

Edited by Vincenzo Cesareo

The Twenty-seventh Italian Report on Migrations 2021

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Our annual Report contains the results of the studies carried out by the research staff and collaborators of ISMU Foundation – Initiatives and Studies on Multi-ethnicity (Fondazione ISMU – Iniziative e Studi sulla Multiethnicità).

The Twenty-seventh Report on Migrations 2021 is a shorter version of the Italian edition (Fondazione ISMU, Ventiseiesimo Rapporto sulle migrazioni 2021, FrancoAngeli, Milano).

This Report was written under the direct supervision of Secretary-General Vincenzo Cesareo, as Editor-in-Chief, with the assistance of Editorial Board members Ennio Codini, Livia Elisa Ortensi, Nicola Pasini, Mariagrazia Santagati, Giovanni Giulio Valtolina, Laura Zanfrini, and with the editorial coordination of Elena Bosetti and Francesca Locatelli.

ISMU Foundation (www.ismu.org) is an independent research centre founded in 1991. It is committed to conducting research, as well as providing consultancy, training and education, in the area of migration and integration. To develop a better understanding of these phenomena, it provides its expertise to research projects on all aspects of migrations in contemporary society. It works with national, European and international organizations and institutions, in both the private and the public sectors. It is inserted in academic networks, it cooperates with welfare and healthcare agencies, and it exchanges with libraries and documentation centers in Italy and beyond. ISMU organizes conferences and seminars on migration and produces a wide-range of publications. It has its own Documentation Centre (Ce.Doc.) which, over the years, has built a comprehensive collection of volumes, periodicals and audio-visual material to contribute to the sharing of information on migration.

This publication has been produced with the contribution of



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SAVE
AFGHAN
LIVES

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1. The European Union between uncertainty and hope

Vincenzo Cesareo

The ISMU Annual Report on Migration is now in its 27th edition. Over time, the Report has become a useful reference point for people working on migration, in Italy and elsewhere. The first edition was published three years after the ISMU Foundation was established in 1991. In 2021, ISMU has completed its thirtieth year true to its aim of spreading accurate knowledge on migration and integration. We now reaffirm the Foundation's defining spirit: that of adopting a realist approach to the study of migration, of explaining "the way things are", and of promoting the principles of liberal democracy as a prerequisite for "good integration" – a goal that can only be achieved through a joint effort by immigrants and the receiving population alike. This is the red thread running through all the publications, research projects, and statements issued by ISMU since 1991. Readers will find it in this 27th edition of our Report as well. The bulk of the Report will account for the changes in migration with a focus on Italy. This introductory chapter will focus instead on European migration policy (or better yet, on the lack thereof) – a topic that has always been of particular interest to the ISMU Foundation.

1. Current crises and possible scenarios

Since the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, the very survival of the European Union has been put to a stress test. In continuity with the previous European legislative, the current legislative has proved responsive to the UN 2030 Agenda

– an international agreement centered on the idea of sustainable development. The UN's 2030 Agenda also features in the “Political Guidelines for the Next European Commission 2019-2024”, a political manifesto presented by Ursula von der Leyen as a candidate for President of the European Commission. An early, very successful outcome of this strategy was the “European Green Deal” project. As the pandemic deeply impacted EU Member States, beginning with Italy, the EU institutions have proved able to respond to the emergency appropriately and successfully in collaboration with all national institutions in order to face the consequences of the pandemic on the economy and society as well as on public health. Let us only mention here the adoption of Next Generation EU, an instrument of recovery which, in the 2021-2024 period, will allocate 750 billion euros on six goals to be pursued through the Recovery and Resilience Facility: green transition, digital transformation, smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, health and economic, social and institutional resilience. This European-level reaction appeared appropriate to the unexpected pandemic shock, and it bodes well for the very future of the EU. At the national level, this political initiative translated into the Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP) that member states had to submit to European institutions by April 2021 in fulfilment of the requirements for accessing the funds that the EU had made available (after approval and review). Member States will then have to make the RRP consistent with the national plans already in place (National Reform Plans, National Plans for the implementation of the Youth Guarantee, National Climate and Energy Plans, Just Transition Plans) as well as with agreements made to access EU funds.

However, the six pillars of the RRP – discussed and approved on 22nd June 2021 by the Council of the European Union on the Commission's proposal – do not include immigration. Hopefully, this issue will be taken up once specific policy interventions will be designed to tackle a variety of issues, including promoting the integration of migrants. Notwithstanding the absence of migration from the RRP pillars, the European Union has begun to move in the right direction, which attests that a true political community is taking shape, at least from an economic point of view.

At the same time, some remarkable episodes call for more cautious expectations. A minority of governments of EU member states has increasingly been exhibiting xenophobic or culturally intolerant attitudes and pitting religious values against secular ones, thereby moving away from the fundamental principles of the European Union – centered on the respect of human dignity, freedom, pluralism, and tolerance, all of which lie at the core of democracy. One example of this is the proposal that twelve European states (Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, Greece, Lithuania, Poland, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, and Slovak Republic) made to the European Commission in October 2021 for building a European wall against migrants along the outer borders of the EU – a proposal that is reminiscent of the Berlin Wall and of the separation between opposing blocs that plagued Europe for decades. While in October 2021 the President of the Commission had made it clear that the Commission would not finance the construction of any such barriers – it should be reminded the

border protection proposed by the Polish government would cost around 350 million euros – following a visit to Warsaw the President of the European Council Charles Michel revised this position, stating that the Union would consider financing the construction of physical infrastructures for this purpose.

Moreover, member states are becoming increasingly polarized between political regimes that remain firmly anchored to the principles of liberal democracy and political regimes that lean towards “illiberal democracy” – an oxymoronic definition, as democracy is inextricably linked to liberty. It is alarming in this respect that prominent politicians (including Italian politicians) legitimize Orbán’s government, which jeopardizes the democratic life of Hungary as well as universal rights, freedom of the press, and freedom of association. One should never forget that democracy as such requires, among other things, an opposition that is free to express itself in the Parliament. To these concerns one may add politicians who champion the rule of law in their own country while at the same time supporting Orbán dismantling it in Hungary.

On a positive note, 2021 was in a sense the year of the “alliance of democracies,” which the newly elected U.S. President Joe Biden proposed between the U.S. and the EU on his first trip to Europe in Spring 2021. Even though there have been tensions between the two sides of the Atlantic – on the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan without the allies’ agreement, on the cancelled purchase of French submarines – both share the intention of reaffirming a set of shared values among liberal democratic countries against hybrid regimes such as Russia (an illiberal and authoritarian democracy) and openly authoritarian regimes such as China.

The sanctions proposed at European summits against member states which do not share the ethical principles of European democracies attest the importance of Europe’s core values: proposals have, in fact, been made for making access to EU funds conditional on compliance with the rule of law. As of yet, it is not clear if and how such unprecedented measures will ever be implemented. The EU is currently adopting more ordinary legal measures against Hungary. In particular, Hungary’s refusal to amend or repeal the so-called “Stop Soros” law passed by the Hungarian Parliament in June 2018 – which makes it illegal to help migrants request asylum or apply for a residence permit – led the Commission to refer the matter to the Court of Justice of the EU, which in November ruled that Hungarian authorities had failed to comply with EU law. Should Hungarian authorities fail to adopt the measures indicated by the European Court of Justice for compliance with European law, the European Commission may apply financial sanctions.

2. Can there be a common migration policy?

In order to identify the condition for adopting a common approach to migration, it may be useful to review the peculiar practices adopted by some EU countries. In Northern Europe, for instance, Denmark has been distancing itself from the

traditional “Nordic” model. Tellingly, the current left-wing coalition government has adopted highly questionable measures that clamp down on immigration and integration. To name but a few, Denmark has revoked international protection for Syrian refugees, claimed that the Damascus region is a “safe zone” to which asylum seekers can be returned, and waged war on “ghetto” districts through the “forced socialization” of young people who must spend 24 hours a week learning Danish values and culture in special facilities.

In July 2021, France issued a bill against religious “separatism” based on concerns akin to Denmark’s: on the one hand, the bill aims at preventing the spread of cultural and religious enclaves where principles contrary to human dignity (e.g., the “virginity testing” of young women) are preached and practiced; on the other hand, the bill severely limits freedom of association. The French government has also been ambivalent about migration flows: while speaking in favor of a common European policy based on solidarity among member states (meaning the relocation of migrants), it has refused entry at the border with Italy to migrants and asylum seekers endeavoring to reunite with people living in France.

In Germany, a wedge has been driven between an open and welcoming attitude (most prevalent in cosmopolitan cities such as Berlin and Hamburg) and a nationalist one. It should be noted that the September 2021 general election resulted in a setback for Alternative for Germany, not unlike what happened to so-called “populist” parties in other European countries. However, xenophobic orientations are still widespread among voters, while the parties seeking to represent them have become more and more vocal in their intolerance towards immigrants, especially since Merkel’s 2015 “gamble” on the admission of one million Syrian refugees. Since then, Germany has been outsourcing the management of refugees to avert new, massive inflows. (Germany was the main advocate of the controversial EU-Turkey deal signed in 2016 and renewed in 2021.) The renewal of the EU-Turkey deal is also of great interest to Greece. However, the situation of asylum seekers in Greece is still an unsustainable and inhumane one of overcrowded refugee camps: the confinement of many migrants on Turkish soil by the EU-Turkey deal has not translated into a commitment for Greece to improve the conditions of those who are on Greek soil.

The outsourced governance of migration flows has also been adopted in Spain, where new arrivals have increased significantly between 2020 and 2021. An agreement with Morocco has been in place for many years to contain illegal immigration: under it, a large number of people who had attempted to enter the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in Morocco have been repatriated by Spanish authorities.

In the light of this overview, significant differences emerge between EU countries. All countries have a strong interest in limiting the arrival of new migrants, but each country pursues it through its own peculiar strategies and policies. These differences thus raise the question, is this long-standing piecemeal approach to European migration policy satisfactory? Or, to put it differently, can a new European approach to migration emerge which results in new public policies for migrants?

A significant step in this direction was the inclusion of “migration manage-

ment” as a topic on the agenda of the European Council meeting held on 24th and 25th June 2021. Italy and Spain had insisted that member states and governments returned on this thorny question, which the Council had not addressed since 2018. Three years and one health and economic crisis later, the issue garnered attention again. On the one hand, the official decision to discuss the topic was good news, since the debate on the subject had long been suspended. On the other hand, no significant progress was made in terms of proposals and approaches to prevent illegal and dangerous migration across the Mediterranean. In fact, the Pact on Migration and Asylum presented in September 2020 by the European Commission was not discussed at all due to strong disagreement among member states. Indeed, some member states still consider “supporting third countries” as the royal road to limit migration to Europe. This support would translate into renewing the controversial deal with Turkey – which the EU “pays” to prevent Syrian refugees from emigrating to Europe – as well as into the allocation of funds to African countries – officially for development cooperation, but all too often used to build infrastructures for regulating and preventing the free movement of people. As these policies were renewed, it comes as a surprise that the Council concluded its meeting by condemning the “blackmail” by “third countries” which exploit migrants for their own political ends. These conclusions were specifically requested by Spain as a way of sending a clear message to the Moroccan government, which Spain accused of loosening control on Ceuta and Melilla in order to collect more funds. As some noted (Zotti 2020), the same strategy was employed by Turkey when migrants on the Balkan route were encouraged to enter Greece in February 2020, which resulted in turmoil and violence at the EU border. Furthermore, outsourcing migration-related problems to non-EU countries makes their solution vulnerable to the action of third-country governments who “gamble” on the lives of migrants. It is migrants, after all, who pay the highest price by being forced to cross borders illegally and thus putting their own lives at risk, as the news from the Balkan route report. Hence the need for the next Council Presidents to put more effort in creating the conditions for devising concrete and effective proposals in matters of migration policy.

At present, a common, supranational European migration policy is still far from being implemented. Governing immigration without a strong core of shared values is unviable. Despite the attempts made by three of the founding countries – France, Germany, and Italy - to reach an agreement on the relocation of migrants in the European Union, the moral ideas of “redistribution” and “equity” lack an unequivocal definition at the European level. Instead, each member state or EU institution tends to act strategically when it comes to migration policy, citing legitimate but short-sighted domestic interests motivated by electoral concerns. The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Vice-President of the European Commission Josep Borrell has stated that the EU must welcome migrants not only for humanitarian reasons, but also to respond to the demographic crisis present and future. If this is the case, then European leaders and member states alike must commit to create the conditions for legal entry into Europe and for a fair relocation of migrants among member states.

More explicitly, a strong ethical commitment is needed even more than a political one. Today, migration policies meet with dissatisfaction among supporters and opponents alike, and they stand in need of reformation. Without a strong ethical commitment, no European initiative will provide mutual benefit through effective solidarity among member states. While cognizant of the historical, cultural, and economic differences among member states, much effort must be put in reinforcing common values based on social justice and solidarity. And yet, even the Afghan crisis failed to meet with a shared response, if only from a humanitarian point of view. While the European Parliament has stated that Afghan refugees must be received properly in EU countries, the Council has instead sought to support countries bordering with Afghanistan (once again outsourcing the solution to a migration problem) and have Afghan citizens received in third countries.

The above shows that disagreement within the European Union is increasing rather than reducing. This prevents the EU from acting as a great power in international relations with other great powers. In other words, Europe can never be strong in the international arena if it is weak in domestic arena. As Sergio Romano authoritatively pointed out, in order to be stronger globally the EU must pursue unity even at the cost of shrinking a little.

In this scenario, superpowers firmly oppose the consolidation of the European Union as a close-knit great power with shared strategies. Think of Russia, which attempted to pit EU countries against each other, even by effectively waging cyberwars. Immigration, too, is used to hinder European consolidation. A case in point is Belarus, where more and more migrants rush to the borders with Lithuania and Poland in the attempt to enter the EU. The Belarusian government has been known to encourage the arrival of asylum seekers from Africa and the Middle East, providing for expensive journeys with the help of agencies and airlines and promising to facilitate entry into the EU. Since Belarus is dominated by Russia, there is reason to believe that this operation is part of Russia's broader strategy of leveraging migration-related problems to destabilize the EU. Migrants are being effectively weaponized to destabilize Poland and, with it, Europe and even NATO. The EU's criticism of Poland – on the grounds of its unloyalty to Europe and of its reluctance to safeguard liberal democracy – should thus be revised. Migration conflicts at the Belarus-Poland border make Poland geopolitically instrumental to the EU stability in the east: paradoxically enough, a dissident state in terms of the core values of the EU may become vital for safeguarding EU borders. Both the lack of agreed-upon fundamental principles and tension at the borders of the EU attest that there will be no policy response to the immigration issue in the near future.

Future developments in international relations will tell whether the EU after Merkel will prove capable of securing stability inside a crucial arena for the government of migration flows. The Belarusian scenario has made it all the more important to implement a common foreign policy, which in turn may favor the adoption of a common migration policy consistent with European values.

The recent defeat of Western forces in Afghanistan, possibly cutting back the role of the US as the main global power, should encourage EU countries to

strengthen the Union itself. The EU may really become an authoritative Western power in the international arena. The 2022 French presidential election and the stance that Germany will take after the September 2021 election (won by the Social Democrats, Greens, and Liberals) will also play a role in this.

Be this as it may, the Afghan situation confirms that borders – both European borders and the borders of neighboring countries where refugees fleeing the Taliban are currently displaced - are key to the mobility of people. The management of borders and of refugee mobility has always been a cause of conflict, and international relations still depend largely on it. Therefore, it is only appropriate to take into consideration the complex stratification of the decision-making processes underlying the definition and management of borders.

3. Understanding borders locally and globally

Many political actors have failed to live up to the complexity of migration when they tried to govern it. Most of them restricted themselves to providing information and resources to other local actors. Instead, a multi-level governance would be required to implement the guidelines of migration policy. The debate on border management – sparked by the recent reports on migrants on the Polish-Belarusian border and along the Balkan route – reveal that local, national, and supranational interests must be reconciled with individual freedom of movement. Borders are one of the many sources of disagreement among EU countries. The path to the Schengen Treaty allowing the free movement of citizens of member countries has been a long and hard one to tread. Internal borders between EU countries have even been restored in special cases such as during the COVID-19 pandemic or after the 2015 jihadist attacks in Europe. At any rate, it should be recalled that the opening of internal borders was agreed upon on the condition that the external borders of the EU be strengthened and monitored. Despite this joint effort, some regret the pre-Schengen era in the hope that internal borders may allow member states to better counteract immigration.

At the global level, too, there is a sharp contrast between those who believe it necessary to strengthen existing borders for security (“build walls”) and those who wish to abolish them instead (“tear down walls”). Among the latter, “no border” movements oppose borders and boundaries, arguing that both have become not only obsolete in an increasingly globalized world, but also a source of conflict between nations and an obstacle to the mobility of people, especially migrants.

The no border movements are a form of humanitarian internationalism emphasizing unrestricted freedom of movement around the globe, whereas any border is seen as limiting personal development. It should be remembered, however, that humanitarianism traditionally links human freedom to personal responsibility, which in turn requires limiting one’s actions (Cesareo, Vaccarini, 2006).

As Hannah Arendt stressed, territorial demarcation is key to the foundation

and consolidation of polities: “A citizen is by definition a citizen among citizens of a country among countries” (1970: 81). Even Kant, a proponent of cosmopolitan law (1795) who argued in *Perpetual peace* that those who enter a foreign state should not be treated with hostility in compliance with a “natural right to hospitality”, never advocated a world without borders, fearing that a world-state would result in global tyranny.

In his recent book, Frank Furedi (2020) identifies three different kinds of borders: a) territorial boundaries with physical borders, which allow human beings to develop a sense of belonging, b) ethnic boundaries, which are cognitive in nature and allow people to relate themselves to others and to the community, c) symbolic boundaries, which provide a compass for managing relations among human beings. Among symbolic boundaries, moral boundaries are particularly important in marking off acceptable and unacceptable behavior. For Furedi, all three kinds of boundaries are connected to each other and are necessary both at the individual and at the collective level.

At the same time, boundaries limit people: territorial limits restrict freedom of movement, ethnic limits influence behavior, symbolic limits restrict available options for individual action and, insofar as they lose moral force, are perceived as oppressive. Among other things, Furedi highlights what he calls “the paradox of borders:” his research apparently reveals that many people oppose territorial borders but at the same time defend personal ones; it is “as if the space around an individual’s body is the one frontier that really counts, and one which requires constant protection” (Ibid.). In Furedi’s opinion, this paradox is the epitome of the hyper-individualistic world in which we currently live, where even the boundary between good and evil blurs somewhat.

To conclude this detour on the complexity of border management, there is no denying that borders set limits to freedom, place obstacles, and call into question the tradeoff between freedom and security. On the other hand, borders have always been a source of security; all bounded communities have always prospered despite existing boundaries, and often even beyond them. As Simmel (1994: 5) pointed out, borders do not merely separate people; they also connect them by providing the conditions for relating to one another: “things must first be separated from one another in order to be together... we are at any moment those who separate the connection or connect the separate”. Moreover, history shows that borders and other kinds of boundaries have always spurred human beings to overcome them in search of something new.

While borders have always been there and may even be considered necessary, the focus must be shifted from the “no borders” vs. “yes borders” debate to guaranteeing human rights for all, including immigrants. The question of border management and regulation thus becomes key. More specifically, regulations must first and foremost respect the dignity of all individuals, be they asylum seekers, refugees, economic migrants, or people wishing to reunite with their family. Secondly, the respect of human dignity in the country of arrival requires assisting migrants in their integration into the country. For this purpose, no-border criticism is particularly valuable not so much for actually abolishing borders as for making boundaries more humane.

What has been said so far on borders in general applies to the EU more specifically. It is no coincidence that, as mentioned above, the EU persuaded member states to open internal borders by committing to strengthening the EU's external borders. There, too, rules must be established to ensure that the dignity of each person crossing them is always respected.

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1. Recent developments in migration data and trends in Italy

2. Third-country nationals during the pandemic

3. Counting the new Italians

4. An update on disembarkations and asylum requests

5. Conclusions

2.

Statistical aspects

Gian Carlo Blangiardo and Livia Elisa Ortensi

1. Recent developments in migration data and trends in Italy

The reduction observed in the number of foreign citizens in 2020-2021 in Italy has two main explanations. On the one hand, recent data from the resident register – updated within the framework of the so-called “ongoing census” conducted annually since 2018 – revised down the number of foreign residents in Italy. On the other hand, the reduction of flows, influenced by the measures implemented to contain the pandemic, further contributed to this reduction – as also noticed in the last Report of ISMU Foundation.

The updated statistics show that only at the beginning of 2019 the symbolic threshold of 6 million foreigners was neared (5,962 thousand). Over the following two years, the number decreased by 200 thousand, more than 80% of which during COVID-19 pandemic alone.

Table 1. Foreigners in Italy as of 1st January 2018-2021 by status (in thousands)

Status	01-01-2018	01-01-2019	01-01-2020	01-01-2021
Residents*	4,883	4,996	5,040	5,013
Non-resident regular migrants	431	404	366	224
Irregular migrants	533	562	517	519
Total	5,847	5,962	5,923	5,756

* Data revised on the basis of Istat post-census data, 2018.

Source: ISMU analysis and estimates on Istat data

The 2020 decline in the number of foreign residents appears to be due to a decrease in the number of regular immigrants who are not (or not yet) residents, while the number of residents fell only marginally. The number of irregular immigrants is essentially unchanged due to the evaluation of the regularisation programme applications introduced in July 2020 (see section 2).¹

Chart 1. Foreigners in Italy as of 1st January 2003-2021 by status (in thousands)



Source: ISMU Foundation, Annual reports²

¹ As the regularization (decree-law n. 34/20, 01-01-2021) is pending, no distinction has been made here between irregular migrants and formally irregular migrants who nonetheless applied for the regularization of their status. The effects of the 2020 regularization will be included in the next edition of the Report.

² See <https://www.ismu.org/publicazioni/elenco-delle-pubblicazioni/>.

The analysis of the factors that contributed to the reduction in the number of residents (-26 thousand) shows that in 2020 the migration balance was positive (+56 thousand people), 132 thousand former migrants acquired Italian citizenship, and the natural population change increased by 50 thousand.³ More in detail, the natural population change results from the difference between 59 thousand new births and 9 thousand new deaths, two figures that deserve careful consideration. On the one hand, the birth rate follows a decreasing trend that has been relentlessly going on since 2012. Despite an average population size of 11% smaller than in 2020, in 2012 the number of births was 80 thousand. On the other hand, the number of deaths during the pandemic was not exceptionally high (9,323) but still resulted in a remarkable increase (+23.3%) compared to the average number in 2018-2019. Note that the rise in the mortality rate among Italian citizens – who are comparatively much older and have certainly been hit more by the increase in deaths with COVID-19 – was almost 6 percentage points lower (+17.7%). Contextual factors – such as the lethality of the COVID-19 infection itself or the indirect effects of the social and health vulnerability induced by the current economic situation – may have played a role in making the foreign population even more vulnerable.

