EMPATHIC NARRATIVES: A CASE STUDY OF IMMIGRATI/E IN MILAN PERCEIVING THE 'MIGRATION CRISIS'

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EMPATHIC NARRATIVES: A CASE STUDY OF IMMIGRATI/E IN MILAN PERCEIVING THE 'MIGRATION CRISIS'

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This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

November 2020

ABSTRACT

This research investigates the perceptions of resident migrant communities in Milan's diverse areas of 'Zona 2' and 'Zona 9' regarding the current 'migration crisis'; and aims to determine whether growing discrimination has produced communal solidarity or purposeful disengagement in the affected communities.

The findings, resulting from observation analysis and semi-structured interviews, suggest that there are no consistent patterns of discrimination from 'established migrant' communities towards recently-arrived 'new migrants'. On another level, the research also highlights how there is growing discrimination directed towards the religion of Islam and its practitioners – a trend that is aligned with broader media narratives in Italy, and Europe more generally.

This thesis provides a close analysis of the ways in which the '*immigrati's*' sense of narrativity is constructed and enacted within these local areas of Milan, and how participants of the observation are able to both shape and parse their own narratives within their communities.

This thesis is therefore interested in the role played by empathy: the ways in which empathy is enacted or not enacted by the *immigrati/e* participants; participants' ability to 'understand' the position of the refugee; and the extent to which they perceive parallels between their own experiences of voicelessness and of being 'the other' and those of the 'new migrants'. In this process of self-narration and self-determination the participants express their rejection to consent to discriminatory discourses and terms such as *immigrati/e*, while actively identifying as *stranieri/e* and creating new forms of radical narrativity.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would firstly like to express my sincere gratitude to my Director of Studies Dr. Roza Tsagarousianou for the continuous support and guidance over these past four years. Her assistance, immense knowledge, motivation and above all patience have simply been indispensable. I could not have imagined writing this thesis without her supervision.

Besides my supervisor, I would like to thank my second supervisor Dr. Alessandro D'Arma for his insightful comments and Dr. Tarik Sabry, Prof. Jean Seaton and Dr. Pieter Verdegem for their words of encouragement.

I am grateful to Tom Rodrigo. When I was doubtful about applying for the scholarship or not you were the one who convinced me to think of it as a lottery and simply do it! I've taken this path also thanks to you. Lucy Qandil, I am eternally grateful for the immense support throughout this journey and the daily reassurance you gave me while living together. Both of you have shown me kindness and love that I never thought I could find beyond my direct family.

I would also like to thank Rea Mole: you were there to assist me in my darkest PhD moments and personal crisis. A mention has to go to Marco for the initial help.

A very special gratitude goes to all my doctoral companions. Charu our meetings, hours long telephone calls, eating outside and shopping were what got me through this PhD ordeal. Thanks for being my 'buddy'. Pablo, thank you for helping me with all the technical bits and inspiring me to finish! Doug, thanks for always answering the myriad of questions and for looking out for me in general. Musab just simply thanks for everything. So thankful that our paths crossed through this doctoral journey. Silvia, thank you for always being present for me, listening and for being my rock especially in the last months of writing up.

I am grateful to Maria Catena and Abigail for the continual words of encouragenment. Mary, thanks for just being there along with me in this London journey. Serena Fernando, I;m eternally grateful for your help. Tom Rausch, thanks for the unfailing encouragement and friendship.

Back in Milan I would like to thank Chiara Pirrò, Giuseppe Monfredini and Laura Santarelli for supporting in so many ways during these years. I am also grateful to Rebecca Kazadi and Alessandra Nardelli, Valeria Weerasinghe.

Eternally grateful to Attilia Borghi-Casali, Anny Casali and other members of the family whose presence in my early childhood shaped my own perception of Italianness and made me feel like I belonged in something.

To Ernesto Gismondi, Carolina Gismondi and Carlotta de Bevilacqua I am immensely grateful to the help provided throughout the years.

Thanks go to my extended family as well: Sunil Mami, Hirusha Rodrigo, Renuka Fernando, Shehan Fernando, Mallimami, Deril Mahappi, Ivan Mahappi, Donald Mahappi, Rexi Mahappi, Cuccumami, Kapila Mami, Mary Aunty, Nandavathi Aunty, Darshana Aiya, Mervin Uncle, Mal Uncle, Priyency Mami, Ajantha Mami, Kamala Aunty, Nandi Aunty, Kristy Mami, Janet Aunty, Ananda Uncle, .Priyankara Malli and Linda Aunty. I also want to thank my late grandparents Clara Fernando, Bernand Fernando, Agnes Fernando and Arthur Fernando.

Special thanks got to my cousin Deepika who helped me gather different particpants of the observations. Dankan uncle and her daughter. Thank you to all the participants who took part in the study.

Last but definitely not least, I am eternally grateful to my parents Sybil and Gerald... putting traditions aside, you vividly encouraged me to take these crucial years for a ‘Sinhala girl’ to complete a Doctorate. No matter our social background, our caste, our wealth, the belittling and discrimination throughout the years, you have always pushed me to look for what really interested me and strive for it. This has been a

journey that we have taken together and grown from it together. Thank you for the freedom, patience, love.

DECLARATION

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing. It has not been previously submitted, in part or whole, to any university of institution for any degree, diploma, or other qualification.

1 INTRODUCTION

In our modern 'globalised' times, the space we live in has been subject to change, not only geographically through the construction of borders, but also socially. In 1991, anthropologist Roger Rouse (1991) claimed, "during the last twenty years, we have all moved irrevocably into a new kind of social space" (Rouse, 1991: 8). In the present day, one could argue that this space has become less homogenous and possibly less predictable than ever before.

Migration is one aspect of globalization, which is considered less positively by many people than other ones such as fast communication, business, and globalized travel. Migration to Europe is seen as "a tidal wave of desperate people fleeing poverty and warfare at home trying to enter the elusive European El Dorado" (de Haas, 2008: p. 1305). Moreover, the 'European migration crisis' has been one of the focal aspects in European debates on a political and social level in the last five years. As Monica Colombo (2018) highlights, the use of the term 'crisis' and its shift from employing the term 'emergency' is telling of the way the phenomenon has been framed in the public discourse. The attention afforded to it on a media level has been exceptional,

especially after the tragedies of thousands of drowning people/migrants in the Mediterranean Sea in 2015 (Colombo, 2018).

With it, discourses around securitization have developed further, with some European countries accusing others of uneven 'distribution of migrant quota' in the continent. Immigration has been mostly talked about as a "threat" with migrants seen as an "invading and besieging army" (Colombo 2018; Quassoli 2013). These discourses have aided the claim of many far-right parties in Europe of a serious incumbent threat posed by the arrival of new migrants in the European continent.

National 'security' is of the utmost importance for most European countries. Security is needed in order not only to protect the people of those countries - especially from the 'threat' of terrorists, possibly seen with the arrival of refugees - but also to safeguard the values that a given 'Western-European' country and its population holds, threatened by migrants who have already settled in the country. It is the politicians and officials, the 'securitising actors' (Mavelli, 2013: 164), who speak about security and emphasize the existence of a threat that could endanger the survival of their addressees and the social values that they hold, hence resonating with a wide audience. They urge security to be taken seriously and proclaim that they are willing to take any measure, even going above their own laws, to protect their countries. Securitising actors therefore instil this idea of threat and stir public opinion into believing there is a need for security.

Hence, the entity majorly responsible for this change is believed to be the migrant. 'The migrant' is used by some politicians and media in certain countries as a scapegoat, responsible for many, if not all, of the issues that are straining a given society. The migrant is seen as "belated and partial" (Tsagarousianou, 2007: 3), somehow inferior to the values and lifestyles that 'Westerners' hold. They are separated and ostracized from the rest of the society where they decide to settle, especially in the initial phases of their arrival, until in some cases they are 'asked', or rather implicitly forced, to assimilate and integrate. Migrants are seen as 'others', as they might wear the markers of 'otherness' and always put in juxtaposition to the ideas

of ‘our culture’ or ‘our morals’. They are perceived as an obstacle to the nation-building strategies of the new countries they have entered. Their own formation of communities is seen as parochialism, tribalism, and ineptitude at being cosmopolitan. Consequently, migrants are also constantly subjected to loyalty tests.

As Roza Tsagarousianou (2007) explains,

“[t]he migrant, subject of fear, of loathing as well as of curious and often forbidden fascination, the victim of lethal racisms of pervasive discrimination has become the ‘folk devil’ of late modernity whose loyalties are continuously questioned, whose attempts to build a home are seen with suspicion and often dismissed” (Tsagarousianou, 2007: 1).

The ‘fear’ of the migrant seems to have worsened along with the so-called ‘migration crisis’. One of the countries at the epicentre of this ‘crisis’ has been undoubtedly Italy, with the popular and populist far-right party the *Lega Nord* using immigration as a mainstay in their political agenda. This politicization of immigration (Krzyanowski and Wodak, 2009) under the lead of the *Lega Nord* has increased the “politics of fear” (Wodak, 2015) in the Italian context.

While there is various research on migrant communities living in Italy, there hasn’t yet been a comprehensive study on the effects of the portrayal of the ‘migration crisis’ on established migrants living in Italy. The main subject of this research is indeed the figure of the ‘migrant’ along with the constant change in perception, imagination, and negotiation of the identity that he/she is subject to and linked to. In Italy, as in other European countries, migrants are considered part of what Bourdieu called the ‘universe of the undiscussed’ (Bourdieu, 1977: 168), invisible to the mainstream because of their status of minority. Their voices are neglected and completely unheard. Migrants have become iconic figures of modern times: they are indeed made visible because of (and despite) the negative connotations associated with them. And yet, although they’re made visible and overtly present their voices are ultimately silenced, not taken into consideration. Iconic, yes, but mute. One might argue that this is one of

the main reasons why they are portrayed negatively, because of the one-sided nature of the conversation in the mainstream media where they are subject to 'nominalisation', defined as *immigrati/e* or *extracomunitari* in the Italian context (Hanretty and Hermanin, 2010). They embody the position of the subaltern (Spivak, 1988), who is the subject of a certain discussion but whose voice is silenced.

In this thesis as well, despite arguing against the use of generalizing terms, there are issues in how the participants and the subjects of news stories related to the 'migration crisis' are addressed, respectively *immigrati/e* and 'new migrants'. It does so to denounce the labelling provided in Italian public discourses, yet the researcher is aware of grouping individuals in the questionable way she is trying to denounce. *Immigrati/e* translates to immigrant and in the Italian context it generally denotes people who have arrived and resided in Italy since the late 1970s initially from African, Asian and increasingly from ex-Soviet Union countries following 1989 (Triandafyllidou, 1999). The presence of a large *economia sommersa*, the informal sector, and employment opportunities in Italy gave way to a form of immigration that was mostly undocumented (Calvanese and Pugliese, 1988). This though implied that most of the *immigrati/e* were employed for low-skilled and low-wage work. It can be argued that up to this day, *immigrati/e* are restricted access and mobility to the wider labour market because of this initial association, which has categorized them as agents that can take over certain underqualified positions. In Italy, the racialization of labour force has become the norm and an important tool that provided the country with "cheap and disposable migrant workers to sustain neoliberal socio-economic reforms in Italy" (Oliveri, 2018: 1863).

'New migrants', on the other hand, in this thesis implies those people who arrive to Sicily and try to travel to the Northern regions of the country, to then possibly access to other bordering European countries. They are the main subjects of the 'migration crisis' and its representation on different media platforms. Their migratory journeys from North Africa and the Middle East has shaped various political events in particular from 2015 onwards, such as Brexit or the German federal elections in 2016 and Hungarian elections in 2018 (Fiore and Ialongo, 2018). While the number of migrants arriving to Greece from Asia peaked in 2014-2015, the number of people arriving by

sea from the African continent to Sicily-Italy has been rather consistent throughout 2013 to 2017 but increased in 2016, with circa 180,000 migrants arriving to Italy that year alone (Varrella, 2020), right before the observation took place. This phenomenon was used by many far-right parties in Europe in their political agenda, instigating and linking a sense of threat to this 'migration crisis'. In fact, a survey conducted by the Pew Research Centre showed how a majority of Italians believed that refugees from Iraq and Syria would represent a threat to Europe with their arrival (Pew Research Centre, 2016).

Therefore, using the terms *immigrati/e* and 'new migrants' is problematic itself and it can be argued that it reproduces the same linguistic issues that the researcher, I address in the thesis. However, any term that could be used to define migrants is problematic, as it is categorising people/individuals of minority background that have been stereotyped and grouped using these problematic terms. It should be noted that these are not what I, the researcher, am accepting, as they are in no way acceptable. Yet, these terms have been adopted in the thesis also to reflect on the mediatic processes of categorisation that have used the terms to classify 'Others'. As the researcher, I acknowledge that it is extremely problematic and my stance is rather ambiguous in using them, but I am also aware that for the scope of research, there is a need for definition and differentiation to better examine the nuances of the migrant journeys that characterize the participants and the migrants part of the 'migration crisis. 'New migrants' is problematic, but it is used to point to a specific type of migrants. These terms are used as they then allow to reflect on a specific phenomenon. It is extremely difficult to use any terms without reproducing the main discriminatory discourse that the thesis is attempting to dismantle. Language has a central role in defining meaning, as it is socially constructed. Thus, the reason why it is used and addressed in the thesis.

1.1 Objectives

The purpose of this research is to analyse how resident migrant communities in Milan's diverse areas of 'Zona 2' and 'Zona 9' perceive this 'migration crisis' and to

determine whether there is communal solidarity or purposeful disengagement from growing discrimination.

The main research questions of the present study set to explore:

- how established migrants in Milan define their own position in the nation vis-à-vis the current debates on 'new migrants people and the general securitising discourse on migration?

-how established migrants navigate through the *Lega Nord* produced and influenced discourses that set migration in general and the 'new migrants' in particular as a threat to the security and coherence of the nation?

- how *immigrati/e* respondents learn / access these debates and discourses? Through which media and how do they discuss them and interpret them both online, offline?

In fact, the main objective was to explore whether established migrants, confronted with stark discourses questioning who adheres and belongs to the community or not, are possibly trying to secure a place for themselves in the narrative of said community, which is defined by prevalent security discourses. I was interested in inquiring whether their sense of exclusion from the European Union community had an impact in their views regarding the current 'migration crisis', but also on their perception of themselves.

Despite there being vast literature on migrant communities living in Italy, on 'second generation' migrants/ children of migrants, research has not been conducted on how the portrayal of the 'migration crisis' has effected *immigrati/e* living in Italy and their reaction towards the possibility of new 'new migrants' arriving to Italy.

The thesis underlines how marginalisation, emphasised by the respondents of the ten *immigrati/e* households in 'Zona 2' and 'Zona 9' of Milan who participated in this study, can be conveyed through language, through certain types of nominalisation processes. Nonetheless, this research contributes to the existing literature on migration and diaspora studies by showing how this marginalisation is also questioned and

rejected, giving an oppositional reading to the encoded dominant ideology if Hall's (1991 [1977]) theoretical framework is used. The participants refuse the limiting narrative associated to being identified as *immigrati*/e and express a will to accept their status as 'Other' in preferring to referred as *stranieri/e*. This act of self-determination instigates new types of resistance and the further development of narrativity.

The findings, through the use of observation and semi-structured interviews, also show that although there is no consistent discrimination towards newly arrived 'new migrants' from the likes of 'established migrants', it can be claimed that there is increasing discrimination towards Islam and its followers, which goes in line with the general perception in the media.

As much as opinions of Italian experts or other representatives are seen and heard in the media regarding these particular immigration issues, established migrant communities seem to have no voice in the matter. In fact, there appeared to be a growing sense of community among the established groups of migrants. The research therefore demonstrates how the hegemonic discriminatory discourses provided by media might affect how urban migrant communities interact among themselves, the sense of solidarity and exclusion that are put into practice.

Furthermore, the political state of affairs in Italy, the relentless stride to popularity and victory of the right-wing party and the steady increase in acceptance of xenophobic sentiments around the 'migration crisis' when it first became a media phenomenon, all influenced in the way the main research question was conceived four years ago. Yet, my personal affiliations with the subject matter of the study had an impact as well. In fact, being an Italian 'second generation' migrant myself affected the way the research and observation were carried out and finally how the findings of this thesis were formulated. As I continuously juxtaposed the participants' *immigrati/e* experience to that of my own, I found it challenging to fully adhere to the main research scope during the observation and later to analyse the gathered data.

The first chapter of this thesis is the "Conceptual Chapter" that will examine the development of Migration Studies, from first being centred solely on push/pull factors, with primarily an economic perspective, to then focus on the anthropological sociological aspects that entail migratory journeys, among all the diasporic lenses. The concept of diaspora is key to this study as it puts to the forefront the sense of identity and belonging of migrants in their journeys and their 'new' settlements, homes. In addition, it is fundamental as the participants of the observation belong to diverse diasporic communities in Milan. Processes of securitisation are discussed as well in order to better understand how and why the concept of 'security' is now associated with migration on a political and media level.

Chapter 2, "Migration: Italy", will provide an overview of the historical underpinnings surrounding migration in Italy, from it being primarily a country of emigration to becoming one of immigration. This chapter will also explore the way immigration has risen to prominence in public (media) debates starting in the 1980s, its ongoing politicization, and ending in the developments of the current 'Migration Crisis'. Along with these, the ascent of the far-right political party the Lega Nord will be covered too.

Chapter 3 will delineate the methodology of the research. It will explain the methods used, namely observation and semi-structured interviews. The chapter will provide justifications for the locality and participant sampling, the thematic analysis of the gathered data, along with a reflexive analysis that will inform the reader as to why the research was conducted in the first place.

The analytical section will start with the Chapter 4 on "Narrativity". The focus will be to assess whether the portrayal of the 'migration crisis', and particularly the narratives surrounding it, have affected the way established migrants living in Milan perceive themselves and make sense of their identity. The chapter will analyse whether the participants of the observation see similarities in the ways they as *immigrati/e* have

been depicted in the Italian media over the years, and the way 'new migrants' are reported on current news.

Following the latter point, Chapter 5 on 'Voice' will feature a discussion on the effects that voice, or the lack thereof, has in contributing to the constant sense of powerlessness that the participants of the observation experienced. The latter reflected on how the portrayal of the 'migration crisis' and images of 'silent' migrants resembled the depiction of their own voiceless status in Italy, where they are only represented, especially in the media, as working bodies or criminals.

Following this, the Chapter 6 on "Empathy" will feature a discussion on the way the participants make sense of this new attack on 'migrant bodies' and whether they feel compelled to show solidarity towards new 'new migrants' or instead reproduce the discriminatory discourses towards this newfound 'enemy'.

Most of the participants have in fact highlighted a sense of empathy and identification in respect to 'new migrants'' experience, not due to a shared journey or arrival experience to Italy, but a common sense of struggle and sacrifice that engulfs the 'migrant bodies' when they arrive and live in Italy. The key aspects that bring established migrants to empathize is the perceived shared discrimination and voicelessness.

