclusion of groups, the global nature of civic rights and so on, the reaction to globalization put in question the value of this type of education. This is because education based on the national-state idea is what most societies in the world today perceive as known and safe, being the base of political organization that guaranteed a relatively peaceful existence or at least a well-known framework. A solution that can be considered a compromise between being part of an international community as member of international organization might be the respect international agreements while at the same time preserving an educational system which is consolidated around the idea of national state and aims to include both a national history and a global awareness.

As we will see later, the Italian system, through its constitution, promotes human rights and applies directly international laws signed by the Italian state and promotes programs Italy is part of, such as UNESCO initiatives for education for all. Because of this decision, human rights are promoted in the national curricula and have become an important part of the national education system. This doesn't mean, however, that national curricula, based on a national tradition, have been challenged

to a point that the idea of nation-state building disappeared. Subjects such as national history, Italian literature, and Latin are still compulsory subjects and a cornerstone of the national educational system. Still, the idea of global citizenship has been somehow more and more accepted in the school system. Curricula including the history of Europe, for example, or the compulsory teaching of philosophy and history of art whose curriculum is international and includes authors and artists from all over the world, helped to shape a more international sensitiveness, and awareness that a national citizenship doesn't necessarily exclude the idea of a belonging to a multinational reality, for example the European Union.

Moreover, on the topic of citizenship a different approach has been used by some Italian schools and universities, where the notion of “differentiated citizenship” started to be accepted and taught. It's a principle that “goes beyond the idea of cultural homogeneity as a necessary condition for the state to exist” (Ungaro, 2001. p. 72-73) and opens the doors to an extension of the right to citizenship for people without demanding them to renounce to their culture.

Refugees and asylum seekers are categories that fit in this dialectic between international approaches and national systems in a very peculiar way. First, refugees and asylum seekers are national citizens in a state that cannot guarantee their rights anymore. Even though they are entitled to national rights, these cannot be guaranteed because the State with the authority to guarantee their right is not able to do so. Second, refugees and asylum seekers are entitled to the right of protection because of their citizenship. This is because if the state of destination, for example Italy, doesn't recognize that the State of origin of the immigrants is, for example, fighting a war that put its inhabitants in danger, the pre-conditions for receiving protection are lacking. If, on the contrary, Italy recognize the country of origin of the immigrants as dangerous, the right to protection can be recognized to the immigrants. Another case it is closer to the idea expressed by the UNESCO when referring to global citizenship as rights recognized by the only fact of belonging to the world community. It is the case of subsidiary protection defined as:

the protection given to a third-country national or a stateless person who does not qualify as refugee but in respect of whom substantial grounds have been shown believing that the person concerned, if returned to their country of origin, or in the case of stateless person to their country of former habitual residence, would fare a real risk of suffering serious harm as defined in Art. 15 of Directive 2011/95/EU (European Union, 2011)

In both cases, immigrants are recognized rights in the hosting country based on their belonging to

the international community, through the participation of the hosting country in the international community. In other words, immigrants might be considered global citizens as defined by the UNESCO.

However, their rights to education might not be granted only because they are granted the protection in the hosting state. That's why in the case of education for refugees/asylum seekers, mass schooling through programs such as UNESCO's 'Global Citizenship Education' (GCED) aiming to contribute to peace-building, is a good framework for those school systems that want to provide educational opportunities to immigrants as well and include them in the idea of working to build awareness around the idea of global citizenship. We saw also that UNESCO framework is good as a base for those systems that want teach human rights and multinational belonging without challenging completely the tradition of national curricula, if these systems are able to find a balanced compromise between promoting multiculturalism and preserving local heritage.

Despite the critics towards the UNESCO agenda or simply towards the fact the international agencies in general set the agenda about education on national states, the declaration of Human Rights can still be considered supported by a general international consensus. Moreover, the very general formulation of some of its articles, especially the one on education allows member states to be flexible in their interpretation of the articles. As far as education is concerned, nothing is specified about the contents of education. What appears as a guarantee in itself is that the Declaration of Human Rights states clearly the importance to guarantee schooling for all, independently from the citizenship and based on the fact of being part of the human community. For people with asylum seekers and refugee status, this consensus, even if problematic, has been a guarantee for more schooling also in a situations of uncertainty and where national law might be unclear or lacking a specific imposition for the hosting state to provide educational opportunities also for refugees and asylum seekers.

To finish this chapter, I would like to argue that the limits of UNESCO's programs for education and peace-building that might appear when we try to implement them and that we explained before, are not necessarily an obstacle when we want to provide educational opportunities to refugees.

The limit of national implementation, for example the lack of national laws guaranteeing educational opportunities to immigrants might easily be resolved by extending the right to education also to non-citizens while resident in the hosting country. This solution, we will see, is what the Italian State has chosen, giving even more freedom to institutions or NGO's working with immigrants to formulate internal policies on education when working with immigrants.

The more theoretical limit represented, according to some, by the fact the UNESCO member states prefer to consolidate their own national curricula, instead of adopting a different approach where multiculturalism, internationally spoken language and the teaching of human rights are prioritized, is only a perceived limit that partially has ideological roots. First, national or even traditional curricula are not necessarily in contrast with the idea of peace and tolerance. This might be the case only under very specific geopolitical circumstances. Second, it is in generally very hard to find a world history and a world cultural heritage which is not nationally or locally anchored. Third, the reality in which immigrants hosted in a country are absorbed is a local and national reality. The more immigrants are given the opportunity to learn about the context in which they have to live, the more their integration process will be easy. One may even go so far to argue that it is the local knowledge that can give immigrants the tools to succeed in their educational path, together with a real inclusion in the school system and under the condition that language classes are granted.

Again, the inclusion of immigrants in the new community is most likely to succeed when immigrants are provided the tools to understand this new community and the use of traditional curricula at school might be key to make them able to interpretate the new reality in which they are living and being integrated in the new community. Attending a public national school may also be a way to succeed in their educational path in case they are allowed to stay in the hosting country, and they decided to continue their education.

The promotion of global citizenship and the UNESCO's programs on education, as we said, are important framework to guarantee the right to education for immigrants also in absence of clear legal framework for non-citizens at national levels.

As Wallerstein (1997) points out, the concept of citizenship creates inclusion and exclusion at the same time. The idea of citizenship itself, while guaranteeing rights independently of gender, class and ethnicity, creates at the same time the idea of migrant. Mass schooling aiming to shape global citizens is a general concept that, as we saw, has been both contrasted by several scholars and has been shown to be not easily implemented. One of the main challenges is how to promote the idea of global citizenship, international cooperation, respect of human rights using cultural references that are mainly national. This is not because national curricula are in contrast with the idea of peace and tolerance, but mostly because some very national or even subnational curricula might exclude knowledge on other part of the world, or overestimate the role of one nation in a specific phenomenon or focus on national interests only.

This is an ongoing debate that have many sides. On one hand, UNESCO's idea on global citizenship focuses on the need to teach in some way that poverty, war, climate change and other challenges we

face are not only local, but global issues. On the other hand, there is no world history or world cultural heritage which is not nationally or locally anchored, and even when we refer to global issues, we might understand it differently through our different cultural lenses. This is also why, when we talk about implementing UNESCO ideas and guidelines, we can't avoid the need to contextualize them. Implications and repercussions of problems and issues that UNESCO considers global by nature, can be interpreted differently depending on which state or which local community are making the interpretation. If we want to use as an example the case study of this research, we might take into account that even the evaluation of poverty and marginalization made by S. Home might differ from how people receiving its services perceive their situation.

However, the simple general idea of global citizen and a general consensus on the Declaration of Human Rights provide a guarantee for migrants. These are theoretical and juridical frameworks where rights for refugees and asylum seekers are guaranteed. The fact, then, that at a national level, curricula remain profoundly national and may appear alien and not relevant for immigrants, may not be the case. On the contrary, the participation in the national/local schooling system may be seen as a way to shape refugees/asylum seekers' understanding of rights and responsibilities linked to their hosting community and potentially new national community in the future, together with sense of belonging to a nation state. In fact, the reality in which immigrants hosted at S. Home are immersed is a community with a strong local belonging, made of people speaking the local language in addition to Italian, and generally very proud of its local traditions and history. Having the tools to understand why this sense of belonging is so strong, why Sardinian language is still spoken and how all this coexist with the Italian aspects of the culture, is an advantage also for immigrants who deal with this reality in the everyday life.

Moreover, the national curriculum focuses on national references that shape the community, such as the story behind the national day or the transition from a dictatorship to a democratic republic. This knowledge is key to understand the functioning of the whole national system that immigrant have to deal with during their stay in Italy and it is a knowledge that facilitate the understanding of what happens around them.

4.2 According to the Italian constitution

According to the Italian Law n. 296, art. 1, comma 622, 27th December 2006 “Education is compulsory for at least 10 years and has as a goal to obtain a certificate of secondary high-school or a professional certificate, lasting at least 3 years, before the 18th year of age” (Law n. 296, 27th dec.

2006).

In other words, the Italian State establishes that education is compulsory from the age of six to the age of sixteen. At the age of thirteen is possible to obtain the certificate of “Scuola Media” and the State establishes that the first three years of high-school are compulsory and are the base for students to be able to continue for two more years if they want, until they obtain the diploma of high-school.

Primary school provides the teaching of subjects such as writing and reading (in Italian), math, history, geography, English language, sciences, music, and civic education (citizenship and constitution). In the secondary school, the same subjects as in the primary school are taught and in addition students learn about technology, informatics, arts, and sport. The wide range of subjects at secondary school is meant to give students basic knowledge and skills in order to be able to choose the high school they prefer. High-schools or professional schools are, in fact, specializations in different subjects (scientific high-school, languages high-school ..) while providing as well a range of common subjects such as Italian literature, math, history.

The Italian law, mentioned above, ruling specifically the field of education can be read in a broader context which is the Italian Constitution. In fact, the art. 2 of the Italian Constitution states that “The Republic recognizes and guarantees the respects of human rights both for individuals and social groups, where individuals' personality develops [...]” (Italian Constitution, 2021, art. 2). As we saw in the previous paragraph, the Declaration of Human Rights in the art. 26 states that

(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit. (2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality, and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. (3) Parents have prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children. (Declaration of Human Rights, 1948)

The Italian Law n. 296, art. 1, comma 622, 27th December 2006 both implements the recommendations contained in the Declaration of Human Rights and implements the general

obligation stated in the Constitution. In fact, as suggested in the Declaration of Human Rights, Italian Law established that education is free and compulsory in the elementary. The Italian Law goes so far to guarantee free school access for all ten years of compulsory education.