2. Third-country nationals during the pandemic

While the overwhelming majority of registered foreign residents as of 1st January 2021 are Romanian citizens (1,138,000 residents, or 23% of all foreigners and 75% of EU nationals), the analysis of data on nationality reveals that third-country nationals (including UK citizens) account for about 70% of the total number of registered foreign residents (3,543,000). Most of them are Albanian or Moroccan (11.6% and 11.5% of all non-EU residents, respectively), followed by Ukrainian, Filipino, Indian, and Bangladeshi immigrants.

Between 1st January 2019 and 1st January 2021, the number of Albanian residents decreased, while the number of Moroccan residents remained relatively stable. The number of residents from the Indian subcontinent increased (+4.5% residents from India, +5% from Pakistan, +6.7% from Bangladesh). However, the highest increase among the top ten communities regarding the number of registered residents in 2019-2020 concerns Egyptian nationals (+8.6%).

³ Provisional data extracted on 1st November 2021 from www.demo.istat.it.

Table 2. Foreign residents in Italy by nationality. Absolute values and percentage change, 2019-2021 (as of 1st January)

<i>Nationality</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2021</i>	<i>2019-2021</i>
	<i>Thousand residents</i>			<i>Percentage change</i>
Romania	1,144	1,146	1,138	-0.5
Albania	423	422	410	-3.1
Morocco	406	414	408	0.5
PRC	283	289	289	1.9
Ukraine	228	229	228	-0.1
Philippines	158	158	156	-1.0
India	147	153	154	4.5
Bangladesh	131	139	140	6.7
Egypt	120	128	130	8.6
Pakistan	117	122	123	5.0
<i>Other EU countries</i>	<i>329</i>	<i>329</i>	<i>332</i>	<i>1.1</i>
<i>Other non-EU countries</i>	<i>1,510</i>	<i>1,512</i>	<i>1,506</i>	<i>-0.3</i>
<i>EU total</i>	<i>1,473</i>	<i>1,475</i>	<i>1,470</i>	<i>-0.2</i>
<i>Non-EU total</i>	<i>3,523</i>	<i>3,565</i>	<i>3,543</i>	<i>0.6</i>
Total	4,996	5,040	5,013	0.3

Source: Istat, 2021

In 2020, 107 thousand new residence permits were issued in Italy – the lowest number in the past 10 years, almost 40% less than in 2019. Between 2018 and 2019, the number of new permits had already decreased sharply (-26.8%); mobility restrictions imposed by COVID-19 resulted in a further significant decrease. The pandemic has also delayed the processing of applications for a residence permit, which may have contributed to the lower number of new permits issued in the past year. It is no coincidence that even the sharp increase in disembarkations on Italian shores in the second half of the year (see section 4) only partially translated into a higher number of residence permits related to new arrivals. This was probably due to a delay in the processing of asylum applications. Something similar might have happened in relation to the issuing of new permits to people who applied for regularization as per Art. 103 of Legislative Decree no. 34/2020. The process has been much slower than previous regularizations; very few applications were processed by December 2020.

Table 3. New residence permits granted to non-EU citizens in 2020

<i>Country of origin</i>	<i>New residence permits</i>	
	<i>Absolute value</i>	<i>Percentage change since 2019</i>
Albania	13,185	-38.5
Morocco	10,266	-36.0
Pakistan	7,925	-29.3
Bangladesh	6,467	-34.9
India	6,191	-45.7
Egypt	4,740	-28.9
PRC	4,731	-46.8
Nigeria	3,911	-24.9
United States of America	3,841	-51.0
Ukraine	3,264	-46.4
Other countries	41,982	-42.1
Total	106,503	-39.9
Of which for the following purposes:		
Work	10,331	-8.8
Family reunification	62,304	-38.3
Study	8,520	-58.2
Asylum/humanitarian protection	13,419	-51.1
Other	11,928	-30.1

Source: Istat, 2021

With that said, new arrivals in 2020 have declined from some countries more than others if compared to the previous year. These are the United States (-51.0%), China (-46.8%) and Ukraine (-46.4%). Among the ten main countries of origin of new immigrants, Nigeria (-24.9%) and Pakistan (-29.3%) have been affected the least by this decline.

Student residence permits decreased the most in percentage (-58.1% compared to the previous year). Travel restrictions enforced by many countries to contrast the pandemic can explain such a sharp decrease. The United States are particularly representative of this; new student permits decreased by more than 90% compared to 2019, while permits granted to Pakistani students surprisingly increased (+14.6%). Overall, almost 28% of all permits for student residency have been granted to Chinese students who, despite the drop in admissions, have been granted the highest number of student permits.

In 2020, asylum permits decreased by 51.1% compared to the previous year:

only 13,467 new permits were issued for asylum and international protection (12.6% of the total new permits). The decrease affected all the main non-EU countries of origin, peaking at over 80% in the case of India and Ukraine.

Family reunification permits, the most common entry channel (58.5% of all permits in 2020), also fell by 38.3%, while admissions for work-related reasons suffered the slightest decrease (-8.8%). However, it must be mentioned that new arrivals for work purposes were already at a very low level in the past years.

Overall, regular non-EU citizens in Italy decreased by about 7% – from 3,616,000 as of 1st January 2020 to 3,374,000 as of 1st January 2021. In terms of nationality, this decrease ranged from -1.9% in the case of Egypt to -8.5% in the case of Albania. As for the latter, however, the reduction may also depend on more people becoming Italian citizens. It is no coincidence that Albanians, like Moroccans, have been granted fewer long-term residence permits – which typically lead to the acquisition of Italian citizenship – compared to other nationalities.

To sum up, excluding the large share of long-term residence permits (64.4% of the total), 52% of non-EU citizens with a fixed term permit are in Italy for family reunification, 27.8% for work, 13.6% because of international protection and 6.6% for study or other reasons.

3. Counting the new Italians

The acquisition of citizenship has significantly influenced the statistics regarding foreigners. Naturalization has played an essential role in shaping the foreign population in Italy, first and foremost its size.

Between 2011 and 2020, almost 1,250,000 thousand people acquired Italian citizenship. Of these, more than 400,000 became Italian citizens before they were 18 by acquiring their parents' nationality (former Art. 14 of Law 91/1992).⁴ Acquisition by residence – which, in the case of non-EU citizens, requires 10 years of uninterrupted residence in Italy – has been by far the most widespread method, confirming that, over time, immigrants become successfully and permanently integrated in Italy.

⁴ The most recent available data show that minors of foreign origin, whether Italian citizens or otherwise, were 1,3 million as of 1st January 2020. 21.5% of them are Italian citizens. Italian minors of foreign origin are predominantly born in Italy (81.3%) (Strozza et al., 2021).

Table 4. Foreign and naturalized Italian citizens residing in Italy as of 1st January 2020. Absolute values and percentage shares

	<i>Foreign residents</i>	<i>Naturalized Italians</i>	<i>People of foreign origin</i>	<i>% in all naturalized Italians</i>	<i>% in all people of foreign origin</i>
	A	B	C=A+B	% B/C	% B/A
Romania	1,145,718	92,364	1,238,082	7.5	8.1
Albania	421,591	215,567	637,158	33.8	51.1
Morocco	414,249	199,373	613,622	32.5	48.1
PRC	288,923	15,413	304,336	5.1	5.3
Ukraine	228,560	28,557	257,117	11.1	12.5
Philippines	157,665	21,108	178,773	11.8	13.4
India	153,209	44,416	197,625	22.5	29.0
Bangladesh	138,895	17,484	156,379	11.2	12.6
Egypt	128,095	27,074	155,169	17.4	21.1
Pakistan	121,609	25,465	147,074	17.3	20.9
<i>Other EU countries</i>	329,149	171,455	500,604	34.2	52.1
<i>Other non-EU countries</i>	1,511,974	658,370	2,170,344	30.3	43.5
<i>Tot. EU</i>	1,474,867	263,819	1,738,686	15.2	17.9
<i>Tot. non-EU</i>	3,564,770	1,252,827	4,817,597	26.0	35.1
Total	5,039,637	1,516,646	6,556,283	23.1	30.1

Source: Istat 2021. Estimates based on provisional data

After peaking at 200 thousand in 2016, citizenship acquisitions have decreased, though never below 100 thousand per year. However, not all citizenship acquisitions result from residence or marriage to an Italian citizen. About 6% of new acquisitions in 2020 involved descendants of Italian emigrants who successfully applied for citizenship by *jus sanguinis*. As of 1st January 2020, over one and a half million foreign-born “new Italians” live in Italy. There are on average 29 “new citizens” every 100 foreigners. The ratio is much higher in some national communities; every 100 Albanian foreigners, more than 50 are Italian citizens of Albanian origin; every 100 Moroccans, the number of Italian citizens is approximately 48. This ratio is much lower – only 5 new citizens every 100 foreigners – within the Chinese community, where the non-recognition of dual citizenship in China may play a significant role.

4. An update on disembarkations and asylum requests

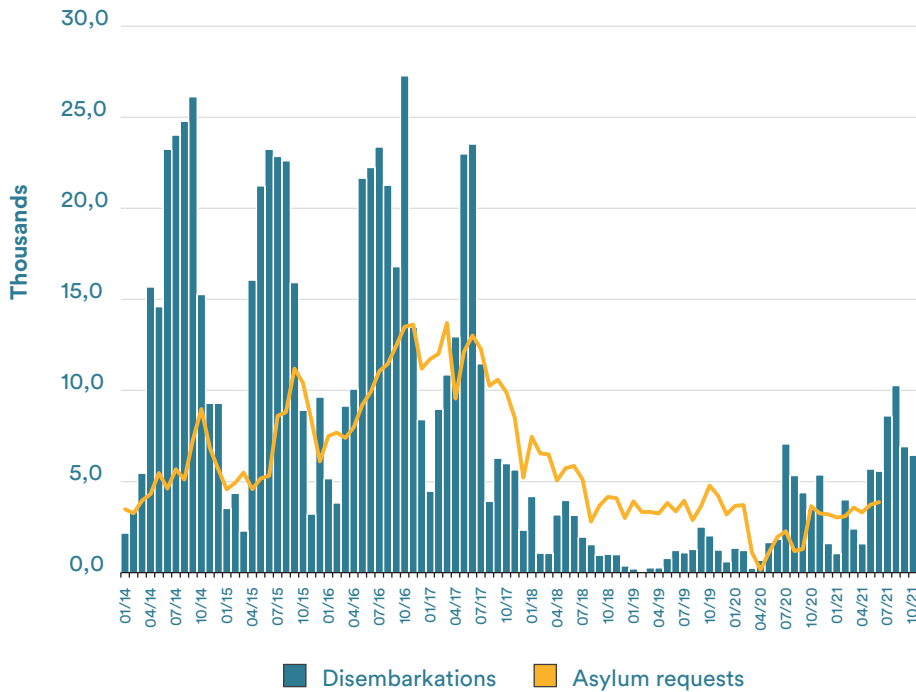
Over 34 thousand people arrived on the Italian shores in 2020 – about three times as many as in 2019 but only 20% of the average annual number of entries between 2014 and 2016 (Chart 2). The data show a further increase in 2021 as departures from Tunisia and Libya grew by 37.6% and 142% since 2020. The total number of arrivals by sea in 2021 is 67,040 (Table 5).

Libya is no longer the only point of departure to Italy. Most people disembarked in 2020 had departed from Tunisia (just under 15 thousand; 45% of all new entries), Libya (about 13 thousand; 39%), Turkey (9%), Algeria (4%), and Greece (2%). In 2021, Libya was the point of departure in 47% of cases and Tunisia in 30%. Arrivals from Turkey have increased significantly (almost 13 thousand; 19% of all new entries), possibly due to Greece sending people intercepted at sea back to Turkey (ECRE, 2021). Algeria (2%) and Greece (1%; UNHCR, 2022) play a less significant role in connecting countries to Italian shores.

The country of departure strongly influences the composition by nationality of immigrants. In 2021, the majority of people who departed from Libya were from Bangladesh (23.3%), Egypt (21.6%) and Eritrea (7.5%). People who departed from Tunisia were mostly Tunisian (76.9%) but also Ivorian (11.7%) and Guinean (6.3%). People who departed from Turkey were mostly Iranian (30.0%), Iraqi (20.0%), or Afghan (15.3%).

The pandemic has put a strain on Southern Mediterranean countries, and irregular migration to Italy and Spain resumed as a result (Fakir, Werenfels, 2021; Vermeren, 2021). Since 2018, Tunisia has been the leading nationality in terms of entries to Italy by sea; after a decline in the first months of the pandemic (March-April 2020), migration flows from Tunisia quickly resumed throughout the rest of the year. Tunisians have been leaving the country due to rising poverty and youth unemployment to join existing networks of fellow Tunisians in Europe. The lack of socioeconomic inclusion in Tunisia also drives migrants and refugees from Sub-Saharan Africa who had previously moved to Tunisia, particularly Ivorians, out of the country (UNHCR, 2020). For similar reasons, the number of Egyptians and Moroccans entering Italy by sea has also increased in 2020 and 2021 (Ministry of the Interior, 2021). This was the most significant flow of Egyptian migrants for years, even larger than the 2016 peak (4,230 people). Between 2013 and 2016, many Egyptians (between 42% and 65%) were unaccompanied minors (ISMU Foundation, 2019). More recently, however, migration flows from Egypt have become more age balanced due to the increase of adult Egyptians fleeing economic and health hardships in their country (UNHCR, 2021a). Migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa are less present than they were in the past: restrictions on mobility in connecting countries have made the migration from Sub-Saharan countries even longer and more difficult (Schofberger, Rango, 2020), thus making migration flows more local (Villa, 2021).

Chart 2. People disembarked on Italian shores and asylum requests. Monthly data, January 2014-October 2021



Source: ISMU analysis of data by Eurostat and the Ministry of the Interior

While disembarkations are constantly monitored, the analysis of migration routes to Italy other than by sea (which may include potential asylum seekers) is less straightforward. Data on land arrivals, particularly along the Balkan route on the border with Slovenia, are scattered and not systematic in their diffusion through official national or international reports.

The data provided by the Ministry of Interior in response to a request of Fondazione ISMU report that land arrivals between 1st January and 31st October 2021 totalled 6,718, or 10.7% of all arrivals. Although referring only to a part of 2021, this figure is higher than the total land arrivals in 2020 (5,247, or 13.3% of the total) and in 2019 (4,133). (Note that in 2019 more than 1 in 4 arrivals – 26.5% – was through a land border).

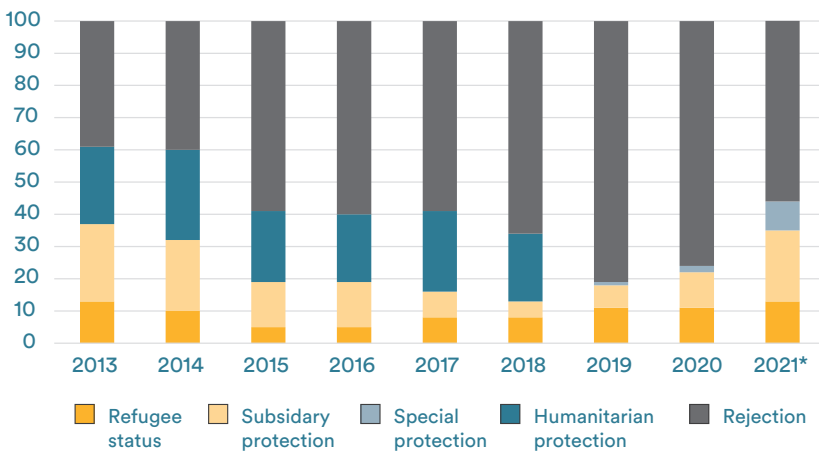
According to UNHCR (2021a, 2021b), despite the lack of official systematic data on entries, between January and August 2021 about 5,600 people requested international protection to Italian authorities or were intercepted at the border between Italy and Slovenia, including 192 unaccompanied foreign minors. Entering Italy from Slovenia are mainly migrants from Bangladesh

(about one third of total arrivals), Pakistan and, to a lesser extent, Afghanistan. According to UNHCR reports, in 2021 a constant number of migrants has been observed in Ventimiglia near the French border (primarily migrants from Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Tunisia, Ivory Coast, Guinea, and Morocco who reported entering Italy by sea). According to UNHCR, a small but significant minority are Afghan, Pakistani, or Bangladeshi migrants who entered Italy via the Balkan route.

In 2020, the number of migrants seeking international protection or asylum who were returned to Italy under the Dublin Regulation decreased but never became negligible (1,442 compared to 5,864 in 2019; Eurostat, 2021), as did the number of migrants from third countries who resettled to Italy (350 compared to 1,355 in 2019).

Overall, fewer asylum requests were rejected in 2021 (56%) compared to 2020 (76%⁵, Chart 3). This was primarily due to the greater number of special permits issued in 2021 (12%), as well as to the higher number of asylum seekers receiving refugee status or subsidiary protection (15% and 17%, respectively, compared to 11% in 2020).

Chart 3. First instance decision on asylum requests, 2013-2021



Source: ISMU analysis of data by the Ministry of the Interior

⁵ Note that the Ministry of the Interior counts missing applicants or other outcomes of asylum requests as rejections.

Table 5. Summary of disembarkations and asylum requests in Italy, 2016-2021

	<i>Disembarkations</i>	<i>People arriving from Libyan shores</i>	<i>Percentage change from the previous year</i>	<i>Unaccompanied foreign minors disembarked</i>	<i>Share of unaccompanied minors in the total number of disembarkations</i>	<i>Main nationalities of disembarked people</i>	<i>Asylum requests</i>	<i>Percentage change from the previous year</i>	<i>Main nationalities of asylum seekers</i>
2016	181,436	n.d.	+17,9%	25,846	14,2%	Nigeria (20.6%). Eritrea (11.4%). Guinea (7.3%)	123,600	+47.2%	Nigeria (22.1%). Pakistan (11.1%). Gambia (7.3%)
2017	119,310	10,212 (89.9%)	+17,9%	25,846	14,2%	Nigeria (20.6%). Eritrea (11.4%). Guinea (7.3%)	123,600	+47.2%	Nigeria (22.1%). Pakistan (11.1%). Gambia (7.3%)
2018	23,370	12,977 (55.5%)	-80.4%	3,536	15.1%	Tunisia (22.1%). Eritrea (14.2%). Iraq (7.4%)	59,955	-53.5%	Pakistan (13.7%). Nigeria (11.8%). Bangladesh (9.3%)
2019	11,487	n.d.	-50.8%	1,680	14.6%	Tunisia (23.1%). Pakistan (10.3%). Ivory Coast (9.9%)	43,783	-27.0%	Pakistan (20%). Nigeria (8%). Bangladesh (7%)
2020	34,154	13,012 (38.1%)	+197.3%	4,687	13.7%	Tunisia (37.7%). Bangladesh (12.1%). Ivory Coast (5.7%)	26,963	-38.4%	Pakistan (20%). Nigeria (12%). Bangladesh (10%)
2021 (First half)	20,259	13,002 (64.2%)	+193.0%	3,527	17.4%	Bangladesh (15.4%). Tunisia (14.5%). Ivory Coast (7.9%)	20,588	+70.1%	Pakistan (14.5%). Nigeria (14.1%). Bangladesh (12.1%)
2021	67,040	31,556 (47%)	+96.3%	9,478	14.1%	Tunisia (23.3%). Egypt (12.5%). Bangladesh (11.7%).	56,388	+173.9%	Pakistan (13.3%). Bangladesh (12.7%). Tunisia (12.6%)

Source: ISMU analysis of data by Eurostat, Ministry of the Interior, UHNCR

5. Conclusions

Early consolidated data concerning the foreign population since the beginning of the pandemic reveal a two-year decline due to the decrease in arrivals and the increase in naturalizations. The unprecedented growth in mortality in 2020, albeit within a relatively young population, deserves further investigation. As of 1st January 2021 – the reference date for the most recent estimates – the number of irregular immigrants was stable. Among them, those who have applied for regularization in 2020 are also included. As mentioned, the processing of regularisation applications has been slow: as of February 2021, only 5% of applications were in the final stage. The most recent data show that 92,876 applications had been processed as of 8th November 2021 (44.7% of all applications); 83.6% were successful, while 2.4% were withdrawn.⁶ The effects of this process on irregular migrants will undoubtedly be visible in the next estimate (as of 1st January 2022), which will be published in the next edition of this Report.

Like in the past, and contrary to the general decline in the foreign population, irregular entries of mixed flows of migrants, including asylum seekers, have increased due to the strong impact of the pandemic on Southern Mediterranean countries.

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⁶ These data have been provided by the Ministry of the Interior upon request by ISMU Foundation.

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A blue-tinted photograph of a stone street sign. The sign is rectangular with a double-line border and is mounted on a wall. The text on the sign is in a serif font and reads "VIA DEL PARLAMENTO" in large letters, with "R. III" in smaller letters to the right. The background is a textured, light-colored wall.

VIA DEL PARLAMENTO R. III

1. Regularization

2. Asylum

3. Citizenship

4. Conclusions

3.

The legal framework

Ennio Codini

Little has changed between 2021 and the previous years regarding migration law. Moreover, all changes have been temporary or issue specific. Temporary measures have been taken in response to the COVID-19 emergency, such as the extension of the validity of residence permits by Decree Law number 2, 14th January. Technical changes have been more significant. A decree issued by the Ministry of the Interior on 20th January introduced a new ‘unified model’ for residence permits in order to keep pace with technological innovations in identification documents. On 20th July, the Constitutional Court ruled the existing regulations on **legal aid** illegitimate (ruling 157) on the grounds that they prevent non-EU citizens from accessing legal aid by self-certifying the amount of their salary – as Italian and EU citizens are allowed to do. (Such unequal treatment, the Court ruled, places obstacles in the path of the legal protection of the most deprived foreigners). All this is very important from a legal point of view, but it has either temporary effects or a limited scope.

However, some events of 2021 could and should pave the way for much-needed **comprehensive reforms** of migration law.

In particular, the difficult implementation of the regularization process started in 2020 should pose the question of how to effectively deal with the decade-long problem of foreign workers illegally staying in the country. Some of the solutions adopted with respect to asylum seekers should also elicit reflections on more radical measures to be taken against human trafficking. Finally, the political debate on the reform of the acquisition of citizenship by second-generation migrants should lead to outlining the basic requirements that nationality law should meet for effectively integrating migrants.

1. Regularization

The evaluation of applications for regularization under article 103 of Decree Law number 34 (2020) continued in 2021.

This process was ridden with problems. First of all, political authorities tended to reject asylum claims that would instead be accepted in court (ruling 739 of Piedmont Administrative Court, 15th July). Yet more relevantly, the overall process has been an **extremely slow-moving** one. In November, more than one year after the selection had begun, only about 45% of requests had been examined. Aside from not abiding by legal requirements (as ruled e.g. by Lombardy's Regional Administrative Court on 6th October), such slowness exacerbated existing problems, such as employment ending before the request was examined. Aside from this (see Morlotti, De Franchi, 2021; Morlotti, 2021 for more on this topic), the delay revived criticism of the 2020 regularization **measure**, which many considered ineffective or at least grossly **inadequate** to regularize the large number of foreign workers who illegally reside in Italy.