Chapter 7 will explore how, despite there being a sense of empathy and identification with the strife that 'new migrants' endure in their journeys towards Europe, there is also nonetheless a perceived threat posed by the possible arrival of Muslim migrants. This sentiment follows the general global trend that tends to vilify Islam and its followers. The majority of the interviewed *immigrati/e*, despite appearing knowledgeable of the mediatic strategies that systematically smear *immigrati/e* people like themselves and denouncing this method, seemingly reproduced the discriminatory public and political discourses against Muslims, othering a new 'Other'.

2 CONCEPTUAL CHAPTER

It is important to analyse the wider literature on migration that explores the various historical and social events that have led to the current situation. Different disciplines have put forward divergent understandings on this particular phenomenon, using a range of analytical frameworks in their study.

In fact, from the beginning of the nineteenth century, several theories were formulated in order to better comprehend the migration process, differing also in thematic focus, such as emphasis on studying the migration of 'forced migrants' rather than voluntary ones (Castles *et. al*, 2014). Migration has been analysed through the study of patterns and responses, labour market and finance effects from an economic perspective; from a geographical outlook centred on the social-spatial features of various 'human movements'; political, questioning the aspects of citizenship and national security; and from an anthropological point of view that looked at the effects of diaspora, the issues that it raises such as citizenship, belonging and identity.

Caroline B. Brettell and James F. Hollifield (2015) try to navigate the different aspects of migration by exploring it through a cross-disciplinary conversation in their book 'Migration Theory: Talking Across Disciplines'. In fact, they explain that "despite the volume of research interest in a host of academic fields, only rarely are there conversations across the disciplines about shared theoretical perspectives and analytical concepts or about core assumptions that might differentiate one disciplinary approach from another" (Brettell and Hollifield, 2015: p.2). Yet, as Stephen Castles, Hein de Haas and Mark J. Miller (2014) argue, the migration process should be studied in its totality, as the various theories themselves are complimentary. "To gain a deeper understanding of migration processes, it is important to see migration as an *intrinsic part* of broader processes of development, globalization and social transformation rather than 'a problem to be solved'" (Castles *et. al*, 2014: p.26).

This Conceptual Chapter will give an overview of the main theories related to Migration Studies in order to better comprehend how mobility has been understood and has evolved in media over time and how 'the migrant' has become a controversial figure in most societies. These theorizations around migration and its processes might help in understanding how migration itself is still mostly considered as a quantifiable problem that should be solved, while migrants represent 'the Other' who nonetheless remain voiceless and stigmatized. The general discussion regarding the figure of 'the migrant' serves to portray how the established migrants that were interviewed for the research have been studied, and the reasons why they possibly came to settle in Italy. Therefore, the first section will briefly explore the theory elaborated by economic studies on migration.

The second part of the Conceptual Chapter is centred on the concept of securitisation, a central aspect in the wider research that will analyse the effects of security discourses on established *immigrati/e* communities in two areas of Milan, Italy. As Didier Bigo explains, security is constructed through the "struggles for political decisions and justification of practices of surveillance, control and punishment as well as practices of protection, reassurance, worrying and surveillance" (Bigo, 2008: p.124). Securitisation theory is central in this research as security discourses are the at core of

the research question and the primary reason as to why it was formulated. The discussion around Securitisation Theory is central in understanding the processes that have led to certain representations of 'the migrant', relating both to the '*immigrati/e'* participants of the study but also the 'new migrants' at the centre of the 'migration crisis'. The 'migrant' is the victim of security discourses, such as those proposed by far-right parties like the *Lega Nord*, but they are not limited to extremist political discourse. As it is explored in the chapter, certain governmental practices consist in spreading a sense of fear, in order to justify the need for security in a particular country, consequently implementing border control and firmer immigration policies. Yet, these practices essentially reinforce the 'othering' of members of society such as the migrants, alienating and antagonising them.

Yet, this research especially aims to uncover the results of mobility and diaspora in a Western country by studying the protagonists of such diasporic movements themselves, and their mentalities. Therefore, it will distance itself from the main economic and geographical theorizations on migration, through which lens the 'migration crisis' has mostly been portrayed and affiliated in politics and media. Thus, the third section will explore in depth the concepts put forward in diaspora studies such as that of home, transnationalism, liminality, identity and narrativity. These notions are essential in this research as they will be discussed in the analytical chapters to answer the research question of the present study, which primarily mostly examines the mobility, sense of identity of established migrants and their experience as living as such in Milan, Italy, as it tries to unravel the perception of the latter in relation to the 'migration crisis'.

2.1 ECONOMIC AND GEOGRAPHICAL STUDIES ON MIGRATION

It is necessary to explain how studies of migration were initially conceived. Despite being distant from the anthropological/diasporic interests which this research mainly

features in its aims, the economic aspects of migration are still given primary focus by various governments when talking about migration. In fact, in recent years both center-right and center-left parties in Italy have claimed the "functionalist case for immigration (necessary in terms of labour market shortages)/ a position also held by key economic actors such as employer associations" (Bigot & Fella, 2008: p.306).

Some of the first studies around migration, centred on analysing the causes of this process, consisted of functionalist theories. In the nineteenth century, the geographer Ravenstein (1885; 1889) wrote the 'laws of migration' (Castles *et. al*, 2014), where he claimed that migration was strictly linked, and essential to, development, also stating that the main cause for migration was due to economic reasons. This framework used Isaac Newton's 'gravity' model to explain how most migrants were attracted to countries with larger economies and it would "predict the volume of migration between places and countries on the basis of distance, population size and economic opportunities in destination and origin areas" (Castles *et. al*, 2014: p.28). This was also complicit with the normalized notion of "the desire inherent in most men to 'better' themselves in material respects" (Arango, 2000: p.284).

Early geographers assumed migrants considered moving from one country to another because of certain 'plus' and 'minus' factors, thus originating the 'push-pull' model in migration studies. Yet, this framework majorly consisted of a list of various factors, not explaining how these latter combined provoked population movement (Skeldon, 1990). Moreover, this framework did not allow to rationalise return migration and the processes of both emigration and concurrent immigration in a given country (Castles *et. al*, 2014).

In addition, the neoclassical theory suggested that migration was essential to the development process of society consisting of the movement of rural populations into urban spaces and providing the urban workforce and labour market with human capital considers the Industrial Revolution as the primary event that initiated this type of migration. Therefore, the reasons behind people's mobility were thought to be grounded in economic need and generally the desire to increase individual wealth.

Related to this, Castles, de Haas, and Miller claim that both the push-pull model and the neoclassical theory, upon which modern economic migration studies derive from, make unrealistic assumptions and in particular do not stress the importance of human agency, of migrants' own choices (Castles *et. al*, 2014). In fact, actual real migration patterns contradict these neoclassical theories, which economic studies on migration are based upon (Arango, 2000).

Proving this point, the report 'The Impact of Migration: A Review of the Economic Evidence' conducted by the Centre for Research and Analysis of Migration (CReAM), is an example of the study of migration with an economic approach. It analyses the impact of migration in the UK and particularly Wales, specifically on how immigration impacts the workforce and employment of native residents (Dustmann, *et. al,* 2016). To do this, Christian Dustmann, Tommaso Frattini, and Albrecht Glitz first explore the literature on migration from a socio-economic perspective. They explain that the early migration models considered immigrants as crucial elements of the labour chain, affecting the wages in the capital market and offering different sets of skills, possibly interchangeable with the natives' ones. It is the level of skill that immigrants bring to a given country that deeply impacts the natives, as this creates further competition between the two groups. As such, the authors assume in their own analysis and model, for the sake of the report, that natives and immigrants have different sets of skills and construct the extreme scenario whereby immigrants are low-skilled. Thus, they claim, "[i]mmigration will now lead to an excess supply of unskilled labour at the pre-immigration wages. Because unskilled labour is in excess supply, firms will therefore be able to satisfy their demand for labour even at lower wages" (Dustmann, *et. al,* 2016: p.11). Therefore, this results in a lack of skilled workers in the market but a rise in wages for this group, which consists of natives, and the authors argue that it would be the opposite if one were to consider the other extreme scenario where all immigrants were skilled. This is the model the authors' empirical work is based upon, on immigration in Wales. They themselves suggest that it is "attractive because of its simplicity and clear-cut implications" (Dustmann, *et. al,* 2016: p.15).

Yet, it can be argued that it is rather one-dimensional and solely promotes binary oppositions. They study immigration on a national structural level, hence the effects that immigrants have on the economy, policy, education of a 'receiving society'. They do not address the effects this phenomenon has on identity and culture in any given society and the overall diversity that characterizes migration, thus migrants' level of skill as well.

From the latter study, one can see how migration theory studied through an economic point of view is centred on analysing the choices and causes that push certain people to migrate, the effects on the economy of receiving societies, and all the added skills they provide (Brettell and Hollifield 2015). The latter is explored from a macroeconomic perspective of migration, whereas from a microeconomic one migration economists "view migrants as utility maximisers who assess opportunity in cost-benefit terms and act accordingly" (Brettell and Hollifield 2015: p. 8). This reduces the overall discussion to a 'winner and loser' debate, focused on the effects of emigration and immigration on the labour market and the finance of certain societies, leading to a rationalist way of thinking.

In addition, Joaquín Arango (2000) argues that most of the initial theories on migration did not address the 'immobility' of certain individuals, only the mobility of others.

"The existence of centripetal forces that lead to staying has been generally ignored by theories, although there are signs of increasing interest towards them in very recent years (Hammar et al. 1997). This implies that more attention than hitherto should be bestowed upon family types, kinship systems, social systems, and social structures in general. Much the same can be said about the cultural dimensions and contexts of migration, including, but not stopping there, the costs of cultural adaptation" (Arango 2000: p.293).

In fact, the neoclassical theory and approach to migration was contested from the late 1960s by the historical-structural theory, proposing that capitalism had created an

uneven, asymmetrical world where heavy industrialised countries exploited agrarian ones, which have relied for development on the first ones and were hence subordinate (Arango, 2000). This idea produced the dependency theory of migration.

Moreover, anthropologists, who consider context to be crucial in migration studies, and historians, mostly concerned with periodization, time, and temporal cycles of mobilities, now reject the rationalist perspective used in economic studies. In fact, economists engage in the field of migration through macro-level research, which explores the structural conditions that influence migration flows, whereas anthropologists in particular analyse migration through micro-level research, thereby exploring how the larger forces studied by economists have influence on a smaller scale on "the decisions and actions of individuals and families, or how they affect changes in communities" (Brettell and Hollifield 2015: p.11).

Yet, it is important to underline that the overall process of migration is difficult to analyse. As Arango claims, "[m]igration is too diverse and multifaceted to be explained by a single theory" (Arango 2000: p.283). In fact, Philip Martin (2015) explains that "[m]igration means change. (...) Isolating the economic changes associated with migration at a point in time is difficult, and constructing an accurate motion picture of the individual and social changes that accompany migration is even more difficult" (Martin, 2015: p.110). As a matter of fact, solely studying the economic effects of migration and mobility does not allow to explore the various impacts that migration has on a social level, in terms of the effects that any type of displacement, whether forced or voluntarily, has on the populations undertaking it.

However, these economic perspectives need to be examined as they feed into how migrants, as the participants of this study, make sense of their identity and positionality in the new country they reside in. Representing merely workforce and accounting for 'cheap labour', one could argue that these capitalistic narratives mould how migrants perceive themselves. From the gathered data during the observation, it became evident that these narratives are internalized, as the participants feel a sense of powerlessness and voicelessness, ultimately not being able to exceed certain positions, economic and social.

Finally, it can be argued that it is through these economic perspectives that look at migration in terms of flows, forces from a macro-level that promote binary oppositions that security discourses have developed. These perspectives have ultimately lead to envision 'the migrant' as a threat.

2.2 SECURITISATION: THE MIGRATION-SECURITY NEXUS

Processes of securitisation have developed in response to migration and are the cause for the continuous attack on the (voiceless) 'migrant' on media platforms. Jef Huysmans (2006) suggests that securitisation is not solely focused on one function, such as the securing of national borders, but it encompasses practices that are central to visualising the nature of politics (Huysmans, 2006). Securitization in a given country entails most and foremost creating first a sense of insecurity, mostly linked to migration, in order to explain and justify the actual need for security. In fact, as the author explains, "[i]nsecurity is a politically and socially constructed phenomenon" (Huysmans, 2006: 2). Migrants are seen as a threat to the security of a country because they are constructed as such by political actors: in the Italian context, as will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2 migrants have been depicted as a security threat after the 'Vlora' incident in 1991 and even more so with the Mediterranean 'migration crisis'.

Yet, one might question the reason why generally migrants are 'sold' as entities that create insecurity, and most importantly the meaning behind the concept and politics of insecurity. Diverse state governments' sectors define insecurity in different ways: "the societal security sector defines insecurities that spring from threats to identity while the military sector focuses on military aggression threatening state sovereignty" (Buzan 1983 cited in Huysmans, 2006: p.2). The politics of insecurity hence are constituted and revolve around the notion of threat, which is a useful factor in policy making, easy to create and that attracts most of society to adhere. Moreover,

Huysmans claims that "[t]he politics of insecurity (...) also consists in using and contesting the use of security language in relation to certain events and developments" (Huysmans, 2006: 7).

In relation to this, Luca Mavelli (2013) examines the aftermath of 9/11 in his article 'Between Normalisation and Exception: The Securitisation of Islam and the Construction of the Secular Subject'. Mavelli explores the two main approaches to security elaborated by the 'Copenhagen School' and the 'Paris School'. The first one offers an account for which it is the 'speech act' centred on securitisation that creates a 'regime of truth'. Thus, if one takes the aftermath of 9/11, George W. Bush and Tony Blair created a new dominant discourse, in discrimination of Islam, through their securitising speech.

On the other hand, the 'Paris School' claims the opposite, whereby 'regimes of truth' which are already present in society allow and implicitly justify securitising 'speech act' (Mavelli, 2013). Ole Waever (1998) claims that security originates as a 'speech act', and it is through the latter that threat is constructed. Holger Stritzel (2011) goes further by reconsidering the latter with the concept of 'translation' (Mavelli, 2013: p.164), where the importance is placed on the moment the assertion for increased security becomes assimilated by the audience into a "consolidated discursive realm", mostly how this process of translation takes place thanks to already existing security discourses (*ibid*). Politicians consolidate a given 'regime of truth' (Bigo, 2008) and people are asked to adhere to it, as it happened in Italy with Matteo Renzi's speech after the drowning tragedy of 2015 that will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

As Huysmans explains "[b]efore an event can mobilize security policies and rhetoric, it needs to be conceived of as a question of insecurity and this conception needs to be sustained by discursively reiterating its threatening qualities". (Huysmans, 2006: p.7) Insecurity, in the particular context of 9/11 for example, was not merely naturally present in American society, but was well-crafted, highly elaborated, and instigated by state agents. After the events of 9/11, 'terror' was translated into 'Islam' (Mavelli,

2013). Therefore, not only was security addressed by political leaders such as George W. Bush, but the process of 'translation' was put forward by him/them as well.

Securitisation is therefore fundamental in producing forms of subjectivity that adhere with the secular. In fact, there is a clash between security and religion itself, or better, that which is not Christian, and a distinction between 'the exception' and 'the normal' in securitisation studies (Mavelli, 2013: p.161). As will be explored in Chapter 7, one could thereby argue that the discourse of a 'Christian West' is normalized and juxtaposed to an environment that features Islam as something separated from the rest of society, the exception, the extreme 'other', which ultimately poses a threat.

In relation to this, Huysmans analyses the shift of attitude towards migration, outsiders in a given society, from general unease to considering it as an existential threat (Huysmans, 2006: p.47). Through security discourse, governments attempt to construct a political community secured in identity and unity by producing existential insecurity. Migration is therefore a threat to the integral unity of this community. Huysmans explains that this type of securitisation rests upon "what a society intends for itself as *the good life*" (Habermas 1972: p. 313), which is naturally juxtaposed to, and creates the notion of, what a society considers as dangerous life. "In the pursuit of freedom from threat it is the rendition of dangerous life that makes the judgment of good life possible" (Huysmans, 2006: p.47). This so-called 'good life' primarily provides freedom, including freedom of movement, for example within the European Union. Hence, due to this hegemonic discourse, migrants are seen as a security threat, that should be either eliminated/rejected, or incorporated into the hegemonic logic of liberal governmentality.

Moreover, one of Huysmans' key points defines how governments produce a dynamic of inclusion and exclusion by administering distance towards migrants. Externally, the threat of migrants might be neutralized by strengthening border control, thus rendering it more difficult for them to enter a said 'protected' society, yet internally the state will control migrants through the use of various technologies such as special visas or identity cards and other forms of registration.

The author explains that while integrating migrants into the social and political community through these technologies, and on a certain level diminishing the difference between 'indigenous' people and foreigners, these also constitute markers of difference, eternal reminders of their status of unwanted, where the migrant is supposed to self-identify himself/herself as an outsider, the 'other' (Huysmans, 2006) which will hinder their identity formation. Among other security tools, these technologies and the document papers reinforce a form of governmentality as they are a mark of biopolitics, of controlling the body of he/she who is considered migrant. By doing so, these securitizing processes unify migrants "into a collective dangerous force" (Huysmans, 2006: p.56).

Hence, it is necessary here to define the concepts of discipline (Foucault, 1995), biopolitics (Foucault, 1978), and governmentality (Foucault, 2013) introduced by Michel Foucault. Foucault explained that biopolitics entails the "control over relations between the human race, or human beings insofar as they are a species, insofar as they are living beings, and their environment, the milieu in which they live in. (...) [T]he problem of the environment to the extent that it is not a natural environment, that it has been created by the population and therefore has the effects on that population" (Foucault, 2013: p.65-6). The author explores the elements that are entailed in the art of government, (Foucault, 1991) and claims that governing a state "will therefore mean to apply economy, to set up an economy at the level of the entire state, which means exercising towards its inhabitants, and the wealth and behaviour of each and all, a form of surveillance and control as attentive as that of the head of the family over his household and his goods" (Huysmans, 2006: p.92).

Thus, Foucault introduces governmentality, which is "the art of governing a population rather than a territory" (Huysmans, 2006: p.98). With governmentality, Foucault explains how states control the population by asserting them certain freedoms. With this notion, Foucault moves further from the concept of biopolitics, which theorized the physical control over individuals of a given population by the state (O'Farrell, 2012).

Linked to this, Huysmans identifies that the excessive freedom - of movement most importantly here - through the Schengen Information System, for instance, provided to the European population, is a further marker that differentiates the migrants from the 'natives' (or better those who hold a EU citizenship). He analyses this phenomenon using the biopolitical framework, suggesting how this level of freedom is offered to European citizens in order to optimize them as a population: "[t]his governmental intervention seeks to guide biological and social dynamics into a more optimal direction by working on the conditions within which free individuals go about their lives and thus develop as a population" (Huysmans, 2006: p.98-9). It is through this sense of freedom that participants of the European Union are controlled and the 'other' migrants are differentiated, thus reinforcing the 'otherness' and binary oppositions.