Also, as suggested by the Declaration of Human Rights, technical and professional education is made available. Especially interesting the part of the art. 26 of the Declaration of Human Rights that suggests that “Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality”. (United Nations, 1948, art. 26). This part of the article inspired the choice of the Italian Parliament to make the first two years of the high-school and provide a range of common subjects for all specializations, in order to give the students the opportunity to continue having a more general education aimed to develop their personality and understanding of the world around them. (Ministero dell'Istruzione, Università e Ricerca, 2021).

Since the Italian Law n. 296, art. 1, comma 622, 27th December 2006 also suggests that compulsory attendance aims to give students the opportunity to obtain a final diploma if they decide to continue after they are sixteen years old, the high-school system is organized in a way that makes it simple for students to just continue the same educational path after the first two years – which are compulsory – in the same school until they obtain the diploma.

4.3 According to S. Home

S. Home is the NGO that officially accepted to take in charge the hosting of asylum seekers and refugees arriving in southern Sardinia and implement the C.A.S. And SPRAR programs. The NGO implements these programs according to the law, giving practical protection and support to immigrants after their arrival, while waiting for their application for protection to be accepted or rejected and, in case the application is accepted, the NGO welcome and support immigrants for a short period – six months – after they obtained the status of refugees.

Italian Law on education doesn't make any distinction between citizens and non-citizens. This means that minors who are legally resident in the country have to go to school as their Italian peers. This makes the enrollment to school for minor immigrants arriving to S. Home automatic, while not for adults. The Italian Law on Immigration doesn't specify whether adult immigrants should be granted school access, however the article 2 of the Constitution can be interpreted as a guarantee for those immigrants who want to go to school. The Constitution states, in fact, that “The Republic recognizes and guarantees the respects of human rights both for individuals and social groups,

where individuals' personality develops” (art. 2, Italian Constitution, 2021). This article guarantee the right to go to school also for immigrants adults who wish to, and the lack of further specifications in the Italian Law let us think that NGOs working with immigrants have a certain room to decide through internal policies its own rules as far as education is concerned.

S. Home made use of this freedom given by the law and decided its own policy regarding education and immigrants. According to an internal decision made by the management of S. Home, in order to be hosted at S. Home, adult asylum seekers and refugees have to agree to attend school.

When interviewed, the director of the section for Immigrants at S. Home hasn't explained in details when and why this policy was voted, but only stated that “Education, school is a value for us and it is important that our hosts receive this opportunity and share this value” (director of Office for Immigration at S. Home, personal communication, 2 august 2020).

I will argue, in the next chapters, that this policy that was made based on the ideological belief that more school is good, has also practical advantages that were most likely taken into consideration when the policy has been adopted.

Independently of the motivation behind the decision of establish compulsory education for all immigrants hosted at S. Home, this decision is totally in accordance with both the suggestion contained in the Declaration of Human Rights and the obligations that the Italian Constitution and the Law previously mentioned imposed to Italian citizens.

It is important to underline that the freedom given by the Italian Law when it comes to education for adult immigrants, in the case of S. Home becomes a freedom to choose only for the NGO. Immigrants hosted by the NGO are not free to decide whether they want or don't want to go to school. The legal space of action is, in fact, completely taken by the NGO that imposes people who are hosted to respect the NGO's internal policy on education. This put immigrants in a position that is constrained both by the Italian Law and the NGO.

However, this situation might be considered and perceived by the immigrants as profitable. Ideally, this treatment put immigrants – who are in a liminal state where they are non-citizens but still dependent on the law of the hosting country – in a position where they can potentially get the same chances as an Italian student. This means also the chance to potentially become an Italian citizen in the future.

As I mentioned, this policy has also practical advantages. For example, it allows S. Home not to

have to control their guests for the hours they are at school and not to have to risk a potential confrontation with the local population about people staying in the street doing nothing. I will argue, later, that this aspect might have been relevant when the decision to make school enrollment compulsory for all immigrants hosted at S. Home has been taken. I will use some empirical examples from the town where S. Home is active and works with immigrants, to show that a policy on education can be inspired by principles and beliefs, but is also a result of a local context where decisions have an impact on the community. I will argue that the policies on education decided by S. Home have a double advantage to give immigrant students the same educational opportunities as their Italian peers and at the same time to prevent tensions between immigrants and the local community to begin.

Before moving to this analysis, I will dedicate next chapter to the presentation of my data from field work. I believe the data collected among respondents hosted at S. Home are the best way to get an overview over the educational path of immigrants students and to understand what education for all in the case of immigrants hosted at S. Home means in practice. In other words, I will try to show how education for immigrants hosted in a small town in southern Sardinia looks like: which schools do they attend? How do they learn the language? Who support them in case of difficulties? Do grades show potential to succeed?

Chapter 5: Case Study S. Home

In the previous chapter I addressed the issue on Education for All as intended by the UNESCO and I presented part of the debate on the issue. I also argue that even though the ideas of education for all and education for global citizenship have been criticized, they are still relevant and applicable in the case of guaranteeing education for refugees even if through the use of national curricula. I then explained how the right to education is guaranteed by the Italian State and promoted by S. Home at a local level.

In this chapter I present my own research, the data from field work and the analysis. I will first describe the situation at S. Home, how the Office for Immigration works, how many people are hosted and where they live. I will then present a description of the data gathered in the questionnaires, the data emerged by the interviews and the results of my observation on the field.

I will then analyze the data concerning immigrants' educational path (language knowledge, school attendance, enrollment criteria, type of schools, diplomas, and grades). I will also analyze closely data on extra-curricular activities and in which way those activities increase the perception of support and they are in line with immigrants' ambitions and wishes. I then make an analysis of partnership between S. Home and local actors in order to understand how these partnerships are facilitating factors for the NGO and its ambitions to create a supportive environment for immigrants. Finally, I will compare the work of S. Home with other initiatives for immigrants in Italy in form of civic integration programs.

After 2015 S. Home started the Office for Immigration, a new section in addition to those responsible for other types of marginalization: extreme poverty, psychiatric illness, and drug addiction.

The Office for Immigration is responsible to host asylum seekers and refugees in cooperation with the Prefecture of Cagliari and to implement the programs established by law: C.A.S. And SPRAR. C.A.S. Stays for Centro di Assistenza Straordinaria (Center for Extraordinary Assistance) and according to the Ministry of Home Affairs it starts in the moment asylum seekers are registered to the moment they receive the status of refugees or they are sent home, in case their demand is refused. It has a variable duration, since the legal process can last up to five years.

SPRAR is the program for those whose demand is accepted and receive the status of refugee. This program lasts 6 months, it can be prolonged until one-year maximum. The main goal of the program

is to help refugees to start an autonomous life in the hosting country. In order to achieve the goal, S. Home offers a list of activities both educational- and work-oriented.

Even though C.A.S. Has less conditions to respect than SPRAR being only an Extraordinary Assistance Program, S. Home has decided to offer the same activities and chances to people attending both programs. This is because C.A.S. Can last very long and the NGO beliefs people should be given the chance to conduct an active life also during the limbo, while waiting from a response of the tribunal.

Another condition to be hosted at S. Home is that all people hosted have to be enrolled in public school. Normally, this is compulsory only for minors arriving in Italy. Compulsory schooling for all asylum seekers and refugees is an internal policy of S. Home that, as we previously saw, is in accordance with both the Declaration of Human Rights and the obligations that the Italian Constitution and the Law impose to Italian citizens.

Table: Asylum seekers and refugees hosted at S. Home for each program

	CAS	SPRAR (SIPROIMI dal 2018)	MSNA <i>(not accompanied minors)</i>
Since 2015	236	86	59
2019/2020	20	20	

Table: Schools attended by asylum seekers and refugees hosted at S. Home

	CAS	SPRAR (SIPROIMI since 2018)	
Liceo Classico (Highschool)		1	
IPIA (alberghiero)		3	
Secondary school (11-13 y)	3	4	
Primary School	4	2	
Kindergarten 3-6		2	
Kindergarten 1-3	2	2	
Italian course A1	10	6	
Italian course A2-B2			

The people interviewed for this research are part of the C.A.S. Program 2019/2020.

5.1 Interview at the Office for Immigration at S. Home

The 2nd of August at 12.30 I was invited to interview the Director and the four officers in the Office for Immigration at S. Home. It was a group interview with five respondents. When I arrived at the flat where we had the appointment, I was received in the administrative office for Immigration Issues at S. Home. The same flat is the location where asylum seekers and refugees are hosted. It is a flat on two floors, six rooms, four bathrooms, a kitchen, a living room, two balconies and a room which is the administrative office. This last room is a small place and there is an office desk in the middle dividing me and the officers. Beside me is sitting the Director of the Immigrant section, who is responsible for both programs, and he is the coordinator of the other four respondents. He wants to show me documents while speaking, and I can more easily take notes.

Among the respondents there was an old acquaintance of mine, and I got the impression, during the interview and the observation, that this created an atmosphere of trust, and that without this person knowing me well, I would have had more difficulties in getting answers from others as well, if I wasn't introduced so warmly to the whole team. Moreover, my old acquaintance was my chaperon after the interview, and showed me the entire infrastructure, and introduced me to some of the people hosted there. I had the chance to have a coffee and a chat with three refugees: an old woman, her daughter, and a boy who arrived in 2018 as asylum seeker, and now is working as an interpreter for S. Home itself.

The director introduced his officers, and they explained me their role in the NGO. They are all specialized in different fields but in the daily work, besides their field of competence, they may have similar tasks such as giving information to the hosted people, checking that everybody is in the structure by 11 pm and so on.

John, Frances and Alex are working with the C.A.S. The section for special assistance. One is psychologist, one is lawyer and one is a social worker. They explained me that they have a work division based also on what is required by the Italian law: the psychologist helps immigrants in their relation to the health system, the lawyer helps them during the whole legal procedure to obtain the asylum status, the social worker is in charge of the enrollment at school.