Criticism targeted primarily Decree Law number 34, which limited regularization to domestic and family care work and to agricultural work, excluding a large number of foreign workers who are employed in the construction or in the service sector without a valid permit (Zorzella, 2021). More criticism emerged when the deadline for the submission of requests expired: it turned out that only a small number of requests out of above 200,000 applications concerned agricultural work, which resulted in regularization being restricted almost exclusively to domestic and family care work.

Two considerations are in order here. First, regularizing agricultural workers through special measures has always proved extremely difficult, if not downright impossible. Even the most far-reaching regularization measure in Italian history – implemented as part of the so-called Bossi-Fini law – only marginally affected agricultural work. Especially when agricultural workers are exploited to the point of enslavement, they have no actual access to regularization, no matter how the measure is devised. Regularization must thus go beyond special measures, especially as far as labor exploitation is concerned. One step in this direction is the 14th July protocol committing the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI) to undertake joint actions “to prevent and contrast labor exploitation and *caporalato*¹ in agriculture”. Aside from economic intervention, only **the combined use of repression and incentives** may lead to the regularization of illegal workers in agriculture, both migrant and non-migrant ones.

Second, even beyond the specific problems of agricultural work, the regularization currently underway has a **limited reach** due to its being a **one-time measure**. Certain groups of prospective applicants may be excluded for political reasons, since special measures are often the result of political negotiations.

¹ A form of illegal intermediation and exploitation of agricultural work by Italian gangmasters.

This also leads to further limitations that may be exacerbated by a tight schedule, resulting in a flawed design of the provision. Finally, one-time measures typically result in the regularization of a part of the total number of illegal workers, without solving the problem in the face of future waves of immigration adding new irregular migrants to the existing ones.

In light of this, the widespread dissatisfaction with the “failed” regularization implemented by Decree no. 34 should not translate into a plea for “better” and more “radical” measures. Instead, one should call for **the rolling admission of those “illegal migrants” who are eligible for a permit to stay**, as suggested by previous ISMU Reports as well as by the *Libro verde sul governo delle migrazioni economiche* (*Green book on the governance of economic migration*) issued by the Economy and Labor department of ISMU Foundation.

After decades of immigration and several measures of mass regularization surrounded by much controversy, extensive research has been produced on the subject; the time is thus ripe for outlining a set of basic requirements and procedures for ordinarily granting a permit to those migrants who currently work illegally in Italy but could become fully integrated if allowed to.

2. Asylum

Several measures regarding asylum have been taken in 2021. A decree enacted on 29th January issued new guidelines for the management of reception facilities in line with Decree Law no. 130 (2020), which introduced courses of Italian language in reception centers, along with psychological support and a general introduction to job opportunities and services in the local area. Art. 7 of Decree Law no. 139 (8th October 2021) significantly raised the budget of the national asylum fund for the creation of 3,000 new jobs by 2023 for asylum seekers airlifted from Afghanistan. These measures are certainly significant, but they do not dramatically change the status quo; other measures are more promising in terms of radically reforming the existing migration policy.

One of them is the **Afghanistan airlift**. Between 18th and 28th August, operation *Aquila Omnia* airlifted around five thousand people at immediate risk of death or persecution following the change of government in Kabul. As they qualified as asylum seekers, Afghan refugees were to be hosted in SAI (*Sistema di Accoglienza e Integrazione*, Reception and Integration System) centers. This amounted to opening up a legal route to Italy for asylum seekers (albeit a temporary one) which is *alternative* to human trafficking. It is also *different* from the existing legal alternatives, such as resettlement and humanitarian corridors: resettlement begins in refugee camps, and therefore typically in a third country, while humanitarian corridors have so far stretched only to the countries where refugees had found a first refuge, as was Lebanon for Syrian war refugees. On the contrary, Afghan refugees are now airlifted from their country of origin. Moreover, the Afghanistan airlift is **entirely operated by Italian authorities**, whereas resettlement and humanitarian corridors involve the UNHCR or aid agencies.

Humanitarian corridors themselves have been the subject of new legal provisions. After the 2015 and 2017 agreements aided two thousand refugees (mostly from Syria), a new protocol was signed on 5th August between religious institutions (*Tavola Valdese* and *Comunità di Sant'Egidio*) and Italian authorities for offering humanitarian aid to one thousand more people, mostly Syrians who had found refuge in Lebanon. Another protocol signed in November also involved the Italian Episcopal Conference and the Federation of Evangelical Churches in opening a humanitarian corridor in favor of 1,200 Afghanistan refugees from Iran and Pakistan.

Why is all this important for reforming migration law? After all, one could object that the Kabul airlift was a one-time measure taken under very special circumstances. The airlift also affected almost exclusively people who had worked in Italian missions in Afghanistan and were especially at risk, and therefore put Italian authorities under a special ethical obligation to protect them. Humanitarian corridors, for their part, are not unprecedented (two such agreements had been signed in 2015 and 2017), and at any rate they can do very little about the massive illegal flows of asylum seekers. Nonetheless, some lessons can be learned from airlifts and humanitarian corridors on how to set new rules to prevent human trafficking and the undertaking of dangerous migration routes. Humanitarian corridors are certainly a drop in the bucket. However, they have been developing for years now, and expertise on *how* to manage them grows constantly. Their very reiteration attests to the fact that they are successful; they are also accepted more favorably by the public opinion than other ways of aiding asylum seekers. All this makes **humanitarian corridors a valuable practice to be nurtured in the future**. Humanitarian corridors are also in many respects more promising than other legal alternatives such as resettlement. According to UNHCR's *Resettlement Data Finder*, less than three thousand people have resettled to Italy over the past twenty years.

Despite all its limitations, operation *Aquila Omnia* has shown two important things. The first is that **Italian authorities are capable of airlifting a great number of people in need of humanitarian protection on their own, even under extremely adverse circumstances**. One should also bear in mind that other situations may not even require an airlift, but only a first selection of people eligible for a visa.

The second important thing is that the Kabul airlift has been just as favorably regarded by the public opinion as are humanitarian corridors. Therefore, it is safe to assume that negative reactions to the arrival of asylum seekers are largely due to the fact that arrivals are often “uncontrolled” – which negatively affects public safety and the capacity of reception. (Questionable narratives on asylum seekers also play a role in the negative perception of asylum seekers.) One may thus venture that **a system for legal and therefore controlled arrivals** could meet with consensus among the public opinion. Given the need to at least reduce human trafficking, humanitarian corridors and the Kabul airlift may be the cornerstones of **a system for the legal arrival of asylum seekers**, to be run jointly by the state apparatus and by aid agencies in a way that makes systematic what is now occasional. In this way,

asylum seekers may be offered **an alternative to illegal migration run by smugglers**.

3. Citizenship

In 2021, the reform of the law on the acquisition of citizenship by second-generation migrants has been cause for political debate.

Existing laws do not grant second-generation migrants Italian nationality when they reach the age of majority, nor do they offer adequate education to this purpose. The debate is thus a promising starting point for a comprehensive reform.

Like in the past, the debate mostly revolved around **birthright citizenship**, or, more specifically, “tempered” birthright citizenship. In the “tempered” version, citizenship can be acquired by anyone born in the country if at least one of their parents has been a legal resident of that country for one or more years or holds a permanent permit to stay.

As highlighted in a recent study (Codini, 2021), the rationale for tempered birthright citizenship is that citizenship alone can safeguard the rights of minors. However, minors should be granted rights regardless of their nationality. Tempered birthright citizenship also depends on how long one has been residing in a country or for how long they have been holding a permanent permit, which is hardly relevant to whether one can become integrated in a country. Finally, tempered birthright citizenship **does not protect foreign minors who have arrived in Italy through family reunification, nor does it value life paths and choices** before majority age.

Jus culturae has also been considered as a basis for the reform of nationality law. On *jus culturae*, citizenship can be offered to those who can demonstrate affinity for the country’s culture. In 2021, *jus culturae* has been discussed much less favorably than birthright citizenship in Italy. However, the idea should be seriously considered if properly educated second-generation migrants are to become citizens when they reach the age of majority. In fact, *jus culturae* could be a viable political compromise capable of ensuring that second-generation migrants acquire citizenship *before* the age of majority and *on the grounds of* their education. In its currently proposed form, *jus culturae* would offer Italian nationality to *all* second-generation migrants who grow up in Italy; it does not depend on the country of birth and it values school education (Codini, 2021).

Given the ongoing debate on the acquisition of citizenship by second-generation migrants, *jus culturae* could and should be the starting point for a decent reform.

Two points should be made in relation to the study mentioned above. The first is that the **choice of a relevant school path** should be of the greatest importance in the acquisition of nationality. This would value both the minor’s developmental process and school education programs. Contrary to what many reform proposals prescribe, emphasis should generally be placed on the final two years of compulsory education. To be sure, all foreign minors should com-

plete their education through to the final two years; anchoring nationality to the full completion of education would discourage dropping out of school. However, the final two years of education are particularly relevant to the acquisition of citizenship because upper education programs – and upper education activities in general – tend to emphasize citizenship-related subjects much more than early education does. This is also the age at which teenagers start to become more conscious about their political belonging.

The second point is that the reform of nationality law should not be limited to granting citizenship through *jus culturae*. Instead, it should **enhance civic education in school** by introducing new rules and resources for teaching and career assistance. This would complement other existing education paths to citizenship, both within and outside the household, to the benefit not only of young foreigners but of all young people – especially those who come from a difficult background where civic values have little place. Like all education in difficult contexts, citizenship acquisition would benefit from **the joint effort of schools, households, boroughs, parishes, and community services** in which cultural mediators may have a crucial role. Education to citizenship is an important aspect of considering the younger generations as a resource rather than a problem, including those who encounter the greatest difficulties.

A relevant aspect of the acquisition of citizenship that is all too often neglected in reform proposals as well as in the political debate is the *ritual* aspect. Rituals feature prominently in school, where rites of passage abound (think of the first day of school or of graduation). Outside of Italy, the acquisition of citizenship often takes place during a **ceremony**. For these reasons, the “ritual” aspect of citizenship should be given more importance. One should not forget that citizenship is not just about status and formality: it is about **belonging** to a people who has rights and duties. Building such a sense of belonging requires rites, among other things.

3. Conclusions

In light of the above, the 2021 developments could and should inform significant reforms in the future.

Three areas of reform stand out in particular. The regularization started in 2020 could and should be the starting point for implementing a thorough, ordinary, and enduring procedure capable of regularizing illegal foreign workers at all times. The *Aquila Omnia* mission and humanitarian corridors could and should elicit reflection on how to effectively manage the currently unregulated and illegal flows of asylum seekers. The goal is to establish a system of legal channels for legal migration that is open to many if not all migrants and may be a real alternative to human trafficking. Finally, the political debate on the reform of nationality law concerning second-generation migrants could and should outline the features of a good reform based on *jus culturae*, along the lines described above.

There have been no significant developments in 2021 on one issue which is of the utmost importance as the limitations of the corresponding legislation stand in the way of asylum seekers and of the regularization of illegal migrants. This is the **lack of adequate legal channels for the admission of foreign workers**. Without them, the flows of asylum seekers are inevitably mixed – i.e., they include both economic migrants and people eligible for humanitarian protection - and the reception of migrants is considerably more difficult. The number of workers without a permit to stay also tend to increase to a point where their regularization is a constant challenge. This lack impinges on the possibility of implementing the changes proposed above, yet it is all too often neglected in policymaking. While workers in this field consider it a priority, the debate on it is virtually nonexistent, despite the fact that Annual Reports have long been calling for a comprehensive reform. This issue is the main focus of the aforementioned *Green paper*. The time is ripe to reform the existing legislation on migrant labor in light of its decade-long failure and moving from the seemingly self-evident principle that laws should govern existing flows instead of counteracting them. The lack of legal opportunities for economic migrants to enter Italy clashes with the fact that this is the most widespread migration channel.

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1. Lessons from the pandemic

2. Immigrants in the Italian labor market

3. Are immigrants increasingly inactive, unemployed, and poor?

4. A new governance of migration and inclusion is required

4.

Labor

Laura Zanfrini

1. Lessons from the pandemic

Two years on, the impact of the pandemic on the labor market is still hard to assess, especially as far as its medium- to long-term consequences are concerned.

On the one hand, more than 9 in 10 workers live in countries where unemployment has risen, mostly to the detriment of migrant work (ILO, 2021). On the other hand, the economic recovery is set to provide new employment opportunities, though not necessarily in old jobs. The drive for digitalization, ecological transition, and the redesigning of global supply chains – which the pandemic has put to the test – may increase the demand for high-skilled labor while jeopardizing low-skilled jobs in labor-intensive sectors. At the same time, the health emergency has proved that low-skilled migrant work is essential in the production of basic goods and services in sectors such as health and domestic care, transportation and logistics, and agriculture. This revealed a gap between the high economic and social value of migrant labor on the one hand, and migrants' poor working conditions and low wages on the other.

These problems affect many if not all destination countries for immigration, including those that are traditionally taken as benchmarks for the management of migration flows. In Canada, for example, hundreds of thousands of essential workers either have a temporary residence permit, are foreign students, or are former asylum seekers whose claim has been rejected. They are thus excluded from the set of rights and protections that permanently residing migrants enjoy. Therefore, innovative, sustainable policies are required to meet the high

demand for low-skilled labor while safeguarding the rights of workers (MRN, 2021). As for USA, a thought-provoking analysis conducted by a prominent think tank (MPI, 2021) revealed that the criteria for the admission of migrants to the country (established over thirty years ago) are not only out of step with current migration processes; they are also not in line with the national interest: since no real policy for legal immigration is in force, 11 million foreigners currently live in the country illegally.

In the European Union, travel restrictions – along with the special measures adopted to allow migrant workers into the countries and face the labor shortage in agriculture – have put the living and working conditions of migrants into the spotlight. These have been even compared to slavery (EPRS, 2021), so much so that the protection of seasonal workers has been at the center of guidelines issued by the European Commission and of a resolution adopted by the European Parliament in June 2020. These actions have emphasized the urgent need for policies that regulate labor migration, especially as far as low-skilled manual work goes. (In the eyes of the public opinion, low-skilled manual labor often overlaps with the problem of irregular immigration and of social dumping resulting from underpaid, hyper-flexible migrant labor.)

Italy is a clear example of how of the existing models of migrant inclusion are inadequate both to protecting essential workers and to fostering an economic recovery which must be based on the quality and qualification of work. One need only recall - to cite two emblematic examples - the spread of unreported employment in the domestic care and in agriculture, where foreign workers are strongly over-represented. The enduring wage gap between national and foreign workers also contributes to turning the latter into working poor. As a result, one third of immigrant households in Italy currently lives only on unregulated work, while one fourth of all foreigners live in absolute poverty despite being regularly employed.

The pandemic has thus taught us that migration and inclusion require new forms of governance. We will discuss this in the final section. In the next sections, we will provide an overview of the role of immigrants in the Italian labor market and of how it has evolved in the year under consideration.

2. Immigrants in the Italian labor market

In 2019, on the eve of the pandemic, the ILO (2021) estimated that there were 245 million working-age migrants worldwide, 169 million of which worked in the country of destination, making for 4.9% of the global workforce (almost 6 in 10 were men). In the same year, the number of working-age foreigners in Italy was 4 million, while the number of active migrants was 2.9 million (including both employed migrants and those in search of a job) – 11.3% of the total workforce.

One year later (2020), foreigners amounted to 10.8% of the working-age population and their share in the workforce had shrunk to 10.4% due to a considerable rise in the number of inactive foreigners. While in 2019 8.9% of the

inactive working-age population was of foreign origin, one year later this percentage has risen to 9.9%; conversely, the share of foreigners in the working population has fallen from 10.7% in 2019 to 10.2% in 2020.

Aside from their magnitude (Table 1), these variations attest to **a halt to the increasing ethnic differentiation that characterized the Italian labor market before the coronavirus outbreak**. This can be largely explained by a sudden rise in inactivity, as **foreign workers account for as much as one third of the growth in the number of inactive people between 2019 and 2020**. The pandemic-induced crisis has exacerbated a structural problem of the Italian labor market, namely the low participation rate of large chunks of the working-age population. Of almost 1 million workers who lost their job in 2020 (due to layoff, to the employer going out of business, or to the end of the work contract), including 142,511 foreign workers, only 38.7% looked for a new job. (The share is 47.1% among EU foreigners and 49.8% among non-EU foreigners). This appears to be the most significant effect of the pandemic at present.

Table 1. Population by employment status and nationality (2020)

	<i>Italians</i>	<i>% var. 2020- 2019</i>	<i>EU foreigners</i>	<i>Non-EU</i>	<i>Total foreigners</i>	<i>% var. 2020- 2019</i>	<i>Total</i>
Working-age population (15-64 y.o.)	34,245,100	- 0.4	1,259,300	2,756,400	4,015,700	- 0.4	38,260,800
Workforce (15-64 y.o.)	21,869,500	- 2.3	853,400	1,797,300	2,650,700	- 7.3	24,520,200*
Employed people (15 or older)	20,557,674	- 1.4	752,600	1,593,500	2,346,088	- 6.35	22,903,762
Looking for a job (15 or older)	1,958,345	- 10.2	114,525	237,592	352,117	- 12.4	2,310,462
Unemployed (15-64 y.o.)	12,375,624	+ 3.1	405,900	959,100	1,364,982	+ 16.2	13,740,606

* This figure refers to people between 15 and 64 years of age rather than to people who are 15 or older. Therefore, it does not amount to the sum of the number of employed people and the number of people who are looking for a job.

Source: ISMU analysis of Eurostat data: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfsa_pganws/default/table?lang=en

Let us now consider how the activity rate, the employment rate and the unemployment rate have changed. The activity rate has decreased owing to a 6.5 percent-point reduction in the female population – although the reduction in the male population (-3 percentage points) is not insignificant either. While the differential between foreign men and Italian men is still positive, **for the first time the activity rate of foreign women was lower than the activity rate of Italian women**. Overall, **the sudden halt in the activity rate of for-**

eigners has brought it closer to the low activity rate of Italian people (Table 2).

The employment and unemployment rates have both fallen as a result of the overall worsening of the economy and of the reduced activity of foreigners who have lost their jobs, respectively. (As we have seen, almost half of all the foreigners who lost their job have become inactive.) **For the first time, the employment rate of both foreign men and foreign women dropped (-2.2 and -4.9 percentage points, respectively) below the employment rate of Italian people.** Ultimately, **the pandemic crisis seems to have eroded one of the main economic advantages of immigration, namely its role in balancing of the main indicators of the labour market.**

Finally, **the negative differential in unemployment rates has increased** as the unemployment rate of Italian workers has reduced more than the unemployment rate of foreign workers. This is also true for women, although the unemployment rate of foreign women has decreased slightly. (This can be explained by the fact that many foreign women have become inactive).

Table 2. Activity rate, employment rate, and unemployment rate by gender and nationality between 2005 and 2020

	2005		2008		2011		2017		2019		2020	
	For.	Ita.	For.	Ita.	For.	Ita.	For.	Ita.	For.	Ita.	For.	Ita.
Activity rate												
Men	87.5	74.0	87.1	73.6	84.0	72.1	82.9	74.2	84.0	74.0	81.1	72.7
Women	59.1	50.0	59.9	51.0	59.1	50.7	60.2	55.4	59.3	56.1	52.8	54.9
Total	73.4	61.9	73.3	62.3	70.9	61.4	70.8	64.8	70.9	65.1	66.0	63.9
Employment rate												
Men	82.0	69.4	82.0	69.5	75.5	66.7	72.4	66.5	74.0	67.3	71.8	66.7
Women	50.1	45.1	53.1	46.8	51.0	46.1	50.2	48.8	49.5	50.2	44.6	49.6
Total	65.8	57.2	67.1	58.1	62.3	56.4	60.6	57.7	61.0	58.8	57.3	58.2
Unemployment rate												
Men	6.9	6.2	6.0	5.6	10.2	7.4	12.6	10.4	11.8	9.0	11.4	8.3
Women	15.4	9.8	11.9	8.3	14.4	9.1	16.6	12.0	16.3	10.6	15.5	9.8
Total	10.3	7.7	8.5	6.7	12.1	8.1	14.4	11.1	13.8	9.7	13.2	8.9

Source: ISMU analysis of Eurostat data:

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfsa_argan/default/table?lang=en

Only data on the creation and cessation of businesses buck the trend: in 2020, when the pandemic was at its most severe, the number of non-Italian owners and partners in Italian-based companies increased by 2.3%. In the first half of 2021, too, the number of “foreign” companies has risen by 16,197 – a much higher number than it was in the first half of the previous year, when Italy was under lockdown, and even higher than in the first half of 2019, when the net increase in the number of companies run by foreign nationals was 10,205 new companies.

3. Are immigrants increasingly inactive, unemployed, and poor?

Various reports issued by international organizations, government agencies, and think tanks have brought attention to the severe consequences that the COVID-19 crisis has had for migrants, their families, and their communities of origin. The crisis has exacerbated existing inequalities both between and within societies (Oxfam International, 2021). In Italy, the structural disadvantage that people with a migrant background suffer (on accounts of the existing model of inclusion in the labor market) has made them even more vulnerable (Zanfrini, 2022). In other words, **the traditionally high employability of flexible immigrant workers has not proved capable of countervailing the increasing ethnic stratification of society**. The link between the vulnerability of migrant households and the employment status and salary of their members was strong even before the health crisis, yet its full-blown consequences have fully emerged only in the past months.

First, in line with historical and international trends (OECD, 2021), **foreigners have absorbed the unemployment shock caused by the crisis** by losing comparatively more jobs, especially in the sectors in which they are traditionally employed in the greatest number – with the exception of agriculture, where the number of employed immigrants has increased. Their over-representation in fixed-term employment partly explains this. However, other factors contribute to making some categories of workers less protected than others. Discounting for the many variables that influence the probability of finding, losing, and getting back a job, foreigners are comparatively more likely than natives to be fired. Compared to men, women are 1.5 times more likely to lose their job than not to lose it. This probability decreases with age, meaning that younger people are at a disadvantage. Residents in the central and southern regions of Italy are also more likely to lose their jobs than people who live in Northern Italy. Finally, the risk of losing one's job is positively associated with lower education and skills (Directorate General for Immigration and Integration Policies, 2021a). Therefore, while the 2008 crisis had taken its toll primarily on “core” workers (adult men) and was accompanied by an astonishing growth in the number of employed foreigner workers driven by a growth in labor supply, **the impact of the pandemic crisis has been more in line with traditional forms of labor market segmentation**.

In particular, the pandemic has conspicuously impacted foreign women in Italy. This confirms a global situation where the health crisis has made female immigrant workers more vulnerable: they are over-represented in low-paid, low-skilled jobs, and they have limited access to household support services (ILO, 2021). **The employment rate of foreign women in Italy has shrunk twice as much in comparison to that of male immigrants**. The impact of the pandemic on immigrant women accounts for the “feminized” effects of the pandemic on employment: foreign women lost one fourth of the 456 thousand jobs wiped out by the pandemic between 2019 and 2020, whereas before the pandemic foreign women were 4.5% of the employed workforce. In terms of percentage change,

the number of employed foreign women decreased by 10%, while the number of foreign men decreased by 3.5% and that of Italian women decreased by 1.4%.