Similarly, in the analysis of the particular phenomenon of the 9/11 aftermath, Mavelli brings to the fore the production of these binary oppositions and the construction of the figure of the 'Other' as a security threat. He discusses how a consolidated 'discursive realm', using Huysmans term (Huysmans, 2006: p.90), frames the notion of who 'we are' as the West, how 'we are' as a political community, centred in cultural unity and an identity that might be threatened. In fact, this ultimately clashes with those that are defined as not partaking in the established social canon of identity. Under the circumstances described by Mavelli, but current ones as well, this security threat is defined as Islam.

Mavelli claims that securitisation theory is based on the separation between politics, decisions that take place within the boundaries of an establishment, and security, which takes place beyond those boundaries and is fundamentally centred in survival. Security is considered to be even above politics. "When survival is at stake, when an issue is imposing an existential threat to a designed referent object (a state, a community, an identity) extraordinary measures may be required to ward this threat off" (Mavelli, 2013: p.164).

The claim that Mavelli makes regarding this (quasi) primal attitude of survival is central in comprehending the reasons behind the national, local or more generally

territorial protectionism. It might therefore be suggested that it is because of survival that some established immigrant communities in Italy tend not to empathize with 'new migrants', where the discourse is not solely 'survival of the fittest', but mostly 'survival of the first'. For instance, in this research this is a crucial concept to consider as it might be argued that established migrant communities living in Milan's 'Zona 2' and 'Zona 9' may feel the need to protect themselves, distance themselves from the people who have entered the country subsequently, especially refugee/asylum seeking migrants.

Among the security discourse, Walters has included the concept of domopolitics (2004), whereby questions on migration and asylum become even more concerning than ones related to citizenship. With this term Walters intends "to the governments of the state as a *home*" (p.241), and specifically refers to "a reconfiguring of the relations between citizenship, state, and territory. At its heart is a fateful conjunction of home, land, and security. It rationalizes a series of security measures in the name of a particular conception of home ... it has powerful affinities with family, intimacy, place ... the home as our place, where we belong naturally, and where, by definition, others do not" (Walters, 2004: p. 241). Domopolitics regulates and disciplines the lives of asylum seekers/refugees in their 'new' country (Darling, 2014), one might argue even prior to their arrival. Colombo (2018) claims that within this logic of domopolitics, both securitarian and humanitarian discourses hinder the asylum-seeking rights.

Lastly, the 'Refugee Crisis' has highlighted the domological assumptions of most European political parties. "If migratory movements involve an assertion of subjectivity, a right to flee oppression whatever its nature, or simply to live otherwise and elsewhere, domopolitics resists this assertion. It mobilizes images of home, a natural order of states and people, of us and them, in such a way as to suppress and deny these subjectivities" (Walters, 2004: p. 256).

Furthermore, following Huysmans theories, Dimitrios Skleparis (2011) explores the critical approaches to security studies, in particular those put forward by the Copenhagen and Paris Schools of thought. These were the results of a crucial debate

in security studies, which took place in the early 1990s. These schools of thought claimed that the object of security was in constant change and not objective.

In particular, the 'Copenhagen School' analysed the processes and discursive practices by which security agents render and mould events and issues as threats to security. Migrants are seen as 'outsiders' therefore agents who could harm a well-established country, its society, and its 'identity' if the state is unable to control its borders. Hence the reason for migration to be securitized through 'speech acts', but it is the audience's acceptance of these 'speech acts' as securitizing moves that ultimately renders them as such and reaffirms the security strategy. Therefore, the 'Copenhagen School' regards modern security practices as ways that legitimize methods of governing migration, the latter's negative portrayal and its effects.

Yet, Skleparis claims that the approach put forward by the 'Copenhagen School' has its defects: it lacks an adequate structure in the securitisation theory itself, especially in applying the 'speech act' theory; its emphasis on securitizing agents and mostly on public discourse ignores other methods of securitisation such as the visual ones, through images, and other silent forms; it is not preoccupied with the cultural state of the audience, the general historical conditions and the power that the producers and receivers of 'speech acts' both hold. Mostly it does not consider the importance of the normative power that security discourses have, transforming the security theories into actual practices.

In fact, in the European context, particularly the Italian one which will be the focus of this research, it can be argued that the securitising 'speech acts' produced by the government and the extremist parties might turn into actual social practices, where the 'native' population rejects outsiders by physically distancing itself from the 'others', the migrants, reproducing further discrimination by actually recreating the 'us' and 'them' binary opposition. The thesis aimed to explore whether this might be even enacted by established migrant communities living in Milan. Overall, securitization theory informed the observation in Milan, the interviews and the following analysis of the gathered data. In particular, the securitising discourses of the Lega Nord,

explored in the Chapter 3, informed the line of questioning during the observation, as the internalisation of these securitising discourses by the likes of the participants was questioned as well. These informed their sense of agency and diasporic narrative.

2.3 DIASPORA

In order to better understand what the concept of diaspora entails in the modern day, it is necessary to analyse the history and semantics of it. The word diaspora is embedded with negative connotations that are mostly linked with the history of Jewish people and their displacement throughout history (Cohen, 2019). It is primarily seen as a sign of loss of ancestral value, or better, space and of placelessness. Therefore, it was seen as not solely being nomadic and in constant movement, but also as not experiencing a sense of place; being utterly "rootless" but also forced in this helpless state.

Yet, the meaning of the term has developed over the years and acquired different meanings. As Clifford (1994) explained

"For better or worse, diaspora discourse is being widely appropriated. It is loose in the world, for reasons having to do with decolonization, increased immigration, global communication and transport – a whole range of phenomena that encourage multi-locale attachments, dwelling, and travelling within and across nations" (p. 306).

Tsagarousianou (2007, 2019) as well argued that the term and concept of diaspora is now studied in various different academic fields to study unexplored aspects of human mobility in history but mostly human dispersion linked to theoretical frames of globalization, postmodernity and post-colonialism. But it is this shift from chaotic dispersion to diaspora that the author believes is fundamental: it veers the discourse towards the centrality of agency in this type of human mobility. When considering

diasporas, migrants are agents themselves, they hold agency in their movements, their social actions and new cultural endeavours. They are not seen as mere victims, but main protagonists of the development of the concept of diaspora.

Researchers such as Gabriel Sheffer (1986), William Safran (1991) and Robin Cohen (1997) have tried to delineate the features that characterize diasporas, by underlining the significance of a contact with their 'homeland' where they will possibly return, the alienation in their 'host' countries and the maintenance of a collective identity.

Safran (1991) identified the different factors that define the term diaspora and the characteristics that can be associated with diasporic members: (1) "expatriate minority communities" who, they themselves, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from an "original 'center'" to more than two "peripheral" or other regions; (2) in time they maintain "a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland"; (3) they acknowledge the impossibility of them to being "fully accepted by their host society", and therefore feeling marginalized; (4) they firmly believe in returning to their "ancestral homeland" given the right conditions, if not them their direct descendants, as it is considered "their true, ideal home"; (5) hence they are collectively dedicated to the "maintenance or restoration" of the this homeland and for this reason perhaps (6) "they continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship" (Safran 1991: p.83-4).

These are characteristics that a diasporic community might hold, yet Clifford (1997) warns off from considering an "ideal type" of diasporic community as even the archetypal diasporic one which is the Jewish community, is inextricably multifaceted, ambivalent and might not represent all of the six features. As Gilroy suggests diaspora is the meeting of roots and routes (1993). The concept of diaspora is fluid and elusive mirroring the movements it represents. Yet, given the centrality of the notion of 'home'/ 'homeland' in early diaspora studies, it is therefore necessary to analyse what these concepts represent.

2.3.1 HOME / HOMELANDS

The idea of an imagined 'home' and 'homelands' is at the core of diasporas studies. In fact, as Avtar Brah (1997) explains, "the concept of diaspora offers a critique of discourses of fixed origins, while taking account of a homing desire which is not the same thing as desire for a 'homeland'" (Brah, 1997: p.180).

Brah argues that ''home' is a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination" (Brah, 1997: p.192). It is the place of origin where immigrants want to return, yet, apart from holiday visits one might argue, most of them never truly will. It is the desire to relive the memories and the lived experiences of everyday life that they had there.

Yet, Tsagarousianou (2007, 2019) also argues that this is not the only central feature: 'homeland' also represents the ties, the sense of community and solidarity that are created (or better they themselves create) in their new social spaces, people who are brought together by their shared experiences of diaspora and migrancy. Tsagarousianou claims that the imaginaries that diasporic communities have of their 'homelands' and their longing for it, is often overrated. She agrees on the fact that it is mostly about an emotional bond and that, although 'return' might not be the central thought and final goal of diasporic communities, "nostalgia surely is present in their lives" (Tsagarousianou, 2007: p.152).

As a matter of fact, in some cases, once the migrant is settled in the global city, she/he manages to bring friends and relatives from the country of origin and creates her/his own network, which then enlarges into a community (Sassen, 2003).

Diasporic people acknowledge the fact that they live in different places and within these they are negotiating and re-imaging their communities on a transnational level: "these *homelands* are significant primarily due to their currency as largely symbolic means of negotiating inclusion in the societies in which migrants settle" (Tsagarousianou, 2007: p.156). Their common tradition, culture or even a shared

language does not entail an attachment to a ‘physical’ homeland, but something that is much more diverse and almost intimate.

In addition, as much as ‘home’ is believed to be connected to the past country of origin in diasporic studies, it is also stressed in integrationist discourses as a fundamental idea to be created in the new countries of residence. In fact, migration is perceived from an integrationist perspective as a process that involves people leaving one country for another, renouncing their past identities and attachments in order to form newer ones (Tsagarousianou, 2007). Yet, this type of integration cannot be achieved in one lifespan but over at least two generations. In fact, as seen in the last few decades in the ‘Western developed’ countries, migrants have challenged the notion of ‘moving on’, forgetting one’s past and collective memories linked to the country of origin, a notion which is central in assimilation and integration practice, by developing their own institutions, agendas and narratives.

This continuous link between the ‘homelands’ and the new places of settlement is central in how diaspora studies envision ‘home’. The latter is not synonym to enclosed intimacy or security anymore, as it is disrupted by the entrance of media that extends the cultural boundaries. (Silverstone, 2004; Georgiou, 2010) Yet, this factor empowers diasporas. As Georgiou (2010) explains:

“For diaspora, extended cultural boundaries might be enabling for the construction of new and multiple domestic and collective homes. At the same time, and as cultural boundaries stretch, stability becomes less adequate as a synonym for home. Home in the case of diasporic populations is always ambiguous and incomplete” (p.23).

Migrants try to make sense of themselves also in relation to the new surroundings they inhabit. Urban contexts might be challenging as a space to envision as ‘home’. In fact, one might argue most cities to offer adverse ground for migrants. With reference to ’the global city’ in particular, Sassen (2010) stresses the need to distance oneself from the images often associated with globalization, hence deconstructing it, in order to focus on the invisible/voiceless human experience that it features. Sassen argues, that

the notion of globalization solely takes into account the advantages of this phenomenon, solely the progress, not considering the side-effects. In fact, almost parallel to the continuous cross-border mobility of capital, globalization itself has contributed to a new flow from south to north (Sassen 2010), a new wave of migration. As the urban space is occupied by centralized capitalist corporations that also offer non-expert and low-paid jobs, the global city attracts migrants from poorer countries.

As Bejamin (1997) suggests with the concept of transitivity, the global city is spatially and temporally open, allowing increasing mobility that lead to difference and diversity, but also to 'survival circuits' (Hochschild, 2003: p.20). Thus, despite being a challenging space to inhabit and despite being marginalised and excluded from public debates, it should be underlined that most migrants do try to be involved in the urban politics of representation and engage in activities that emphasize their sense of agency in the global city. As Georgiou (2006) explains:

"In the cities with high concentration of different migrant and diasporic populations, various intra- and inter- community activities take place. These include everyday practices, such as the sharing of schools and shopping centres and more organised activities such as organised local (short-term and long-term) movements around residents' associations, community centres and arts centres" (p. 10).

Migrants in these urban spaces develop a sense of belonging that is based upon difference and cultivate a sense of community that goes beyond shared ethnicities. They develop 'circuits of survival' also amongst themselves creating new familiar bonds, which feature among interviewed participants as well, while also maintaining links and relations in their countries of origin.

In relation to this, Rouse (1991) has developed the notion of the 'transnational migrant circuit', part of transnationalism processes. Rouse studied and introduced a new 'cartography' that was centred on people's everyday lives and their flows between countries, particularly studying the case of Mexican Aguililans in the United States, (Rouse, 1991), which transcended the conventional mappings of space and movements found in migration studies. In fact, he claimed that these types of migration are not merely movements from one 'distinct environment' or 'locale' (Rouse, 1991: p.14) to another, but instead establish 'transnational circuits'. The latter,

using Rouse's words, represents "continuous circulation of people, money, goods, and information, [in which] the various settlements have become so closely woven together that, in an important sense, they have come to constitute a single community spread across a variety of sites" (Rouse, 1991: p.14). Through his study he emphasizes the importance of analysing these circuits as a whole when researching on 'transmigrants'. Hence, 'home' cannot be identified and isolated to only one specific place, but is constituted by this widespread transnational network.

For instance, the respondents of the present study engaged in particular 'transnational circuits', as despite their attempts to make Milan their 'home', they also showed a fondness and sense of attachment to their 'homelands', revealing that they intended to return there to live with their children. This underlined a constant search and self-questioning for an imagined 'home'.

Generally, when considering migrants, whether undergoing movement or settled as immigrant residents in places such as Italy, it is crucial to take into consideration the 'transnational circuits' that they are a part of, as these might influence how they make sense of the ongoing phenomenon. It is therefore necessary to understand what the concept of 'transnational circuits' means, beginning with transnationality and transnational migration itself.

It is by acknowledging the importance of transnationality in current diasporic movements that the concept of diaspora fully takes form. It stresses the difficulty of full assimilation in the hegemonic normalized way desired by governments in many Western societies, yet not complete impossibility, as demonstrated by transnational circuits, in which migrant adjust and settle to new localities and developing their own links and affinities.

2.3.2 TRANSNATIONALISM & LIMINALITY

Nina Glick Schiller (2007) explains how, in 1986, she and other scholars began to rethink the dominant perception and theories around migration and started talking about transnationalism instead. Together with her colleagues, who she explains were all "observing immigrants" (p.448) living in New York City, they realised that the academic debates on migration that centred on assimilation and multiculturalism did not reflect the reality of their own personal experiences of living in more than two nation-states. In fact, these fields presented limited conceptual space that could not allow the incorporation of migrants inhabiting in multiple spaces, places, and societies. They realized that other anthropologists such as Michael Kearney and Roger Rouse were studying the narratives of migrants living across borders as well. "A new paradigm for migration studies was needed, one that allowed researchers to explore simultaneous embeddedness" (Glick Schiller, 2007: 448). Therefore, they named this new paradigm 'transnationalism' and its protagonists/actors as 'transmigrants'.

Most importantly, Glick Schiller underlines the difference between the terms 'global' and 'transnational' explaining that the latter entails the "ongoing interconnection or flow of people, ideas, objects, and capital across the borders of nation-states, in contexts in which the state shapes but does not contain such linkages and movements" (Glick Schiller, 2007: p.449).

In fact, it is this immaterial aspect of connection which goes beyond the bureaucratic or legislative regulations of states, defeating the whole notion of nation-states, that Brah highlights as well. "Diasporic identities are at once local and global. They are networks of transnational identification encompassing 'imagined' and 'encountered communities'" (Brah, 1997: p.196).

However, it should be stressed that it is by acknowledging their transnational nature that these communities move from a constricting ethnic identity to a diasporic and transnational one. In fact, Loring Danforth (1996) explains that diasporic communities themselves construct notions of 'who they are'.

Hence, transnational communities truly become as such when they are fully aware of their diasporic nature and developing experiences and discourses. Yet, it is also crucial to understand what this notion entails in different circumstances and environments and if it is juxtaposed to a different group and different community. In fact, it might be questioned whether with this construction and delineation of a new transnational identity, they reproduce themselves a new set of binary opposition. One should therefore investigate who this new 'Other' is: does the 'settled' transnational migrant create a new 'Other' for himself/herself, find another 'outsider' to exclude? This is the focus of the hypothesis and research questions, which will be debated in the analytical chapters.

Furthermore, it can be argued that the experience of migrancy, and therefore a certain level of transnationality, is itself something so profound to humans that it might be impossible to reject it, nullify it, or undo it. Nonetheless, as explained in the previous section, this does not imply that diasporas are constricted to the past but rather are entrenched in a constant sense of 'moving forward', with a gaze to the future.

They appear to be in a constant battle between the 'being here' (in the present) and 'being there' (in the past), of living in the new country of settlement, 'adapting' to it, and the memories of their past lives in a 'homeland'. This is also heightened by the global reach of communication in modern days, what Madianou and Miller (2012) named 'polymedia'. The latter refers to the mediums and media content that allows diasporic communities to maintain a closer connection to people/members of family who live in their countries of origin or to consume similar media content. These technologies can be seen as vital means of communication for mothers separated from their families, for instance in the Filipino diaspora. As such, they unify not only fragmented audiences but family groups as well. However, it can be argued that migrants are therefore not fully able to live one version of reality, as they experience another one as well. This is possibly due to the fact that migrants feel unwanted in their new country, or that they long to reconnect with their previous society, or just escape their new 'brutal' reality.

This concept of ambivalence and ambiguity, not fully transitioning mentally from one place to another, was first studied by Victor Turner (1969), who called it 'liminality', then reprised by Clifford (1997). This condition, as explained by the latter author, is intrinsic to "experiences of separation and entanglement, of living here and remembering/desiring another place" (Clifford, 1997: p.255). This causes a constant questioning of one's identity, a perennial negotiation. Turner was primarily inspired by the work of ethnographer Arnold van Gennep, who claimed the existence of three different phases in "social rites of passage" in diasporic cultures (Tsagarousianou, 2007: p.164): the first one consists of the estrangement of an individual from a particular group or place and the third that involves in her/his return. Yet, it is the second phase which is especially interesting and central in diasporic journeys: it is a period of transition, represented by the Latin concept of *limen* (threshold) where diasporic subjects (liminars) enter a state of ambiguity. As Turner adds, "liminal entities are *neither here nor there*, they are *betwixt and between* the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial" (Turner, 1969: p.95).