The C.A.S. is responsible of the assistance to immigrants since they arrive in Sardinia to when they receive the asylum (or they are sent back to their country of origin). Assistance in the first phase includes the registration at the Prefecture, health check and hosting. Most of the immigrants arriving

to Sardinia need an interpreter to go through the first phase. This is provided either by the Prefecture itself or by one of the NGO that will be in charge of the group of immigrants. The most used languages are English, French and Arabic. In addition, they are supported by the psychologist of the NGO, that is going to receive them during the health check.

After the first phase, immigrants are taken in charge by an NGO or a public structure called hosting center, depending on the availability. In my case study, immigrants arrived directly from Lebanon through humanitarian corridor. This was possible because S. Home works in cooperation with an NGO based in Lebanon and giving assistance to migrants escaping from the Syrian war.

Despite the name “special assistance” which may suggest this is a first and short phase, the period immigrants spend in the C.A.S. is normally not less than six months. This is, as explained before, a program required by the Italian law for immigrants arriving in Italy and applying for asylum. This program has some conditions to be respected: immigrants have to be enrolled in a language course, be supported in the relation with local institutions, learn how the health system works, and become as independent as possible in the time they wait for an answer to their application. The Italian law makes a difference between the two programs. SIPROIMI program is for those who already received the status as refugees. The program is shorter and focuses mainly on the integration of refugees in the hosting country and their economic independence through providing classes in Italian languages and professional training.

S. Home has decided to make those programs as similar as possible for people hosted by them, by investing the same resources for both groups. The rationality behind this decision is to make the life of people waiting for asylum more active and as normal as possible, even in a limbo situation. In practice, this means that people in the C.A.S. are enrolled to public school or to Italian classes and can take part to the same activities as those who already are entitled the refugee status.

It also means that the officers have a similar work in both programs, which makes – according to them – the organization easier.

5.2 Who are the asylum seekers/refugees hosted now?

The majority of them are Syrians arrived via humanitarian corridor from Beirut to Rome first, and sent to Sardinia with the help of a Lebanese NGO partner with S. Home. They didn't arrive independently, for example by boat, but in a totally legal way in the framework of international

cooperation, through humanitarian corridor.

A humanitarian corridor is, according to the Italian Foreign Minister, a “safe and legal way to transfer to Italy and integrate those immigrants who are in a particular vulnerable situation: single woman with children, victims of the human trafficking, people with handicaps or serious illnesses, or people identified as vulnerable by the organizations such as UNHCR” (Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale, 2021).

This way to organize the arrival gives immigrants the priority in the procedure for asylum. I was explained by the legal officer at S. Home that other asylum seekers who have been hosted by S. Home from African countries or Bangladesh with no help from other NGOs had to go through a long process that lasted between 3 and 5 years. They normally receive a temporary residence permit which is renewed every 6 months. This makes their situation very precarious and it is more difficult to find a job and be independent that way. In fact, the temporary residence permit doesn't give the right to a social security number which makes even more difficult to access all the basic services.

This is why all immigrants hosted at S. Home have a personal assistant who support them in all the bureaucratic procedures.

5.3 What are immigrants' expectations?

Both the questionnaires, and unofficial chat with people hosted at S. Home while I was shown the flat, give a clear confirmation that what they want, first of all, is help with the language and the communication with the outside world. This is essential both for their learning process and to limit the risk of isolation in the flat, where everybody speaks Arabic.

In the interview with the director, he made it clear that they also have expectations, first and foremost that hosted people respect the rules. This is because S. Home has to report to the Prefecture, and there are rules for asylum seekers and refugees who are still part of the SIPROIMI program. For example, they have to sleep in the structure where they live, they have no possibility to stay out in the night, and they have to be home at 11 pm. They cannot have visits, use alcohol or drugs. They also receive a pocket money they are expected to use wisely.

In fact, people hosted in the structure are people in a liminal state, not autonomous human beings, and remain so both in their relation to the state and at S. Home. However, during the chat with some of them, nobody expressed openly the need for more freedom or independence. On the contrary,

feelings of satisfaction and happiness for small things happening in their daily life were very much expressed.

The director expressed another expectation, which is that hosted people are good with each other. This is an essential condition when about 20 people live together in the same flat for an undetermined time. The officers told me that this is not always the case, especially when the hosted group is not homogeneous, for example when S. Home was hosting people from Maghreb, Bangladesh and Sub-Saharan African countries at the same time. This wasn't the case for my sample, being almost everybody from the same country, but still officers told about some quarreling happening especially among girls living in the same floor of the flat. From their experience, they noticed that quarreling happened more often among women/girls and decided therefore to hire a woman psychologist.

5.4 Education for Asylum seekers/refugees

While school attendance is required by the Italian law for minor immigrants arriving and being hosted in Italy, no such condition is imposed for adult immigrants. This is also partially in accordance with the law on education in Italy, which established that schooling is compulsory until the age of 16.

S. Home, however, has a policy that imposes to all immigrants hosted at S. Home school attendance. This is their condition to host asylum seekers and refugees. The rationale behind this policy is mostly ideological but has some practical aspects as well: immigrants don't only stay home doing nothing or in the streets, were they have been more exposed to the critics of the local population.

Another reason given to me by the director of the Office for Immigration is that they would like to compensate the loss of opportunities for learning Italian that was a consequence of the new Salvini law. This new modification to the law on Immigration that was voted in the Italian Parliament in 2019 includes a remarkable reduction of the budget for Italian teachers for the C.A.S. Program.

The knowledge of Italian language is crucial. The main reasons are that other languages – except from the local language, Sardinian – are not spoken in the island, and also that the teaching medium in all schools is Italian.

That's why the first thing immigrants have to do when they arrive at S. Home is an Italian language test. S. Home collaborates directly with a school called CPIA that offers Italian classes and

secondary school courses for adults.

The second step, as far as the education is concerned, is the enrollment to school. This phase is not unproblematic. According to the officers, this process is delicate because it may create a lot of frustration in the hosted people/future students. The main reason is the choice of the criteria used to decide in which school asylum seekers/refugees are going to be enrolled.

In fact, it is not possible to take into consideration only the age. S. Home organized a language test first and some of the students may need to go to primary school because they can't even write the Latin alphabet, but they are, of course, too old to be in class with children, so a different solution needs to be found.

At the same time, the officer in charge of the enrollment has to try not to isolate the asylum seekers/refugees in separate language classes, because they believe they need to be in class with local students, which is important for their integration in town. This means that some students have been enrolled at school even without a good Italian knowledge. For example, a 44-year-old man with no primary school experience and no good Italian, was enrolled at the high-school, in evening classes for adults, in order to make his school experience as normal as possible.

“We try to combine different criteria: age, knowledge of Italian, diploma they have from before, support they can have at school here”, says the officer in charge of education for the Office of Immigration at S. Home.

However, sometimes it is not possible. During the interview I was told about the case of two sisters, one only one year older than the other. Still, one managed to be accepted in the secondary school, the other needed to learn Italian better, and was enrolled in an Italian course with adults, this created a lot of frustration, since they considered to have received a too different treatment.

What is positive in the town where S. Home is located, is that the two schools offering Italian classes for foreigners have a long and good experience and manage to prepare students to start at school as soon as possible.

5.5 Does S. Home also organize extra-curriculum activities or classes in any subject?

S. Home does organize both extra-curriculum activities and reinforcement courses. The NGO focuses on minors, especially those who arrived without parents. This is because adults can freely participate to workshops and activities organized by other organizations in town than S. Home such as gym, music school, art school and can take their children with them, while minors alone are not allowed. S. Home tries to compensate this lack of opportunities for minors without parents, by organizing its own workshops and activities. The NGO also focuses on reinforcement courses, for example they organize reading classes in Italian for children in cooperation with a local church.

The intervention of the NGO is not limited to organizing classes, but they are also contact people for the schools where the asylum seekers/refugees are enrolled. In a usual situation, parents are responsible of the relation with the school of their children. In the case of people hosted at S. Home, the NGO takes the responsibility for all students, which means adults included. The relation with schools includes going to the meetings with teachers, regularly receiving information about grades and discipline. The Italian curriculum for all types of schools includes “discipline” as a curricular subject, which has a remarkable importance since a grade below average in “discipline” can imply – in the worst-case scenario – the exclusion from the school. S. Home is particularly attentive on that matter, being school attendance not only compulsory by law, but also their internal policy, as we saw previously.

Finally, another type of intervention by S. Home is to contact pedagogues and collaborate with them in case their students need special help in any subject or in the learning process as a whole.

5.6 What happens when the C.A.S. program is finished?

As we saw C.A.S. is a temporary program that finishes when people either receive the status of refugees or be sent to their country of origin.

In case of officially becoming a refugee, those who are hosted at S. Home, or any other organization implementing the program, go to the ex-SPRAR now called SIPROIMI.

SIPROIMI lasts only six months and in case of necessity can be extended for a maximum of 6 other months. The goal of this program is to help refugees to create an independent life in the hosting country. This includes find a flat/house, find a job, knowing the language and the system well

enough to manage an independent life without the constant help of an intermediate.

According to the officers at S. Home, the most challenging part for refugees is to find a job. That is also a reason why S. Home invests so many resources in supporting refugees in their educational path even before receiving their refugee status.

Despite the difficulties, as far as we know from S. Home experience, all people who were hosted by the NGO managed to build a network in town, and preferred to stay, even though they are not supposed to stay in town or in Sardinia once they finish the SIPROIMI program. The network are often old classmates, parents of children's classmates, participants to activities refugees took part in when attending C.A.S. or SIPROIMI.

There is also another aspect that makes somehow convenient for refugees to have been part of C.A.S. and/or SIPROIMI with S. Home, which is that, as we saw in the description of S. Home mission, the NGO originally worked with other types of marginalization, and still works in these sectors. This is a potential additional network for refugees who might end up in a difficult situation after the SIMPROIMI is finished, for example in a situation of extreme poverty or mental illness. These are sectors where S. Home has its expertise and in case of necessity can be a resource for refugees in difficulty even when S. Home cannot help them officially through the Office of Immigration.