More generally, **the health emergency seems to have definitively disrupted the delicate balance on which the Italian model of integration was based, exposing its flaws in terms of sustainability.** Two aspects are particularly revealing in this regard.

The first is the aforementioned growth of inactivity. What happened during the pandemic suggests that inactivity is linked, at least in part, to some sort of **precariousness or underpaid work “traps”**. Especially in times when the work-life balance is most difficult, many workers may become less prone to taking jobs that demand sacrificing private and family life, pose risks to health and personal safety, or offer little prospects of stability or professional development. Among other things, a working-age family member exiting the labor market increases the vulnerability of immigrant families that may end up relying on the income of one of its members alone. At any rate, the mismatch between the demand for flexible migrant labor and the (actual or virtual) supply of labor is bound to increase as foreign workers are increasingly bound by family ties, have been socialized in Italy, and rightly seek professional and economic development. This prediction is all the more plausible if one considers that economic migrants proper are a tiny part of new entries – 6.4% in 2020 – and that only 43.4% of non-EU migrant residents has a permit of stay for work reasons (less than 30% if one considers only short-term permits). In this scenario, **immigration – traditionally understood as a solution to the mismatch between the supply and the demand for labor – is becoming part of the problem.**

The second aspect is **the worsening of the poverty problem**; in 2020, 29.3% of foreigners lived in poverty (as opposed to 7.5% of Italian people), which affected 26.7% of foreign-only households (24.4% in 2019). This means 415,000 households, or 568,000 if “mixed” households (i.e., households in which at least one member is a foreigner) are included in the count.

Job seekers are most affected by poverty, but foreign job seekers are twice as much affected: 31.5% of foreigners looking for a job live in poverty, as opposed to only 16% of Italian people. Most strikingly, however, the working poor account for 25% of the foreign population, but only for 5.1% of the Italian population. This worrisome figure can be easily explained if one takes into account both the low net worth and the low wages of immigrants: in 2020, **the average salary of non-EU workers (12,902 euros) was 38% lower than the average salary of the entire working population** (mainly because of the concentration of migrants in low-skilled jobs). All this translates into a growing need for immigrants and their families to access benefits. Partly excluded from the *reddito di cittadinanza* (a form of minimum income which requires having been a resident in Italy for at least 10 years), immigrant families are a significant share of the total recipients of the benefits introduced in 2020. The struggle of immigrant families becomes even more blatant if one considers the number of those who have received support from non-profit organizations: for example, foreigners are more than half the number of people who benefited from *Caritas* services in 2020, 80% of which are in a situation of economic hardship (*Caritas and Migrantes, 2021*).

Besides describing the comparative disadvantage of immigrants, these data should sound like **a wake-up call to the severe consequences that the diffusion of “bad” and underpaid jobs may have**, particularly since household wealth will be reducing and intergenerational solidarity will become a less reliable source of support in the future.

4. A new governance of migration and inclusion is required

The organizations involved in global governance constantly point out that international migration *might* benefit the countries of destination – by countering labor shortages and population ageing and contributing to the financing of social security systems. It *might* also be a source of well-being and development for the migrants themselves as well as for their countries of origin (ILO, 2021). However, this is a mere possibility: whether migration is beneficial to all involved stakeholders or not depends on how it is governed. This call into question not only the governance of human mobility itself, but also the implementation of labor and employment policies (an oft-neglected aspect of the governance of migration). **This twofold action is also cited in the UN Sustainable Development Agenda**, which identifies migration as relevant to development, provided that effective migration policies are implemented and that the rights of workers, especially migrant workers, are safeguarded.

This goal becomes a priority in the light of what the previous sections have shown. **Italy apparently neglected the management of economic migration altogether**: the three-year plan issued with the Consolidated Act on Immigration (no longer mandatory since Law 189 was enacted in 2002) has only been implemented three times (in 1998, in 2001, and in 2005). Since then, no cabinet ventured to identifying the criteria for the admission of migrants. At the same time, over the past twenty years it has become customary to favor seasonal migration, to the point that non-seasonal labor migration has become virtually impossible. As for the deficit of labor and employment policies in Italy, the problem persists in spite of the recurring reformation of existing legislation and of the various studies and proposals made available by scholars and experts. This problem is even more critical in migrant-intensive sectors of the economy – such as agriculture and domestic work – where **the intermediation between labor demand and supply is scarcely regulated** and the informal or even illicit labor market thrives.

In the light of the above, the ISMU Foundation has issued a *Libro verde sul governo delle migrazioni economiche* (*Green book on the governance of economic migration*, Settore Economia e lavoro, 2021) with the aim of fostering debate and providing guidelines for the publication of a *White book* in 2022.

Without discussing the insights from the *Green book* into greater detail, it should be stressed that the governance of economic migration is an extremely complex issue that is often oversimplified in the political debate. **Governing migration implies managing delicate trade-offs between contrasting**

needs and goals, first and foremost the *economic* planning of migration flows – aimed at meeting the needs of the labor market and achieving development targets – and the *political* need to provide legal migration channels capable of discouraging irregular migration and misplaced asylum requests. *Short-term* responses to the contingent demand for low-skilled jobs and the *medium- to long-term* creation of sustainable models of integration also trade off against each other, as do the *management of migration* (in line with Italy’s role in the international arena, particularly the Euro-African arena) and the *sustainable inclusion* of migrants in the Italian labor market. Finally, the procedural technicalities of planning – which require flexible, simple, user-friendly migration schemes that provide workforce as required – must be reconciled with politics with a capital “p”, meaning the governance of immigration in the light of both ethical values and a vision for the future.

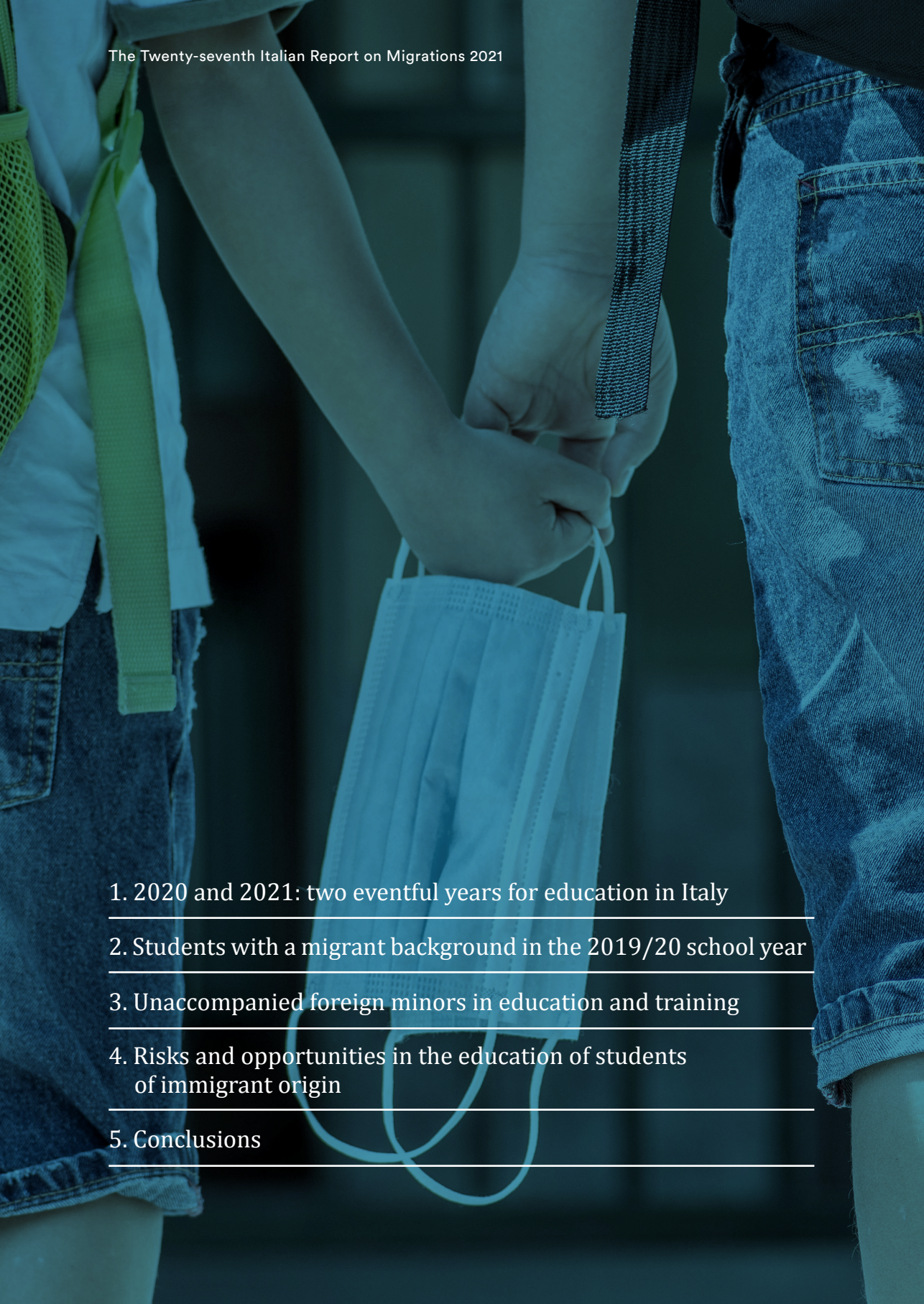
In this respect, ISMU’s *Green book* contends that fair and sustainable economic growth (one of the goals of policy reform in regard to economic migration) implies **redesigning accumulation regimes, production and supply chains, and models of social reproduction** – the limitations of which can be identified through the lenses of immigration and by learning from the pandemic. In particular, the *Green book* focus on the four most crucial sectors for the present and future of migrant work. It appears that migration cannot be managed without considering the relentless “global care crisis” that the ILO (2018) warned about. The *Green book* also reveals that the lack of institutional intermediation of labor supply and demand – e.g. in the agricultural sector – has undercut the very same migration policies that had been implemented. Furthermore, the flaws of the Italian health system must not overshadow the importance of a global system for the development of hard skills in the medical and nursing professions worldwide. Finally, the *Green book* investigates the reasons why Italy attracts less profitable workforce than other countries do, and it urges the support for professionalism and entrepreneurialism within the pursuit of the country’s strategic goals (such as strengthening its international role or contrasting depopulation).

These challenges attest that **there is much room for policymaking in the area of migration and in all other areas** (such as labor policy, social policy, agricultural and industrial policy, and policies of urban development and for the repopulation of inland areas, to name but a few). Policymakers and governments can thus take a pro-active role in all policy areas. However, **civil society can play an equally important role**. To be sure, best practices that developed locally – from training and skills development programs to bilateral agreements, from the creation of safe spaces against *caporalato*¹ to cooperation for meeting health needs, and even to the participation of immigrants themselves in business incubators – must be valorized and institutionalized into a coherent framework. More broadly, however, awareness must be raised about the role that the individual choices and actions of companies, households, and consumers may play in enhancing the quality of employment and in making the use of immigrant labor more sustainable.

¹ A form of illegal intermediation and exploitation of work by agricultural gangmasters.

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1. 2020 and 2021: two eventful years for education in Italy
 2. Students with a migrant background in the 2019/20 school year
 3. Unaccompanied foreign minors in education and training
 4. Risks and opportunities in the education of students of immigrant origin
 5. Conclusions

5. Education

Mariagrazia Santagati

1. 2020 and 2021: two eventful years for education in Italy

2020 and 2021 will no doubt be remembered as unique years for Italy: the unprecedented health emergency caused by the spread of the SARS-COV-2 virus has affected many sectors of society, first and foremost the education system. In particular, the 2019/2020 school year saw the nation-wide closure of all schools from March 9th to September 10th, 2020 (Pavolini et al., 2020).

The decade-long problems of the school system – which is at the center of social life (Argentin, 2021) – have become more urgent in the wake of the pandemic, especially when lockdowns and social distancing were active. Even though these issues have been presented as novel, the pandemic has in fact revealed structural weaknesses in the school apparatus. If anything, the pandemic may exacerbate learning problems and inequalities among disadvantaged students as well as among students with special educational needs.

A qualitative study conducted on teachers, parents, and students in primary and lower secondary school (Santagati, Barabanti, 2020) has identified some generative dynamics of school inequality during distance learning. Old and new relational and learning problems emerged, which predict the school dropout of disadvantaged students. Different aspects combine in the narratives of the interviewees. The physical and social distancing and technological disconnection (due to the lack of adequate devices and internet connection) have resulted in the progressive emotional and educational detachment of many students. This has resulted in an educational disadvantage as well as in troubles between par-

ents and teachers – including work overload, stress, mutual transfer of responsibilities, overload, and confusing roles. These processes have reinforced the inequalities produced by an education system which was already “distanced in presence”, and they negatively affected the opportunity for the personal and social development of a whole generation of disadvantaged minors.

During lockdowns the school system also failed to meet the special needs of students with a migration background. Their opportunities for practicing Italian language and for improving Italian as a second language have been reduced or downright canceled, as have those for interacting with Italian speakers (a crucial aspect in language learning, Santagati, Colussi, 2021). The education of many vulnerable minors, such as unaccompanied foreign minors, was discontinued as migrant reception facilities lacked adequate internet connection while schools proved unable to reach out to them (Santagati, Barzaghi, 2021).

2. Students with a migrant background in the 2019/20 school year

The latest Ministry of Education data (published by the Department for Statistics and Research in September 2021) reveal that more than 870 thousand students of non-Italian citizenship enrolled in the 2019/20 school year, almost 20 thousand more than in the previous year. The share of students with a migrant background is 10.3% of the total number of students enrolled in Italian schools, from kindergarten to upper secondary schools (Table 1). In school year 2018/19, the symbolic threshold of 10 students with immigrant origins every 100 students was crossed.

Table 1. Students with an immigrant background in Italy. From 2009/10 to 2019/20

<i>School year</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>In 100 students</i>	<i>Net increase</i>
2009/10	673,592	7.5	-
2010/11	711,046	7.9	+37,454
2011/12	755,939	8.4	+44,893
2012/13	786,630	8.9	+30,691
2013/14	803,053	9.0	+16,423
2014/15	814,208	9.2	+11,155
2015/16	814,851	9.2	+643
2016/17	826,091	9.4	+11,240
2017/18	841,719	9.7	+15,628
2018/19	857,729	10.0	+16,010
2019/20	876,801	10.3	+19,072

Source: ISMU analysis of data by the Ministry of Education

As is well known, the number of students of non-Italian nationality has been stagnating for years – due to reduced migration flows, to the increase in the number of Italian citizens among young people (born abroad or in Italy), and to the low rates of schooling between 3-5 years of age (83.7% among non-Italians compared to 96.3% among Italians) as well as between 17-18 years of age (73.2% among non-Italians compared to 81.1% among Italians: Ministry of Education, 2021). This adds to reduced or precluded access to education of extremely vulnerable groups such as unaccompanied foreign minors, asylum seekers, and refugees (Santagati, Barzaghi, 2021). Nonetheless, the number of students of non-Italian citizenship has begun to increase again since 2016/17 in the face of the constant decrease in the number of Italian students: this has resulted in a growth by more than 60 thousand non-Italian students over four school years.

In the past decade, the absolute number of students of immigrant origin has increased in all educational levels. The share of non-Italian students in primary and secondary school has been relatively stable over time (Table 2): in 2019/20, 57.4% of non-Italian students in the Italian education system are enrolled in primary or lower secondary schools. The percentage of children with a migrant background in kindergarten has been decreasing slightly (-0.8 percent points over a decade), while the share of students enrolled in upper secondary school has been increasing (+2 percent points over a decade).

Table 2. Non-Italian students per educational level. 2009/10 - 2019/20. Absolute values and percentages

School year	Absolute values				Percentages			
	Kindergarten	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Kindergarten	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary
2009/10	135,840	244,457	150,279	143,224	20.2	36.3	22.3	21.3
2019/20	166,351	317,734	188,038	204,678	19.0	36.2	21.4	23.3

Source: ISMU analysis of data by the Ministry of Education

As for nationality, students come from around 200 different countries and about half of them are of European origin, one fourth are of African origin, and 20% are of Asian origin. Romanian, Albanian, Moroccan, and Chinese communities are the most represented in Italian schools, with more than 100,000 students each. In 2019/20, students of Romanian origin have decreased compared to previous years (156,718, 17.8% of non-Italian students), followed by a steady number of Albanian (118,778, 13.5%), Moroccan (108,454, 12.3%), and Chinese students (55,993, 6.3%). All these countries have a history of emigration to Italy. 67.7% of all non-Italian students belong to the ten largest foreign communities, followed by the Chinese, Indian, Egyptian, Moldovan, Filipino, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi communities.

The situation of students with an immigrant background has not changed over time. The 2019/20 data also confirm that the majority of students with

non-Italian citizenship are in the Northern regions (65.3%), followed by the Central regions (22.2%) and, finally, by the South (12.5%). In recent years, however, the number of non-Italian students has been growing in some Southern regions – particularly Campania, the first region by growth in the percentage of non-Italian students in the past three years (+11.5%) and the fourth region by absolute values (+2,900 students) behind Lombardy, Emilia-Romagna, and Veneto (Ministry of Education, 2021). The number of students with a migrant background has also grown considerably in Puglia (+1,200), the second region by growth in percentage (+7%). Lombardy has historically always been the leading region by number of foreign students – over 224,000, more than one fourth of their total number (25.6%). In Emilia-Romagna, students with non-Italian citizenship are 17.1% of all students in the region, the highest share among all Italian regions.

The 2019/20 ranking of provinces by number of students with an immigrant background (Table 3) largely corresponds to previous rankings, led by the Milan province (in which, however, the number of foreign students fell from over 92 thousand in 2018/19 to almost 80 thousand in 2019/20), followed by Rome, Turin, and Brescia. Most of the top 10 provinces are in Northern Italy.

The percentage ranking features very different provinces, such as Prato (at the top of the list: 28% of non-Italian pupils), Piacenza, Mantua, Parma, Cremona, Asti, Lodi, and Modena. Brescia (18.5 non-Italians per 100 students) and Milan (18.2 per 100 students) feature in both rankings.

Among the top ten municipalities by number of students of immigrant origin are Genoa, Prato, and Venice, none of which feature in the province ranking.

Table 3. Top ten provinces and municipalities by number of students with a migrant background in Italy. 2019/20. Absolute values

<i>Province</i>	<i>Absolute value</i>	<i>Municipality</i>	<i>Absolute value</i>
Milan	79,842	Rome	43,779
Rome	64,464	Milan	41,133
Turin	39,732	Turin	25,014
Brescia	33,765	Genoa	10,934
Bergamo	26,342	Bologna	10,532
Bologna	22,576	Florence	9,926
Florence	22,572	Prato	9,439
Verona	21,380	Brescia	8,726
Modena	19,287	Verona	8,022
Padua	18,392	Venice	6,758

Source: ISMU analysis of data by the Ministry of Education

In 2019/20 school year, the number of Italian schools unaffected by immigration continues to decrease (9,939 schools, 17.9% of the total number of Italian schools), while the number of schools with 30% or more students of immigrant origins grows (3,809, +3.5 percent points compared to ten years earlier, or +0.4 compared to the previous school year and including 3,809 schools) (Table 4).

Table 4. Italian schools by share of non-Italian students. 2018/19 and 2019/20

	<i>None</i>	<i>Less than 30%</i>	<i>30% or more</i>	<i>Total</i>
2009/10	25.2	71.4	3.4	100
2018/19	18.3	75.2	6.5	100
2019/20	17.9	75.2	6.9	100

Source: ISMU analysis of data by the Ministry of Education

The share of schools with less than 30% of non-Italian students remains large and stable, equal to three quarters of the total number of Italian schools (41,717).

Official reports by the Ministry of Education reflect the deep changes in the composition of students with a migration background over the past decade, due to the coming of age of second-generation migrants born in Italy. Almost 85% of students of Chinese origin were born in Italy, as were three quarters of students of Moroccan and Albanian origin and 70% of Filipino students (Ministry of Education, 2021).

Second-generation migrant students born in Italy were 20,000 more than in the previous school year, totaling 570,000 or 65.4% of non-Italian students (Table 5). The highest share is to be found in younger students: about 82 in 100 students with a migrant background in kindergarten were born in Italy, compared to 74 out of 100 in primary school. The number of students born in a foreign country has also significantly increased in secondary schools.

Table 5. Native students with immigrant background by educational level. 2007/08 and 2019/20. Absolute values and percentages

	<i>Absolute value</i>		<i>Natives in 100 non-Italian students</i>	
	<i>2007/08</i>	<i>2019/20</i>	<i>2007/08</i>	<i>2019/20</i>
Kindergarten	79,113	136,217	71.2	81.9
Primary	89,421	237,135	41.1	74.6
Lower secondary	22,474	116,932	17.8	62.2
Upper secondary	8,111	83,561	6.8	40.8
Total	199,119	573,845	34.7	65.4

Source: ISMU analysis of data by the Ministry of Education

Besides monitoring trends in native students with immigrant origins, since 2007/08 the Ministry of Education has been monitoring the entry of newly arrived students into the Italian education system. From 2007/08 throughout 2019/20, the size of this group has been oscillating. After having decreased by more than 23 thousand in over a decade (currently equal to 3.2% of non-Italian students, Table 6), since 2016/17 the number of newcomers has settled at around 22 thousand. The number of new immigrant students in primary and upper secondary schools in 2019/20 school year has not changed compared to the previous years, while increasing slightly in lower secondary schools – from 4.9% to 5.1% of the total number of students with a migrant background.

Table 6. Non-Italian students entering the Italian education system for the first time. 2007/08 and 2019/20. Absolute values and percentages

	<i>Absolute value</i>		<i>Newcomers</i>	
	<i>2007/08</i>	<i>2019/20</i>	<i>2007/08</i>	<i>2019/20</i>
Primary	23,650	4,826	10.9	1.5
Lower secondary	12,064	9,578	9.5	5.1
Upper secondary	10,440	8,297	8.8	4.1
Total	46,154	22,701	10.0	3.2

Source: ISMU analysis of data by the Ministry of Education

Recently arrived students are mostly concentrated in Southern Italy or in areas where migrants arriving in Italy by sea through the central Mediterranean route are usually disembarked. Among these students there are also unaccompanied foreign minors who experience the greatest difficulties in accessing Italian education and training. This is confirmed by the data that emerge from recent in-depth studies (Bichi, Bonini, 2019; Colombo, Scardigno, 2019; Di Rosa, Guicciardo, 2019; Pavesi, 2020; Santagati, Colussi, 2020). Focusing on this particularly vulnerable group reveals the contradictions of a highly inclusive and universalist school system which nevertheless falls short of guaranteeing the right to education to near-adult foreigners.