This also links to the concept that Paul Gilroy explored initially in his book the 'Black Atlantic' of 'double-consciousness'. In his explanation of the rejection of the idea of 'blackness', he also underlined nonetheless the impossibility in the UK (and originally in Du Bois' America) of seeing whiteness and blackness as symbiotic, hence an unavailability of a liminal space in for black culture in the UK (Gilroy, 1993). In parallel, this study aims to highlight how in Italy, Italianness and 'other', whichever connotations it holds and represents, is not deemed to hold any common ground, and social limbo and ambiguous positions are inconceivable and cannot exist.

However, it is this space of liminality that provides subjects with new routes of prospects. Liminality should not be seen as a negative state but one that has the potential for new beginnings, possibilities, and a push to creativity and further opportunities. Thus, diasporic communities should be seen as in constant change. This liminality is even strengthened by the constant longing for membership, citizenship and belonging in the country of settlement on the one hand, but also simultaneously towards their diasporic community and 'homelands'.

The concept of transnationality, and mostly liminality, naturally questions the normalized notion of identity, hence the reproduction of certain sets of codes, morals, and traditions that are confined to a particular place. In fact, it can be suggested that it is important to see how migrants, entrenched in mobility, challenge this idea of identity as conceived as fixed to a certain locality.

2.3.3 IDENTITY AND NARRATIVITY

2.3.3.1 IDENTITY

The concept of 'identity' is central in the present research. It stands as one of the focal subjects, if not the most important and central to the study. As will be discussed in the analytical chapters, it is what is questioned in migrants, or what they themselves might question as well, along with issues concerning origin, history, and memory. In fact, one might argue that identity is central in studies around migration and mostly diaspora and it has been the centre of studies for most sociological academics.

"The term 'identity' offers conceptual and political space to rethink issues of racialised social relations and ethnicity" (Brah *et al.*, 1999: p.2). In analysing identity, Avtar Brah, Mary Hickman, and Mairtin Mac an Ghaill (1999) underline the centrality of distancing from or even refusing earlier ideas of racialised and ethnicized forms of identity, which were centred on studying racialised differences between majority and minority ethnic group identities, all static and unchanging categories.

On this matter, Stuart Hall (1992) claims that not only does/did this lead to binary oppositions but that one does not 'have' an identity per se. For instance, he argues that the concept of 'black', and the identities and experiences associated with it, is one that is socially, politically, and culturally constructed as a fixed category, "which therefore has no guarantees in Nature" (Hall, 1992: p.254). In fact, Hall's argument on

representation perfectly explores the issue of identity as something that is reproduced by society, especially the media, and the subject himself/herself. In relation to the representation of 'black people', he explains that "[i]n these spaces blacks have typically been the objects, but rarely the subjects, of the practices of representation" (p.252).

This idea gives the possibility to acknowledge an astounding differentiation and diversity of subjectivity and identity. As Homi Bhabha (1986) also adds, "[f]or identification, identity is never an *a priori*, nor a finished product; it is only ever the problematic process of access to an 'image' of totality". (p. xvii) Moreover, from a poststructuralist point of view, Brah, Hickman, and Mac an Ghaill argue that "at a social level (...) having a singular, coherent and rational subjectivity is inadequate because the interplay between different institutional regimes of power continually reproduces a variety of subjectivities" (Brah *et al*., 1999: p.4). Yet, individuals themselves are not empty vessels, 'tabulae rasae', who are to be passively influenced by all the ideologies that surrounds him/her, but actively take part in this constructing process of cultural identities.

As Hall (1992) suggests:

"a recognition that we all speak from a particular place, out of a particular history, out of a particular experience, a particular culture, without being contained by that position as 'ethnic artists' or film- makers. We are all, in that sense, ethnically located and our ethnic identities are crucial to our subjective sense of who we are. But this is also a recognition that this is not an ethnicity which is doomed to survive, as Englishness was, only by marginalising, dispossessing, displacing and forgetting other ethnicities. This precisely is the politics of ethnicity predicated on difference and diversity" (Hall, 1992: p.258).

Therefore, identity must also be addressed in the form of syncrenism, "pluralistic forms of belonging" (Brah *et al*.' 1999: p.2), the result of the formation of new identities through diaspora. In fact, diasporas themselves can't be thought of as

conceptually homogenous or even permanent as they have diverse modes of being lived. As Tsagarousianou explains they are the product of different periods and reasons for migration, different numbers and modes of settlement: she calls this a "multiplicity of experience" (Tsagarousianou, 2007: p.169).

Yet, differently to when one holds agency in shaping his/her identity, how is identity influenced and reinforced by external factors? Arguably by the external exclusion (Young, 2000) one experiences from the society he/she now inhabits. In fact, one could claim that being left out shapes part of the narrative that is being formed in said participatory systems.

Iris Marion Young (2000) proposes two types of possible exclusions that one can experience in democratic societies. In the first place, she agrees with deliberative democratic theory in addressing the problem of external exclusion, which "names the many ways that individuals and groups that ought to be included are purposely or inadvertently left out of fore for discussion and decision-making" (Young, 2000: p.54).

However, Young also goes further to include the issues around "internal exclusion", where the subjects of particular participatory processes are not being left out per se, but are not being heard/listened to/acknowledged because of their inability to use the right type of rhetoric. During processes of discussion and decision-making "others ignore or dismiss or patronize their statements and expressions" (Young, 2000: p.55). These are stances where "people lack effective opportunity to influence the thinking of others even when they have access to fora and procedures of decision-making" (Young, 2000: p.55). Thus they are rendered voiceless, a key aspect that the respondents of the study denounced as part of their condition of living as *immigrati/e* in Milan, which will be analysed in detail in Chapter 5.

Moreover, as a central feature to the concept of identity, Young also distinguishes social groups from aggregates and associations. In relation to the first term, she

explains that people tend to be classified according to some attributes (e.g. eye colour, the home street). But social groups, Young clarifies, are not defined solely by a set of common attributes, but rather primarily by a sense of identity: a shared identification with a particular social status or history. Some attributes do indeed aid in classifying individuals, for example their skin colour. However, Young argues that these attributes are "external to, or accidental to, their identities" (Young, 1990: p.45). As far as associations are concerned, the author explains them to be formally organized institutions (e.g. church, club, political party). Nonetheless the individual's own sense of self is considered to be formed prior to his/her adherence to an association.

Social groups, Young argues on the other hand, constitute individuals. Hence the latter are not prior to the social. In relation to the position of the *immigrati/e* that were interviewed, this represented a major issue in their life living in Milan. As *immigrati/e,* they are not included in public discussion and hence their public acknowledgement is close to null. One could argue this to be the nature of many migrants' situation in most countries. Their own identity is shaped through this exclusion, the visible invisibility, that is in itself a debilitating narrative. In fact, to better comprehend the concept of identity it is essential to explore the role that narratives and narrativity play in the process of identity formation.

2.3.3.2 NARRATIVITY

The concept of identity can be understood in terms of narrativity and narratives. Margaret R. Somers (1994) is one of the theorists who supported the notion of identity as a fluid, complex idea composed of crosscutting storylines and the key concept that Somers proposes in relation to identity is that of narrativity.

Somers lists four different dimensions to narrative. *Ontological narratives* are stories that help to define who one is and subsequently what one does, also in relation to the surrounding location. These are never fixed but evolving with the self and the identity, and hence changing with the social and structural interactions one experiences over time. Somers explains that the latter are commonly known as traditions, whereas she

calls them *public narratives* that go beyond the individual to more institutional narratives around the church or government (e.g. unemployment). The third dimension is *metanarrativity*, which includes master narratives that depict a certain period of time: these can range from Industrialization and Enlightenment to more current narratives such as the "Rise of Nationalism and Islam". (Somers, 1994: p.619) However, Somers suggests that given their abstract nature, hence she puts forward the final dimension, *conceptual narrativity*, which ultimately are the concepts that social researchers formulate. The latter is the most important as it fully captures narrativity, defined by "*temporality, spatiality,* and *employment*, as well as *relationality* and *historicity"*. Here she proposes the different aspects of *narrative identity* and *relational setting*. The latter is intended to substitute the concept of society and it is "a relational matrix, a social network" (Somers 1994: p.626) where identity-formation takes place. In relation to narrative identity she distances this concept from pre-existing identity theories and explains that "the self and the purposes of self are constructed and reconstructed in the context of internal and external relations of *time* and *place* and *power* that are constantly in flux" (Somers 1994: p.621). One of the most important points Somers makes is that it is always necessary to take into consideration the historical developments of a given relational setting in order to better explore the interactions between institutions and narratives. This is central to the present research as well, as in Chapter 2 the historical processes of migration to/in/from Italy are explored to better examine the developments that have led to the 'migration crisis' and to the present narrative of the *immigrati/e*.

2.4 ENCODING AND DECODING DISCOURSES

The main objective of the research is to study how established migrants in Milan envision and define themselves in Italy vis-à-vis the debates on 'new migrants' people and the general securitising discourse on migration. A participant observation was conducted in 'Zona 2' and 'Zona 9' of Milan to explore how settled *immigrati/e* navigate through the Lega Nord produced and influenced discourses, thus how they learn, access and navigate these debates. The participants could adopt these discourses themselves, accept certain parts or might reject these completely. A central theory that

looks into the communication process and the possible readings that an audience can adopt is captured by Stuart Hall's Encoding/Decoding Model.

Stuart Hall saw audiences not as passive but as interpreting, looking at different types of interpretation. For him the process of communication cannot be considered "in terms of a circulation circuit or loop" (Hall, 1991 [1973]: p.90) Hall talked about representation, which he saw as structures. Stuart Hall argued that those who control the material means of production are also able to control the mental means of production. Their position of power enables them to establish ideas, values that are favourable to the continued political and economic dominance.

In relation to media, the latter has the fundamental function of producing meaning and is seen as instrumental as enabling the dominant ideology, not simply representing a reality but also shaping it. For Hall the process of communication was closely linked to the production of meaning, with a specific ideology, particular purposes and the ultimate purpose of reproducing the current social structure and reinforcing the dominance of those owing the means of production.

Hall seeks to explain how the mechanisms the meaning-generating processes were at work, through which predominant meanings are produced. Yet, this production of meaning is not a one way process, the consumption method, which requires an interpretation of the meaning, lies on the other side of the production process. Therefore, the viewers, the receivers of meaning, have the possibility to resist and provide alternative interpretations.

By highlighting this, Hall further distanced from those theoretical frameworks that identified the audience as 'the masses', such as those proposed by the Frankfurt School (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1997), closely linked to the Hypodermic Needle Model theory, masses that simply were not capable of interpreting and possibly resisting mass culture and mass communication. Consequently, Stuart Hall underlined the importance of considering audiences as active recipients of messages, with agency.

Hall developed the encoding and decoding model which encapsulated the process of communication. Hall describes encoding as the process in which meaning is produced

by media. This involves the transmission and reporting of a 'raw event' (Hall, 1991 [1973]: p.91), which is though structured according to both its internal logic, relating to what has actually taken place, but additionally with particular other way of it being represented. "[T]he event mist become a 'story' before it can become a communicative event" (Hall, 1991 [1973]: p.91) The event is therefore presented by the media not simply in its 'raw form', but through a particular type of pre-inscribed presentation mode. Hall thus describes the media as agents producing reality itself. A reality that might be depicting any type of migrant objectified as a threat, as is the type of representation that this research aims to unpick.

The news story does not fully represent reality, it differs from the 'raw event' that took place. The latter is communicated to an audience , yet it also bears a particular ideology, a logic and code that emerges from the media organisation and outlet. This logic is linked to certain interests but also to institutional practices and practices of production.

Decoding is equally central, as the audiences might not automatically accept and decode the messages in the way the producer intended it to be decoded. Thus Hall argues that there are three potential ways of interpreting. Firstly, this process could entail a dominant or preferred reading, where it follows a similar reference code to the encoding, an analogous logic. Thus, audiences would completely agree with is being told and 'sold'. Secondly, the decoding could be negotiated, whereby there would be elements of the original encoding that are accepted along with some diverging elements present in the interpretation of the audience that are not included in the original one. Audience might shift the meaning but within the hegemonic relations of power. Lastly there might be an oppositional decoding in which a message is decoded in a totally different way, contrasting completely the original intention. Therefore, the audience would reject the dominant encoded ideology.

It is through these process that Hall claims that audiences can resist power and the ideology that is invested in the encoded text, by interpreting it in different ways, also

through their own experiences, through different modes of perceiving reality. Thus, the audience retains some of power of interpretation.

Hall though emphasised the importance of recognising that situated culture could have in the different readings, depending on their ethnicity, gender, social class, sexuality etc.. For instance, in relation to the news stories regarding the 'migration crisis' established *immigrati/e* in Milan might assume a different reading to that of white Italians living in the city. The awareness of their own total environment (Terni, 1973) might lead to make sense of what is depicted in a particular way, that is also influenced by their positionality inside the Italian context.

This model is fundamental in Audience theory and particularly reception theory. Further developing these points Ien Ang (2010 [1989]), examines the relationship between text and audience. Ien Ang (2010 [1989]), followed on this point claiming that while it was important to study the 'audience activity', it shouldn't be studied as an isolated phenomenon , but it should be embedded "in a network of ongoing cultural practices and relationships" (Ang, 2010 [1989]: p.453).

She underlines how it is important to understand "media consumption as a site of cultural struggle, in which a variety of forms of power are exercised, with different sorts of effects" (Ang, 2010 [1989]: p.454). Thus, if an audience was to give an oppositional reading to a certain media product or story, it should be considered solely as an instance of audience freedom, but a sign of cultural struggle, a struggle over power and meaning that is part of everyday life. From a methodological perspective, Ang suggests that qualitative research, in particular ethnography, offer the most valuable methods to best examine the complexity of audience activity, that takes place in a specific historical and political context. The researcher that studies specific audiences is then not transposing a mere reflection of reality, but constructing interpretations that are relative, subjective and historically contingent. The lived realities examined when conducting audience research is never self-evident but always interpreted by the researcher in a specific political and historical context.

Therefore, Ien Ang took Stuart Hall's model a step forward and it is through both of their theoretical framework that the thesis tries to understand what type of reading is involved when the *immigrati/e* participants consume the encoded ideology provided

by mainstream Italian media and far-right popular discourse. Yet, to analyse this it is also necessary, as Ang underlines, to examine the cultural and historical context in which this encoding and decoding phenomenon takes place. In fact, interpretation and translation of certain codes takes place within a certain structure, certain societal structures that play a role in how one understands the world and its surroundings. This further historical analysis of the Italian context will be executed in the following chapter.

CONCLUSION

Sassen's attempt to deconstruct the concept of globalization is an example of how theorists in diaspora studies want to shift the focus and shine the light on the human experiences that these movement phenomena entail. In a similar way, the research, as it considers the economic, political and geographical aspects of migration, it stresses the importance of considering the subjects of these migration circuits themselves and their lives, the networks they create, the narratives that affect them and the way they make sense of the surroundings in the new places they inhabit.

"In short, the condition of diaspora is one in which the multiplicity of identity and community is a key dynamic. Debates about the meanings and boundaries of affiliation are hence a defining characteristic of the diaspora community" (Mandaville 2001: p.172). Moreover, the notion of the 'homeland' associated with migrants, that constricts them to a normalized notion of a single identity, could be seen as an essentializing one as well, one that sees all communities representing the Others in a Western society as having their ultimate vehement desire to return to their countries of origin (Werbner, 1997).

Yet, the analysis of migrants' perception of 'home' and 'homeland' itself might illustrate how they experience their transnational lives and negotiate their identities.

Thus, what does the notion of 'home' entail? How does one create a sense of 'home'?

This also depends on the processes/sense of inclusion and exclusion that migrants might experience in their new spaces of settlement. This might also impact the way *immigrati/e* decode the security discourses that aim to depict immigration and the 'migration crisis' as a threat. Possible discrimination incidents reduce immigrants' sense of belonging (Brah, 1997) and their positionality, which consequently also affects the decoding mechanisms and readings that can shift between preferred, negotiated and oppositional (Hall, 1991 [1973]).

The period of transition, 'liminality', constitutes a focal element to the research. It is interesting to research what this phase of ambiguity entails in settled migrant communities in Milan, how this 'uncertainty' is lived and what it produces. The research findings demonstrate the presence of certain resident *immigrati/e* in Milan who discriminate against 'Other' migrants, it is interesting to note, as in Chapter 7, when their process of 'assimilation or integration' started with the acceptance of securitising discourses while distancing themselves from other forms of 'otherness'.

But it might be questioned how some of the other *immigrati/e* participants in Milan who are equally affected by the securitisation processes might still be able to empathize with all of the refugees, all of the outsiders. As will be discussed in the analytical chapters this might be due to their entrenched memories of cases of discrimination (and still live them).

One might question whether these minority groups suffer from 'internalised stigma'. In fact, Levent Küey (2015) argues that one of the factors that aggravates the stressful nature of migration is the stigma that the subjects have to face.

"Internalised stigma stimulates a vicious cycle of traumatisation via lowered self-esteem and expectations, mixed emotions of anger and shame and frequently learned helplessness and a decrease in personal capacity and coping skills" (p. 65).

Küey claims that internalised oppression might also lead to the victim becoming the perpetrator "as an act of survival, as illustrated in the case of Stockholm syndrome or analysed and described as identification with the aggressor" (p.65).

It is therefore interesting to analyse how some migrants might want to 'erase' their 'markers of migration/otherness' (be it skin colour, accent when speaking the language of their country of settlement, religion, clothing, or other customs) with an attempt to 'blend in' and to highlight a newfound identity, free from past narratives, especially in the researched case of Milan. What this thesis attempts to elucidate is how *immigrati/e* participants decode the migration discourse in Italy and specifically the 'migration crisis' representation, what type of reading they enact, whether dominant, negotiated or oppositional. In order to understand this phenomenon, it is important to explore the migratory trajectories in Italy, along with the socio-cultural, demographic and political shifts that have characterized the country in recent years.

3 Migration: The Italian Case

It is argued that the phenomenon of immigration is rather recent in Italy, yet the country has always been an important crossroads to migratory routes, due to its location and geography (Corti and Sanfilippo, 2012).

Amato claims that when talking about migration, especially that which characterizes the Italian context, it is extremely important to take into consideration the fluidity and 'liquid nature' of such a phenomenon (Amato, 2008). In fact, with regards to Italy, he explains that the quantity of immigrants has increased rapidly from the start of the 21st century and has changed the composition of migration itself.

Therefore, it has been indeed at the centre of mobility for centuries, especially of various migration trends. Hence, one could argue for the importance of highlighting the early migratory journeys that characterized the history of the Italian region, which can be considered to be a crucial part of initial globalization in general.

Faini and Venturini (1994) suggest that it was Italy's unification in 1861 that marked the beginning of Italian migratory trends. In fact, many Italians fled from poverty at home in search of a better future abroad. "Migration, [...], has been an enduring feature in Italian economic life" (Faini and Venturini, 1994: p.72).