5.7 People attending C.A.S. in 2019/2020

Overview

People attending C.A.S. Program at S. Home in 2019/2020 are twenty in total. Sixteen of them accepted to participate to my research by responding a questionnaire.

As we mentioned before, this group is very homogeneous in terms of nationality: fifteen of them are Syrians while one is from Nigeria.

The questionnaires aimed to describe the researched population and tries to understand how S. Home organized its work with the group based on needs and characteristic of the population.

1. Language knowledge

Fifteen of the respondents have Arabic as first language. As also confirmed by the officers of S. Home during the interview, this aspect made it much easier for the whole group living together, since communication problems were less than with previous groups. Having a common language also made it easier for the participants to help each other in learning Italian. During the observation, I could notice that life in the S. Home flat was characterized by the predominance of these two languages.

The only participant who hasn't Arabic as first language, speaks one of the language spoken in Sub-Saharan Africa. The participant, however, speaks English as well, which allows him/her to communicate with part of the group who also can speak English.

According to the answers given in the questionnaires, only three people said they can speak Italian, three people said they can speak English, and one participant declared to know local dialects from the country of origin. In spite of the strong French influence that characterized Syria, nobody speaks French, but the reason may be that nobody in the group, as we will see later, have higher education.

It is interesting to notice that two of the respondents who can speak Italian also declared that they could speak English before arriving to Italy.

1.2 Previous knowledge of the Italian language

The majority of participants – fifteen of them – declared that they had no knowledge of the Italian language at their arrival in Italy, while one of them had a knowledge of Italian language at A2 level, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

2. Education

According to the answers given in the questionnaires, nine participants have obtained a degree generally speaking, while seven participants had no school experience before arriving to Italy. Among those who attended school in their country of origin, four have attended and completed primary school only, two have completed secondary school, one has attended three years high-school without obtaining any diploma, two have completed high-school, and one has a university degree in Economics.

2.2 Diploma accepted in Italy

None of the participants received help by the staff of S. Home to convert the diploma obtained in

the country of origin into an Italian diploma, and the diplomas from the country of origin weren't taken into consideration in the enrollment process. In fact, as we saw in the previous chapter, criteria for choosing the school in Italy were a combination of age and Italian knowledge. In this context, the knowledge of Italian and the opportunities to integrate with peer classmates were prioritized, and previous diplomas obtained in the country of origin were considered irrelevant.

2.3 School attended in Italy

All participants are enrolled either in Italian classes or in a public school. Four participants attend the primary school, two participants attend the secondary school, while eight participants attend Italian language classes: two participants attend Italian course at A1 level, five at A2 level and one participant at B1 level.

According to the answers given in the questionnaires, two participants declared they don't attend any course or school, despite attendance for asylum seekers at S. Home is mandatory, for no specified reasons. Also S. Home preferred not to give information about those two cases.

2.4 Enrollment

As we saw in the previous chapter, enrollment to a school follows first and foremost the criteria of the language knowledge. The overview we get from the questionnaires is that the majority – eight participants – who attend Italian language classes didn't have any knowledge of the Italian language from before. The same is for the six participants attending primary school, who most likely were enrolled in primary school because of the age, by taking into account the possibility to learn Italian directly at school.

One of the participants attending secondary school had knowledge of the English language before arriving. The knowledge of the English language has no significance for the other two respondents: one enrolled in primary school, more likely because of the age, and the other attending no school, for not specified reasons.

According to the declaration of the officers during the interview, diplomas obtained in the country of origin were not officially chosen as a criterion for choosing the school. However, data from the questionnaires show that it is unclear whether diplomas obtained in the country of origin play a role in the choice. We see, for example, that all participants attending primary school – five – had no previous school experience, which may be seen as a consistent choice. However, other cases are more confusing: one of the students attending secondary school already had a certificate from secondary school obtained in the country of origin. This shows that in absence of skills/knowledge

testing of the individual academic maturity level, it's most likely that only the Italian language criterium was used. Also, other students had not finished primary school in the country of origin, but were enrolled in secondary school, most likely because of the age.

As far as the previous school experience is concerned, the situation of the participants attending Italian classes is various: two of them have no school experience from before, two of them finished primary school, one finished secondary school, two obtained a high-school diploma and one had a university degree.

Data confirm the difficulty expressed by officers at S. Home during the interview concerning the enrollment process, especially the way to find the right criteria. According to what they told during the interview; this situation is very frustrating for all people involved. They are aware that not only does this situation create dissatisfaction for the students, but also, it can seem that the decision of which school and class suits best for each and every one is left very much to chance. The only way they have to overcome this frustration is to make shared decisions as much as possible, including both students and school principals. In fact, according to the director of the Office for Immigration at S. Home, principals are those responsible for the final formation of each class in their school and S. Home needs to discuss with them pro and cons of the enrollment in a certain class for asylum seekers/refugee.

2.5 Grades

According to what is declared in the questionnaires, grades are generally very high. The average grade for the first semester 2019-20 for participants attending primary school is 8,5 (in a scale from 0 to 10, where 10 is the best grade). The average grade for participants attending secondary school in the same period is 7,5.

2.5.1 Grades/Subjects

The subjects in which participants received the best grades in primary and secondary school are: math (five students), Italian language (four students), English (four students), history (two students), geography (one student).

2.5.1 Grades/Language knowledge

The previous knowledge of a European language has little impact on which subjects the participants receive the best grades. When the previous knowledge of a European language has an impact it concerns only for students in secondary school. The language factor has, in fact, no meaning for students attending primary schools where the average grade is 8,5 in a scale from 0 to 10, despite

none of the students had previous knowledge of a European language when they started school.

3. Occupation in the country of origin

Nine participants had an occupation before leaving the country of origin. None of them had a job requiring a university degree. According to the answers given in the questionnaires, the occupations the participants held in their country of origin are: hairdresser, electrician, bus-driver, bartender, caregiver, cook assistant, welder, beautician, shepherd, and housewife.

4. Extra-curriculum activities

4.1 Activities at S. Home

All sixteen participants take part in a extra-curriculum activities organized by S. Home, sometimes in cooperation with other institutions or groups in town.

Here is an overview of the activities attended by the participants: three of them are taking the driving license; five are daily involved in works of social utility which entail for example gardening in public spaces, repairing small public structures such as playgrounds; five are taking extra Italian classes at the local church; two participants are taking pizza baking classes, one participant is helping in a local church with cleaning and preparing the location for the celebrations.

Some of the participants take part in more than one activity such as hairdresser course, internship in a farm, nursing course, beautician course and sport.

The youngest participants are involved in age-appropriate activities such as scout (2), playroom (4), readings at the church (2), summer camp (3), artistic laboratory (1).

According to what declared in the questionnaires, none of the participants take part in activities which are not coordinated by S. Home. This means that the NGO cooperates closely with other parts of civil society. These connections are the results of years of work in town also in other sectors, as we saw previously. This cooperation can be seen, if not as an official part of the NGO's infrastructure, as a successful *modus operandi*.

5. Ambitions

A final part of the questionnaire is an open question concerning the participant's ambitions. Analyzing the answers, I took into consideration several aspects of this population. The participants are asylum seekers escaping from a war, they are potentially long-term migrants, and not primarily

economic migrants. Researched people in this thesis are participants at C.A.S. who still have not obtained a refugee status, even though their chance to be sent back to their country of origin is limited by the fact that the war in their country is still continuing, and being arrived by humanitarian corridor, their demand is prioritized by the Prefecture. However, the context in which they live is very precarious and characterized by the need of protection first and foremost. This makes their ambition geographically and temporally limited.

5.1 Ambitions related to education

According to the answers given in the questionnaires, when it comes to education for six of the participants the main ambition is to learn Italian as soon as possible, one of them wishes to obtain a diploma while one of them wishes to study medicine at the university. Eight of them preferred not to answer this question.

5.2 Ambitions related to job

Participants have various ambitions when it comes to occupation. The following are the professions that the participants would like to have in the future: hairdresser, electrician, cook, welder, hostess, dairy worker, nurse/doctor, and pizza baker.

When we look at the work ambitions and previous jobs in the country of origin, we see that most of the participants wish to continue with their previous occupation also in the hosting country. Among those who answered this question, five participants out of nine would like to continue with the same job they had before leaving their country, while four of them would like to start a completely different occupation.

5.3 Geographical and temporal perspective and ambitions

During my observation, I had the opportunity to take a coffee and have a chat with two workers at S. Home and two women from Syria hosted in the flat, mother and daughter. In the conversation, the topic of ambitions and wishes emerged, and the perspective of the Syrian woman was clear: they expressed short-time projects and wishes in Sardinia, or more generally in Italy, even in case of receiving the status of refugees. While the mother talked less about the future and more about her life in the flat, the daughter expressed with strong conviction that she “will go back to Syria for sure”. Also one of the two workers at S. Home I talked to confirmed my impression after the conversation: many of the people who are hosted at S. Home expressed their wish/conviction that their stay in Italy is only temporary, due to the war in their country that they see as close to an end.

Being part of the C.A.S., people at S. Home now have a limited temporal horizon, but also in the

perspective of receiving the status of refugee – something that all of them wish and work for together with the lawyer at S. Home – their temporal and geographical perspective is limited to Sardinia until the end of the war. This might explain their engagement in all kind of activities with local institution in the town where S. Home is located, but at the same time the wish to continue the same working activity they successfully carried out in the country of origin.

Chapter 6: An analysis of S. Home policy on education

In the previous chapter I started to present my case study and the data collected on the field. I started with a description of the Office for Immigration at S. Home. This description is the result of a long interview with the director of the Office and his officers. I tried to give an overview over their work and duties and especially over the way in which the Office is able to implement the two programs C.A.S. And SIPROIMI. I, then, continued providing some figures of the people who have been hosted at S. Home since 2015 and in another table, I show how many people are hosted today and in which school they are enrolled. Then, I give a description of the population who is my researched group. They are all part of the C.A.S. Program, which means they are all waiting for an answer to their application for the status of refugees. I dedicated a paragraph to the description of their expectations of the program. I believe taking into the picture not only their objective situation, but also their state of mind while living this situation, would contribute to understand better their life at S. Home and the relations with the people from the NGO, the schools and their life in town. Then I move on showing my data on education. I show which choices and opportunities immigrants have as far as school enrollment is concerned, and which extra-curricular activities they can take part in. I also explain which opportunities immigrants have when the C.A.S. Program is finished for them. Finally, I go through data from the questionnaires that I divided in relevant categories for my research: language knowledge, diploma obtained before arriving to Italy, attended schools, grades and other activities. I tried to find correlations and I gave a special attention to immigrants' ambitions. I found out an important correlation between extra-curricular activities and ambitions, which is also relevant for further analysis in this chapter.