3. Unaccompanied foreign minors in education and training

For the first time in Italy, a study promoted by the Ministry of Education (Santagati, Barzaghi, 2021) has made available data on the access of unaccompanied foreign minors to education, training, and Italian language courses¹. A nation-wide survey has been conducted on Italian reception facilities hosting unaccompanied minors in 2020 (as part of the Italian SAI – System for the reception on Arrival and Integration) as well as on local public facilities and on special facilities hosting minors over 14 years of age.

A questionnaire has been administered to a representative sample of 130 facilities from all over Italy, revealing 1,400 unaccompanied minors, almost all of which are male, three quarters of which are 17 years old, and living in 75 provinces across Italy with a concentration in the areas of the Mediterranean and Balkan routes. They come from 41 different countries in Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe, but mostly from Bangladesh, Albania, Egypt, Tunisia, and Pakistan.

This is a heterogeneous group, even in terms of their previous education. Working minors (13.8%), minors who were no longer pursuing education in their country of origin (20%), or illiterate and unschooled minors (17.9%) are a significant share of them. Their inclusion in Italian-language education is therefore particularly difficult. More than 80% of the total number of unaccompanied foreign minors have Alpha-level or pre-A1-level knowledge of Italian language because they never learned to read and write or lack any formal education. On the other hand, 49% of all unaccompanied foreign minors had been in school, and 29.2% had been in secondary school. They thus have many of the learning skills that are vital to their integration in Italy (from multilingualism to soft skills such as autonomy, initiative, etc.). 51.9% of unaccompanied foreign minors speak at least two languages, including Arabic, Bengali, Albanian, French, Urdu, Bambara, English, and Italian (D'Agostino, 2021).

As of September 30th, 2020, 72.4% of the total number of unaccompanied foreign minors were attending language courses, 24.4% of them were in upper secondary schools, and 17.2% were in primary or lower secondary schools. 32.2% of them had completed their previous education, while 61.8% had yet to complete it. Among the former, almost 40% had graduated from lower secondary school, about 31% had obtained a certificate of Italian as a second language from a local adult education facility, and 10% had attended vocational training courses. The survey reveals that unaccompanied foreign minors typically wait 1 month to access basic language courses, up to 4-5 months to access primary education, and almost a year or more to access secondary education. However, 20% of minors are granted access to the education system within 1 month since

¹ This study, conducted by ISMU Foundation, is part of the project “Alfabetizzazione Linguistica e Accesso all'Istruzione per MSNA - ALI 1” [“Language literacy and access to education for unaccompanied foreign minors”] (N. HOME/2019/AMIF/AG/EMAS/0093), co-funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund of the European Union. See <https://www.ismu.org/progetto-studio-conoscitivo-sui-minori-stranieri-non-accompagnati-in-italia-e-laccesso-allistruzione/>.

their arrival in Italy, and over 60% within 2 months. The survey also shows that participation in school and training is overall successful, and that school attendance, integration, motivation, and the development of cognitive skills tend to improve over time.

4. Risks and opportunities in the education of students of immigrant origin

As usual in ISMU Reports, the problems and outcomes of the education of students with a migration background are reported in the following (Boerchi, Valtolina, 2021).

School delay is one of the main problems in the education of non-Italian students, currently affecting 30% of them compared to 9% of Italian students (Table 7). Compared to ten years ago, the overall share of students with a migrant background enrolled in classes with younger classmates has shrunk by more than 10 percent points. A similar reduction can be found among Italian students, too, albeit to a lesser degree: the gap between Italian and foreign students has reduced from 30 points in 2009/10 to 21 points in 2019/20. Despite these positive changes, non-Italian students are still largely enrolled in classes with younger classmates: in upper secondary schools 56.2% of students of immigrant origin are one or more years older than their classmates. The share is also high in lower secondary school (almost 32%) and in primary school (more than 12%), especially in comparison to Italian students.

Table 7. Percentage of Italian and non-Italian students enrolled in classes with younger classmates (in 100 students) by educational level. 2009/10 and 2019/20

	2009/10			2019/20		
	Italian (a)	Foreign (b)	b-a	Italian (a)	Foreign (b)	b-a
Primary	1.9	19.3	17.4	1.6	12.1	10.5
Lower secondary	8.1	49.2	41.1	4.6	31.8	27.2
Upper secondary	25.1	71.3	46.2	18.8	56.2	37.4
Total	12.1	41.5	29.4	8.9	29.9	21

Source: ISMU analysis of data by the Ministry of Education

School dropout and problems related to the transition between school, training, and work also affect young people in Italy. In 2020, the percentages of *Early Leavers from Education and Training* (ELET) and *Neither in Employment nor in Education and Training* (NEET) are still very high among foreign-born youth in Italy, more than in any other European country.

Young people aged 18-24 who neither have a secondary school diploma or a professional certification nor are in education or training (ELET) have been reducing in number over the past decade, both among Italian and among the non-Italian population. However, the share of ELET among foreign born youth is 32.1% in 2020, or three times as much as natives (11%). The number of NEET aged 15-29 has remained more stable over the past decade (36% of foreign-born young people in Italy, +4.1 points compared to 2019).

Table 8. Percentage of ELET (aged 18-24) and NEET (aged 15-29) by place of birth. 2010 and 2020

	<i>ELET</i>			<i>NEET</i>		
	<i>Italian</i>	<i>Foreign</i>	<i>b-a</i>	<i>Italian</i>	<i>Foreign</i>	<i>b-a</i>
	<i>(a)</i>	<i>(b)</i>		<i>(a)</i>	<i>(b)</i>	
2010	16.3	40.7	24.4	20.6	32.7	12.1
2020	11	32.1	21.1	21.8	36	14.9

Source: ISMU analysis of data by the Ministry of Education

Moreover, in the past decade the gap between native and foreign-born ELET and NEET has not reduced significantly. If anything, the rate of foreign-born NEET has become much higher than the rate of Italian NEET due to the early impact of the pandemic on educational choices, life chances, and the labor market.

On the other hand, the situation of students of immigrant origin has improved with respect to their choice of upper secondary schools. Data show that foreign students consistently enroll in technical colleges (*istituti tecnici*) (38.3% in 2019/20) but less so in vocational colleges (*istituti professionali*) (-9.8 percentage points over 10 school years) in favor of *lyceums* (+9.3 points) (Table 9). In 2019/20, *lyceum* students with a migrant background are 30.9% of all non-Italian students enrolled in upper secondary schools, i.e. 63,261 attending students. For the first time, this number exceeded that of foreign students enrolled in vocational colleges (63,117 non-Italian students), albeit by a small margin.

Table 9. Percentage of students with an immigrant background per types of upper secondary school. 2009/10 and 2019/20

	<i>2009/10</i>	<i>2019/20</i>
Lyceums	21.6	30.9
Technical colleges	37.8	38.3
Vocational colleges	40.6	30.8

Source: ISMU analysis of data by the Ministry of Education

More ambiguous results emerge from test scores (INVALSI, 2021). Scores in Mathematics and Italian in the final grade of upper secondary school were overall worse in the 2020/21 than they were in 2018/19 – before the pandemic ushered in two years of intermittent closure of schools in various Italian regions (Table 10).

Table 10. Average INVALSI test scores in Italian, Mathematics, and English in the final grade of upper secondary school by citizenship and immigrant generation. 2018/19 and 2020/21

	<i>Italian</i>			<i>Mathematics</i>			<i>English Reading</i>			<i>English Listening</i>		
	<i>Italians</i>	<i>1st gen.</i>	<i>2nd gen.</i>	<i>Italians</i>	<i>1st gen.</i>	<i>2nd gen.</i>	<i>Italians</i>	<i>1st gen.</i>	<i>2nd gen.</i>	<i>Italians</i>	<i>1st gen.</i>	<i>2nd gen.</i>
2018/19	201	184	193	201	192	196	200	201	204	200	205	208
2020/21	191	173	178	191	183	186	198	198	194	201	204	203
Difference	-10	-11	-15	-10	-9	-10	-2	-3	-10	+1	-1	-5

Source: ISMU analysis of INVALSI data

Natives tend to have higher scores than second-generation migrant students in Italian language. In turn, second-generation migrants outperform first-generation migrants. Mathematics test scores are similar, although with smaller differences between the different groups of students. Between 2018/19 and 2020/21, the overall performance in Italian language seriously deteriorated, especially among second-generation migrant students. Grades in mathematics have become lower among natives and second-generation migrants, followed closely by first-generation migrants. While second-generation migrants outperformed both natives and first-generation migrants in English in 2018/19, their grades have now seriously lowered especially in English Reading tests. Their scores in English Listening tests are only slightly better.

5. Conclusions

The analysis offered here highlights the non-standard education of Italian and students with an immigrant background, which results in ambivalent performances depending on the background and family of origin, as well as on the support of educational institutions and teachers (Santagati, 2021) and on other unpredictable contextual factors such as school closures or the alternation of distance learning and traditional learning during the pandemic (Milione, Landri, 2020).

As early as 2020, the risks of a “learning loss” affecting millions of students in Italian schools had become an issue of public relevance. Early estimates in

the first stages of the pandemic were later confirmed by the INVALSI data from 2021, as well as by the perception and everyday experience of teachers and parents. The accumulation of cognitive deficits and disorders will be hard to relieve in the short term, resulting in higher educational inequalities in the medium and long term, to the detriment of disadvantaged and minority-group students. In the face of this, the debate has become polarized between those in favor of distance learning and those against it, while issues regarding diversity and difference have almost disappeared from the public agenda. Further research is thus needed to investigate the impact of the pandemic on multicultural schools and on students with a migrant background.

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1. Introduction

2. Focus on: COVID-19

3. Health and foreigners in Italy

4. Concluding remarks

6.

Health

Nicola Pasini and Veronica Merotta

1. Introduction

As the COVID-19 emergency continues, **this chapter addresses the consequences of the pandemic on migrants in Italy and Europe.** While the pandemic affects the entire population, in continuity with the chapter on health from the previous ISMU Report, we have narrowed our focus on the territorial and ethnic dimensions of the pandemic, even though the situation is still changing. The analysis will focus on the different health-related issues that have emerged as well as on the measures adopted by health institutions to counteract the pandemic. The starting point of our analysis is the vaccination campaign that has involved, at various degrees, a large number of Italian and foreign citizens since early 2021.

The second half of this chapter will focus on **the main health issues that migrants face and that COVID-19 has in some cases aggravated.** For this reason, some general remarks will be required on the institutional decision-making process concerning social security as a whole, beginning with health policy (see concluding remarks).

2. Focus on: COVID-19

2.1 COVID-19 transmission – the European scenario

As we pointed out in the previous ISMU Report, **the risks that corona and other diseases pose to migrants are often associated with socio-economic or simply economic conditions.** Relevant factors are occupational risks (lack of social safety nets, prevalence of jobs that require contact with the public and the use of public transport), crowding in housing solutions (especially in multigenerational households), and public communication failures on matters of health and health care (low command of the official language, low awareness and skewed perception of health hazards).

Some migrant groups in the EU, in the European Economic Area (EEA), and in the UK have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of cases, hospitalizations, and deaths associated with the novel coronavirus. In the European Union (ECDC, 2021), migrants accounted for a large chunk of total cases in Norway (42% of cases as of 07-04-2020), Denmark (26% of cases as of 07-09-2020), and Sweden (32% of cases as of 07-05-2020). As we will show in the following sections, the hospitalization rate of foreigners in Spain and in Italy was higher than that of natives. Higher mortality rates among migrants in 2020 were reported in several countries such as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, France and Sweden. In general, multiple outbreaks of COVID-19 were recorded in camps, reception facilities and repatriation centers across Europe.

Recent data indicate that vaccination rates among migrants are particularly low in some European countries (Ibid.). In general, access to free care and vaccines is severely limited or absent when it comes to certain migrant groups such as illegal migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees (De Vito et al., 2017). A study conducted before the pandemic showed that 82% of migrants in seven European countries had no health care coverage, which defies the universal right to health as a basic good (Médecins du Monde, 2019). As the international literature on epidemiology and sociology of health from the past thirty years suggests, migrants' access to health care may be limited by organizational obstacles (lack of linguistic and cultural mediators, transportation problems, limited territorial coverage) as well as by individual obstacles (precarious socio-economic conditions, social isolation, lack of psychological support, discrimination and stigmatization by the community) (ECDC, 2018).

2.2 COVID-19 transmission – the Italian scenario

In line with recent research on Europe, the immigrant population in Italy has been comparatively more affected by the consequences of COVID-19 than the native population, even though migration has been generally per-

ceived as a less problematic issue during the pandemic than it was before.

A recent study (Fabiani et al., 2021) showed that migrants may be at a higher risk of morbidity and mortality from COVID-19 infection because of their living and working conditions and limited access to health care. Of all confirmed cases of COVID-19 between February and July 2020, 7.5% were non-Italian nationals and had been diagnosed approximately two weeks later than Italian nationals, peaking at four weeks in the case of migrants from countries with a low Human Development Index (HDI). As a result, infections among non-Italians were diagnosed less timely, at a more advanced stage of the disease, and with more severe symptoms. This result is reinforced by data on hospitalizations; **foreigners proved to be more likely to be hospitalized and to be admitted to Intensive Care Units.** The likelihood is even higher in the case of people from countries with low HDI. The risk of death for patients from low-HDI countries is also higher than it is for Italian patients, although no significant difference was found in hospitalized patients. In general, the lower the HDI of the country of origin, the higher the risk of hospitalization, ICU admission, and death.

According to the *Istituto Superiore di Sanità* (ISS), Italy's national institute of health, delayed diagnoses have multiple causes, such as difficult access to primary care in the region (general practitioners, outpatient care, mediators, all of which are crucial to early diagnosis), administrative, legal, cultural, social, and language barriers that obstruct access to health services, and fear that isolation and quarantine would impact work.

In our previous contribution to the 26th ISMU Report (Pasini, Merotta, 2021), we had analyzed ISS (2020) data on infections from the first wave of the pandemic. The highest number of infections are to be found among Romanians (high-HDI), followed by Peruvians, Albanians, Ecuadorians, Moroccans, Ukrainians, Egyptians, Moldovans, and Filipinos (medium-HDI), then by Indians, Bengalis, Nigerians, and Pakistanis (low-HDI). On the basis of these data, ISMU had calculated the infection rate by relating the number of cases to data on national groups in Italy as of 01-01-2019, provided by the national institute of statistics (Istat). The results indicated that the groups with the highest infection rate were Peruvians (8.1‰) and Ecuadorians (4.2‰), while the other national groups ranged from 1.8‰ (Egyptians) to 0.7‰ (Moroccans).

During 2020, the ISMU Foundation investigated how the foreign population experienced the “first wave” of the pandemic by conducting a survey in the four provinces of Lombardy that were most hit by the pandemic in early 2020 (Milan, Bergamo, Brescia and Cremona) over a six-week period between September and October 2020.¹

Answers to questions regarding the COVID-19 infection itself (Menonna, Papavero, 2021a) reflect the fact that, at the onset of the pandemic and with a few exceptions, people were not tested unless they had symptoms. **As a result, most people (64%) do not know whether they caught COVID-19 between March and May 2020 since they had no symptoms and therefore were not**

¹ See *La pandemia COVID-19 tra la popolazione migrante e di origine straniera nelle province di Milano, Bergamo, Brescia e Cremona*, ISMU Foundation.

tested. A total of 4.6% of people were infected, including those who only belatedly learned about it after serology testing. More women than men were sure that they had caught COVID-19 after testing (3.1% vs 1.8%), just like more Eastern Europeans (3.2%) than foreigners from other regions were.

During the first wave of the pandemic, requests for assistance were also affected by ill-defined procedures for accessing health care services. While 70% of the sample did not need to seek medical support and assistance because they had no COVID-19 symptoms, 17% still requested information and help from their family doctor, while about 8% called the dedicated institutional hotline and 4% went straight to the emergency room.

Slightly less than one third of foreign nationals and nationals with a foreign background stated that **the COVID-19 emergency had no impact on their overall health, while a significant number of those who reported negative effects on their health cited anxiety, stress, panic attacks, and sleep disorders (Menonna, Papavero, 2021b).** Women had to forego scheduled medical treatment and consultation more than men in order to face depression. Negative consequences on health were reported in the highest number by North African people and in the smallest number by Asian people.

The 2021 Budget Law (Law 178/2020, art. 1, sections 795 and 796) will allocate 5 million euros by the end of the year in favor of border towns and coastal cities involved in the management of migration flows. The Ministry of the Interior will create a fund specifically for this purpose. This measure links the allocation of funds to the current coronavirus-related health protection dispositions in relation to migration flows. A decree by the Minister of the Interior issued on 22nd April 2021 allocated the available sum to all 36 coastal cities and 12 border towns involved.

2.3 Vaccination

European responses to the pandemic have involved the testing, treatment, and vaccination of migrants to various degrees (Crawshaw et al. 2021). In some cases, this translated into structural and institutional “racism”, which reinforced the health inequalities caused by the pandemic (Razai et al., 2021). Further steps are required if current and future responses to the pandemic are to effectively reduce COVID-19 transmission and extend vaccination to migrants. **In Italy, the starting point is the recognition of the different legal status of migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, stateless peoples, homeless, and victims of human trafficking, some of whom do not have an ID and/or are not registered with the national health care system (ISS, 2021).** As a result, some flexibility is required to respond promptly to the vulnerability of the group under consideration as well as to specific individual needs.

Recommendations by Italian (Ibid.), European (ECDC, 2021), and world institutions (WHO, 2020) on preventive healthcare and infection treatment are very clear in terms of the actors involved, the logistics of vaccination, and health communication. First of all, vaccination should cover not only healthcare work-

ers but also workers who are at a particularly high risk of infection. Healthcare workers should be trained with the cultural skills that are necessary to avoid discriminatory or offensive behavior. Information should be culturally targeted and possibly provided in a multilingual form. Migrants, cultural mediators, and third-sector organizations may be involved to win trust from the different migrant communities on vaccines and on the immunization campaign. Misinformation can be counteracted by providing reliable and accurate information. New sites and techniques can be devised that make vaccines more accessible by illegal migrants. “Standard” sites include reception centers, mobile units, and vaccination centers. Ideally, linguistic and cultural mediators should be available to migrants in all sites.

3. Health and foreigners in Italy

3.1 Hospitalization

According to the latest ISTAT (2021) data available, 96.7% of all non-ICU hospitalized patients in 2019 were from a European country (including Italy),² followed by people from African (1.6%), Asian (1%), and American countries (0.6%). Outpatient hospitalizations have a similar geographical distribution: 97.2% of hospitalized patients were European citizens (of which 2% were from non-EU countries), followed by African (1.2%), Asian (0.9%), and American (0.7%) citizens. The number of foreign women hospitalized is slightly higher than the number of foreign men (52% vs. 48%). The main causes of hospitalization among foreign men are vascular diseases (17.7%), respiratory diseases (11.7%), cancer (11.6%), and gastrointestinal diseases (9.6%). Among foreign women, the main causes are complications of pregnancy, childbirth, and the puerperium (14.9%), followed by vascular diseases (11.2%), cancer (11%), and disorders of the genitourinary system (9%). In geographical terms, complications of pregnancy, childbirth, and the puerperium are the main cause of hospitalization in all nationality groups (32.3% for Asian citizens, 30.1% for African citizens and 26.5% for American citizens). Gastrointestinal diseases are the second cause of hospitalization among Asians (7.7%) and Africans (8%), while the second cause of hospitalization for Americans are disorders of the genitourinary system (8.3%).

3.2 Pregnancy and childbirth

The most recent data on births available (Ministry of Health, 2021) reveal that 21% of all births in 2019 were to non-Italian mothers. The share is higher in

² Of these, little more than 2% were non-EU citizens.

Italian regions with a higher density of foreign people, such as Center-North regions (27%) – particularly Emilia-Romagna, Lombardy, and Liguria, where more than 30% of births are to foreign mothers. The most represented geographical areas of origin are Africa (27.6%) and the European Union (22.1%), followed by Asia (20.2%) and South America (7.8%). At the time of childbirth, foreign mothers are on average 30.7 years old, while Italian mothers are on average 33.6 years old. The mean age at which foreign women have their first child (28.7 years) is lower than that of Italian women (31 years). The percentage of foreign women who first see a doctor more than three months into pregnancy is 11%, compared to only 2.2% of Italian women. Cesarean delivery is less frequent among foreign women (27.1%) than it is among Italian women (32.9%).

3.3 Health risks between lifestyle and prevention

Data collected through the study “*Progressi delle Aziende Sanitarie per la Salute in Italia*” (“Institutional progress in local healthcare in Italy”) and analyzed by AIOM Foundation (2020) cast light on the lifestyle of foreigners in Italy, particularly on key factors for cancer prevention.³ Risky levels of alcohol consumption can be found among Italians and foreigners alike (17% and 16%), as can binge drinking (9%). Smoking habits are equally present in the Italian and foreign populations (26%), but fewer foreigners claim to be former smokers than Italians (12% and 18%, respectively). Foreigners seem to have a more sedentary lifestyle than Italians (37% and 34%, respectively), but fewer of them are overweight (30% vs. 32% of Italians) or obese (10% vs. 11%). The consumption of at least 5 portions of fruit and/or vegetables every day (“5 A Day”) is rather uncommon among foreigners (9%), although no less common than among Italians (10%).

A significant finding of this study is the differing predicting factors for not undergoing screening tests – particularly people between 50 and 69 years of age who reported not having been tested for the early diagnosis of colorectal cancer or having done so beyond the recommended time. The share of untested foreigners (59%) is 6 percentage points larger than that of Italians (53%), **suggesting that the foreign population faces specific obstacles and has special needs that must be detected and addressed for the sake of their own health**

On this assumption, the ISMU Foundation partnered with LILT (*Lega Italiana per la Lotta contro i Tumori*, the Italian League Against Cancer) on the *Salute Senza Frontiere* project (“Health Without Borders”), first presented in 2017 and 2018 and then reissued in 2020 with partial funding by the 2019 Community Award Program of GILEAD. **The project aims at promoting health literacy for cancer prevention among the foreign groups included in the LILT network.** The ISMU-LILT partnership for research, action, and training promoted an integrated approach based on the assumption that “health” and “diseases” are complex objects that also include morality and culture. In particular, the study

³ Unless otherwise indicated, the study refers to citizens between 18 and 69 years of age.

conducted by ISMU focused on the Filipino, Romani, and Maghrebi groups along with some Sub-Saharan African groups in the Milan area (Lombardi, 2021).

3.4 Health poverty

A report by the *Osservatorio sulla Povertà Sanitaria* (2020) uncovers the influence of extreme poverty and other socio-economic factors on the accessibility of health care to foreigners. Italy-wide data provide information on the activities of the participants in the *Rete Banco Farmaceutico* (Drug Bank Network) as well as on the needs of people in economic and health poverty. The majority of people who received assistance are of foreign origin both nationally (53%) and, more so, in Northern metropolitan areas (60%). In Southern Italy, the Italian component is larger than the foreign component (61.6% vs. 38.4%), especially in small municipalities (in which two thirds of people who received assistance are Italian). This confirms that poverty in Southern Italy is an autochthonous and endemic phenomenon. Assisted foreigners are a minority in small municipalities (<50,000 inhabitants) in all areas (47% in the North, 38% in the Center, and 26% in the South). Updated data from October-November 2020 reveal that the number of assisted foreigners increased considerably (from 53% to 65%) during the first stages of the COVID-19 pandemic.