In fact, as Corti and Sanfilippo claim, there has been a vast production of literature related to migration in Italy in the last decades (Corti and Sanfilippo, 2012), overall divided into three groups that either study the migration trends and patterns from the peninsula in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, or the internal migration from the modern age up to now, whereas others analyse the immigration and arrivals in the last thirty years. Yet, the two authors argue that these phenomena are artificially and forcefully categorized in a rather simplistic way. Instead they claim that one should firstly question when the departures and arrivals to the country took place; secondly if these two types of mobility are related; and thirdly, if these two types of mobility entail an internal mobility as well.

Hence, this chapter will look at the different migratory patterns that characterized Italy since its unification in 1861. It will outline its history of emigration – that is, people 'leaving' the country and settling abroad - a phenomenon that has been extensively studied over the years in sociological literature. There will then be a focus on the phenomenon of immigration, people 'arriving', as this is crucial to better comprehending modern Italian society, which is central to this paper.

Moreover, although much importance is given to the phenomena of immigration and emigration, it is also central to consider the phenomenon of internal migration when people moved from rural to urban areas, a mobility that was predominantly from South to North and is still relevant today, heightened by the economic crisis of 2008 (Bonifazi and Heins, 2017). Although this is a common process in most countries worldwide, it is here highlighted because of its relevance in how Italy's Northern far-

right party *Lega Nord* has shifted its discriminating discourses that firstly targeted Southerners, and then migrants, the *extracomunitari.*

It is therefore central to engage with the discursive and historical construction of migration in Italy as a social phenomenon and mostly as a political force, which is mostly relevant to Italian media agenda and discourse today.

3.1 THE JOURNEYS OF PEOPLE LEAVING ITALY

For Audenino and Tirabassi (2008), history related to Italian emigration can be divided into three main phases, not merely two: the first one expanding from the initial years after unification until the end of the First World War, which featured the 'great migration'[1]; secondly, the period between the two world wars; and lastly, from the mid-twentieth century until the 1970s, where the exodus cycle of the country was surpassed by the number of arrivals instead (Audenino and Tirabassi, 2008).

[1] During this period the predominant countries to which Italians emigrated were Argentina and the United States. Specifically from 1881 to 1920, 1,808,850 Italians entered Argentina and 4,655,430 landed in the Unites States (Audenino and Tirabassi, 2008: p.65-9)

All in all, as with other social and political aspects, with the matter of migration Italy was a latecomer compared to other European countries. It was not only at the beginning of the twentieth century that Italy contributed to the global mass population movement. In fact, between 1901 and 1913, circa 8.1 million Italians emigrated from the Mediterranean peninsula (Faini and Venturini, 1994). Faini and Venturini argue that despite Italy's economic stagnation which characterized the second half of the nineteenth century after the country was unified, it was at the beginning of the twentieth century, when employment rates were in fact growing and the general economy improving that Italy, rather paradoxically, witnessed a rise in emigration. The authors claim that there are two complementary explanations for this phenomenon. First, the findings suggest that Italian migrants were pushed towards destination countries such as the USA because of an increase in labour demand, which functioned as a major 'pull-factor'; second, the authors argue that it was the effect of income growth (and yet regional gaps) internal to Italy itself that 'pushed' people to migrate, despite this being paradoxical (Faini and Venturini, 1994).

Nonetheless, it can be argued that it was mainly the prospect of a new life and new beginnings, the 'dream' of better possibilities in unknown lands, that encouraged Italian migrants to move to 'young countries' such as the United States. In fact, with the outbreak of the industrial revolution, America was one of the main countries that attracted migrants predominantly from Europe: firstly, British and German workers from 1800 to 1866; then from 1850 to 1914 it saw the arrival of migrants from Ireland, Italy, Spain, and Eastern Europe, where industrialization advanced at a later moment.

As a matter of fact, America offered the possibility of increasing social status and income with the promise of becoming independent farmers or traders. However, in reality, this seldom became possible at first (Castles and Miller, 2009). Italians constituted the largest immigrant groups between 1860 to 1920, among the Irish, and Jewish people from Eastern Europe (Castles and Miller, 2009). They were mostly employed in the construction and transport sectors, as canal and railway companies increasingly sought labour force. Thus, these immigrant groups settled along the construction routes, the East coast ports of arrival in the United States of America.

During this period, intra-European migration developed alongside overseas migration. Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller (2009) note that Italian emigrants were fundamental contributors to the industrialization process in Germany and France. In fact, of the total 15 million Italians who left their country of origin between 1876 and 1920, 6.8 million, hence almost half, emigrated to neighbouring countries in Europe such as France, Switzerland, and Germany.

Furthermore, Richard Bostworth (1996) specifies that semi-official accounts before the First World War note that 135,000 Italians had settled in Switzerland, 35,000 resided in Egypt, 20,000 in England and Wales, 450,000 in France, and a non-specified number of millions had moved to non-European countries (Bosworth, 1996). For instance, most notably in Argentina where it was estimated that in 1895, 81% of the workforce in Argentina industries was represented by Italians (Bosworth, 1996).

Despite the aftermath of the First World War posing more obstacles for free mobility in the world, Italians did not recede from leaving the country. "It has been estimated that, by the outbreak of the Second World War, about 20 million Italians had been through the emigration process since 1860, of whom 14 million remained 'permanently' domiciled outside Italy" (Bosworth, 1996: p.114). A further 7 million emigrated after 1945, even though this rate was gradually surpassed by internal migration figures.

Despite the importance of highlighting figures and rates of emigration, the process of 'integration' that Italian migrants underwent should also be considered. How did they "preserve, foster or reinvent *Italianità* abroad?" (Bosworth, 1996: p.127). It should be noted that this obviously differs in respect to the various countries of arrival, where they were recognized as immigrants. In most cases around the world the image of the 'Italian', his/her social status was rather negative: "[i]t is commonplace that Italian emigrants were poor (though modern research has indicated that they were not the

poorest of the poor) and rural (though that general term cries out for precise definition)" (Bosworth, 1996: p.127).

Most Italian migrants at first faced difficulty in entering financial, intellectual, and policy sectors in their new host countries. To alleviate discrimination, some Italians decided to restrain their Italianness, for instance in Argentina where it was noted that some members of the Italian community preferred to 'merge' with the Spanish and Portuguese ones (Bosworth, 1996). In the United States as well, Italians were confronted by a sense of racial superiority held by other migrants of Anglo-Saxon, German and Irish origin. This racial prejudice, the 'Italophobia', was mainly due to a fear that Italians, and more generally Mediterranean people, would "pollute Aryan America's racial purity" (Bosworth, 1996: p.132). Moreover, after the end of the Second World War, Germany and Switzerland labelled Italian migrants as 'guest workers' and in Australia they were socially differentiated as well. However, the outcomes of Italian emigration are vivid even at present.

"With all the qualifications and movement, with all the change over time and space, with all the subjectivity or situationality of Italianness, the emigrants, as they pursued the highways and byways of the world, did carry with them cultural baggage, even as they often, willingly or unwillingly, consciously or uncounsciously, added to it on the way. Some of that baggage was transported from that other great and ambiguous 'Italian' organisation, the Universal or Roman Catholic Church, some from the Italies and rather less from the official culture of 'United' 'Italy'" (Bosworth, 1996: p.136).

3.2 INTERNAL MIGRATION

As stated above, after the end of the Second World War, the number of Italians leaving the country in search of a better life abroad diminished and gave way to a new phase of migration, which remained internal to Italy.

Internal migration was highly feared during the Fascist regime as in 1939 it promulgated a law that prevented these internal movements from developing: it obliged the migrant to show evidence of employment in the new big city he/she wanted to move to, which to be obtained, required the migrant to show a residence certificate first, making the migration impossible (Ginsborg, 1990).

After the turmoil that had involved Italy on an international level, such as the Second World War and then the Cold War, Italy's political landscape suffered to find stability, and was also aggravated by profound territorial disparities. In fact, due to the outstanding economic growth millions of people in Italy moved from rural to urban areas, internal to coastal areas and from North-Eastern and Southern regions relocated to North-West and central Italy (Golini, 1974). As such, the biggest internal movement in Italy took place between 1951 and 1971, with a peak between 1955 and 1963 (Ginsborg, 1990). A period of lower internal mobility characterized the 1970s and 1980s (Bonifazi and Heins, 2017: 10). The phenomenon reflected the internal migratory trends featured in other European countries, yet what set the Italian case apart was the short time span in which it happened (Bonifazi and Heins, 2000).

As the agricultural population diminished quite drastically in both Northern Italy and the central region, on the other hand in Southern Italy it declined marginally over the years. However, migration from this area was the most dramatic in its figures, causing a real exodus from the South, *Mezzogiorno* (Ginsborg, 1990). Northern Italian cities were the main destination of southern migrants, along with West Germany. Ginsborg explains that the reasons for the momentous departure of people from rural areas in Italy were "the poor quality of the soil in much of the South, the persistence of chronic underemployment and poverty, the widespread ownership of uneconomic smallholdings, the very limited nature of the agrarian reform of 1950" (Ginsborg, 1990: p.221). Pull factors that attracted migrants to the North consisted of higher income, regular wages, and working hours.

Ginsborg (1990) explains that there are no proper statistics around migration in that period, as the patterns are quite complex, yet Pugliese (2006) argues that an estimated four million people moved from the Southern-Central regions to the North during the 1950s and 1960s. Figures related particularly to Milan depict a rise in movements of people from the countryside to the cities between 1953 and 1963, with arrivals from many rural areas of the country. This had a longstanding effect on the agriculture sector of the Northern region, especially as rural workers were mostly attracted to the big cities of the Industrial Triangle (Milan, Turin and Genoa) but also to the other smaller cities of the region.

The Energy Crisis of 1973-74 put a halt to South to North migration trajectories in Italy (Pugliese, 2006). Not only did these diminish in intensity, but forms of return migration started developing as well. South to North internal migration started developing again in the 1990s, yet not as numerically similar to that which characterised the Italian economic miracle period of the 1950/60s.

Overall, these internal movements were not received positively by some political factions in the North. From a geographical level, territorial differences were vindicated by the *Lega Lombarda* and other leagues, which later became the *Lega Nord*, who proposed federal separation in Italy as a solution to contrast the emerging internal migration with the creation of their own separate state, the *Padania* (Maher, 1996).

Margarita Gomez- Reino Cachaferio (2001) notes how even in the mid-nineties, members of the *Lega* were still extremely opposed to the unity of Italy. As one of them claimed: “[t]here are two Italies, one is African and the other European” (Cachaferio, 2001: p.56). One of the regional councillors added: “Italy has been constructed upon a mistake. For the last thousand years there has been a Celtic Germanic culture and a Greek-Latin one”. As Cachaferio explained “[o]therness is constructed upon the differences between two cultures, one Mediterranean-African, the other European” (Cachaferio, 2001: p.56).

This resentment towards Southerners is still present in the North on a social level. One could argue that recent ongoing internal migration from South to North might have spawned certain animosities to resurface (Bonifazi and Heins, 2017). Yet, on a political level, Lega Nord's hostility altered in the past years. In fact, in the following decades and years, *Lega Nord'*s agenda shifted to accommodate the party's presence in Parliament, as it found a new enemy and scapegoat 'arriving' to the country through the latest phase of migration that was evolving in the country. "Categories of exclusion such as *ebreo* (Jew), *zingaro* (gipsy) or even *marocchino* and *africano* (once used of Southern Italians), have called into new salience elements of the Italian population such as Jews and Southern Italians whose participation in the state and in the nation had become a matter of course" (Maher, 1996: p.162).

3.3 FOREIGN MIGRANTS ARRIVING TO ITALY

Jonathan Dunnage (2002) explains Italy started becoming a country of net immigration in the 1970s, from being a country of net emigration (Dunnage, 2002), increasing especially in the eighties and nineties.

This point is quite critical as it is particular to the Italian context, and following this "dramatic Italian U-turn from emigration to immigration", as described by Caponio (2008: p.445). Researchers faced much difficulty in analysing this phenomenon, especially because they did not link this new phase of migration with Italy's history of emigration, hence not considering the entirety of migration trends. "[I]mmigration was depicted as a sudden and indistinct phenomenon, originating in the conditions of underdevelopment that characterized most non-European countries, as implied by the term "*extracomunitari*" commonly used in these first accounts" (Caponio, 2008: p.445). It is therefore important to briefly portray an overview of the literature in Italy regarding its own history of migration and mobility.

3.3.1 LITERATURE ON MIGRATION IN ITALY

Initially, the Italian literature of the 1980s in this field analysed immigration in a descriptive, quantitative way, or using a "framework based on the assumption that Italy was a 'case apart'" (Caponio, 2008: p.447). Caponio explains that in the European context, the already established literature on immigration in countries such as France, Great Britain and Germany portrayed a social phenomenon that differed from that of Italy (Caponio, 2008: 447-8). It was in this context that Italy was perceived as a 'case apart', different from other European countries, for instance that were 'receiving' mostly ex-colonies' migrants and where the immigration process had begun decades if not centuries before. In fact, as Melchionda (2015) explains as well, Italy's unpreparedness in dealing with this new phase of migration can be seen in its lateness in issuing its first Immigration Law after World War 2 only in 1986 (Melchionda, 2015: p.25), known as the 'Foschi Law' (943/1986). Parliament approved to regularize irregular migration along with the placement and treatment of non-European migrants, and most importantly regularize irregularly employed migrants.

Following this, research in the 1990s shifted its focus on the aspects of immigrant settlement and integration, encompassing into two main streams: the first one was named 'community studies' as it centred on the analysis of the different national groups and emphasized cultural diversity; the second focused on the social problems that followed immigration and naively believed that these could only be solved through the implementation of integration policies (Caponio, 2008).

The second immigration law in 1990, the 'Martelli Law' 39/1990 softened some of the regulations indicted by the 'Foschi Law' in regards to asylum seekers but also required migrants to have an entry visa and residence permits (Melchionda, 2015). Because of this, various conferences were held with experts of the immigration field, scholars, political scientists, and jurists to advance solutions and policies that would

solve the rising social problems. Hence, this period marked a shift in the way immigration was perceived in Italy as it became a central issue on the political agenda, and the country itself ceased to be seen as a 'case apart': the optimal method to tackle the rising dilemmas regarding the phenomenon of immigration was to compare the Italian case with that of European countries.

Caponio (2008) explains that European researchers in sociological studies borrowed concepts and theories already elaborated by North American studies, given the history of immigration that featured in that continent, such as the network approach. As explained by Douglas Massey, networks are "sets of interpersonal ties that link migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through the bonds of kinship, friendship and shared community origin" (Massey 1988: p.396).

Caponio argues that the initial networks of mobility are to be considered as part of "migratory systems", but not entirely associated with push/pull factors from the economic perspective (Castles and Miller, 2003). In the Italian context, the latter can be identified in four main migratory systems, wherein the arrival of new migrants coincided with the labour demand of particular areas in Italy: Sicily and Tunisia attracted originally Italian entrepreneurs, who were forced to move back to Italy after the mid-1960s; Friuli Venezia Giulia drew people from the Balkan territories, due to the proximity and the historical bonds between the two areas; the cities of Milan and Rome served as a base for ex-colonial migrants from Eritrea, Somalia and Ethiopia; the last "migratory system" saw Italy's Catholic religious affiliation as a major 'pull' factor that attracted people from countries such as Cape Verde and the Philippines, where Italy had established a Catholic missionary presence in the past (Caponio, 2008).

For this reason, it can be argued that the push/pull factors approach employed in economic studies, which mostly bases mobility explanations on lucrative reasons, becomes redundant. Contrary to other European countries, the Italian context does not feature one predominant ethnic group. "Existing studies on processes of 'racialization' and 'othering' have usually focused on '*extracomunitari'* (non-EU immigrants) as a whole, rather than on specific minorities" (Caponio, 2008: p.452).

3.3.2 IMMIGRATION TO ITALY

"Controlling the entry of immigrants presents great difficulty in Italy. A long seaboard difficult to police, the relative proximity of the Albanian and North African coastline, the lack of experience in establishing such controls, the enormous and economically vital influx of tourists who must not be put off by excessive bureaucratic control, makes Italy particularly vulnerable. The widespread pattern of casual labour and the mentality associated with the black economy with its avoidance of controls compound the problem" (Sassoon, 1997: p.105).

Despite Italy facing a period of economic recession in the 1980s, and thereby not having pull factors that would traditionally attract migrants, its lack of entry restrictions favoured new migration flows similarly to other Southern European countries.

Since the 1970s, because of the lack of precedent history of immigration and thus measures of border control, the inflow of foreigners started steadily rising. The data is contradictory regarding the number of migrants working in Italy. In fact, Donald Sassoon (1997) explains "it has been estimated there were 186,000 foreign workers in the country in 1975, 350,000 in 1980 and 896,000 in 1991. Other estimates, such as those given by ISTAT (The National Institute for Statistics in Italy), put the 1989 figure at 1.15 million immigrants" (Sassoon, 1997: p.104).

The 1979 census provided a clearer picture of the (im)migrant population residing in the country and its report included in-depth investigations into the city of Milan and the regions of Veneto (northern Italy), Emilia Romagna (central Italy) and Sicily (in the south) (Caponio, 2008). One thing was certain: migrants answered the mounting need for low-skilled labour.

John L. Harper (2000) suggests that in the 1980s while there was an increased pressure from Europe to control mass immigration and 'defend' Italy from the rest of the Mediterranean countries, Italy also had to protect its vital interest and dependence on

the Arabian Peninsula and North African regions, which provided 69 per cent of crude oil imports, and 24 per cent of natural gas imports.

A vast number of East Europeans and non-Europeans migrated to the peninsula from the 1980s. Ginsborg (2001) explains that in the 1980s the migrants who remained lived in poverty: "there were Egyptian foundry workers in Emilia, Tunisians in the Sicilian fishing industry at Mazara del Vallo, Eritreans and Ethiopians working as dishwashers, porters and workers in Milan" (Ginsborg, 2001: p.63). They were excluded by the Italian sense of superiority, of Italianness, as they were not deemed to be part of it. One could argue that the history and migrant journey that Italian emigrants underwent when they moved abroad, the sense of social and professional downgrading they had also suffered, repeated itself through the new 'immigrants', the *extracomunitari.*

The exact figure of such migration was unidentifiable for many years due to the illegal nature of the arrival of migrants, mostly through the Italian coastlines, until 1991 when the Ministry of Interior recorded 409,898 documented *extracomunitari,* estimating the same number of illegal migrants, totalling 1.3% of the population. By the end of 1990 the legally documented migrants residing in Italy were mainly from Morocco, Tunisia, the Philippines, and Yugoslavia. Most of them were women - in particular from the Philippines, Somalia and Ethiopia - who were working as domestic workers. Despite being highly qualified, others "worked in the fields as casual labourers doing the menial jobs Italians were no longer willing to perform" (Sassoon, 1997: p.104): working in farms or as cleaners.