In this chapter I engage theories from my literature review, and I analyze data from field work from different perspectives. I will first argue that extra-curricular activities play an important role in supporting immigrants in their educational path in Italy. Especially because data show a correlation between which activities immigrants carry out and their professional ambitions.

Second, I will argue that the decision to make school attendance compulsory for immigrants hosted at S. Home is for sure a policy inspired by an ideology which consider education crucial for personal development, but it is also a policy that has advantages in terms of avoid tensions between immigrants and the local community.

Third, I will argue that the support given by S. Home and the perception that immigrants have of this support has an influence on school engagement and on the decisions made by immigrants on their educational path.

Four, I will analyze the contribution that local actors give to S. Home by welcoming immigrants to take part in extra-curricular activities. I will analyze these partnerships with local actors using three different theories of power: by Dahl (1957), by Lukes (2005) and by Stoppino (2000).

Five, I will argue that the work carried out by S. Home with immigrants can be seen as an example of educational justice. I will use an analysis by Mel Ainscow and argue that S. Home tries to achieve educational justice working at three different levels: within school, between school and beyond school.

Finally, I will make a comparison between S. Home and civic integration programs that were used in several European countries since the 90s. I will argue that both the ideology inspiring S. Home and its practical activities with immigrants differ from the approach used by civic integration programs.

6.1 Educational activities at S. Home

As far as both education and job possibilities are concerned, S. Home supports participants' ambitions. According to the data from the questionnaires, we can see that S. Home seconds hosted people's ambitions by finding a relevant extra-curricular activity for participants in the field of their interest. In fact, in seven cases out of nine S. Home managed to find an extra-curricular activity which is directly relevant with the professional ambition of the respondent, while only in two cases the extra-curriculum activity is only indirectly relevant.

The main reason expressed by the director of the Office for Immigration is that the choice of extra-curricular activities is based first and foremost on the hosted person's motivation and capacity. These two factors are seen as the key for success in terms of perseverance (wanting to continue the activity) and learning. In order to achieve these goals two main factors need to be taken into consideration: One is the initial obstacle of the language knowledge: the director and his officers made the choice to find extra-curricular activities that asylum seekers could take part in shortly after their arrival, even with a poor Italian, because they had basic knowledge from before, for example the hairdresser who started to take hairdressing course. The second one is the perception of support. According to Ryan et al. (2019), school engagement – defined as the extent to which students are involved, committed and motivated to learn and work towards their academic and professional goal – “is highly correlated with students' perception of support from their teacher, parents and friends (Ryan et al, 2019, p. 2). In the case of migrants at S. Home the support from family and friends is lacking and needs to be substituted by other actors, in this case S. Home who take the role of parents in relation with schools.

6.2 School attendance: a policy with practical advantages

School attendance is both compulsory by law for minor immigrants' part of C.A.S. and SIPROIMI and is compulsory for all according to S. Home policy.

As we saw previously, S. Home starts by the belief that education is important for integration, and in order to give more chances for the future refugees, when they will start an autonomous life in Italy. This policy also has some practical advantages: 1) it is a way to compensate the budget cut for Italian teachers that characterized the SIPROIMI program (while the precedent SPRAR program included remarkably resources for the teaching of Italian language); 2) it is a way to avoid that adult migrants, who have the right to seek job, but little chances to find one, remain jobless and without a constructive activity to do, which in the past created some polemics among the local population. In 2017, for example, the town became known in the rest of the island for what the media called the "asparagus war": immigrants hosted in a public structure managed by the municipality decided to organize a new business in competition with local jobless men which was the sale of asparagus. This initiative was hardly tolerated by the local population who didn't want to see a local natural resource used in what they called a "war among the poorest". Tensions were registered by the local police between local sellers and immigrants and the debate lasted almost one year. At the end, the structure was closed, and S. Home remained the only structure in town that works with immigrants. The experience of the "asparagus war" functioned as a warning that C.A.S. and SIPROIMI programs needed to be implemented taking into account also the sensitiveness of the local population.

Apart from this episode, no other case of tension or conflict were registered in town, and the director of the Office for Immigration confirmed that the enrollment at school created no problems for the other students and the dynamics within the classroom.

6.3 Perceived support and school engagement

The director of the Office for Immigration at S. Home explains that the NGO has a goal to support immigrant students until they obtain the secondary-school diploma when it is possible. This policy works according to the Italian educational system that define secondary school as the last compulsory cycle. Students who already obtained the diploma have to continue in high school at least until they are part of the SIPROIMI program and until they fulfill 16 years.

Data on enrollment of immigrants who part of the SIPROIMI in 2019/20 show that four immigrant

students are attending high school and made interesting choices about their educational path. Three of them have chosen a professional-oriented school in order to have easier access to the job-market in Sardinia. The school focuses, in fact, on subjects related to the tourism-industry, the most important sector in the island. The other student has chosen the “Liceo Classico”, which can be defined as the elite high school for those who wish to continue an academic career in humanistic subject, and where the main subjects are Latin, Ancient Greek and Philosophy. The school is located 50 km from the flat of S. Home, and the student spends most of his time commuting and studying. Officers at S. Home expressed surprise and a strong admiration for a choice that they consider being both brave and demanding. In spite of the difficulties like commuting or, for S. Home, represent the student in a school located in another municipality, S. Home decided to support this choice.

Interviewed respondents expressed a general satisfaction as far as perceived support is concerned, but the most interesting finding come from the questionnaires. In all cases, there is a correlation between ambitions and extra-curricular activities. As we said before, S. Home tried and managed to second the ambitions and preferences of all asylum seekers. S. Home created what can be defined a supportive environment. Choices made by students who already went through the C.A.S. Program show that a supportive environment had as result the capacity of immigrant students to identify their own goals in the new context, after having been able to seek and find right information about their opportunities. S. Home was also able, first with its policy on education, and then with its decisions, to create new circumstances in terms of more stability and predictability for immigrants, which may be the reasons of the positive outcomes. In fact, as we saw before, grades are relatively high for all the students, independently of the previous knowledge of the language or the subject.

6.4 S. Home and its partners

As we saw before, respondents take part in a range of extra-curricular activities which are organized by S. Home in cooperation with other local actors. Works of social utility are coordinated in collaboration with the municipality, driving classes are organized by private driving schools, Italian classes and readings are organized by a local church, pizza baking classes are organized by local bakers, and other activities are organized by a local church.

Hairdresser courses, internships in a farm, nursing courses, and beautician courses are organized by private local professionals, while scout, playroom, summer camps, and artistic laboratory for children are organized by churches or local artists. Only one of these actors – the municipality – is also a donor of S. Home.

In general, we can say that S. Home gives remarkable support to students in their educational path also because of the collaboration to its partners in town. While none of those actor would define the collaboration as a partnership, nor this network can be considered a structure, there is no doubt that this collaboration over the years is “a working relationship that is characterized by a shared sense of purpose, mutual respect and the willingness to negotiate” (Pugh et al. 1987, cited in Buchanan, 1994, p. 9, cited in Lister 2000, p. 228). Some of the elements defining a partnership can be observed, such as mutual trust and support, as well as a shared perception of mutuality and give-and-take. However, there is no shared decision making or a common structure, in other words the collaboration is not institutionalized, but there is a working relationship characterized by strong personal relationships. Some of the officers have previously been part of scout groups linked to the church and have direct contacts both with churches and scout groups. In the other cases we know that local professionals are linked to S. Home by acquaintance at different levels.

6.4.1 Power in partnership

A contribution coming from Lister (2000) shows how power relationships between partner NGOs can help define how NGOs work, how they share responsibilities and in which ways they achieve positive results in their work.

In order to analyze power relationships that exist between S. Home and its partners at a local level, I will start applying Dahl (1957), being his theory of power a classical and a reference for many who researched on power after him. A lot happened after Dahl and some critics showed Dahl's theory's limits. I will use a famous critic to Dahl by Steven Lukes (2005) to add some more elements in the analysis of power relationships between S. Home and the local actors that cooperate with the NGO. I will finally use some reflections by Stoppino (2000), in order to give a final reconstruction of power relationships that can be relevant for S. Home and the successful collaboration between the NGO and its partners working locally.

In his famous work, Dahl proposes a power comparability, in other words a way to compare who has more power than who, based on five factors: the basis of power, the means of employing the basis, the scope of the power, the number of comparable respondents and the chance in probabilities. “The first two factor may be thought as differences in properties of the actors exercising power, and the last three may be thought of as differences in the responses of the respondents” (Dahl 1957, p. 206). It is likely that differences in properties will produce differences in responses.

Using Robert Dahl's framework, as suggested by Lister (2000), the *base of power*, that is in the case of partnerships between NGOs and local actors can be thought as the resources that an organization can use to influence the other organization's behavior is not clearly identifiable. We don't know, in fact, which resources S. Home might use in order to make local actors cooperate in planning extra-curricular activities that fit with immigrants' needs, unless we are willing to consider a positive reputation of the NGO a base of power strong enough to influence local partners to cooperate. In other words, the (A) S. Home would influence the behavior of (B) other partners in welcoming immigrants in their activities in line with S. Home need to find extra-curricular activities for the people hosted by the NGO.

Relevant resources for all actors involved can be different, and while we have not much information about which resources are involved in the cooperation between organizations - other than positive reputation and mutual help- we do know that financial resources are involved in the relationship between S. Home and the Municipality. Among its local partners, the only direct donor, which is the Municipality, guarantees total transparency about the financial resources given to S. Home. This information is accessible to everybody in S. Home website. However, in this case it would be the Municipality the actor A whose properties might influence (B) S. Home in planning activities in line with the Municipality interests. This is only a speculation, since we have no evidence that the partnership between S. Home and the Municipality has in any way influenced S. Home's decisions in the matter of its activities.