4. Concluding remarks

In consideration of the UN Sustainable Development Goals for 2030, **health-care is fundamental for the personal development of migrant people as well as for the overall protection of public health within the broader community**. This target has been evoked in all previous health chapters of earlier ISMU Reports. In the wake of the global pandemic emergency, its importance has only increased. In order to promote healthcare for all, including disadvantaged groups such as migrants, health services should be adequately financed so as to fully protect health as a human and social right. The Declaration of the G20 Health Ministers meeting held in Rome on September 5-6, 202, goes in this direction. The preamble of the Declaration reads as follows:

“We, the G20 Health Ministers, met... to promote strong multilateral cooperation, including towards ending the COVID-19 pandemic and supporting recovery, and to continue contributing with our joint efforts to better prevent, detect and respond to global health risks and emergencies.”

In the light of the new developments described above, **it is vital to understand the new challenges that lie ahead in relation to health citizenship – especially as the new economic-social context** (after the pandemic) demands a different allocation and redistribution of scarce resources, both locally and

globally. The new priorities fall under either of the following two rubrics. The first is the set of institutional and political issues such as the adoption of new models of solidarity and social inclusion, the evolution of citizenship and social rights (first and foremost the right to health), the multi-level governance of social and health policy in relation to migration (who decides what and at what institutional level is a problem in relation not only to health policy, but to all policy concerning immigrants in general). The second is the set of issues that concern health more specifically, such as the conceptualization of health and illness in a global context, the changing supply and demand of social and health services, the monitoring of the medical conditions of immigrants through the comparative analysis of social and health indicators, the health condition of immigrant women (especially in the reproductive sphere and more specifically in regard to maternal health), the detailed analysis of certain pathologies such as infectious diseases (tuberculosis, HIV, STDs, COVID-19, and the like), mental disorders (especially, but not exclusively, in reference to refugees and asylum seekers⁴), cancer, trauma (from accidents at work or at home, violence, self-harm, or vehicle collision). By focusing on these issues and identifying the priorities that may lead to their solution, the actors involved in healthcare management at all levels may be able to reduce (at least in part) the vulnerability of migrants.

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⁴ In this respect, it is worth mentioning the *START* project (*Servizi Socio-Sanitari Trasversali di Accoglienza per Richiedenti Asilo e Titolari di Protezione Internazionale*) implemented between September 2016 and December 2018 in the Brescia and Milan areas with the aim of testing improved and innovative approaches for the quick and effective identification and care of vulnerable applicants for international protection or people under it. The project involved three hospitals and three third-sector organizations in the Brescia and Milan areas: ASST Spedali Civili di Brescia (project leader), ASST Grande Ospedale Metropolitano Niguarda, ASST Santi Paolo e Carlo, Cooperativa Tempo Libero, Crinali Cooperativa Sociale Onlus, ISMU Foundation. See Progetto "START - Servizi socio-sanitari trasversali di accoglienza per richiedenti asilo e titolari di protezione internazionale 2.0" - ISMU Foundation.

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1. Politicization of migration in national party politics

2. From the member states to the EU

3. Conclusion

7.

Politicization and securitization of migration: from national politics to EU policies

Pierre Georges Van Wolleghem

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in September 2001. It also marks the end of twenty years of American presence in Afghanistan as well as the ensuing return of the Taliban in office. On 12th September 2021, Piero Ignazi, a renowned Italian political scientist, provocatively wrote: “September 11 has not changed our world”¹. For it was a mere step in a deeper process that has its origins in earlier times. If Ignazi’s statement applies to geopolitics, it also appropriately depicts the EU’s migration policy and the securitization of migration.

When they met at Tampere in 1999, the EU member states had a plan: pursuing the goals of the Treaty of Amsterdam and laying the basis of the Area of Freedom Security and Justice (AFSJ). Despite it being essentially conceived as a corollary to the reinforcement of the common market (Guild, 1998; Ziller, 2009), the AFSJ conferred the EU a competence on immigration matters, accompanied by the creation of the Directorate General for Justice and Home Affairs (which was a mere task force in the years prior). The five-year programme adopted at Tampere in 1999 was fairly ambitious and, that must be said, quite balanced in terms of priorities.² Asylum, border management and fair treatment of third country nationals were to be developed in parallel, so that freedom and

¹ See Domani, available at: <https://www.editorialedomani.it/idee/commenti/11-settembre-non-ha-cambiato-il-nostro-mondo-bilancio-di-un-anniversario-bk8fdj4c>.

² For more detailed on the construction of the EU migration policy, its objectives and achievements, see Van Wolleghem 2019.

justice would not be overwhelmed by security concerns.³ But doing away with the security and border-oriented policy that had been dominating the approach to migration since the Trevi Group and the Schengen agreements (Bigo, 2002; Guiraudon, 2003) was not going to be easy.

The securitization of migration is a phenomenon that started in the 1980s and that succeeded the more permissive labour migration policies of the decades prior (Huysmans, 2000). In this framework, the movement of workers across borders was gradually perceived as a question of public order. Similarly, asylum was less and less regarded as a humanitarian matter, and more and more as an immigration issue (Morris, 2002), thus conflating protection goals with border control objectives. The terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers in 2001 did not help shift that focus; on the contrary, they reinforced and legitimated the security leaning. More security measures and intelligence-gathering reforms were taken at the national level; a dynamic that echoed at the EU level. Accordingly, Heidbreder (2014) shows that from 1993 to 2011, about 60% of all the policy measures adopted at EU level were concerned with security matters whereas a sheer 15.5% had to do with guaranteeing rights to third country nationals.

This chapter's goal is to look at today's EU migration policy through the lens of political preferences deeply rooted in its member states. Should that be reminded, the EU is not a state but a hard-to-define political object that sits uneasily between the principles of delegation and shared competences. Resultantly, the policies we see emerging at EU level are the outcome of difficult compromises between different national priorities, situations, and political objectives. The lines that follow are thus structured in two parts. The first one looks into the security turn at the national level since the 1980s. It draws a broad picture of the evolution of policy supply in terms of security and migration policy over the last 40 years and builds the case for what has been called "the complicity of the centre"; i.e. the restrictive turn of mainstream parties. I use data from the Comparative Manifesto project (CMP), a database that codes the content of political parties' manifestos, to illustrate the evolution of national politics on migration (see Volkens et al., 2020, for data description). I show how positions towards migration have become more and more critical over time. The second part of this chapter elaborates on the direction the EU's policy on migration has been headed toward; an endorsement of security concerns. In anticipation of the creation of the EU Agency of Asylum, announced in the EU's New Pact on Migration and Asylum, I look at the evolution of two regulatory bodies relating to migration policy: Frontex, the EU's border agency; and EASO, the European Asylum Support Office.

³ This was also affirmed as such in the words of Commissioner Vitorino at the Seville Summit in 2002.

1. Politicization of migration in national party politics

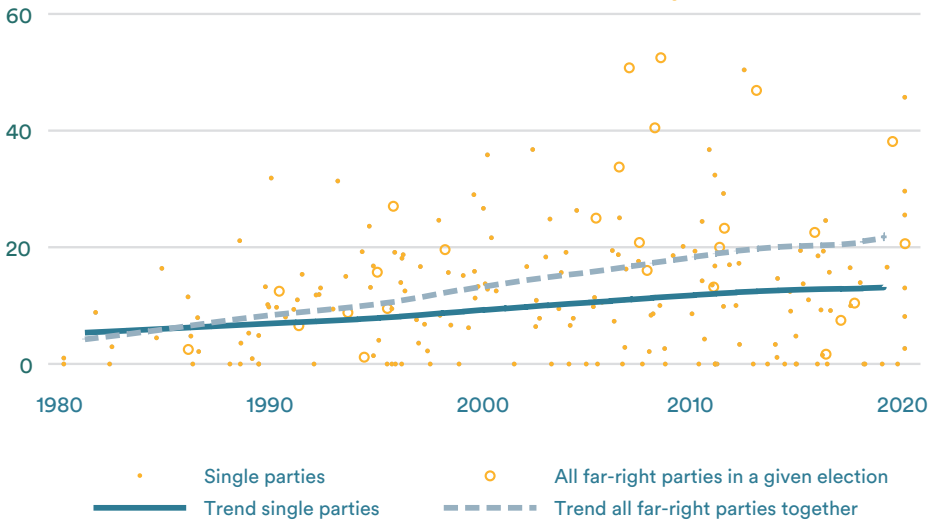
Migration has not always been as politicized as it is today. In *The World of Yesterday*, Austrian novelist Stefan Zweig famously described borderless travels in the pre-WWI world. In the period after WWII, most Western European countries resorted to foreign workers to match their need for cheap and flexible workforce. Further to the oil crisis of the 1970s, migration policies shifted from permissive to restrictive, but the incapacity of states to stem inflows, notably those entailed by family reunion, contributed to link the phenomenon to the destabilization of public order (Huysmans, 2000). It is especially in the 1980s that the debate on migration became particularly sour. At the international level (meaning among EU countries), the informal transborder collaboration of police forces contributed to conceptualise migration as a security concern and a border control matter (Guiraudon, 2003); an orientation that was formalized with the adoption of the Schengen agreements, which explicitly connected immigration and asylum with terrorism, transnational crime and border control (Bigo, 2002). At national level, rising concerns as to immigration and cultural diversity begged the questions of national identity and integration (see *inter alia* Schnapper 1994); questions that would remain on the agenda of most EU member states over the decades to come (especially so for EU15 member states; see Van Wolleghem, 2019).

1.1 *The rise of the far-right*

Such a context has created a fertile ground for the development and strengthening of far-right parties which mobilized around the issue and filled a void on a topic mainstream parties had shied away from (Betz, 1994). From niche parties at the margin of the election game, far-right parties gained ground, multiplied, and entered local and national governments. Figure 1 below represents the percentage of votes won by far-right parties⁴ in the EU28 from 1980 to 2019. The solid line represents the trend of the percentage won by each far-right party while the dashed line represents the cumulated percentages of far-right parties in the same country, for the same elections.

⁴ To classify parties as standing at the far-right of the spectrum, I rely on Rooduijn et al., 2019.

Figure 1. Success of far-right parties in national elections, EU28, 1980-2019 (%)



Source: own elaboration on CMP data

Two comments are worth making. Firstly, the trend curve for single parties (solid line) clearly shows an increase of voters’ interest for far-right parties. Secondly, and perhaps not so obvious from the figure, the number of said parties have also increased over the years, conducing to dispersion of the far-right vote, and thus to a trend curve for single parties (solid line) that is lower than the cumulated vote for far-right parties competing in the same election (dashed line).⁵ Considering their number, and limiting ourselves to parties with a certain political relevance (defined here as having obtained at least one seat in the lower chamber⁶), there were about 7 far-right parties in the EU⁷ in the 1980s, 26 in the 1990s, 22 in the 2000s, and 32 in the 2010s. Beyond their growth in number, this family of parties has also grown in terms of political responsibilities, both in subnational and national governments (Mudde, 2013). Orbàn’s Fidesz party

⁵ If several parties at the far-right of the political spectrum compete for the same voters, each will likely have lower percentages than would have had the far-right, had it had only one such party. This situation particularly applies to Italy where, for instance, Fratelli d’Italia and Lega would be competing for a potentially similar, yet not perfectly overlapping, electorate. But this has also been the case recently in other countries such as Denmark where the New Right and the Danish People’s Party were present in the same elections

⁶ In order to consider only the parties that have had some minimum relevance in national politics, CMP data excludes micro-parties by considering only those parties which have won at least one seat in national elections to the lower chamber; two for Central and Eastern European Countries

⁷ Here we still consider EU28 countries even though many countries were not part of the bloc in the 1980s.

in Hungary has been in office for over a decade now. The Sweden Democrats and the Alternative for Germany have both entered parliament, respectively in 2010 and 2017, and are significantly represented. France's Marine Le Pen heads the party that leads the opposition. And, of course, the Lega in Italy was in the governing coalition with the Movimento 5 Stelle for more than a year. And the list is far from exhaustive.

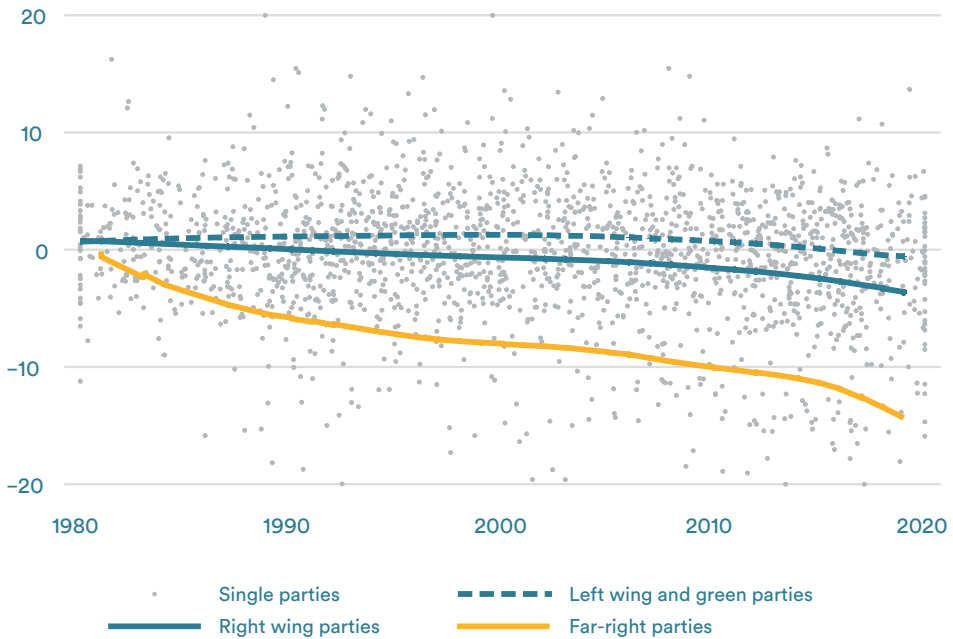
1.2 *The “complicity of the centre”*

If the idea of the existence of a far-right family of parties has triggered quite some discussion in scholarship on whether they form a coherent ensemble (Hainsworth, 2008), one thing is for sure: the parties classically placed at the far-right of the spectrum share strong preferences for anti-migration policies (Ivaldi, 2004). The success of far-right political parties on anti-immigration platforms has arguably prompted programmatic changes for right-wing, but also for left-wing parties. Mainstream parties are expected to react strategically to the increase of far-right's vote; notably by sharpening their stance on issues like migration in order to prevent vote loss and perhaps regain already lost votes, too (Meguid, 2008; Atzpodien, 2020). If this theory has only partly been supported by empirical findings (migration issues have emerged in mainstream party manifestoes even in the absence of far-right parties; see Mudde, 2013 for an overview), it remains that, from “niche” topic, what is now commonly called “the immigration issue” has become of prime importance in the politics arena. This is true in at least two ways. Firstly, the topic has gained more traction in political parties' platforms; it has become significantly more salient for a wide array of parties. The statement particularly fits western and northern EU countries such as Sweden, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, and the UK, to name but a few. Secondly, immigration has become the object of competition for voters among mainstream political parties (Alonso and Da Fonseca, 2011). The increase saliency of migration in public opinion has contributed to boost far-right parties (Dennison and Geddes 2019) and, at the same time, prompted mainstream parties to seize the issue (Atzpodien, 2020). In short, from an almost irrelevant domain of concern for national leaders in the EU in the 1970s, immigration has gradually gained importance and cut across political cleavages, with positions on the matter becoming more and more restrictive. Even in political venues where the far-right is absent or almost irrelevant, the migration issue has been picked up and capitalized upon by parties at the right and at the left, in what ECRE's secretary general Catherine Woollard calls the “complicity of the centre”.⁸ Figure 2 below represents parties' positions on migration (as defined in Alonso and Da Fonseca, 2011) over the period considered. The orange curve represents the evolution of far-right parties while the dashed and solid green curves respectively represent the evolution of green and left-wing parties

⁸ See Woollard, 2021: 19'45". ECRE stands for European Council on Refugees and Exiles.

on the one hand, right-wing parties on the other. All three slopes are, at different rates, going down, meaning that political parties, on the whole, are adopting ever more restrictive policy positions, irrespective of where they stand on the political spectrum.

Figure 2. Party positions on migration and trend for far-right, right-wing and green-and-left-wing parties, EU28, 1980-2020



Source: own elaboration on CMP data. Positive values indicate a rather positive position on migration while negative values proxy a more restrictive position

A current illustration of this trend can be seen in the reactions to the recent events in Afghanistan by European leaders. French President Macron, for instance, whilst he emphasized the need to organize protection of the Afghan people, affirmed in the same discourse the need to “protect [Europe] from significant irregular migratory flows” that could result from the Taliban’s takeover⁹. Likewise, Germany’s CDU chairman Armin Laschet, while Kabul was falling, uttered “2015 mustn’t be repeated”¹⁰. Similar words were also pronounced by EU’s foreign policy high representative Josep Borrell, after having convened

⁹ France 24, available at: <https://www.france24.com/fr/asia-pacifique/20210816-en-direct-emmanuel-macron-s-exprime-sur-l-afghanistan-et-la-strat%C3%A9gie-face-aux-taliban>.

¹⁰ New York Times, available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/18/world/europe/afghanistan-refugees-europe-migration-asylum.html>.

with ministers across the EU: the member states want “to ensure no wide-scale migratory move toward Europe”¹¹.

2. From the member states to the EU

The words pronounced by European leaders – or their contenders, for that matter – on the fall of Afghanistan showcase their positions on migration and asylum. These words are very much in line with the positions political parties have been holding in recent years: securing the borders, limiting asylum influxes, externalizing migration management¹². And the positions of national leaders, in such a sovereignty-related policy realm, transfer to the EU level when it comes to coordinate action. In previous editions of ISMU’s national report on migration, I have taken stock of the tensions between member states on a range of issues relating to migration, and the consequences they have had on the EU’s policy. In the twenty-fourth report, for example, I have shown how irreconcilable the positions of the Visegrád 4 countries, Mediterranean EU member states, and the Germany-Austria couple on solidarity were in the handling of asylum flows. Whilst no agreement could be found on how to reorganize the distribution of asylum seekers within the Union, it appeared to be much easier to organize further collaboration in reinforcing border controls. In the twenty-sixth report, I outlined how the emphasis on border management has settled in the definition of EU priorities in the recent years, notably through the ambition of hiring 10,000 border guards. In this year’s report, and in anticipation of the creation of the forthcoming EU Asylum Agency, as announced in the New Pact on Migration, I draw the attention on the consequences member states’ focus on immigration control has had on the development of EU agencies in the domain.

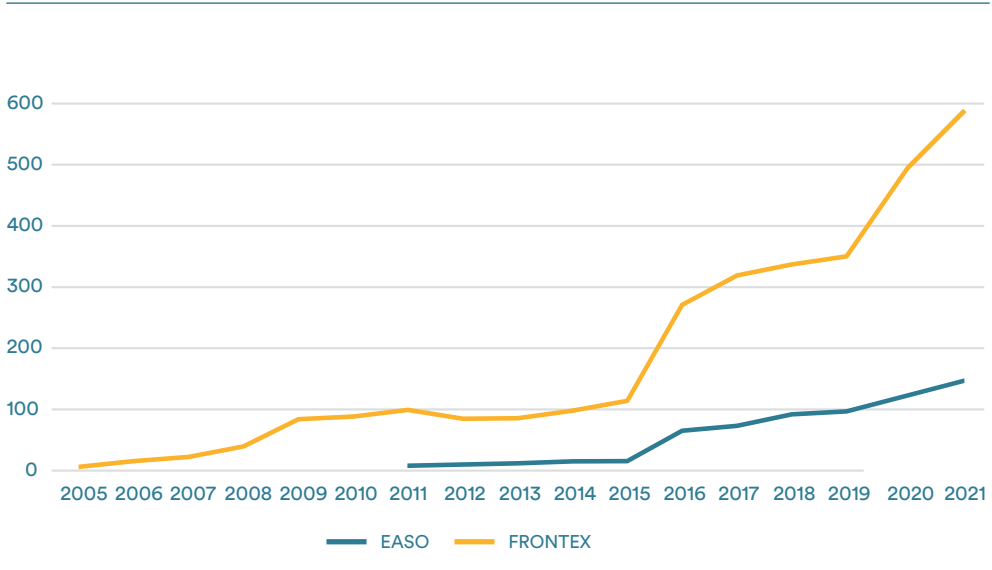
The attentive observer cannot but notice the differentiated development that has characterized the evolution of Frontex, the EU’s border agency, and EASO, the European Asylum Support Office. While the former has outstandingly grown in terms of resources, scope of action and responsibilities, the latter has lagged behind. Frontex was established in 2004, as a result of the migratory pressures on Spanish and Italian borders at the beginning of the 2000s. It was conceived as a way to complement the Schengen agreements and strengthen the management of external borders. EASO, instead, was created much later, in 2010, as a compensation for the uneven distribution of asylum claims across the EU; an uneven distribution perpetuated by the Dublin Regulation (Ripoll Servent 2018). A glimpse at the financial endowments each of these two agencies received over the years helps understand the extent of the difference. Figure 3

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² The three-storey-house metaphor used by Home Affairs Commissioner Shinas to describe the EU’s new migration pact is a case in point.

displays the yearly voted budget for the two agencies,¹³ with Frontex receiving, on average, about six times more funding than EASO in the period. Likewise, the new Multiannual Financial Framework promises Frontex another significant increase (see my chapter in ISMU’s twenty-sixth report). The rest of this section provides some more details on both these agencies.

Figure 3. Budgets of EASO and Frontex compared, 2005-2021 (million €)



Source: own elaboration on EASO and Frontex data

2.1 Frontex: the ever-growing agency

When it was established in 2004, Frontex was a small agency of about 60 employees. Conceived as an operational burden-sharing instrument, its mission was to “facilitate the application of (...) Community measures relating to the management of external borders by ensuring the coordination of Member States’ actions in the implementation of those measures”.¹⁴ From the outset, it was entrusted with a wide range of tasks covering all the steps of the management of external borders, from intelligence gathering to joint return operation, from border guards training to operational cooperation at the borders. Despite the wide scope of action, the agency had little means, and was to rely heavily

¹³ The figures represent yearly commitment appropriations as per original voted budget. They do not consider budget amendments that may occur during the financial year. Said amendments tended to significantly increase Frontex’s allocations. One could also look at the agencies’ staffing and see that Frontex had 1050 members of personnel in 2020 while EASO had 366 (only AD and AST employee levels considered).