Unlike what occurred in other countries in Europe, only a small number of migrants in Italy could access the public sector or work in factories. Hence, Sassoon claims that this provided Italy with a new 'underclass', that gave way to a series of racist incidents ending with the murder of South African refugee Jerry Masslo in 1989 (Sassoon, 1997). This was followed by anti-racist demonstrations and the adoption of anti-racist policy by political parties, trade unions and Italian media. With the 'Martelli Law' in 1990 Italy decided to reinforce its immigration regulations due to pressure from the

EU members of the Schengen agreement, which considered the lack of proper immigration controls in Italy alarming. Moreover, the word '*extracomunitario/a'* first appeared in the 943/1984 law and was used from a legal perspective to delineate citizens from European third countries, but it soon acquired a derogatory meaning. It was "a peculiarly Italian label which in technical terms described immigrants from countries not belonging to the European Community, but which also had strong overtones of exclusion, of describing those who lay outside of the national community" (Ginsborg, 2001: p.62).

Nonetheless, one of the first waves of discrimination was also directed towards Albanians who fled their country after the collapse of the Communist regime and gave way to one of the largest migration movements in Europe after the Second World War. In August 1991 Italy confronted the Albanian exodus for the first time: Italian authorities decided to disembark thousands of Albanians from the ship *Vlora* and to transfer them to the local football stadium in Bari to be then repatriated. However, the conditions in the stadium soon became less than acceptable and violence ensued, bringing the event to the spotlight both on a national and international mediatic level (Ginsborg, 2001). With this, the anti-racist policies implemented in 1989 came to falter as well: then socialist minister, Gianni De Michelis, decided to repatriate 21,000 illegal Albanians, who were forcefully repatriated in 1991 (Sassoon, 1997; IlMessaggero.it).

In 1995 another anti-immigration law, supported by the former Communist members of parliament (PDS), was passed aiming to repatriate new, undocumented immigrants who had precedent criminal records (Sassoon, 1997). Regardless, 13,000 Albanians moved to Italy alone in March 1996 (Harper, 2000).

As Campani (2001) explains, with the rise of immigration as a new phenomenon in Italy in the nineties, the press embraced a "strategy of anticipation" as "they spread pre-formed images of foreigners before the Italian population as a whole could have a direct experience of them" (p.38). Yet, as Wood and King (2001) observe, journalists often act "as the mouthpiece of political parties or other powerful groups" (p.2) and

this was true in Italy as well: the public broadcast has always been under the control and influence of the dominant parties over the years, and the private broadcasting television has been mostly ruled by Silvio Berlusconi, who aside from owning the influential network Mediaset, was also the leader of the center-right coalition (Mazzoleni, 2000; Padovani, 2004).

3.3.2.1 ITALIAN GOVERNMENT VS. IMMIGRATION: NEW LEGISLATIONS

It is important to note the different legislations that were promulgated in regards to immigration in Italy. Similarly to many other countries, Italy introduced provisions that mostly aimed to control and at times, repress immigration, and migrants' life and work in Italy. It is therefore crucial to highlight some key events that started to develop from the mid 1990s. Maurizio Ambrosini (2011) has written extensively on the matter.

In fact, Ambrosini explains that when compared to other countries, Italy is more open to immigration because of its annual quota of migrant admission. However, it is very much similar to other Southern European countries, such as Spain and Greece.

"It could be said that, as for other aspects of the workings of the Italian economy and Italian society, a sort of micro-social do-it-yourself approach has filled the void left by weak institutional arrangements, and has even actively thwarted the normative closures against the entry and settlement of new immigrants" (Ambrosini, 2011: p.177).

Italians therefore, as already mentioned, opened their doors to migrants as they could fill in the gap in the labour market and replace Italians at work they themselves were reluctant to do. Initially it was through ethnic networks that the communication between supply and demand was met, as proper regulation or associations that would arrange this new type of workforce were inexistent.

Nevertheless, migrants did not have the same rights as Italian workers. Due to this, in line with European standards, the Framework Law ('Turco-Napolitano Law' by the centre-left) in 1998 promoted equal treatment between legally resident migrants and Italians, even though certain social rights were still restricted as it required such migrants to have lived in Italy for more than five years and to be in possession of the '*Carta di Soggiorno'*, the permanent residence document (Ambrosini, 2011).

This was followed by the Bossi-Fini Law (189/2002 law by the centre-right) that permitted only those migrants employed in long-term employment to renew their stay permits for a further two years. As Ambrosini claims, this ruling was in complete contrast to the nature of most migrants' work, with the arrangement that they might have had with their employers: "[t]his provision is in contrast with the reality of the labour market which offers temporary work contracts especially in the sectors where immigrants are predominantly employed such as construction, agriculture, tourism, catering, and cleaning services" (Ambrosini, 2011: p.178). However, regardless of the centre-right restrictions, by European standards migrants were allowed certain social rights.

The centre-left government of 2006-2008 announced reforms that would favour migrants. However, as this was met with fervent opposition from the public that believed that they were further 'opening the doors' to danger, in 2007 it adhered to the opposition's stance on the control and expulsions of Romanian migrants. This type of discourse became hegemonic following the attack on an Italian woman in Rome by the hands of a Romanian woman.

In fact, immigration control and security were the primary themes that dominated the election race in 2008 and when the centre-right rose to power, Roberto Maroni, representing the *Lega Nord*, was appointed Minister of Home Affairs. Law 125/24 of 2008 and Law 94/15 of 2009 aimed to reinforce the *Lega Nord*'s agenda on immigration: it indicted a census of 'gipsy' communities living in camps around the major cities of Rome, Milan and Naples; clandestinity was now considered as an aggravating crime and further measures were taken in order to expel illegal immigrants from the country, including the introduction of civilian-led surveillance patrols.

This was met with wide acclaim from the general public and consequently earned the *Lega Nord* vast success in the regional elections of 2010: "the majority of Italians are convinced they are safer, approve tougher immigration laws, rally on the side of local governments opposing the construction of worship centres for Muslim immigrants, want to reserve certain social rights for Italians alone and are happy to limit the rights of immigrants" (Ambrosini, 2011: p.181).

The Pavia Observatory, which analyses Italian media, has shown that following the ascension to power of the centre-right in 2008, there was an increase in news regarding criminality linked to migrants (Diamanti, 2011). Italians believed their country to be unsafe due to the flow of immigration, ignoring the fact that the mafia still dominated most parts of Italy. Yet as Tsoukala (2001) argues, the media "plays a crucial role in the process of construction of the migratory threat, especially by objectifying the definitions advanced on the matter of politicians and the security agents" (p.180).

However, as Ambrosini underlines, the general stance on immigration was also defined with contradictions which the media regularly concealed: Italian immigration policies raised concern among the United Nations High Council and other European institutions; as the security law was approved, many Italians were discovered to have aided and housed illegal migrants in their homes as domestic workers, spurring the government to create another regularization law that rendered the Italian centre-right government the most successful 'regulizers' in Europe; undocumented migrants' expulsion was at the forefront of the agenda, but in reality the total expulsion rate was approximately 2%.

Lastly, the biggest concern that rose with the new immigration policy was in the way migrants' themselves received it. There were several riots around Italy, most notably in *Rosarno*, where exploited African migrants picking oranges in nearby fields revolted and burnt cars and shops in the town; and in *Via Padova* in Milan (one of the areas where fieldwork was conducted) where, after an altercation between Egyptians and Latin-Americans that resulted in the death of the man, for the first time the government decided to send the Italian army in the streets of a city. Nonetheless, this caused a shift in the way immigration was seen: many started questioning whether

integration policies might have been a better option rather than mere deportation and repression.

3.3.2.2 THE 'MIGRATION CRISIS'

The major event that kickstarted the politicization and media exploitation of the 'migration crisis' was the tragedy that took place on April 18, 2015 when around 1000 people drowned in the Channel of Sicily and 900 were reported dispersed (Colombo, 2018).

As of the end of 2018, the numbers associated with the so-called 'migration crisis' involve a total of 1,958,126 migrants arriving between 2014 and 2018 in Southern Europe, with over a million arriving in 2015 alone and a total of 17,821 recorded dead or missing (UNHCR, 2019). In Italy, 648,117 migrants arrived in that period and 14,768 were lost attempting the journey. The total number of arrivals amounted to 1% of the population living in Italy, and migrants arriving in Italy used this as a landing point to then move to northern countries in Europe, believed to offer better living conditions (Fiore & Ialongo, 2018). Yet, the arrival of migrants was seen as a threat as in other international contexts. In fact, Terence Wright argues that the media often portrays refugees and forced migrants as a danger in its various reports: as a disease invading the community, depicted as a 'tide', or a 'flood' (Wright, 2014).

The appropriateness of using term 'crisis' to describe this phenomenon has been questioned by several authors (Cabot 2016; Fernando & Giordano 2016; Fiore & Ialongo, 2018; Rigo, 2018; Ticktin 2016), as it mostly denotes something that is used to depict a mediatic spectacle.

"The crisis that the media and populist politicians have spoken of – the threat of the migrant wave – is profoundly self-serving and elides deeper problems: the crisis of the Italian state that cannot effectively process the influx of asylum seekers and frequently relies on simple detention; the crisis of Italian democracy wherein the fear of migrants brought two populist parties to power who have fundamentally different views on the goals of the national government; the crisis of the E.U. that has seen its commitment

to the free movement of peoples within its borders questioned by the rise of populist parties across the continent; and, finally, and most importantly, the crisis of the very lives of the migrants who are held in often deplorable detention centres for months, if not years, as they await their application for asylum to be processed." (Fiore & Ialongo, 2018: p. 485)

The term most often used to describe the victims of the drowning tragedies in 2015 was *migrante*/migrant. Monica Colombo states that most of the centre-left Italian press (Corriere della Sera, La Repubblica, Avvenire, Il Fatto Quotidiano) denounced such 'tragedy' and called for action and response on a European level. *Libero* and *il Giornale*, the most popular right-wing Italian newspapers, published articles attacking the government, which at that time was led by the centre-left party of Matteo Renzi, of causing the tragedies in the first place in the name of *buonismo'*, excessive borderline-fake compassion (Colombo, 2018).

Colombo analysed the speech of then Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi in the aftermath of the mass drowning of April 18, 2015. She hints at the sympathetic message that the politician expresses in regards to the death toll of the event, quoting the Bible to show a more compassionate side at first, and recalling Western Christian moral values. Colombo links this type of discourse to Nikolas Rose's (1999) concept of 'etho-politics', which are the

"ways in which the ethos of human existence – the sentiments, moral nature or guiding beliefs of persons, groups, or institutions – have come to provide the 'medium' within which the self-government of the autonomous individual can be connected up with the imperatives of good government (...) If discipline individualizes and normalizes, and biopower collectivizes and socializes, ethopolitics concerns itself with the self-techniques by which human beings should judge themselves and act upon themselves to make themselves better than they are" (Rose, 2001: p. 18).

Yet what entails a good quality of self-governing, and as Colombo questions, what can be regarded as a good government? For Renzi, this demands being cautious in

acting with an “immediate, emotional reaction”, hence distancing himself from the humanitarian discourses that were prompted by the Italian media at the time of the tragedy. In the end, although dissociating from Matteo Salvini and the Lega Nord’s xenophobic stance and extreme securitizing discourses, Renzi also dismisses the importance of ensuring asylum-seeking/human rights and focused primarily on a call to action against human traffickers/smugglers on a European level.

Colombo underlines the discursive and linguistic strategies with which Renzi distances himself, as a politician, and the Italian government from the prospect of overtly emotional and empathic responses to the tragedy. He does use the usual pronouns “our/we” to denote group identification, yet avoids other categorizations using ‘migrant’ and ‘refugee’ only once, lastly employing neutral terms such as ‘person; , ‘women’, ‘men’ (Colombo, 2018: p.174).

Colombo adds:

“in Italy the discursive construction of the causes of asylum-seeker flows has involved overlapping dichotomies of ‘voluntary’/’forced’, ‘(im)migrant’/’refugee’,”and ‘economic’/’political’ migration. In his speech, Matteo Renzi offers a geopolitical interpretation of the “refugee crisis,” which implies a recognition of a ‘global poor’, located in developing countries whose needs should be considered within discussions of ‘managed migration’” (Colombo, 2018: p. 175).

In relation to this, comprehensive research examining the press coverage of the ‘Migration Crisis’ in five European countries, of which one was Italy, confirmed the quasi-ubiquitous presence of Italian politicians featured in articles/debates around migration in the local press, underlining the irrevocable bind between Italian politics and migration (Morani in Berry, Garcia Blanco, & Moore, 2016). However, it also highlighted the humanitarian themes that have developed around the ‘Migration Crisis’ as well, as Italian newspapers gave:

“significant space for sympathetic stories about the plight of migrants and refugees and advocacy on their behalf. (...) The heavy focus on rescue operations in

Mediterranean also ensured that humanitarian themes were very prominent (47.6% of all articles—the highest proportion of any country in the sample) in coverage, since much of the reporting focuses on individual migrant stories of suffering and tragedy. Conversely, our Italian sample also featured quite high levels of threat themes, particularly threats to national security and community cohesion" (p. 258).

The focus of most articles was predominantly regarding the push factors that affect migration, that is, reasons of conflicts and authoritarian regimes. Yet, the range of voices in the articles mostly consisted of domestic politicians.

Lastly, there has been an underlying binary in the representation and treatment of the 'migration crisis' in the Italian context: either it has been exploited by far-right parties, mainly the *Lega Nord*, to explicitly remind Italian people that the 'immigrant' remains a security threat; or it has been described as a humanitarian emergency, whereby despite the nature of the discourse is one of providing aid to those in need of rescue in the Mediterranean, which still leaves the 'migrant' voiceless, and inherently deepens the divide between the 'rich West' and the 'global poor other'. Both of these two aspects can be found in Renzi's examined speech.

3.3.3 MIGRANTS' OCCUPATION, EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Emilio Reyneri wrote in 2004 that "a new type of immigrant" (Reyneri, 2004: p.1146) had been entering the social and labour market in Italy for the last 20 years. In fact, it was a long-held belief that most migrants were poor and uneducated, not deserving of high-skilled jobs. However, Reyneri argued that migrants cannot be thought of as poorly-educated and from rural societies, as most of them on the contrary are highly-educated and from urban areas, debunking the old stereotype related to migrants. As the author explained, geographical belonging/longing to the country of origin is crucial as it implicitly substantiates the reasoning behind their migratory project. In fact, Reyneri claimed that urban migrants, who also tend to be better educated and younger, emigrate to gain life experience, living it as an adventure without a specific expiration date, whereas rural migrants' migration is more temporary.

“In Italy, the old stereotype of the poorly-educated immigrant has been for some time confirmed by the only large-scale data available, those from employment offices, which register immigrants either looking for jobs or hired by firms or by families as domestic workers” (Reyneri, 2004: p.1147).

Reyneri highlights the difficulty that migrants would encounter when applying for other socially-believed higher-qualified job positions: the type of non-European documentation most of them need to prove seldom is acknowledged and the translating/recognizing procedure for it is slow. Social and professional advancement is extremely challenging.

Reyneri confirmed through his 2001 study that most graduated, highly qualified migrants accept work positions that are elementary, generally unskilled, non-manual work such as housekeepers. However, one would question the reason for this non-ambition, their ‘blind’ acceptance of ‘lower’ work positions. From an economic view that was popular in the 1970s, a migrant can be considered as an ‘economic man’ (one might add ‘woman’ as well) (Reyneri, 2004) whereby he/she accepts the temporary social and professional condition because of its useful compensation that he/she receives from it, as long as it enables him/her to send remittances to his/her country of origin.

Reyneri’s strongest point is his acknowledgement of the paradox that comes with accepting migrants’ occupational status, especially through those who are favourable to migration (2004). In fact, people justify the presence of migrants in Italy claiming that they pose no realistic threat or competition as they occupy low-level and unskilled positions in the professional sphere, thus indirectly reinforcing the stereotype regarding migrants.

“However, slowing down the integration process so that immigrants are unable to overcome discrimination and compete for skilled jobs is a myopic policy, because it may accentuate the social tensions provoked by the segregation and anomie of

immigrants and it does not prepare the native population to cope with the problems that sooner or later will arise in a multi-ethnic society" (Reyneri, 2004: p.1160).

This idea that is associated with the migrant is fed by stereotypes promoted by local media and a general self-inflicted blindness or denial of the social changes that Italy is undergoing. In Italian society, as in many other 'developed' countries, people live under the illusion that this new era economy has finally eradicated the "three-D tasks: *dirty, dangerous, demanding*" (Castles, 2002). Yet, this demonstrates perfectly the invisibility and social exclusion that migrants are afflicted by, as these are the qualities that most of their jobs possess. Calavita (2005) in fact calls it the "economy of otherness", particularly focusing on countries such as Italy, Spain, and the treatment of Mexicans in the United States, where these particular jobs are "ethnicized", consequently portraying the migrant as different from the majority of society. Ambrosini (2011) explains this with the concept of "subordinate integration", where migrants are indeed accepted however they must only be working for demeaning jobs, similarly to the situation in other countries.

Lastly, another crucial argument that Ambrosini raises regarding migration is on the issue of citizenship. He explains that there still is a prevailing link between the past historical emigration from the country and the new immigration. This is primarily with regards to the issue of national identity and citizenship. When the citizenship code was approved by Parliament in 1992, it enforced the notion that citizenship was still connected to birthright in Italy, *Ius Sanguinis* (Ambrosini, 2011). In fact, this implied that descendants of Italians who had emigrated around the world could claim their Italian citizenship, while it further complicated the process for newly arrived migrants to gain citizenship: the law required them to have at least 10 years of residence in the country, the process would take up to 4 years, and would result in a negative response. Most would opt to gain citizenship through marriage. Similarly, the right to vote for local elections has not been considered as an option for migrants as the centre-right governments still opposes this. In more recent political developments, a reform for the citizenship law has been approved by the Italian Chamber of Deputies in 2015. However, it is still to be discussed in the Senate, where it was highly opposed by the *Lega Nord* and has received almost 8000 amendments (IlPost.it). Therefore, it is clear that there is a substantial need for advancement in the matter of migration in Italian politics and society.

3.3.4 WHERE DO THEY RESIDE?

What renders the case of immigration in Italy even more problematic and rather unique is the fact that it is still a country which is deeply afflicted by territorial imbalances between regions and long-standing unemployment. These issues have an impact on immigration itself. In fact, Ambrosini (2011) delineates four territorial patterns that define migrant worker employment: firstly that which features in the centre-north regions where migrant workers are mostly part of the industrial production; the second pattern relates to the metropolises, Rome and Milan leading, where migrants are involved in various sectors of work such as cleaning, transportation, restaurants or building; the third model entails temporary and irregular work and is connected to the South, where migrants usually commence their 'professional journey' in Italy, mostly in the agricultural sector, to then move to more developed parts in the North; the last model represents the seasonal workers employed in the harvesting industry in autumn and tourism one in summer in the centre-north regions.