As far as the other partners are concerned, we know that S. Home was able to make them cooperate in form of welcoming immigrants and allowing them to take part in activities organized by the partners. Again, we have little information about which resources played a role in making this cooperation possible. What we also know is that no reciprocal advocacy is involved in the collaboration between organizations.

The *means of power*, or in other words the specific actions by which organization A can make actual use of the resources in order to influence the behavior of B. We see a typical symmetric relationship in the case of S. Home and its partner. In a situation of not well-defined resources in stake, it is also not easy to identify which actions S. Home undertakes in order to make its partners cooperate. What we know is that personal contacts between the management of S. Home and local actors play a role in making easier for S. Home to receive information about opportunities for immigrants and also it makes easier to ask local actors about their willingness to welcome immigrants and allow their participation in various activities. We know little about the approach used by S. Home in finding

partners and activities. What we know for sure is that although personal relationships may be important in the choice of a local organization or local professional as partner, this does not imply personal favor, which could not have been regulated formally. The signing up in courses or internships are, in fact, formal and regulated by contracts.

The *scope of power* is the set of specific actions that A, by using its means of power can get B to perform. Although the first two factors, in the case of S. Home, are not clearly defined, we know that what local actors perform is a cooperation which is in S. Home interest. The influence is limited to make its partners welcoming immigrants and allowing them to take part in activities organized by local actors. S. Home does not exercise any influence on projects or activities organized by the local actors, which are planned independently from the demand coming from S. Home. At the same time, the choice of partners and activities doesn't seem to be influenced by the local actors. Since S. Home director and officers decided to map relevant extra-curricular activities based on immigrants' preferences, their choice seems to be influenced only by internal dynamics and not by the relationships with its partners.

The *amount of power* is the net increase in the probability of B actually performing some specific actions due to A using its means of power. Again, being the first two factors not well-defined, it is not easy to determine which resources and actions by S. Home might increase the possibility that local actors choose to cooperate even more in the future. Only the reputation of S. Home and the shared idea of mutual help seems to play a role that can be clearly identified, but how this environment might influence local actors to keep cooperating with S. Home is an issue deserving further investigation.

Lister (2000) uses a classic framework to analyze partnerships in the field of NGO, which is – as we saw – applicable partially also for S. Home. What is maybe more adapt to describe the situation in which S. Home operates is a critic of Dahl, that can be useful to understand in which context S. Home operates. In his *Power: A Radical View* Steven Lukes (2005) criticizes the one-dimensional approach to power by Dahl, as well as the two-dimensional approach to power by Bachrach and Baratz, for being too focused on individualistic behaviors, and consequently, he proposes a three-dimensional view of power, that can be summed up as followed: He firstly is critical towards the behavioral focus and states that A can affect the behavior of B both (a) through a decision making process or controlling the political agenda (not necessarily through decision), concerning (b) issues and potential issues, in presence of (c) a observable (overt or covert), and latent conflict on (d) subjective and real interests.

S. Home in its work in the local community exercises a power (a) through both a decision making process, in this case the main decision is its policy on education and I will argue later that this decision affects more than one actor. This decision concerns real issues which is the need to give immigrants the opportunity to study and at the same time preserve a peaceful coexistence with the local community. The asparagus war showed a (c) latent conflict that S. Home has the (d) interest to avoid. S. Home has the real interest to continue its work in the local community and to create partnerships that facilitate the continuation of its own activity. The continuation of its activities in the local community is its real interest and the very reason of its survival as an active NGO.

Its decision to make school attendance compulsory have direct consequences on the people hosted, who have no other choice than respect the rule if they want to remain in town and here the power relation is clear since the actor B (asylum seekers/refugees) have no other choice to behave as decide by A (S. Home). The policy an effect on local schools who have to accept the enrollment and – as I will explain later – have also the power to influence the school system supervising teachers in intercultural issues and encouraging them to experiment other approaches with immigrant students. Moreover, S. Home has the power of creating social and political values and institutional practices (Lukes, 2005) to its organization. The fact of imposing school attendance and preventing immigrants to take initiatives as in the asparagus war and by doing so avoiding local conflicts is a way to contributing to create a welcoming and cooperative environment where the NGO can continue do its work.

The relationship with other local actors deserves a different attention. Here it is unclear how to define the power relationship between S. Home and its local partners. S. Home has a long tradition working locally in collaboration with local actors in a context where mutual help is socially important and personal relationships are culturally accepted as a source of collaborations between groups. The decision to provide extra-curricular activities to immigrants is for S. Home an issue of being consistent with its decision to provide immigrants the right to study and this decision is also made in presence of a potential conflict that S. Home has the interest to avoid. However, also the decision is potentially a source of conflict and could work against S. Home interest. This is because extra-curricular activities include internships and professional training in potential competition with the local population, in a community with a high unemployment rate. Despite the data collected during the field work don't show any evidence of tension or dissatisfaction in this regard, this aspect deserves further investigation in the future.

It is also unclear if these partnerships, characterized by personal contacts between the management of S. Home and local actors, influenced in any way S. Home's decision-making process as far as its

extra-curricular activities are concerned. Still, it appears clear that the existence of this network of local actors, working in an environment of mutual help, is a contribution to the support S. Home provides to the asylum seekers/refugees hosted.

Maybe a last contribution can come from Stoppino and his theory of power. The author takes into the picture of power relations the element of “intention”. He argues that the state of mind of A, or in other words, the intentions of the actor exercising power are crucial in defining power. There is a power relationship if “the behavior *a* by A causes the behavior *b* by B and if the behavior *b* corresponds to the intentions of A”. (Stoppino, 2000, p. 37).

The definition of state of mind for Stoppino includes also instinct and intuition. The *a* behavior can, then, derive from an instinct or intuition more than from a intention. We can say that there is a power relationship when the *a* behavior which is not intentional causes a *b* behavior which is compatible to A's interests.

This theory of power is relevant when we try to explain the nature of the power relationships between S. Home and its local partners. In fact, based on the data collected on the field, we cannot be sure if the nature of power exercised by S. Home in relation with its partners is rational, intentional rather than based on instinct or intuition. However, in absence of evidence of a rational plan for partnership, I prefer to suggest that the nature of relationships between S. Home and local partners are characterized by intuitions and even habits.

In other words, the existence of a network of local actors, working in an environment of mutual help is the result of connections between local actors sharing a common working culture. S. Home's initiative to cooperate with local actors might come from an intention to make them useful for the NGO, but it can also be the result of informal relationships with local actors who decide to contribute to S. Home or even “imitate” – as Stoppino (2000) would say – the actions of S. Home in a way that corresponds to S. Home's interests. In this case (a) S. Home's behavior of proposing a cooperation in working with immigrants may come from the intuition that (B) local actors may share the same set of values and purpose and the (b) behavior of the local actors in welcoming immigrants to extra-curricular activities is a behavior that corresponds to (A) S. Home interests.

What is interesting here is that (b) behavior of the local actors in welcoming immigrants in their activities can also be defined, using Stoppino's (2000) words “imitation or contaminated behavior”.

6.5 Working toward educational justice

Asylum seekers and refugees at S. Home are, as I repeatedly underlined in this research, a disadvantaged group of people, living a liminal situation, characterized by boundaries and precariousness and this make them students with a difficult background and special needs.

Using Mel Ainscow's (2013) analysis on equity and educational justice, we see that S. Home adopts different strategies both in relation to schools and outside school. The *between school factors* – a term used by Ainscow in his analysis – takes place in the collaboration between the public schools where asylum seekers are enrolled and the school in charge of the Italian classes. As we saw, the criteria used to enroll students in the right school and class are not difficult find and language knowledge plays a preeminent role in the decision. This decision is finally made by S. Home, but the evaluation is made by the school in charge of teaching Italian language, the CPIA. In other words, the school has the double responsibility to evaluate the preparation of the students to start in a public school and to train them efficiently enough to make them start school as soon as possible. The dialogue between CPIA and the local public schools is key to make the right evaluation. This has to be made in the interest of both schools and students. On one hand schools should consider the students ready to take on the new challenge of attend an Italian school without having to use extra resources because of language difficulties of the students. On the other hand, students should feel prepared to take on this challenge without feeling they are failing to soon or they are left without support. The role of S. Home is to coordinate this relationship between schools and according to what expressed during the interviews this collaboration is the more successful in their work with immigrants and schools. According to what expressed by one officer, the success is mainly due to the long experience CPIA gained in these years with foreign students and the good relationship CPIA has developed with S. Home. The results of this success can be measured by the grades received by the researched group which, as we saw before, are generally very high. Also the subjects for which students received the best grades are an indicator: the subjects in which participants received the best grades in primary and secondary school are, in fact: math (five students), Italian language (four students), English (four students), history (two students), geography (one student), in other words students score very well in Italian language and other two subjects – history and geography – which need a good understanding of the Italian language.

Also, the *beyond school factors* are considered important by S. Home in its work. As we saw in the literature review, these factors concern the external context and can be defined as access to health care, after-school programs, tutoring, college preparation and social opportunities.

Access to health care for asylum seekers is guaranteed by law since the arrival in Sardinia. A general health check is one of the first step at the arrival in Sardinia and then at the arrival at S. Home. In addition S. Home hired an officer in charge of health issues, with psychologist with medicine education whose main duties are psychological support and help to access the public health care (accompanying to the doctor, explain where to take blood test and so on).

After-school programs are the second cornerstone of S. Home's policy on education. As I explained previously, extra-curricular activities are considered as important as school attendance. Not only the offer of extra-curricular activities is rich and various, it is also a customized support for all asylum seekers and refugees, where not only age and capacity are taken into consideration but also wishes and ambitions. These activities are also an important social opportunity for friendship, networking and integration.

There is not a specific activity such as college preparation, but S. Home has supported immigrants' academic ambitions in several cases. The most remarkable is the logistical and emotional support given to the Syrian student who decide to choose an elite high school far away from the town he lives in order to increase his chances to be accepted at college afterwards. Also, a student wishing to apply for college and study medicine was offered an extra-curricular activity in form of an internship at the hospital while finishing high school.