¹⁴ Regulation (EC) 2007/2004, recital 4.

on member states' good will to carry out the mission it was entrusted with. More precisely, member states would voluntarily place means at the disposal of a counterpart in need, which in turn would retain responsibility for the actions carried out at its borders by Frontex. The agency itself had no border agents, no boats, no helicopters and, as Frontex's first executive director Ilkka Laitinen, put it: "if member states do not lend their assets for operations, be they boats or airplanes, Frontex has nothing to coordinate".¹⁵ Over the years though, the competence of the agency increased significantly. A first change occurred in 2007 when the Rapid Border Intervention Teams (RABIT) were created. If these were made up of experts from the member states, their creation broke away from the voluntary principle that had guided the agency's activity in the years prior: Frontex could implement compulsory solidarity; i.e. oblige member states to supply personnel, and deploy specially trained experts on the territory of a member state in need (Léonard, 2010). A further amendment to the agency's legal framework in 2011 confirmed its ability to enforce solidarity by allowing it to constitute European Border Guard Teams out of a pool of national border guards and deploy them at the Union's borders. In addition, Frontex was also allowed to purchase or lease its own equipment, yet another shift from the agency's first steps. But the reform that perhaps was of the largest magnitude, even though it affected little the very nature of the agency, is that of 2016, a reform that follows suit the refugee crisis, a reform proposed, negotiated and adopted in a very short time and that transformed the "European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders" (the then-official name of the agency) into the "European Border and Coast Guard Agency". The 2016 amendment to Frontex's regulation sizably increased its financial endowment, as bears witness the steep increase in resources displayed in figure 3 above. It was allowed to avail itself of a rapid reaction pool of 1,500 border guards nominated by the member states in case of increased pressure at the borders of a member state. Similarly, its capacity to purchase equipment was boosted. Finally, the last change (so far) brought to the agency lies with the 2019 reform, which created a standing corps of some 10,000 members that Frontex will be able to deploy (by 2027; the constitution of the force is progressive, see table 1 below). Interestingly, if most of these 10,000 guards would be placed at the agency's disposal by the member states to feed into the European Border Guard Teams, a significant share, so-called statutory staff, would be directly employed by the agency and answer to it.¹⁶

¹⁵ See El País, September 2006, available at: http://elpais.com/diario/2006/09/06/espana/1157493604_850215.

¹⁶ The existence of an autonomous border force that answers to an organization that is not a state is interesting in many ways. This poses a series of questions regarding accountability and sovereignty as Frontex's staff is authorized to use force and will take on executive tasks (ECRE, 2019).

Table 1. Composition of Frontex's standing corps over the next Multiannual Financial Framework, in units. Frontex's staff in bold

	<i>Statutory staff (Frontex's)</i>	<i>Operational staff for long-term secondments</i>	<i>Operational staff for short-term deployments</i>	<i>Reserve for rapid reaction</i>	<i>Total for the standing corps</i>	<i>% employed directly by Frontex</i>
2021	1,000	400	3,600	1,500	6,500	15
2022	1,000	500	3,500	1,500	6,500	15
2023	1,500	500	4,000	1,500	7,500	20
2024	1,500	750	4,250	1,500	8,000	19
2025	2,000	1,000	5,000	0	8,000	25
2026	2,500	1,250	5,250	0	9,000	28
2027	3,000	1,500	5,500	0	10,000	30

Source: data from Regulation (EU) 2019/1896

2.2 EASO, the last child in the EU migration policy

The European Asylum Support Office was established in 2011 and is one of the very last of the about 40 EU regulatory agencies to have been created.¹⁷ Its core rationale was to contribute to the development of a common asylum policy through practical cooperation. From ideation to creation, the plan was to establish a “lightweight structure, devoted to supporting Member States, allowing the practical co-operation on asylum to improve. The office should not have any say or influence on the national decisionmaking process concerning asylum” (Comte, 2010: 379). Its mandate encompassed three main activities. Firstly, the agency aimed to support member states through practical cooperation. This mostly centres around exchange of information, notably on asylum seekers' countries of origin,¹⁸ exchange of best practices, and training programmes for Refugee Status Determination (RSD) officials. Secondly, EASO was also entrusted with activities aimed to support member states whose RSD system is under particular pressure. Finally, EASO was to contribute to the implementation of the Common European Asylum System, through gathering information on national systems and preparing guidelines and operational manuals.

¹⁷ Regulation (EU) 439/2010.

¹⁸ Country of Origin Information (COI) are summaries of current situation in origin countries. They are at the core of the evaluation of asylum claims. See Campbell, 2019 and Sorgoni, 2019, for in situ examples in the UK and Italian case.

EASO's founding Regulation is still in force in 2021 and has not undergone formal changes over the past ten years. The EU's New Pact on Migration and Asylum has announced turning the support office into an EU Agency of Asylum, a process that had already started in 2016 but that appeared to drag in the Council of the EU.¹⁹ However, despite the absence of any amendment to its original legal act, EASO has *de facto* expanded the scope of its activities over the years, notably in the midst of the refugee crisis. Here too, figure 3 corroborates and displays a fourfold increase in the agency's budget from 2015 to 2016. In the context of the implementation of the hotspot approach; that is, the collaboration of EU migration-related agencies on the ground along with the authorities of the member states undergoing significant pressure at their borders, patterns of joint implementation have emerged where EASO participates in the processing of asylum claims (Tsourdi, 2020). As Tsourdi (2020) reports, if EASO's legal basis has not changed since 2010, Greek administrative law was amended to allow the personnel deployed via EASO to interview applicants for international protection.

EASO's evolution does not compare to that of Frontex, irrespective of the angle we look at it from. Frontex has had more budget, more personnel, more reforms, and each of these changes has been of greater magnitude for the borders' agency. That being said, the two agencies have mandates that are different in nature so that the EU's focus on border management can only partially explain the differences in the two agencies' developments. The New Pact on Migration and Asylum put forth in September 2020 seems to accredit EASO's *de facto* expansion and foresees, among other things, the reinforcement of the new agency's assistance capacity. It notably seeks to establish a reserve of 500 experts that can be deployed at the request of a member state under pressure.

3. Conclusion

Over the last four decades, migration has undergone a double process of securitization and politicization. Securitization originated from the infrastructure on which a common policy would eventually see the light. Starting from trans-border police cooperation contributed to conceive of migration as a matter connected to irregularity, terrorism, and crime; a turn enshrined in the Schengen agreements. Politicization started from the attempts (and relative failures) to control influxes in the 1980s, followed by the simultaneous increase of public opinion's concerns, first capitalized on by the far-right, but eventually picked up by mainstream parties. In the context of an integrated space without internal borders, national debates inevitably transferred to the EU level. Some level of collaboration was necessary given the potential externalities that national migration policies could have had on other member states. Similarly, national


¹⁹ The reform proposal COM(2016) 271 final put forward some changes; the ongoing legislative process can be followed at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/HIS/?uri=CELEX:52016PC0271>.

borders at the outer ends of the EU became, as a consequence of the freedom of circulation within the Union, everyone's borders. When it came to collaborate on migration issues, the EU's policy echoed the framework in place at national level: a highly salient issue approached from a security angle. The broad summary presented in the lines above hides a more complex, gradual, and certainly less teleological process. Therefore, it does not do justice to the specificities of each member state, their history, their political culture or their institutions (be they understood as formal or informal ones). It does however highlight a pattern that helps understand today's development at the EU level; why it is that Dublin cannot seem to be reformed while Frontex is constantly strengthened.

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1. The perception of migrants in Italy

2. Migrants and labor in Italian mass media

3. Immigrants in the Italian economy

4. The Saman Abbas affair

5. A glimpse at Europe

8.

Attitudes towards immigration in Italy

Giovanni Giulio Valtolina

All too often, the public debate on migration policy comes down to a war of ideas. Yet migration policy is, or at least should be, first and foremost the outcome of shared reflection on the role of immigration in society present and future. Data from polls and surveys on natives' attitudes towards immigration summarize what they experience and feel, revealing both their openness to the inclusion of immigrants in society and their concerns about the changes that immigration brings about. Policymaking should neither ignore nor uncritically welcome those concerns, especially at a time when the pandemic is exacerbating existing social tensions. Instead, natives' attitudes towards immigration should be taken as important indicators of how an effective and inclusive legislation can be based on consensus.

In the present chapter of the Report, we will take a brief look at research on attitudes towards immigration in Italy; we will then move on to analyzing the results of research conducted in five of the main European countries.

1. The perception of migrants in Italy

The first piece of research one should mention is Ipsos' poll on "The perception of migrants in Italy during coronavirus" (*"La percezione dei migranti nell'Italia del Coronavirus"*, 2021), conducted for non-profit organization WeWorld. In particular, what emerges from this study is that perception differs depending on the context of reference: when asked to identify the main problems of Italy, one fourth of the respondents (27%) answers: "migration". However, when asked to identify the main problems of their city of residence, the same answer is given by a mere 12%. The perception of immigration as a source of concern is therefore overrepresented, both by public opinion and by the media: at a local level, people prove to have a less negative attitude towards it.

The survey confirms that stereotypes about immigrants are widespread in the Italian population, especially when the causes of the current pandemic and of other diseases in general are taken into consideration. This shows that immigrants are still stereotyped as carriers of diseases: 43% of respondents see immigrants as a threat to public health, while 37% believe that immigrants have increased the number of COVID-19 cases in Italy. While concerns about immigration had become more peripheral when the pandemic had broken out (Barretta, Pasini, Valtolina, 2021), they rose to prominence again as the initial health emergency waned, though never to an alarming level. On the other hand, concerns about labor and the economy have intensified: 80% of respondents consider it the most serious and important problem for Italy. Respondents also believe that immigrants contributed mostly to the agricultural sector during the health emergency. Finally, the poll shows that almost 40% of Italian respondents are against birthright citizenship and almost 50% of them are against *jus culturae*¹, while just over 30% maintain that Italian citizenship should be offered only if both of the applicant's parents are Italian citizens.

As WeWorld itself points out, these results are confirmed by a study conducted by *Osservatorio di Pavia* on the media's coverage of migration, particularly labor migration. This will be the subject of the next section. In the press as well as on TV, migrants are passive subjects, they are misrepresented, and they are hardly ever interviewed: they are portrayed as an abstract, generic and magmatic category of people. This reinforces stereotypes about migrants in the audience and readership rather than eliciting some reconsideration or problematization.

¹ On *jus culturae*, citizenship would be granted to those who studied for several years in Italian schools and completed the compulsory schooling.

2. Migrants and labor in Italian mass media

The study on “Migrants and labor in the Italian information system” by *Osservatorio di Pavia* (“*Migranti e Lavoro nell’informazione italiana*”, Osservatorio di Pavia 2020) focused on how migrant professionals are portrayed in the main news programs on seven generalist TV channels (*Rai Uno, Rai Due, Rai Tre, Rete 4, Canale 5, Italia 1, LA7*). The study also analyzed the language used in the headlines regarding economic and labor issues involving migrants in ten national newspapers of different orientations (*Avvenire, Corriere della Sera, Il Fatto Quotidiano, Il Foglio, Il Giornale, Il Sole 24 Ore, La Repubblica, La Stampa, La Verità, Libero Quotidiano*). **News on immigration and immigrants account for 3.7% of all TV news. News about immigration in Italian media outlets tend to fall under either one of the following rubrics: news about racism and intolerance, and news about the rights of migrants and ethnic or religious minorities.** Arrivals of migrants on Italian shores, which seem to have increased significantly in 2021, have also garnered frequent media coverage. Reiterating a point repeatedly made in the past, researchers at *Osservatorio di Pavia* stress that news about integration, or at any rate about the professional success of foreign workers, seldom feature in TV news and newspapers.

According to their study, public broadcasting company *Rai*’s channels – especially *TG3* news on *Rai Tre* – are those that feature migration most prominently (58.2%). Overall, *Mediaset*’s private channels devote only about half of the time to the topic (28.1%), while *LA7* news (13.7%) are comparable to the *TG2* news on *Rai Due* (15%). Researchers note that *Rai* does cover positive stories about the inclusion and professional success of immigrants, whereas such narratives are completely absent from the news on the *Mediaset* network.

TV networks mainly cover migrant labor in reference to the agricultural sector and to low-skilled work, especially on *Mediaset* and *LA7*. The most recurring topic is the regularization of domestic and family care workers (58.5%), followed by labor exploitation (a mere 17%). Professional success is a considerably less recurring topic (7.3%).

Unlike politicians, immigrant workers are almost never interviewed about work-related issues that directly concern them. Migrants are represented as a mostly blurred and indistinct category, and they have a passive role in the news. They are usually nothing but the “subject” of 69.5% of news items; their opinions are seldom reported in the news, giving them an active role in 13.4% of them, while only in 17.1% of them are they given the *main* role. The professional qualifications and socio-economic status of migrants are seldom reported in detail; when they are, it is usually only caretakers or agricultural laborers. Even so, the researchers note, media coverage seldom translates into an investigation of migrant workers’ actual living and working conditions. Other professional occupations of immigrants are altogether neglected, especially when they are high-skilled jobs. If stereotypes are not to be reinforced, the portrayal of migrants – or, for that matter, of any social group – should be as comprehensive as possible, reflecting their social, cultural, and professional heterogeneity.

The study also stressed that migration is a very controversial topic. But while Rai news try to be balanced in presenting political opinions, private networks have proved to be implicitly or explicitly biased. LA7 news explicitly endorsed the regularization of migrant workers, while Mediaset channels generally opposed it.

As for the press, researchers group Italian newspapers into four categories, based on their choices of wording about migration and migrants. Among the “welcoming” newspapers, *Avvenire* is the most open to migrants, as attested by its frequent use of the term “foreigners” instead of “immigrants”, putting migrants on a par with other foreigners. “Interpretative” newspapers like *La Repubblica*, *Corriere della Sera*, *Il Foglio*, *La Stampa*, and *Il Fatto Quotidiano* are most attentive to the interpretation of migration policy. “Observers” such as *Il Sole 24 Ore* use as neutral a language as possible in regard of the subject. “Suspicious” newspapers, such as *La Verità*, *Il Giornale* and *Libero Quotidiano*, are center-right newspapers that identify migrants by emphasizing their foreign origin or their illegal status.

3. Immigrants in the Italian economy

The Ipsos report on “Immigrants in the Italian economy: Between necessity and opportunity”, (*“Gli immigrati nell’economia italiana: tra necessità e opportunità”*; Bonifazi, Paparusso, 2021), written as part of the *Laboratorio Futuro* project at the *Istituto Toniolo* in Milan, revolves around the role of immigrants in the Italian economy and society as well as its perception on the part of native Italians. This topic is of crucial and strategic importance for the future of Italy and of all Europe. Let us consider its main findings.

The first important finding concerns the estimated number of foreign workers in Italy: on average, Italian people estimate that 20% of Italian residents are foreigners. This is a striking overestimation since foreigners legally residing in Italy in fact account for about 8.5% of the total population. Despite this gross overestimation and contrary to what one would expect, the majority of Italian people (54.2%) consider this percentage as adequate to the country (“neither too many nor too few”), 18% think that there are too many foreigners, and another 18% think that there are too few.

Data on the presumed reasons for temporary residence permits in Italy also confirm our previous conclusions (Valtolina, 2019) about Italian people being scarcely abreast of their social context. According to the survey conducted by Ipsos for *Laboratorio Futuro*, 47.2% of respondents believe work to be the main reason why residence permits are granted, 27.4% of respondents believe it to be international protection, 21.8% believe it to be family reunification, and 3.6% indicate other reasons. These estimates do not match the real reasons. In recent years, pressure from the EU has contributed to the adoption of more restrictive policies on residence permits in Italy (Geddes et al., 2020): legal admission to Italy is now possible almost exclusively for family reunification or to forced migrants.

Table 1. Real and perceived reasons for residence permits (%)

<i>Reasons</i>	<i>Perceived</i>	<i>Real</i>
Work	47.2	6.4
International protection	27.4	15.6
Family reunification	21.8	56.9
Other (study, relocation, religion, health)	3.6	21.1

Source: Ipsos poll for *Laboratorio Futuro*, 2021

In this respect, too, the Ipsos research results are worth discussing. 23.4% of the polled sample (representative of the entire Italian population) believe employment rate to be lower among foreign workers in Italy than among natives between 20 and 64 years of age, 25.6% believe the opposite, and 16.7% believe that there are no significant differences. Respondents were then told about the actual figures and asked their opinion on why employment rate is actually higher among foreigners 70.2% of the sample believe that foreigners are more willing to do low-skilled jobs than Italian people are, while only 12.2% believe that foreigners steal Italian people's jobs and therefore have a comparative advantage.

According to Ipsos data, 65.6% of Italian people believe that most foreign workers to be employed in agriculture, 17.5% believe that most foreign workers are employed in the service sector (including domestic and personal care), and 7.9% believe that most foreign workers are employed in construction. In fact, only 6.3% of legal immigrants work in agriculture, while 24.9% are employed in the service sectors, 19.2% are industrial workers, 10.5% work in business, 10.3% work in hospitality, and work 9.5% in construction.

Another highly controversial topic addressed in the Istituto Toniolo survey is the cost of immigration. This issue is a recurring one in public and political debate, especially during economic crises. **The general perception is that foreigners are a cost for the state insofar as they benefit from public welfare more than they contribute to it through taxation.** According to Ipsos data for *Laboratorio Futuro*, 46.5% of Italian people concur that immigration raises the cost of public welfare and subtracts public resources from native Italians. (Another 41.9% disagree, and 11.6% did not express their opinion). In addition, 48.5% agree with the fact that immigrants are often given priority over Italian citizens in accessing benefits, housing assistance, and public services – while 39.2% disagree and 12.3% did not express their opinion. However, the balance of revenues and expenses is in no actual deficit even if we take foreign residents into account; in fact, the budget surplus amounts to approximately half a billion euros (Table 2). (Asylum seekers are not included in the count since they must necessarily rely on public assistance until they are granted international protection and can enter the labor market.)

Table 2. Estimated revenues and expenses regarding foreign residents in Italy in 2018 (average costs in bn euros)

<i>Expenses</i>	<i>Euros</i>	<i>Revenues</i>	<i>Euros</i>
Health	5.6	Income taxes	4.0
Education	5.6	VAT	3.3
Social services* and housing	0.4	Sales taxes	3.6
Local services (solid waste, sewage, water, electricity)	1.0	Consumption taxes (on solid waste, property, gas and electricity)	1.6
Justice and public service	3.4	-	
Immigration and reception	3.3	Residence permits and nationality acquisition	0.2
Social security*	6.8	Revenues from social insurance contributions*	13.9
Total	26.1	Total	26.9
	Balance +0.5		

* INPS (National Institute for Social Security) data from 2017.

Source: data from the Ministry of Economy and Finance, ISTAT (National Institute of Statistics), and INPS as reported by Fondazione Leone Moressa; Ipsos report for Laboratorio Futuro, 2021

Data on revenues from social insurance contributions (13.9 billion euros) are particularly relevant as they contribute to the financing of social security in the present before pensions are paid to contributors in the future. This finding is reflected in the perception of Italian people: according to Ipsos data, 51% of respondents believe that immigrant workers contribute to the financing of pensions and social security through taxation, while 34.1% believe the opposite. Despite the fact that the overqualification of foreign workers has been a stable characteristic of the Italian job market for some time, the survey reveals 76.2% of Italian people believe that the skills of foreign workers should be more valued in the labor market.

4. The Saman Abbas affair

The disappearance of Saman Abbas, a young Pakistani woman who had refused an arranged wedding, apparently reignited Italian hostility against one particular ethnic group – Pakistanis. To be sure, to speak of xenophobia, as some commentators did, is an exaggeration. However, the behavior of a restricted group of people often affects the way the community they belong to is perceived. This

is what the SPOT and WEB survey “Immigrants: the rise of xenophobia in Italy” (SPOTandWEB, 2021) shows. According to the survey, Italian people are most afraid of Pakistani people, followed by Arabs, Moroccan, Tunisian, and Egyptian people. As reported by the respondents themselves, the main causes for this are: religious diversity (51%), cultural diversity (49%), and alleged mistreatment of women (44%). Broadening the view to the entire immigrant population, the survey reveals that only 43% of Italian people believe it possible to live together with different ethnic groups, and that 33% of them believe that immigrants should return to their home countries. Moreover, one in three Italians would not like to have immigrants as “neighbors”, citing generic “socio-cultural differences”, different lifestyles, and peculiar eating habits. (21% of respondents state that they cannot tolerate the smell of foreign food.) Alongside fear, however, the survey also reveals sympathy towards specific foreign communities. According to SPOT and WEB, **the Filipino ethnic group is the most welcome by Italian people (44%): Filipinos are widely considered to be the most well-integrated community on accounts of their hardworking attitude. The South American community is also positively regarded as a particularly hardworking one (39%), as is the Chinese community (35%).** Even though they are often confused with Pakistani people, Indian people also have an acceptable approval rating (28%), just above Sub-Saharan communities (24%). In line with data from other European countries, just under 30% of respondents would prefer “not to have a foreigner as their neighbor”, while 25% are “unwilling to integrate immigrants”.

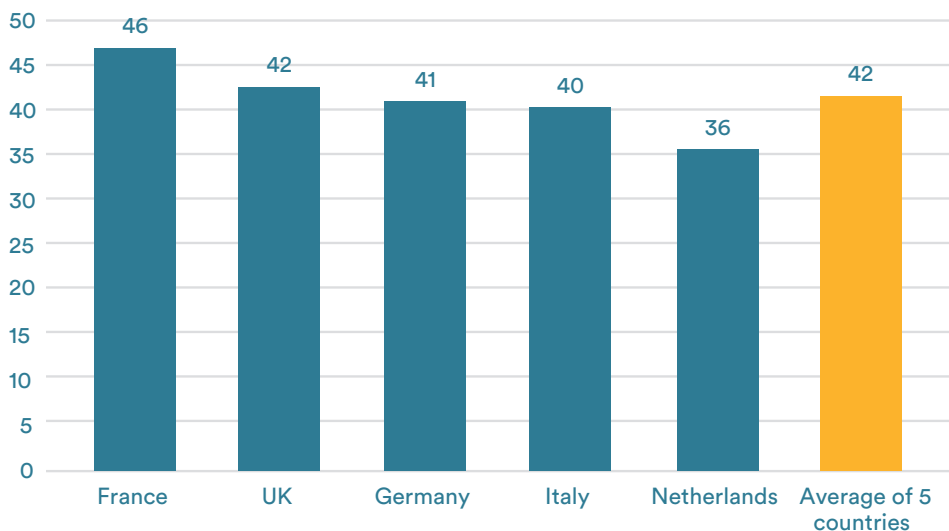
5. A glimpse at Europe

While in the first few months of the pandemic immigration had given way to public health and the economy as the primary concerns of the European public opinion, a survey conducted by Demos & Pi (2021) for the Unipolis Foundation (“*Il virus dell’insicurezza, lo scudo della scienza*”, “The virus of insecurity, the shield of science”) shows that large chunks of the European population have remained very “sensitive” to the issue. After all, migration flows have resumed in 2021, posing urgent problems especially, but not exclusively, in the Mediterranean region.