As of 2015 most migrants (56,6%) reside in industrialized regions of Italy, most notably in the three regions of the North (Lombardy, Veneto and Piedmont) and in central Italy (Lazio and Emilia Romagna) (Istat, 2015). As such, one can argue that migrants are not solely linked to agricultural, caretaking or domestic work. However, it is also necessary to highlight that there is a close connection between foreign labour in Italy and economic development. Differently from countries with a similar immigration history, this phenomenon is not only a feature of urban metropolitan spaces, but involves various territorial areas in Italy.

The rate of immigrant stabilization in many Italian cities, especially in Milan, is established by the number of family recompositions and, more strikingly, the level of 'foreign'/second generation children entering school. On the latter aspect, Milan represents the leading Italian city with 'foreign'/second generation students amounting to 89,000 as of 2019 (lenius.it, 2019).

Mostly in these urban areas there has been a rise of 'foreigners' acquiring Italian citizenship in 2014, most remarkably minors (39,4%). Of those who obtained citizenship at the age of 18 in that same year, 75% were born and lived in Italy all their lives (Istat 2015). Due to current legislation in Italy, children of migrants cannot become Italian citizens despite being born in the Italian territory.

3.3.5 IMMIGRATION BY WOMEN

With the increasing number of Italian women finally entering the workforce and the male figure still very distant from the domestic sphere in Italy, the new waves of immigration contributed in covering the newly absent roles of ordinary family life. Initially, Filipino and Somali women began working in positions that were increasingly becoming available in the job market such as domestic workers, nurses or carers. As specified above, the phenomenon of immigration was initially 'well-received' since it complied with the high-demand for workers in 'low-level' and low-wage jobs such as 'cleaning' and other domestic labour related jobs, which one could argue became decreasingly in demand by Italians over the years.

Nowadays, some, if not most, immigrant jobs in the North are based on domestic work, nursing, caretaking or cleaning, as the region is more industrialized and developed. In fact, domestic workers in Italy are largely immigrants, who constitute 77,1% of this specific workforce and are present mostly in the North-West region (Inps.it, 2015).

Families employing migrants have contributed immensely in the regularization of immigration in Italy. Italian women's emancipation and entry into the national labour market followed their substitution with migrant women (Andall, 2000). However, because of the particular nature of this type of work and the fact that it is still not fully regularized, this phenomenon is ignored and thus the data in this important sector in incomplete.

CONCLUSION

Emigration has taken place in a virtually unending way until 1970s, except for the Second World War years in the 1930s (Sassoon, 1997). In fact, around 26-27 million Italians emigrated from the country between 1861 and 1973, with 6 million returning by 1965.

From the beginning of the 1980s, Italy shifted from being a country of net exporters of labour, to one which was receiving it (Ginsborg, 2001), similarly to the rest of Europe. The particularity of the Italian case, similarly to other Southern European countries such as Greece and Spain, is the fact that it is a country with profound economic issues, internal territorial differences, with a striking rate of unemployment and with interest in other regions of the Mediterranean.

Moreover, Italy seems to be adamant in recognizing the changing face of its society, not fully awarding rights to migrants and their children. “Italy finds it difficult to redefine itself as a multi-ethnic nation” (Ambrosini, 2011: p.179). Ambrosini highlights the invisibility that surrounds migrants in Italy and the threat that they thus pose when they become visible groups and form their own communities. This is, however, crucial for the future of the nation as an increasing number of second-generation migrants are gaining Italian citizenship.

This is also particularly true in terms of literature on migration. One of the most important points Caponio puts forward regards the gaps that still exists in Italian migration research and literature, which she explains are three: “second generations, associational and political participation, and the impact of Europe on Italian immigration and immigrant policies as well as policymaking” (Caponio, 2008: p.457).

"However, almost inexistent are the attempts to analyse the informal participation of immigrants in community networks, and to explore the possible links between networks and formal associations. At the same time, a restricted definition of political participation as essentially limited to visible mobilization in the host country runs the risk of overlooking processes of formation of political identities and attitudes which might also be oriented toward the homeland" (Caponio, 2008: p.458).

By studying the early stages of Italian migration history, it is clear that Italy has been one of the most prolific countries in "dispensing" migrants through the centuries. With this extensive migration history in mind, it is rather paradoxical to witness the discriminating discourses that are being reproduced in Italy towards the *extracomunitari*. As a matter of fact, although representing one of the main countries to have produced most migrants in the past, Italy now seems to have forgotten its history, and is replicating similar racist discourses that Italian migrants themselves had to suffer when they embarked on their journeys abroad.

Thus, immigrants are seen as necessary for the labour economy of Italy. Nonetheless, they are not considered as legitimate parts of society. As Ambrosini explains: "having received hands, Italy still has to receive people" (Ambrosini, 2011, p.180).

4 METHODOLOGY

This chapter will examine the undertakings of the research. Firstly, it is crucial to understand the urban setting of the fieldwork, namely Milan, and especially the two areas of 'Zona 2' and 'Zona 9' where the participants lived. It is absolutely essential to question the research method of participant observation and the issues and concerns that are entailed in conducting fieldwork, especially in the case of one's native country.

This chapter will examine the context of Milan, where the participant observation took place, and the recent historical migratory changes that characterized the city. I will define how the process of data analysis developed after the participant observation, the different themes that were gathered and which ultimately informed how the material collected during the observation was explored. An account of the observation work itself will be provided, detailing how fieldwork started, how contacted with the participants was first initiated during summer 2016. This report will also explain the agreements, arranged meeting and routines held within each of the ten households that took part in the observation.

However, as it emerged during the observation my positionality during fieldwork and the following study occupies a central point in this research and thus it will be analysed in the chapter. In general, the role of the researcher during fieldwork has always been questioned, as it constitutes a fundamental question both in quantitative and especially qualitative. However, it is vastly pondered first and foremost in participant observation research, which emphasizes that the 'I' of the researcher is one of the most evident and possibly invasive aspects of the study, that hence has to be deconstructed and analysed as well. Analysing reflexivity is essential in this process. The latter highlights the controversies that entail 'scientifying' culture, questioning the very foundations of conducting research and its paradigms of objectivity and detached considerations in research.

As Ang (2010 [1989]) argues while questioning the validity of antiquated practices of audience research, "[b]ut it could at least be said that we should try to avoid a stance in which 'the audience' is relegated to the status of exotic 'other' - merely interesting in so far as 'we,' as researchers, can turn 'them' into 'objects' of study, and about whom 'we' have the privileged position to acquire 'objective' knowledge. [...] She or he is no longer the neutral observer, but is someone whose job it is to produce historically and culturally specific knowledges that are the result of equally specific discursive encounters between researcher and informants, in which the subjectivity of the researcher is not separated from the 'object' s/he is studying" (p. 456-7)

Hence, while introducing the urban context of Milan and the methods used to get access to the field and analyse the data is fundamental in this research, it is also central to present the fieldwork processes that 'nativised' myself, to which followed new and still ongoing forms of self-consciousness. As a matter of fact, in relation to this research, questions such as 'who is who' and 'what is what' can only be answered by contextualising my position and my life as an *immigrata* and Italian, to then analyse my positionality as a researcher and participant. Reflecting on this will be a starting point and a factor that should be taken into consideration when reading the following analytic chapters.

It is therefore absolutely crucial to analyse these aspects which I, as the researcher, had to face during fieldwork, which was undergone to verify the hypothesis of the thesis: established migrant residing in these areas of Milan reproduce the securitising and discriminating discourses presented by Italian media, the government and the *Lega Nord* party regarding the ongoing 'migration crisis', in order to better integrate in their host country.

My diversity of positions also in regards to the findings of the ethnographic fieldwork will consequently be discussed as well. This positioning is significant as it is especially evident in the reflexive discussion of participant observation. Being able to understand the personal point of projection of the researcher allows us to contest the notion of ethnography and observation as being riddled with "power relations and personal cross purposes" (Clifford, 1983: p.120).

4.1 LOCALITY AND URBANISM

Establishing the context of the fieldwork is fundamental as the latter moulds the research itself and determines the outcomes and findings. The research was conducted in Milan, which is now regarded as the leading city in Italy, despite not being the capital. As such, it offers opportunities on a professional level, attracting the younger 'unemployed' crowd from the rest of Europe. However, it is its historical, ever developing demographic that was evaluated as interesting for this research.

In fact, Milan first represented one of the main arrival sites for the internal migration that took place during the post-war period in Italy. It saw its peak in post-war migration between 1958 and 1963, gaining the title of 'capital of the miracle' (Foot, 1997). It became one of the most popular destinations in the North not only for Northerners themselves who would move from rural areas, but also for Southerners. People from Southern regions as well escaped poverty and moved to more industrialised territories inside the country, as depicted in Luchino Visconti's *Rocco and His Brothers* (1960).

Milan was part of the 'industrial triangle', along with Turin and Genoa, and attracted circa 400,000 new residents in 15 years, between 1952 and 1963 (Pellicciari, 1970). While continuing to attract Italians from other regions even to this day, from the 1970s the major work opportunities in the informal sector started to attract more international migrants (Artero and Chiodelli, 2019).

From a political perspective, since the *Lega Nord* and its discourse are central in the present research, it is also essential to point out that Milan was the epicentre of the *Lega Nord's* movement, along with Veneto in the east, and of the proposed independent state of *Padania*. As already explained above and in the 'Migration chapter', Milan and its surroundings were one of the preferred destinations, along with Turin, during the internal migration period that characterised Italy. Southerners and their children were the first group that the *Lega Nord* discriminated against and targeted in their early political years (Cachafeiro, 2001), to then be replaced as scapegoats by the increasing numbers of foreign migrants settling in the same areas.

In more recent decades, the central cities of Italy have become hotspots in terms of foreign migration. However, one could argue that this phenomenon cannot be isolated to the city of Milan. In fact, if one was to consider resident immigrants living in cities in terms of numbers, Rome would be considered as the most appropriate site to conduct fieldwork. It is the most populous city in terms of immigrants with 385,559 registered foreigners residing in the capital, 13,42% of the overall population as of 2018 (Comuniverso.it, 2019). Milan is second with 262,521 foreigners; however, the percentage in the overall population is higher, with 19.22% of foreigners.

Consequently, due to its unique historical and social background, Milan was chosen as the city to conduct the research because of its centrality in the *Lega Nord's* discourse development, one of the main sites in which their chain of prejudice took form. Indeed, one of the main aims of this research was to uncover whether the next "ring" of said chain had already formed: if 'established' migrants who had lived in Milan for over 10 years had been influenced by the hegemonic racist discourse, primarily moulded by the *Lega*, and were reproducing it themselves.

The fieldwork was supposed to be conducted as an ethnography, which remained the intention when the data was first being collected at the start of the study in Milan. However, the limitation set by the five/six-month timescale afforded to conduct the fieldwork rendered applying the concept of ethnography to define the research quite questionable. In fact, an ethnography would entail living in the field for an extended amount of time, which in this case was limited. Participant observation, although constricted in time, provided an extensive framework that allowed an in-depth analysis. "[This] results in richly written accounts that respect the irreducibility of human experience, acknowledges the role of theory, as well as the researcher's own role, and views humans as part object/part subject" (O'Reilly, 2008). Hence, I regarded this as the most appropriate research method to analyse what established migrants' perceptions were, how their claims during interviews also conflicted with reality and their day-to-day lives.

Moreover, the observation was not centred on a sole community or ethnic group but was rather focused on locality, analysing two different areas of the city of Milan. The two areas comprised different nationalities of residents: 'Zona 2' and 'Zona 9', both mainly inhabited by Egyptians, Chinese, Peruvians, Filipinos, and Sri Lankans. (Mediagallery.comune.milano.it, 2014). These specific areas were chosen because of the density of migrant population living there, which has doubled in recent years (Salvi, 2017). Maps of Milan, 'Zona 2' and 'Zona 9' can be found in the Appendix.

This hence posed a question about diversity and the best way to study it. A key exploration onto this matter has been put forward by Mette Louise Berg and Nando Sigona in their article (further elaborated in a book) 'Ethnography, Diversity and Urban Space' (Berg and Sigona, 2013). As a matter of fact, they address the issues that arise when conducting ethnography and observation in the modern urban environment, which has increasingly become diversified.

Berg and Sigona argue that, whereas there have been an increasing number of multi-sited ethnographic studies, little research has been conducted studying various migrant groups cohabiting in diverse neighbourhoods. Hence, rather than using the concept of multiculturalism, they stress the idea of diversity. "New geographies of diversity create an almost infinite set of possible combinations of axes of difference and a range of paces of (absolute and proportionate) demographic change that are differently visible as the *scale* of analysis shifts" (Berg and Sigona, 2013: p.352). The different areas that will be the setting of the research provide a wide range of variables, not only in terms of nationalities and culture, but also age, gender, legal status, sexuality etc.

"This geographical unevenness means that ultra-local or neighbourhood identities may be more important than national identities for both minority and migrant groups as well as for majority groups" (Berg and Sigona, 2013: 352). The focus on locality allowed to go beyond the mere study of an ethnic group that appears not to be settled, either in the host country, or in their 'past home'. The research fully explored the effects of transnationality. In fact, Nina Glick Schiller claims that analysing through an ethnic perspective "obscures (...) the diversity of migrants' relationships to their place of settlement and to other localities around the world" (Glick Schiller, 2006: p.613). Yet this spatial diversity, based on locality, brings to the fore methodological concerns as well when conducting an observation. Researchers should be aware mostly of all the social factors of a studied group, especially the local context in which they live in, yet Berg and Sigona argue that the major political, ethical and methodological implications still need to be clearly addressed (Berg and Sigona, 2013). It could be argued that this thesis attempted to tackle these implications.

Instead of focusing solely on one particular ethnic group, it was deemed more important to see how prejudice is enacted on a spatial level. I as the researcher believed it was crucial to see whether networks among different migrants in these two areas, between subaltern groups that are regarded by Italians as *extracomunitari,* spread normalised hegemonic discourses. I thought that witnessing the intercommunal relations and the use of space of the two studied areas by migrants would enrich the finding of my research.

In fact, ethnography, and lastly observation, was deemed as the perfect method as it expands beyond the strict boundaries of the 'household'. It is valuable when considering the area in general, when seeing the interrelations between the people in the area, the interactions between possible households. In fact, initially I considered the possible interactions with other households that create certain local networks, which is a key point in diaspora studies and transnationality. During fieldwork, each household was not seen as an isolated unit, as the study looked at the interrelationships exchanges and networks in the local area and neighborhoods, or between studied households and other non-studied ones. In addition, one of my aims by not focusing on one community was also not to create arguments that would lead to generalisations.

Lastly, despite the above cited premises and justifications to the research, the choice of the city and the specific areas is mostly connected to my own personal narrative. This will be explored in detail in the next section.

4.2 PROCESS OF DATA ANALYSIS

The data was analysed by using different sets of themes that were deemed to be more salient following the data gathering of the observation: 'Narrativity', 'Voice' and 'Empathy'. The criteria for dividing the data into different themes rested on the fact that there was specific repetition of particular emotions, expression and directions in which the participants were revealing in regards to the topics that I would put forward while engaging in conversation with them. These brought to light particular understandings of how participants envisioned their own reality and their surroundings in Milan. Thus, certain themes were reached because there was a common thread of opinions and similar reflections throughout what each of the participants were expressing. The interpretative framework I constructed help to understand the empirical data (Ang, 2010 [1989]).

The theme of 'Narrativity' was analysed as the positionality of the participants in regards to the depiction of the 'migration crisis' is central to the thesis. In fact, the main research question of this thesis aims to find out how established migrants in Milan define their own position in the nation vis-à-vis the current debates on 'new migrants' people and the general securitising discourse on migration.

Narrativity over identity was chosen as a concept to focus on in order to unpick not solely the identity politics at play in the Italian society, but also the more complex and layered narratives surrounding migration in Italy. Therefore, the narratives associated with being migrants and *immigrati/e*, those embodied by the participants and the counter narratives produced by them as well. During the observation it became clear that participants differentiated between types of public and ontological narratives, thus the concept of narrativity as proposed by Margaret Somers (1994) presented an appropriate theoretical framework from which to analyse the participants positionality vis-a-vis the migration crisis. Other aspects that featured during the observation with most participants were the sense of liminality, immobility in their status of *immigrati/e* in Italy, thus also of oppression.

The latter gave way to an analysis of the role that 'Voice' played in the development of this multifaceted and intertwined narrativity. In fact, from the data it became evident that the participants struggled in accepting certain narratives that were implicitly affixed to them, in a perceived state of double-consciousness, and displayed a type of resistance in refusing the term *immigrato/a*, the representation on Italian media and the security discourses. The inability to actually voice this rejection and the general frustration attached to it was deemed central to the research. This impossibility for communication represented a marker for the state of invisibility, silencing and violence that participants were subjected to on a social level. The rise of such themes from the data then gave way to interrogating the level of embodiment participants felt in relation to the media depiction of the 'migration crisis', if they were able to transpose the coerced silencing they suffered onto 'new migrants' they saw in the news. Thus, aspects such as embodiment and ultimately 'Empathy' were implicitly present in my line of questioning, specifically in understanding how *immigrati/e* navigate through securitising discourses that set migration in general and the 'migration crisis' as a threat to the security and - ethnic - coherence of the nation. Questioning whether they reproduced or rejected such discourses, also entailed

questioning a possible sense of empathy, which was why it was employed as a main theme to unravel the research questions and the data.

4.3 ACCESSING THE FIELD

The initial main research questions of the present study set to explore:

- how established migrants in Milan define their own position in the nation vis-à-vis the current debates on 'new migrants' people and the general securitising discourse on migration?

-how established migrants navigate through the *Lega Nord* produced and influenced discourses that set migration in general and the 'new migrants' in particular as a threat to the security and coherence of the nation?

- how *immigrati/e* respondents learn / access these debates and discourses? Through which media and how do they discuss them and interpret them both online, offline?

To unravel these questions, this research primarily relied on the method of observation, through which migrants' experiences and opinions were recollected in two highly populated areas of Milan, 'Zona 2' and 'Zona 9'. Having close relatives living in 'Zona 2' and 'Zona 9', I informed them about the research around May-June 2016 after the first PhD 'Annual Progress Revision'. I explained the type of observation I intended to undertake, the type of participants I was planning to observe and the time requirements/restrictions that the observation would entail. My cousin Deepika who lives in 'Zona 2' offered to ask certain friends and acquaintances she had made at the school her children attended, close to the Metropolitan station of 'Gorla'. I got in contact with two family friends living in 'Zona 9' who offered to ask their friends/acquaintances, specifically the parents they met at the schools their children attended in the areas of 'Derganino' and 'Niguarda'.