The *within school factors* were more difficult to observe because classroom observations were not allowed during the fieldwork. However, it is possible to include the regular relations between S. Home and the local schools as a way to monitor both the performance of the students and their behavior at school and the capability of the teachers to understand if some of the students have special needs. S. Home takes the role of parents in the regular contact with teachers, participating to meeting and responding when some of the immigrant students break the rules, but being and NGO with its own expertise in working with people with special needs, it can also use this expertise to stimulate the whole-school professional development inviting teachers to reconsider some of their practices and collaborating in experimenting new approaches. Especially relevant in this case is the role of the intercultural mediator (*intermediatori culturali*). In addition to the officers who composes the Office for Immigration, S. Home hires an intercultural mediator and each hosted person is supported by one of these mediators. They are educated in intercultural communication and their role is to help hosted people to understand cultural dynamics but also the functioning of local services, in other words help them practically in their everyday life until they become more and more autonomous. Normally the intercultural mediators speak several languages, have lived abroad or worked with foreigners long enough to predict which aspects of their life in Italy can be

problematic or difficult to understand. In the relation with the schools, they support the officer in charge of educational issues and help immigrants to understand the school system and their opportunities as far as education is concerned. In their practical work, they can be in contact with teachers if any problem should arise and they can also supervise teachers if needed.

These multidimensional strategies adopted by S. Home are developed locally by the NGO and contextualized. Data collected during the fieldwork show that the result is so far positive. In fact, grades, general satisfaction of the students and lack of conflicts within the schools are indicators of a positive development towards a fairer educational path also for immigrants. Also, the end of the local tensions, after the asparagus war in 2017, is an indicator of an experience that was used to learn and do better and to work for a fairer society. Especially this last point deserves an observation of the role that education played after that S. Home implemented its internal policies. The asparagus war was an example of a small conflict on local resources. Even though the value of these resources is rather symbolic than economic (though asparagus were actually sold to people), within the community a disagreement has begun and a division between us and them was taking place. Moving immigrants from the streets to the schools and giving them the status of students, not only put an end to this tension, but also gave immigrants another more ambitious perspective of which resources are worth working for and which potential jobs, other than selling asparagus in the street, they might have in the future.

The role of education in ending the potential division between we and them is also relevant for the part of analysis I will present in the next paragraph. Other types of programs for immigrants implemented in Europe since the 90's have been inspired by the idea that non-western immigrants were the Others who needed to learn the values of the “we”, the majority of the population in the hosting countries. S. Home works in the opposite direction, using education as a tool to create a sense of inclusion and equity, instead of division.

6.6 S. Home VS civic integration programs

In her book *In the Name of Women's Rights*, Farris (2017) argues that right-wing national parties in Europe and femonationalists evoked rescuing narratives when talking about non-Western migrants, and portrayed immigrant women as victims in need to be rescued from their own misogynistic culture/religion. Farris also points out that both at European and national level, rescuing policies have been implemented in the form of civic integration programs for third-country nationals. “The main purpose of these policies has been to make non-Western immigrants' long-term residence dependent upon tested results, or a certified commitment to learn the language, culture and values

of the destination country” (Farris, 2017, p. 79). In Italy this approach started in 2009, with the approval of the law 94, part of a “security package” (*pacchetto sicurezza*), which introduced the obligation for non-EU migrants applying for a visa to sign an “agreement of integration” (*accordo di integrazione*) with the Italian state. What is peculiar for the Italian case is that the reception of the European civic integration guidelines happened in a country with a weak tradition in the matter of integration, and the making of integration policies became a rather confused process, that ended up excluding asylum seekers and refugees from this legal framework.

This implies that the status foreigners have when they arrive in Italy also plays a role in which type of integration program they will be part of.

Farris (2017) studies the approach used in the civic integration programs for third-country nationals and notices some interesting features of these programs. Firstly, the material used to teach migrants about Italian culture and values: In addition to material used to teach Italian language and notions of Italian institutions, the visual material used in the permanent territorial centers to teach about Italian values shows that also in Italy gender equality is a central issue and a very important idea to be transmitted to the immigrants. It is also interesting to note that even though the intention of the law and the material used is to teach immigrants on Italian values and gender equality in particular, in practice “the actual translation of portions of the civic integration component into visual didactic materials betrays the persistence of rather unequal gender relations within the Italian society, as well as of colonial representations of foreign women as sexualized objects” (Farris, 2017, p. 102).

People hosted at S. Home find themselves in a very different situation. As mentioned, the law 94 doesn't impose to them to sign an agreement on integration. This means that the activities both in terms of school attendance and extra-curricular activities as well as Italian language courses are not regulated by the law 94. NGOs working with asylum seekers and refugees are relatively freer to choose the ideological approach in their work with immigration issues and integration. It doesn't mean that integration is not a key factor, or that the knowledge of the Italian culture has a minor importance. It only means that in which way the NGO prefers to manage immigration issues is not predefined by law, and the teaching of language and Italian culture can also be delegated, for example – as in the case of S. Home – to public schools directly, instead of using the material created for the permanent territorial centers. While the material analyzed by Farris (2017) is, according to the author, characterized by the assumption that non-Western migrants come from a unequal and misogynistic culture, and in this way immigrants are defined indirectly as the Others, the transmission of the Italian culture via the Italian public school, being directed to both Italian and immigrant students, might be less judgmental and more inclusive.

Another aspect that Farris (2017) points out is that non-Western migrant women participating in civic integration programs have been systematically directed toward a handful of job types: hotel cleaning, housekeeping, child minding and caregiving of the elderly or disable. This is a deep contradiction where feminists and femocrats urge emancipation for non-Western migrant women while channeling them toward the very sphere (domestic, low-paying, and precarious jobs) from which the feminist movement had historically tried to liberate women.

From the data collected on the people hosted at S. Home, we can see that the case is very different for them. As I underlined before, it appears clear both from the questionnaires and the interviews that S. Home chooses to second migrants' ambitions finding extra-curricular activities that are in line with what immigrants wish to learn and would like to have as a profession in the future. Ambitions and activities cannot be located in the same sphere of domestic, low-paying and precarious jobs as described by Farris for the civic integration programs, but are more various and include also ambitions of higher education and internships in relatively well-paid jobs.

Conclusions

This research has been a journey into the context of Sardinia, an island, and a local community that never experienced immigration before. New people arrived, first almost unnoticed and then more and more integrated, despite their very precarious status and the uncertainty about the time they will be allowed to spend with the local community.

It was also a journey into the Italian educational system and how the combination of international laws and a national system made possible to find a way to guarantee a relatively stable educational path to asylum seekers/refugees, not only on paper but in practice as well.

The way a local NGO such as S. Home was able to help asylum seekers and refugees in their educational path through a bunch of initiatives and activities aimed to facilitate not only their integration but also their educational and professional career in the hosting country, was the focus of this research. By investigating how and why the local NGO supported education for asylum seekers and refugees, also other aspects of the entire phenomenon emerged.

First and foremost, the legal context that “created” the situation I studied, is the background of my research. Without the war in Syria and the change in the migration routes, there would be no Office for Immigration in S. Home, an NGO specialized in other types of marginalization and working with local people only. Besides, the challenges that the so-called migration crisis represented for the whole international legal system on political asylum also contributed to an evolution in the field and the more and more frequent use to humanitarian corridors to Italy. The way the Italian State elaborated an hosting system composed by a program for asylum seekers and a program for refugees shows the compromise among different political forces in the field of immigration and the will of the State to adopt a pragmatical approach that could satisfied both the need to respect international laws and manage the arrival of an increasing number of asylum seekers in a way that could guarantee order and security. The two programs are the framework of the new life of asylum seekers and refugees in the hosting country. It is within this framework all decisions concerning their lives are takes and it is this framework the room in which S. Home plan and carry out its work. S. Home is an NGO with a long experience in marginalization and poverty, its mission of helping people in need is inspired by catholic values and has matured in a left-wing tradition of solidarity, mutual help and equity. The beginning of its activities with refugees and asylum seekers has been seen as a natural development of its activities and locally accepted because in line with the reputation the NGO built over the years of its work in town.

How S. Home gave a renewed value to education in its new initiative with immigrants is the key of this research. The NGO, with a simple decision, made a statement on the importance of education and by doing so was able not only to put education as a central activity for integration and coexistence, but also was able to prevent potential problems between immigrants and the local population.

The role of education in its work is essential. As we saw, the decision to make school attendance compulsory was a decision taken by the NGO without any request from the Prefecture or any other local or national institution. It is a condition to be allowed to stay at S. Home, a decision with a potential risk to be felt as an imposition, but that in practice resulted in a opportunity also for adult immigrants not to remain at the margin of the local community. In spite of the difficulties to find the right balance between giving every hosted person the chance to study and impose them an uncomfortable situation making them do something they maybe wouldn't like to do, S. Home managed to create a general satisfaction among people in the researched group. This is the first interesting aspect: S. Home, while working within the legal framework of the Italia State and been inspired by the principles promoted by UNESCO, has developed its own policy as far as education for refugees and asylum seekers is concerned. School attendance for hosted people at S. Home is compulsory also for adults, which is not required by the Italian immigration law. This decision is taken first and foremost based on an ideological belief that schooling is good, gives more chances to migrants to succeed in the future and contribute to a better integration in the hosting community and a personal development. At the same time compulsory schooling has shown to have practical advantages in terms of more acceptance by the local population and reduction of potential or real tensions between migrants and local population.

Education in this case is a tool for integration, but also a way to transform limits in opportunities. The researched group is composed by several people in a situation where they experience impositions both in relation to the Italian States and its law and in relation to S. Home and its internal rules. As the NGO in charge of apply the state regulation on immigration and having in addition its own rules, S. Home might be perceived as an entity imposing boundaries and controlling lives. The decision to make school compulsory has the positive effect of transforming this potential perception of boundaries into the feeling of being given opportunities to do and learn. General satisfaction was expressed by the research group and the lack of conflicts with the local population or even within the research group is a sign of this positive effect.