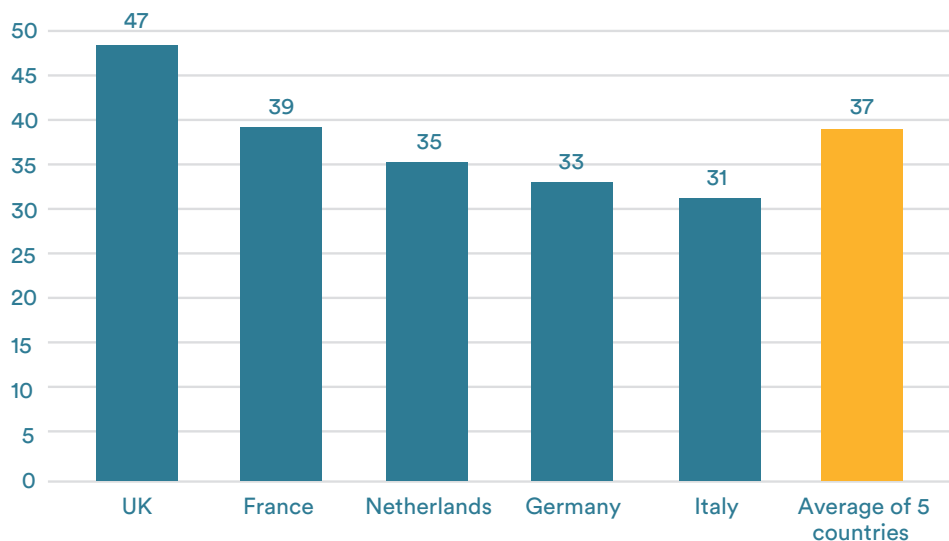
At the European level, immigration has become significantly less problematic in the eyes of citizens, although new arrivals are regularly at the center of public debate. In the five countries examined by Demos & Pi, the share of people who place migration flows at the top of the ideal government agenda is almost half as large as it was in 2020, dropping from 13% to 7%. This decrease is all the more significant in those countries where immigration ranked highest in the list of priorities, such as Germany (from 22% to 6%). The country where the issue of immigration is most sensitive is France (10%).

Chart 1. Fear of immigration in five European countries (% of people who “agree or very much agree” with each statement)

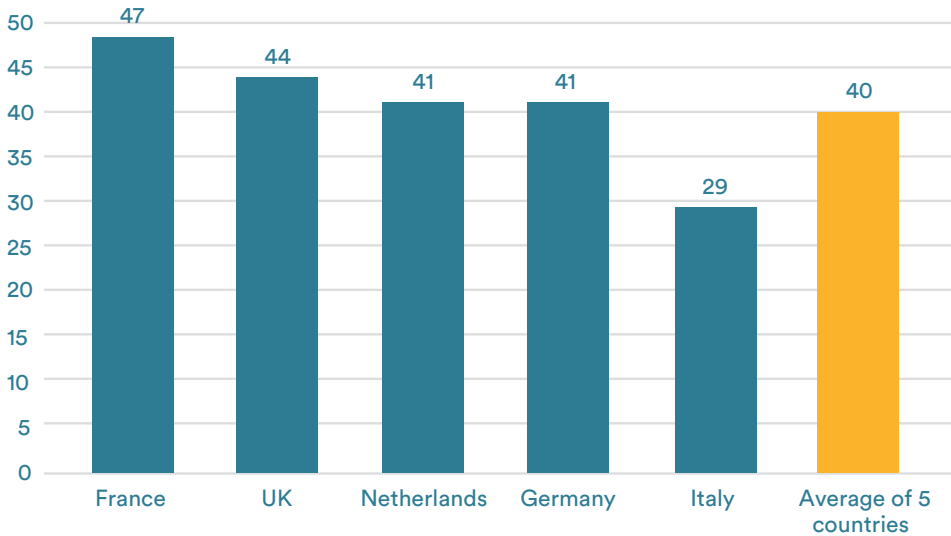
Immigrants threaten public safety



Immigrants threaten natives' jobs



Immigrants threaten our culture, identity, and religion



Source: Osservatorio Europeo sulla Sicurezza, Demos & Pi survey conducted for Fondazione Unipolis, 2021

As chart 1 shows, in the five countries surveyed (France, United Kingdom, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands) 40% of respondents on average worry about immigration, but they are concerned about different aspects depending on the national context. In Italy, foreigners traditionally raise concerns that are primarily related to crime: in 2021, 40% of Italian respondents expressed concerns about this, while 30% state that they are worried about their culture or about their job. In Germany and France, fear about immigration and crime is as high as fear for national culture, national identity, and religion. (Almost half of the French respondents are very much worried about this). Similar figures can be found in the United Kingdom, where employment is the main cause of concern: fear that immigrants could steal natives' jobs – which was at the center of the Brexit debate – is expressed by 47% of respondents. In the Netherlands, finally, the main concern is culture and identity (41%).

In conclusion, the research considered here shows that the decreasing concern about the health emergency apparently led to the re-emergence of hostility towards migrants. However, it should also be noted that the situation is not alarming, especially in Italy.

Unfortunately, political parties from the entire political spectrum have been exploiting this situation with different purposes. This is unpromising since the changing situation in the past year should elicit a more reasoned and fruitful debate.

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1. Why intersectionality?

2. Intersectionality in EU policy

3. Measuring intersectional inequality: the path ahead

4. Conclusions

9.

Opportunities and discrimination among migrant women: the importance of an intersectional approach

Emanuela Bonini, Giulia Mezzetti and Livia Ortensi¹

This chapter reflects on the growing importance of adopting an intersectional approach to the analysis of discrimination, particularly in reference to women with a migrant background. This work stems from the *GRASE - Gender and Race Stereotypes Eradication in labour market access* project funded under the European REC program (Rights, Equality and Citizenship).

Moving from the reflections emerged within the project, in this chapter we analyze the reasons behind the introduction of the concept of intersectionality (section 1), its diffusion in the context of European legislation and policy (section 2), and the possibility of using an intersectional approach in analyzing national and European data on the living conditions of migrant women (section 3).

1. Why intersectionality?

In the past decades, migration studies in Europe (Kofman, Sales, 1998; Rendall, Tsang, Rubin, et al. 2010; Lutz, 2016) and in Italy (Lodigiani, 1994; Scrinzi, 2004; Bonora, 2011; Lomazzi, 2012) have widely analyzed the characteristics and peculiarities of female migration, focusing on the role and position (reunit-

¹ The present chapter is the outcome of shared reflection among the three authors. Emanuela Bonini authored section 1, Giulia Mezzetti authored section 2, Livia Ortensi authored section 3. The concluding section was jointly authored.

ed or first migrant) of women in migration, as well as on the remittance that they contribute to the country of origin and of destination.

Less attention has been devoted to migrant women as autonomous subjects who have peculiarities, needs, and resources that go beyond their family and acquaintances and cannot be encapsulated in a defining characteristic. Focusing on this presupposes an understanding of what happens to them, the conditions they live in, their specific needs and the discrimination they suffer. This can also have policy implications.

Moving from these assumptions and searching for more effective responses, ISMU initiated the *GRASE* project together with national and international partners.² The project aims to help reduce the gender and ethnicity gap by adopting an intersectional approach to addressing the discrimination that women with migrant backgrounds suffer in accessing employment. The project seeks to identify and test effective strategies for overcoming the barriers created by gender and ethnic stereotypes that may be reproduced even in the selection of human resources by employment services. The perspective adopted by *GRASE* puts human resource professionals center stage, reflecting on their potentially discriminatory or segregating work habits. The aim is to identify the implicit reproduction of gender and race stereotypes and to spur the questioning and rectification of these habits.

A reflection has developed within and around the project on the opportunities and discrimination – often indirect and implicit – which women with a migrant background experience in Italy and in other European countries,³ as well as on how discrimination limits opportunities for work and beyond, both in qualitative terms (with regard to occupational sectors, positions, and classification) and in quantitative terms (with reference to the quantity and variety of job opportunities).

A reflection has emerged within and around the project about the (often indirect and implicit) discrimination against women with a migration background in Italy and in other European countries. Such discrimination restricts opportunities for work, both in qualitative terms (in terms of occupational sectors, positions, and types of contracts) and in quantitative terms (with reference to the quantity and variety of job opportunities).

As is well known, the term “intersectionality” has been introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw in a 1989 essay in which she explains that it is not possible to establish whether the condition of black women (specifically in the U.S., but also applicable to women with a migrant background) depends on their women or on their being black women. For this reason, she argues, the two factors must be considered in their interaction. This is particularly evident in contexts where norms on discrimination against specific social characteristics fail to target discrimination against other social categories. The neglect

² Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini (Italy), Adecco Group (Italy), Fundación Adecco (Spain), Asociación AMIGA por los Derechos Humanos de las Mujeres (Spain), APROXIMAR Cooperativa de Solidariedade Social (Portugal).

³ Alongside Italy, the project focuses on Spain and Portugal in order to compare different Mediterranean countries.

of the interaction of different factors may leave discrimination undetected.⁴

The concept of social categories is at the center of the debate on intersectionality, with the aim of understanding and explaining how categories are co-constructed in the situated experience of subjects (Bello, 2020) as well as how the interaction between these social categories (re)produces inequalities. The goal is to shed light on the underlying complexity of intersecting social categories in order to highlight inequality between different social groups. Because every person belongs to several categories that interact with each other both subjectively and at the level of groups and institutions, it is not enough to consider those categories in isolation; the way they relate to each other is crucial (Marchetti, 2013: 134). This makes it necessary to adopt an intersectional approach.

The concept of intersectionality has thus paved the way not only to a relational analysis of social categories, but also to identifying a hitherto invisible condition of discrimination arising from the interaction of different categories that apply to individuals – such as religion, age, citizenship, social class, physical abilities, and so on.

Intersectionality studies also emphasize the multidimensionality of the concept. Although “intersectional” or “multiple” discrimination are often referred to interchangeably, many scholars have clarified that intersectionality is multi-faceted and that an intersection of discriminatory effects are not one and the same thing as a sum of discriminatory effects.⁵

In migration studies, the concept of intersectionality has spurred reflection and criticisms on the very identification of the sources of discrimination as well as on who puts them in relation. If discrimination is identified by a Western, non-situated gaze, the agency of other subjects – namely migrant women – will go unrecognized (De Petris, 2005). The concept of agency within an intersectional framework makes it possible to go beyond identifying the scope and forms of discrimination by giving voice to those subjects as active agents rather than passive ones. This is all the more necessary given the complexity and variety of migration within the broader social context in which it plays out.

In practice, this approach has allowed researchers at the *GRASE* project to study the reproduction of stereotypes in a less traditional way. The intersectional approach to the study of career-guidance professionals in three countries allowed researchers to uncover implicit discrimination.

⁴ This is the case of the black women fired by General Motors considered in Crenshaw’s essay. The Supreme Court had considered race and gender discrimination separately, concluding that GM had discriminated neither against women nor against black men. Thus, discrimination against black women was not recognized

⁵ A powerful classification has been proposed by Sandra Fredman (2016); a definition can also be found in: Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, Opinion on Intersectionality in Gender Equality Laws, Policies and Practice (2020), pp. 3-4, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/aid_development_cooperation_fundamental_rights/opinion_intersectionality_2020_en_0.pdf (retrieved 21st September 2021).

2. Intersectionality in EU policy

Intersectionality jargon has begun to take hold in EU policy as well. The concept is explicitly mentioned for the first time in the documents of the European Commission's anti-discrimination and equal opportunities policies for 2020-2025. These are the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025,⁶ the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020-2025,⁷ the EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation 2020-2030,⁸ the LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025,⁹ the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child 2021-2024,¹⁰ the forthcoming Strategy on Combating Anti-Semitism, and the Action Plan for Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027,¹¹ which specifically concerns migrants. Such variety of documents is revealing of the European Commission's broadened scope in contrasting discrimination. Further indications on anti-discrimination have emerged over time from the European Commission's documents on the integration of third-country nationals (the Common Agenda for Integration 2005,¹² the Action Plan on Integration 2016-2020,¹³ and the aforementioned Action Plan for Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027). These documents are based on the guidelines established with the Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy adopted by the Justice and Home Affairs Council in 2004.¹⁴ Lacking a unified vision, however, this set of initiatives appeared to be fragmented and scarcely integrated.

The increasing importance of promoting equal opportunities for men and women got to a critical juncture when the Treaty of Amsterdam was signed in 1997. The Treaty was innovative in two respects. First, it encouraged Member States to adopt positive discrimination measures in areas where women were under-represented (Article 141). Second, it stated that "the Community shall aim to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality, between men and wom-

⁶ *A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025*, COM/2020/152 final, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0152> (retrieved 21st September 2021).

⁷ *A Union of equality: EU anti-racism action plan 2020-2025*, COM/2020/565 final, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2020%3A0565%3AFIN> (retrieved 21st September 2021).

⁸ *A Union of Equality: EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation*, COM/2020/620 final, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=COM:2020:620:FIN> (retrieved 21st September 2021).

⁹ *Union of Equality: LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025*, COM/2020/698 final, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0698> (retrieved 21st September 2021).

¹⁰ *EU strategy on the rights of the child*, COM/2021/142 final, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0142> (retrieved 21st September 2021).

¹¹ *Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027*, COM/2020/758 final, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=COM%3A2020%3A758%3AFIN> (retrieved 21st September 2021).

¹² *A Common Agenda for Integration - Framework for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals in the European Union*, COM/2005/0389 final, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A52005DC0389> (retrieved 21st September 2021).

¹³ *Action Plan on the integration of third country nationals*, COM/2016/0377 final, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52016DC0377> (retrieved 21st September 2021).

¹⁴ See <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/librarydoc/common-basic-principles-for-immigrant-integration-policy-in-the-eu> (retrieved 21st September 2021).

en” in all its activities (Articles 2 and 3.2). In practice, this resulted in the adoption of a “gender mainstreaming” approach, consisting in the pursuit of gender equality in all policies. This entailed a governance shift from the use of *hard law* (binding legislation codified in legislative acts such as European Directives) to the use of *soft law* (non-binding policy documents such as action plans, strategies, recommendations). The stated aim was to combat gender inequalities through a comprehensive, systemic, and cross-cutting approach which consider gender discrimination as categorial rather than individual (Lombardo & Meier, 2008; Enderstein, 2017; Jacquot, 2015).

The broader scope of gender equality policy has not resulted in a thorough investigation of the reasons why women are discriminated against: the policy instruments adopted did not address the power structures oppressing women nor the cultural norms that govern gender relations (Lombardo & Meier, 2008). This is does not depend on the mainstreaming approach itself as on the way it translates into the routine, superficial, and merely procedural inclusion of the issue of “women” in policy instruments (Enderstein, 2017).

In the 2000s, the gender mainstreaming gave way to the broadening of the policy focus onto all other causes of discrimination. Along with the European Charter of Fundamental Rights (Article 21.1), this transition was once again spurred by the Treaty of Amsterdam, which recognizes religion, disability, age, and sexual orientation as grounds for discrimination on a par with sex, ethnicity, and race (Article 13). In 2000, two Directives were enacted that expanded equal treatment beyond gender, namely Directive 2000/43/EC on equal treatment irrespective of racial or ethnic origin and Directive 2000/78/EC on equal treatment in employment, which covered all other grounds of discrimination. However, the Directives do not actively promote positive discrimination policy; instead, they reinforce the safeguard of *individual* rights without recognizing *structural* discrimination against certain social groups.

This approach has been criticized in many respects, first of all in its assumption that the “differences” at the basis of discrimination – gender differences, racial differences, religious differences, differences of sexual orientation, disability differences, etc. – are all equal and can be addressed in the same way (Verloo, 2006). Instead, critics pointed to their inherent differences, insisted that they have a varying impact in making people disadvantaged, and noted that the advocacy strategies regarding each of them pursue their own aims and logic (Verloo, 2006). In the policy measures adopted, by contrast, “multiple discrimination” (the EU’s official approach until 2020) seems to mean the mere “sum of discriminations” (Müller, 2021). However, as explained in the previous section, “multiple discrimination” is not the same thing as “intersectionality.” Instead of understanding inequalities as they intersect and interconnect, the anti-discrimination strategy of EU policies juxtaposed them (Lombardo & Verloo, 2009), thereby making them – and the groups that suffer them – compete.

More recently, the evaluation report on the Strategy for Gender Equality 2016-2019 (González Gago, 2019) found that progress has been made on the matter but called on the European Commission to adopt a genuinely intersectional perspective more boldly and unambiguously.

In 2020, however, the European Commission adopted a more holistic approach in outlining its anti-discrimination agenda, using the word “intersectionality” in all revised or newly published documents, such as the Anti-Racism Action Plan and the LGBTIQ Equality Strategy. Moving from the evaluations of their previous policies, and prompted by the prominence to which social movements like #metoo and #BlackLivesMatter have risen in recent years, European institutions seem to have become more sensitive to the issue. A review of this new “generation” of documents and approaches shows that the idea of “multiple discrimination” has been overcome, that migrant women are now recognized as a particularly disadvantaged and struggling category, and that cultural change is now promoted through the recognition of implicit biases in stereotypes and prejudices. The new priorities are reflected in the allocation of new European funds, especially DG Justice funds for rights and equality.

3. Measuring intersectional inequality: the path ahead

3.1 Measuring the overall gender gap: an achievement to be preserved

In light of the above, a positive aspect in the Anti-Racism Action Plan and new Strategy for Gender Equality is the adoption of new criteria for the collection of Europe-wide data for investigating discrimination and the categories that suffer it.

A key issue of inequalities resulting from the intersection of gender and migration background is the possibility of measuring them in time and space (Hennebry et al., 2021). This is currently a challenge for statistical systems. Without a set of reliable indices and indicators for measuring intersectional inequality, anecdotal experiences can hardly be translated into robust evidence that may guide policy or monitor progress toward full gender equality. As the analysis conducted within the GRASE project shows, data relative to intersectionality are still largely missing.

Considerable effort has been made to try and assess the impact of gender by measuring differences in the conditions of men and women. A striking example of this is the report on Fair and Sustainable Well-being by the Italian Institute of Statistics (Istat). Now in its tenth edition, the report includes 152 indicators on the well-being of citizens, many of which are broken down by gender and are accessible through a dashboard that helps their extraction and interpretation. However, no such system that provides information on the effects of intersectionality is available.

At the European level, important research is carried out by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), which for years has been building a composite index of gender equality in EU countries, including Great Britain. The index summarizes the differences between men and women in 6 respects (work,

money, knowledge, time, power, and health) based on 31 indicators disaggregated by gender.¹⁵

Italy scored 63.5 out of 100¹⁶ in EIGE's measurement, ranking fourteenth out of 28 countries – below the European average (67.9) – due to a low score in respect to work, power, and use of time.¹⁷

EIGE has very recently broadened its scope to the area of intersectionality, providing data disaggregated by gender, household, age group, level of education, disability, and country of birth. The country of birth indicator is disaggregated by birth in the country under consideration and birth in a foreign country; it thus captures the difference between first-generation migrants and natives. Where applicable, a distinction is made between EU countries and non-EU countries.

3.2 The intersection between gender and migration background in the gender data gap: a target to be achieved

EIGE's work presents some limitations with respect to the current state of the art on intersectionality statistics. First, indicators disaggregated by gender and place of birth are not available for many countries. The reason for this data gap lies in the limitations of the sample surveys from which the indicators are calculated. Many indicators, particularly those relative to working conditions or health, are calculated from surveys conducted on representative samples of the population. In many countries, however, particularly those where immigrants are a small – albeit growing – portion of population, the number of foreign-born people included in the survey is not enough to be captured by indicators. Even in countries such as Italy, where immigration is well-established, information is missing in key areas such as lifestyle.

The choice of indicators, too, may not effectively capture intersectional inequalities despite adequately capturing differences between men and women in the native population. One example is the indicator used by EIGE to measure occupational segregation. The percentage of people employed in education, health, and social work is not revealing of occupational segregation within the immigrant population, which is mostly employed domestic and home care work. (Employment in educational and social work is often inaccessible to immigrants due to a lack of command of the language; for immigrants, professional success often amounts to employment in medical or nursing work.)

Further concerns are related to the statistical formulation of the indices. The validated formulas that are currently used to measure the overall gender gap may not be applicable to the measurement of *multiple gaps* (immigrant women vs. native women, immigrant women vs. immigrant men, and the like). The

¹⁵ A 2020 audit by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre concluded that the index is a reliable measurement of gender equality in the EU.

¹⁶ The index ranges from 0 to 100, wherein 100 corresponds to a perfect gender balance in the area under consideration.

¹⁷ Overall, the top-ranking country is Sweden (83.8), while the bottom-ranking country is Greece (52.2).

measurement of intersectionality therefore requires methodological effort in the construction of new indices.

Sub-national differences (regional or provincial) also escape measurement insofar as different sub-national areas often have different levels of inequality. The measurement of this is crucial to effective regional policymaking.

Measuring intersectional differences therefore requires further statistical development in all respects, from early data collection (survey design) to the dissemination of data disaggregated by gender and place of birth.

4. Conclusions

As shown in the above review of the debate, of EU policy, and of current statistics, the intersectional approach requires a joint effort in many respects. This is an open challenge as neither policy making nor data collection have ever gone in this direction before.

The effort should focus on the meaning and potential of the intersectional approach for analysis and policymaking rather than on the attractiveness of “intersectionality” as a new buzzword. The risk is that “intersectionality” is referred to in policy documents in a merely “ornamental” sense (Müller, 2021), distorted or emptied of its meaning. The ambitious goals set by the recently launched Anti-racism Plan, for instance, strongly contrast with the migration and security policies implemented by EU states and even by the European Commission: the marginalization of disadvantaged people at European borders (think of refugee camps on Greek islands or of people who die at sea), the regulation of access to services (on the basis of migration status or nationality), and ethnic profiling (in police control) reproduce the very hierarchical mechanisms that undergird racism and discrimination. It is difficult, therefore, to imagine how the new set of European policies can promote genuine “intersectional justice” and safeguard rights when the policies adopted in closely related fields pursue a completely different approach.

Hopefully, the joint work of scholars moving from different perspectives – from gender mainstreaming to migration studies – may lead to a substantial change in approach, thus favoring a better and more comprehensive understanding of intersectional discrimination.

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The ISMU annual Report on migration enters its 27th edition in 2022. Over time, the Report has become a useful reference for people working on migration, both within and outside Italy. As the health emergency subsided in the second half of 2021, public interest on migration resurfaced along with the challenges that migration poses to Italy and the European Union.

In addition to the traditional areas of interest (health, work, education, and the legal framework) and to statistical aspects (ISMU estimates that 5,756,000 foreigners live permanently in Italy as of 1st January 2021), the 27th edition of the Report devotes particular attention to the attitudes and orientations of Italian people towards migration, as well as to the experience of migrant women in terms of discrimination and positive valorization.



ISMU Foundation is an independent research centre founded in 1992 promoting research and training activities on migration, integration and the ever-growing ethnic and cultural diversity of contemporary societies. As an independent scientific body, it proposes itself as a service provider open to the collaboration with national and European institutions, local administrations, welfare and health-care agencies, non-profit organisations, schooling institutions, Italian and foreign research centres, libraries and documentation centres, international agencies, diplomatic and consular representations.

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ISBN 9788831443241