Also, the decision to provide extra-curricular activities was a free choice of the NGO. This extra-

bonus has as well a positive impact on the lives of the hosted people in a slightly different way than school attendance. While going to school has been in some cases problematic because of the difficulties encountered finding the right criteria for enrollment, extra-activities are tailored on migrants' wishes and need. Two main aspects concerning the extra-activities can be considered important: first, the match between provided activities and migrants' professional ambitions appears clear from the data. This is not by accident, of course. The intention of the NGO was to create a supportive environment and providing extra-activities is based on the belief that more stimuli bring more and better learning. The basic idea that using time in a productive activity in term of learning is good for personal development is the key of this decision by the NGO.

Secondly, the context in which S. Home operates was also a key factor to realize the plan of offering a relatively wide range of activities. This was, in fact possible, because of the relations S. Home has with other local actors. The easy access to information on opportunities, the personal relation with local entrepreneurs that makes easier for the management of S. Home to ask for cooperation in order to start internship, for example, or the personal contact with local churches who organizes courses and activities for the local population, all this is a facilitating context when planning to provide extra-activity in a relatively small town with, otherwise, not so many chances to participate in any type of activity.

S. Home provides extra-curricular activities for all people hosted, also in the perspective that more training and activities is better for integration and personal development. Extra-curricular activities are used as a tool for more socialization, networking and incentive for better learning. What is peculiar in the case studied is that collected data show that S. Home seconds migrants' ambitions when it comes to extra-curricular activities. As shown in chapter five, this is the case for the majority of hosted people in S. Home, who are given the opportunity to take part to activities related to their wishes/ambitions. When we see closer to the nature of ambitions expressed by migrants in their questionnaires, we see that ambitions are consistent both with their previous school or work experience and with their unpredictable future situation. In all cases ambitions were realistic and consistent with the actual job opportunities at a local level, in the place they were living when answering the questionnaire.

The given support by S. Home to immigrant students is an objective factor that can be defined by the type of extra-curricular activities provided, but at the same time, it is also a subjective, perceived factor. The perception of support by S. Home is expressed by the hosted people in form of a general satisfaction for the support given by the officers at S. Home.

Local partners in the S. Home's network play an important role in giving support in practice. The existence of this network of local actors, working in an environment of mutual help, is a contribution to the support S. Home provides to the asylum seekers/refugees hosted. The collaboration with several local partners over the years built a working relationship characterized by a shared sense of mutual support, which can be considered a fertile environment for new initiatives such as the Office for Immigration at S. Home and its work with refugees/asylum seekers.

Another important aspect that emerged from this research is that the Office for Immigration can be somehow considered an experiment in an historical moment that needed this type of experiments. Sardinia has never, before 2015, been a destination for immigration flows, considered its geographical limits and especially the poverty that always characterized the island. When the situation changed, the need for NGOs working with immigrant increased remarkably and several local actors tried to expand in hosting refugees and asylum seekers more or less successfully. The advantage of S. Home was its original work in the field of marginalization, which represents an important expertise and a source of relevant knowledge to embark also in a journey with immigrant. The work with other types of marginalization that continues can be considered an extra guarantee for the immigrants hosted at S. Home, who can easily receive help if needed also when they are finished in their integration programs.

All in all, S. Home work with immigrants can be considered the realization of the idea of education for all promoted by UNESCO and shared by several member countries. In a liminal situation, non-citizen of the hosting country is enjoying the right to education as national citizens.

The idea promoted by UNESCO in its art. 4 of the SDG is that “Education enables upward socioeconomic mobility and is a key to escaping poverty”. An idea which has been not only an inspiration for S. Home's work but also is totally in line with the values of the NGO when it first was founded. As we could see, working against poverty and marginalization through education, is in fact its mission.

Another idea the less directly was an inspiration for the NGO and somehow characterize its work with immigrants is the idea of a Global Citizenship Education. As stated in the UNESCO website “While the world may be increasingly interconnected, human rights violations, inequality and poverty still threaten peace and sustainability. Global Citizenship Education is UNESCO's response to these challenges. It works by empowering learners of all age to understand that these are global, not local, issues and to become active promoters of more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable societies”. When people escaping from war or poverty in another country arrive in the small town in southern Sardinia, where the presence of foreigners is more than rare, the idea that

war and poverty are not only local issues suddenly became a reality. The contact between asylum seekers/refugees and the local population shows which interconnection the UNESCO is referring to and the need to work in the direction of a more peaceful and sustainable global society becomes easier to understand for both parts.

The work at S. Home showed how by guaranteeing education for refugees and asylum seekers – in other words education for all – is possible to work in the direction of education for global citizenship. Migrants are non-citizens in the hosting country but can also be considered as global citizens by circumstances, whose right to education is also based on their status of refugees, so indirectly on their citizenship as for all national citizens in the hosting country. We saw that many argue that global citizenship is not desirable, and curricula should remain traditionally national. The fact that national school systems prefer to keep using their national curricula is not necessarily an obstacle for the educational path of refugees as far as they are included in the school system and language training are guaranteed. In fact, the right to education for refugees in itself the realization of the UNESCO goal of education for all.

Education in the case of S. Home has been something delegated for the majority to public schools. As soon as immigrants arrive, they are enrolled in Italian classes or in one of the local public schools. Also, extra-activities are delegated to other local actors in partnership with S. Home, but the type of activity and the contents of the activities are decided by the local actors and the role of S. Home is providing and coordinating. This means that S. Home is not in charge of deciding the contents of the education provided to the immigrants. Values and ideas transmitted to immigrants at school and in their spare time mirror the values and ideas of the Italian school and the institutions in the local communities. These can vary from school to school, and even more from local actor to another. The only value that is clearly promoted by S. Home in its work with immigrants is the respect of the law, which is what regulates the whole permission to stay in Italy for immigrants. Beside from that, values and ideas are not directly taught by officers at S. Home as in the case of civic integration programs, which are programs addressed to immigrants but not refugees and asylum seekers. These programs are based on policies that make non-western immigrants' long-term residence dependent upon tested results or certified commitment to learn the language, culture and values of the destination country. The long-term residence of refugees, in other words the status of refugee, is instead dependent on the real need of protection of the people applying for it. No commitment to learn the language and the culture is required by law. As we saw in chapter five, even though no commitment is required to apply for asylum in Italy, the expectation of S. Home in relation to the people hosted is the respect of the law and the rules of the local community.

School attendance is, for example, an internal rule of the NGO that is expected to be respected. This might be considered an indirect, less explicit way to make their stay dependent on the commitment to learn about the values and the local culture. However, the differences between the work that S. Home carry out with immigrants and civic integration programs in European countries are more than the similarities. Ideologically, S. Home positions itself at the opposite of the political spectrum than right-wings nationalists that promoted civic integration programs in Europe. Moreover, there is no evidence that S. Home has characterized immigrants as the Others, been even unwittingly inspired by a negative characterization of non-western women or Islam. Besides, data from field work show that instead of been directed to unqualified jobs and marginal occupations, immigrants at S. Home have been supported in their ambitions and that for the NGO was more important to work in the immigrants' interest than for an abstract or even instrumental notion of integration.

The case of S. Home is not isolated in the Italian context. In the last three years, several NGOs gained the attention of the media for their work with refugees and anti-migration movements addressed against local NGOs their protests.

S. Home is a case with a certain transfer value, being a positive example of what can be done when working with immigrants and how education can be a key for success in terms of stability and integration for asylum seekers and refugees and also in terms of tensions-free coexistence. Its work is, in fact, also an example of how to achieve educational justice and equity, working for the inclusion of the most disadvantaged. The three strategies adopted by the NGO (within school, between school and beyond school) cover the wide range of problematics that can arise when a local NGO aims to provide educational opportunities to people with a difficult background and without a solid previous experience in the field of immigration.

Appendix

Questionario per gli ospiti di S. Home (Immigrazione)

Questionnaire for people hosted at S. Home (Immigration Office)

Informazioni per i partecipanti
Information for the respondents

Il questionario qui sotto fa parte di una raccolta dati organizzata all'interno di un progetto di ricerca dell'università norvegese OsloMet. Il tema della ricerca è la scolarizzazione dei rifugiati e richiedenti asilo nel paese di prima accoglienza.

The questionnaire below is part of a data collection organized for a research project for the norwegian university OsloMet. The topic of the research is education for refugees and asylum seekers in the first country of arrival.

Il questionario è anonimo. L'analisi dati garantirà la non tracciabilità. I partecipanti possono interrompere la compilazione in ogni momento e/o decidere di non rispondere ad alcune delle domande.

The questionnaire is anonymous. The analysis will guarantee the non-traceability. Respondents can withdraw at any moment and/or choose not to answer some of the questions.

In caso di domande, è possibile contattare: Carla Melis (cmelis.newsandtours@gmail.com) o Thorgeir Kolshus (thoko@oslomet.no).

In case you have any questions, you can contact Carla Melis (cmelis.newsandtours@gmail.com) or Thorgeir Kolshus (thoko@oslomet.no).

Background

Nazionalità/paese o regione di origine /*Nationality/country of origin:*

lingua madre/ *mother-tongue:*

altre lingue parlate/ *other spoken languages:*

titolo di studio conseguito nel paese d'origine/ *diploma from the country of origin:*

altri titoli di studio/ *other diplomas:*

titoli di studio riconosciuti in Italia/ *diplomas converted in Italy:*

lavoro svolto nel paese d'origine o prima di arrivare in città/ *profession before arriving in town:*

Esperienza scolastica/ *school experience:*

Scuola frequentata in città/ *in which school you are enrolled?*

classe frequentata in città/ *which class do you attend?*

media scolastica dell'ultimo quadrimestre/ *average grade last semester:*

media scolastica dell'anno scorso/ *average grade last year:*

materie con il voto più alto dell'ultimo quadrimestre/ *subjects with the highest grade last semester*

materie con il voto più alto alla fine dell'anno scorso/ *subjects with the highest grade last year*

materie con il voto più alto nel quadrimestre in corso/ *subjects with highest grade this semester*

Attività interne o esterne non scolastiche/ *internal or external extra-curricular activities*

attività svolte a S. Home dall'arrivo/ *activities carried out at S. Home since the arrival*

attività svolte a S. Home attualmente/ *activities carried out now at S. Home*

Ambizioni lavorative/ *Professional ambitions:*

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