The observation itself started in the summer of 2016, at the end of August. Therefore, August was mostly spent as a data collecting month, familiarising myself with the

areas in which the fieldwork was to take place, as most informants were abroad for holidays. I went to meet the participants/parents just outside the school grounds in September 2016, during the first two weeks of School semester. In order to network and get better acquainted with other possible informants I would join the families at the park after school in some occasions. For instance, by doing so I came into contact with the female members of the Ethiopian and Albanian households in 'Zona 2' and the Peruvian and Filipino households in 'Zona 9'. Since it was predominantly mothers who came to pick up the children before or after school, it became evident from the beginning that I would establish a rapport with the female figures of the households. This was also emphasized by the way they told me that they would ask their partners first and inform me whether they agreed to take part in the observation.

Through a family acquaintance I contacted a General Practitioner as well, who worked at a clinic near Pasteur in 'Zona 2' and gave me the permission to ask the patients whether they wanted to take part in the observation. I went to the clinic for two weeks in September 2016, alternating between mornings and afternoon, but did not succeed in gathering other informants. This was possibly due to the invasiveness nature of the observation or due to the fact that there wasn't a real trustworthy mediatory figure between us, apart from the general practitioner.

This research did not only take into consideration the scale and numbers of each communities, that it to say interviewing participants that came from the predominant foreign groups present in Milan, but it also considered whether they originally came from non-European countries, hence officially categorised as *extracomunitari*. This is a controversial term which was central during the semi-structured interviews as well. I was interested in inquiring whether their sense of exclusion from the European Union community had an impact in their views regarding the current 'migration crisis', but also on their perception of themselves. From fieldwork it was noted that the use of the term *extracomunitari* in the Italian language, and vastly in Italian popular media culture as well, was deemed problematic for the participants, who did not welcome being identified as such.

Moreover, participant observation was chosen as a method because of the direct and sustained contact it allows to have with human agents for a prolonged period of time. In particular, participant observation allowed me to study the everyday rituals and interactions between informants and their general surroundings. The fieldwork per se lasted five months, from September 2016 to January 2017 (July and August 2016 were making technical arrangements as stated above). The observation was initially designed to engage with twelve household units, six for each area, spending at least one week with each household, as it allowed for more time and a more in-depth observation with each household unit.

However, by the end of January 2017 the research fieldwork comprised of the study of ten households in total. The nationality of the families that were interviewed in 'Zona 2' were: Filipino, Ethiopian, Ecuadorian, Sri Lankan, Senegalese, and Albanian; whereas in 'Zona 9' they were Filipino, Peruvian, Indian, and Egyptian (with whom the interview remained unfinished as the family members decided to withdraw).

With each household, I managed to carry out a participant observation that lasted one week, but I had to adjust to their work schedules, which mostly comprised of part-time babysitting, cleaning, caretaking, domestic work for the female members of the households (varying in times and days), and mostly full-time jobs such as nursing, working as drivers, delivery people, or security guards for the males. Thus, we had to agree on a possible timetable for the observation that would work with their work/life schedule prior to the observation itself. It was the female members who predominantly took care of their own daily family engagements/children's activities. This difference in work schedule obviously affected the way I engaged with each household, as due to their more flexible schedules, I would interact more with the female members on a day-to-day basis. Meanwhile, I would mostly see the male members at dinner or in a more relaxed manner during the weekend.

In fact, during dinners on workdays, it would be quieter and tense, especially in the beginning of the week. I would try to ask them questions regarding the issues of the

research in semi-structured interviews on a plenary level during dinners or our times in the weekends. Yet, as I was mostly spending my time with the female members, following them in their routine and domestic chores (school runs, market shopping etc. included), the information I gathered predominantly derives from my time and informal conversations with them.

My general position in the household was to be a 'fly-on-the-wall', observing for instance their day-to-day practices of media consumption, and the internal conversations that took place in the household, in particular when I initiated 'discussions'/semi-structured interviews around themes of migration and discrimination, and their interactions outside of it.

The predominant questions that I based the semi-structured interviews were on the themes of 'Italianness', *Lega Nord* and their use of media for gathering information around migration in Italy, the far-right party and can be found below. The list of the main questions I took with me during observation can be found in the appendix.

The next section will provide a thorough account of the observations taken with each households that took part in the research. For ethical reasons their names have been changed.

4.3.1 ZONA 2

4.3.1.1 ECUADORIAN HOUSEHOLD

Members of this household were composed of Maria, the mother; Diego the father; a daughter and a son; and two other women external from the immediate family named Ana and Paula who lived in the same house. I came to know this family through my own cousin, who had established a close bond with Maria working together. They belong to the Christian Evangelist confession and attend Mass every Sunday. Their opinions are very much informed by their faith.

Diego worked as a lorry driver/delivery person, and the mother is a nanny. They both attended university but Maria did not finish her course in Physics as she followed Diego and moved to Milan 10 years ago. Diego moved to Italy in 2000, at the age of 22. They claimed not to watch television very often but as the observation proceeded during the week, it was noted that they would use the TV in their bedroom to show cartoons to their children and watch family friendly films at night. The little TV in the kitchen was mostly used as background noise in the afternoon when Maria prepared food for dinner and it was tuned onto *Mediaset's Canale 5*. Diego appeared to be the most informed on political and social matters, providing detailed information on current news. In fact, he listens to radio daily while driving (*RDS)*.

We would meet in the mornings in front of the school in Gorla around 8am, close to where they lived, as Maria would drop off their children. We would go back to their house and we would stay there for one hour, just us two as everyone else had already left for work. We would then leave as Maria would go to work as well, she worked as a domestic worker and babysitter, and we would meet again there around 12.30pm. I would remain with her, at times joining her when she went to the supermarket, and accompany her when she went to pick up the children from school. Diego and Ana would come back home around 7-8pm, in time for dinner and I would leave after that. I didn't see Paula every day as she would return from work late at night, usually around 10.30pm, thus I properly met her during the weekend.

As soon as we became acquainted, we managed to meet each other every week, even after their own week of research was over. The mother, Maria, become my main informant in 'Zona 2'. She was the one who primarily put me into contact with other participants. Among all the interviewed families, the one I bonded with the most was the Ecuadorian one, as they were more open for dialogue, engaged in listening and demonstrating an interest in my opinion, hence seemingly less preoccupied with my 'fly-on-the-wall' presence. It should be noted that we disagreed on various topics, culminating in the 'issue of homosexuality'. Given their religious affiliation to Evangelicalism, or one could argue heightened by this, their views on sexuality were extremely conservative and based on heterosexuality: it was their belief that

relationships, sexual bonds, and marriage should only take place between a man and a woman.

Despite this central discordance of views, which in ordinary circumstances would have pushed me to distance myself from them, we continued our friendship even after their research week had ended. This was most likely due to the fact that they seemed open to talk about these types of issues, they were willing to engage in true dialogue, of sharing different perceptions of reality. Reconsidering the fieldwork now, it might have been the case that we became closest because of their ability to negotiate both the Italian and Ecuadorian culture, mostly the family of the household (Diego, Maria and their two children), and their overall level of hospitality, offering lunch and dinner whenever I was conducting the observation. In fact, with most of the other families (except for the Filipino and Sinhalese family) I usually observed or brought with me my own packed lunch/dinner.

The father of the family, Diego, continuously talked about one man he had helped in these past years and who might be available to participate in the observation. Although I made him aware that he lived out of the studied areas, I agreed to meet him for personal interest. Diego later arranged a dinner with the man and the rest of the household, where they discovered for the first time that he was of Islamic faith.

4.3.1.2 ETHIOPIAN HOUSEHOLD

Through Maria, I became acquainted with Aida, whose family of Ethiopian origin I studied as a second household. This family was formed by Aida, the mother, the father, Yonas, and two sons, who seemed more at ease with talking of 'new migrants' and even of equating themselves with them. Aida has been in Italy for 17 years, and Yonas for 20 years. In fact, they seemed to identify more with the 'new migrants' than other participants as they felt that their common nationality brought them together, reminding them of their status as 'foreigners'. Ethiopians are indeed amongst those that risk the trip to reach Europe.

Aida and Yonas took turns to accompany their children to school in Gorla, so I would firstly meet them there around 8am. We would briefly chat and I would accompany them to the tube/bus station as they would go to work. For four days I joined Aida again at their home after 2pm. Normally, I would just talk to her while she was conducting different chores around the house, before picking up the children at school around 3.30-4pm. Due to his shifts at the hospital, Yonas was able to pick up the children on Wednesday so I met him once directly in front of school at 4pm. On all occasions, we would go to the park afterwards. On weekends, I stayed with Aida and followed her to the supermarket on Saturday and joined both of them on Sunday afternoon.

Aida, who works part-time as a cleaner, was the member who mostly felt as an outsider in the Italian society, whereas her husband, who works as a nurse in a local hospital, feels as he has 'integrated' more to Milanese society and does not want to leave the country. Aida felt that Italy is falling apart and desires to provide her children with a better future, which she does not believe can take place in Italy. Hence, she was considering going back to and residing in Ethiopia with her children, who could attend an Italian school (Ethiopia has persisting ties with Italian culture because of its colonial history). They do value Italian culture, the values and customs, but not how the country is governed and its functioning.

Aida always appeared to be at ease around me and we usually spent our time at the supermarket or at the park when she was not working. Due to dental pain, she cancelled two arranged meetings. However, overall she seemed more than willing to talk with me.

Aida could not understand people's lack of empathy in front of desperation, which she saw herself when she went to volunteer with her Orthodox community at '*Stazione Centrale'*. Her husband Yonas, on the other hand, behaved in the opposite way in the beginning. Maria had previously warned me that he might be guarded and irritable, which revealed itself to be true. But during our time together he showed to be very opinionated on the matter of migration in Italy and very well-informed on current

events and news related to Matteo Salvini, as he followed him on Facebook and commented on his posts.

In addition, Yonas had applied for Italian citizenship seven years prior to the interview, hence their children are Italian citizens as well. Aida does not desire to become an Italian citizen and Yonas himself claims he does not feel Italian as he applied for it only for their children's sake.

They both claimed not to watch television very often. However, when I was conducting the observation I noticed that they often had the TV switched on to *Canale 5* in the afternoon. It was observed that they do not discuss about politics at home, but from what they informed me, they get access to relevant information by talking with their church community, at work and through social media.

4.3.1.3 ALBANIAN HOUSEHOLD

Through Maria I also met Elira, originally Albanian. With this it became clear that my first line of contact throughout the fieldwork would be female. She and her husband Valmir live with their daughter and husky dog in a one-bedroom apartment. Elira was also expecting a second child at the time I interviewed them. They were thinking of moving to a bigger apartment but were struggling financially to accomplish this. They had been in Italy for 15 years and arrived initially to study. However, Valmir was now working and maintaining the family financially as Elira was enrolled at university and pregnant. They met each other in Italy but Valmir aspires to move back to Albania one day as he does not trust Italian people.

I did not manage to get more involved with the whole family due to their schedules: Valmir would get back home only at nighttime and we only managed five meetings overall. The issues on migration were raised during my interviews and did not seem to constitute general topic of conversation. Nonetheless, both of them did demonstrate

that they very aware of the events developing in Italian politics and in the Mediterranean, which affected them profoundly. Elira was busy with her studies, managing the overall household and taking care of her 'pregnant self'. I would meet her at school in the morning and would usually go back to their house, except for Tuesday morning and Thursday afternoon when she had classes at university, in the area of Bicocca. During those moments we would converse or at times study-work together, then lunch together. During the afternoon, after going back to school, we went to the park with their dog and their children. At night, Valmir would come back for dinner and we would dine together, yet this only took place four times due to his (work) and her (university) commitments. I joined them again on Saturday, as we spent the day at a shopping mall in the outskirts of Milan and then at the park.

They talked about general migration topics without any sign of uneasiness. However, when we confronted the 'issue' of Islam in Europe, I did avert tension from Valmir, who is Albanian Muslim. Due to this, I avoided the topic for the first days following the initial meeting. I waited for him to become more comfortable with my presence, which he seemingly did only during our last day. Hence, he seemed guarded with the information he provided me. It appeared that when we talked it seemed as a very formal interview, almost an interrogation, rather than a conversation, which characterised my time with his wife.

Considering the overall fieldwork at the end, it appeared that it was considerably smoother talking with Elira about prejudice, *Lega Nord,* and Italian politics on migration than it was with the rest of the participants, both in 'Zona 2' and 'Zona 9'. This was mainly due to the fact that she was conducting her own studies at university in 'Linguistic Mediation', demonstrating similar interests to my own. Despite the constant general awareness of the role I held as an ethnographer, and the paradox of simultaneously being both 'close' and 'distant', I found it more problematic to maintain the stance of an interviewer: the short interviews I conducted during the week, especially at the end, resembled 'informal chats', as she seemed to share the same opinion on various aspects of the research. We also bonded over common

struggles as university students, thanks to which she showed profound understanding of the research methods I was undertaking, seemingly being empathic towards me.

4.3.1.4 SENEGALESE HOUSEHOLD

I met Fatou and her husband, Soulemayne, through Maria's aid. Fatou has been in Italy for over 11 years and has two children (two daughters, the eldest one is still in Senegal). Her husband, who has been living in Italy since 2001, was often away from home as he works as a security guard at a local Zara store. She has been victim of severe cases of discrimination over the years: her youngest daughter was told by one of classmates that they couldn't play together because she was black. Fatou also claimed that a week prior to the ethnographic research she herself was subject to sexual harassment which she believed was linked to her skin colour: as she was walking in the street, an Italian man driving an Audi (detail which she emphasised as it denominated his social status/class in her opinion) stopped at her side, got out of the car and started masturbating in front of her. She underlined that it was because she was seen as a prostitute as "all Italians think that black women are prostitutes".

Similarly, as to what happened with the previous domestic groups, I engaged more with the female figure of the family, because of her flexible schedule compared to Soulemayne's. After meeting her in front of school, we would mostly spend our time at their house during the day. However, it has to be noted that I also averted a sense of alertness, bordering hostility, from Fatou whenever I engaged in a conversation/interview with Soulemayne. In fact, at the beginning Fatou had claimed that it was quite impossible to meet Soulemayne, as he worked late hours in a Zara store in Milan. It was through extreme insistence and persistence that I was allowed to wait at home with her for Soulemayne's arrival on Friday and Saturday.

Following various episodes of discrimination, Fatou did not think highly of Italians and especially politicians like Salvini who help spread hatred. However, Soulemayne appeared to be more neutral on this matter, despite having been victim of

discrimination himself. He underplays the effects of racism and discrimination by stating: “I’ve been here for longer, I got used to it”.

She complained of the lack of diversity in Italian TV news: “It’s either about an Italian woman who was killed or *extracomunitari* who are criminals and are invading cities”. She admitted she watches *Canale 5* at dinner, which has proved to be true during observation, among other *Mediaset* channels. While watching the news at night she often told me: “You see, all information here is negative”. For this reason, they completely empathize with new ‘new migrants’ coming to Italy, blaming Europe for ‘African people’s’ misfortunes. They didn’t appear to be discussing these issues among themselves; I had to question them on the matter.

4.3.1.5 SRI LANKAN HOUSEHOLD

The Sinhalese family as well represents one of the families with whom I bonded with the most, however due to our common culture they could/should have been the group with whom I bonded the most. Piyumi, a housewife, and Amila, a butcher, were both in their early-mid-thirties and they have two children. They had been in Italy for respectively 12 and 10 years.

Piyumi took the children at school in the morning, so I would meet her first and then we would return home or go to the local market to buy groceries for the family of for the neighbouring elderly *nonna* she worked for as well. In fact, I would wait at their home when Piyumi went to work at the flat next door: her job as a caretaker wasn’t quite structured so she would be out for up to an hour, various times during the day. As with others, together we would pick up the children from school at 3.30-4 pm, once this was followed with playtime at the nearby park, but due to the autumnal weather conditions we mostly went back home where the children would either watch TV or do their homework. Amila came back at 7.30pm and we dined at 8, after which I left. We spent Saturday at home in the morning and afternnon, while Sunday the family came to visit so I was asked not to come.

They appeared to be well-integrated, especially with other migrant families, such as with the Ecuadorian and Filipino families, as their children all attend the same school. They were both brought up as Catholics but Amila seems to be getting closer to Buddhism, or so I gathered as although he does not officially state this. I found several Buddhist ornaments around the house and the 'Sutras', the Buddhist Sacred Text, on his computer desk in the living room. This was my assumption as when we met at dinner we would talk about Buddhist teachings and he would later show me videos of Buddhist monks preaching on Facebook and Youtube.

As far as media habits are concerned, the two parents didn't use TV as a source of current news information. They relied mostly on news they gathered on the internet, especially through social media which they accessed in the morning.

As stated above, Piyumi had a part-time job as a caretaker, it is the '*nonna'* (the elderly woman she takes care of) who informs her of what is happening in Italy. She is quite biased and racist at times, Piyumi claims, when she complains about the presence of '*immigrati/e'* in Italy: when a crime committed by an *extracomunitario/a* is reported on the news, the *nonna* underlines the fact that it is done by an immigrant, without taking into consideration Ruth's own nationality, technically belonging to the *extracomunitario/a* categorisation. Hence it can also be claimed that that Ruth's own perception of the migration crisis is heavily influenced by *nonna's* personal views.

They believed Muslim families not to be approachable, mistrusting other Egyptian/Muslim families in the area (they did not separate the two categories). They seemed to be influenced by the events/ general social unrest unfolding in Sri Lanka between Buddhist and Muslim communities. They appeared to generalise in their own arguments on the matter. When asked why they perceived Muslims in the way they did, Ruth explained it was simply how she perceived them, "a sense". By their arguments it could be noted that they believed that is was Muslim people's own fault if they were marginalised, and because of this they should be rightly ostracised from the rest of society, both in Italy and Sri Lanka. Piyumi and Amila felt empathy about new migrants arriving to Italy via the Mediterranean. However they seem to follow

the hegemonic discourses by affirming that this phenomenon was becoming problematic as there “simply is no space left in Italy, we’re too many”.

4.3.1.6 FILIPINO HOUSEHOLD

Piyumi put me into contact with Auri and Denis, who both moved to Milan fifteen years ago from Avellino in Southern Italy where they previously lived for over ten years. They have two sons. They are close to the other Ecuadorian and Sinhalese families in the same area.

Denis worked full-time as a domestic worker while Auri worked part-time as a domestic worker and babysitter. Their work schedule seemed to be quite disordered compared to the other families. As with other households in ‘Zona 2’ I met up with Auri in the morning as she accompanied their sons at school, whom she picked up in the afternoon as well. In the meantime she would go to two different workplaces, thus I would meet her and talk to her in the afternoon at their house and during dinner with Denis, who would return home around 6.30pm. On Saturday Auri and I went to the local market together and on Sunday morning we all went to Mass together.

Their use of media involved watching TV at night while the family was gathered to have dinner and mostly accessing news and general information through their mobile phones (especially Denis). Auri watched Filipino TV dramas using their computer after lunch before she goes back to school to pick her children up and then to work.

They seemed to be less neutral regarding the arrival of new migrants from the Mediterranean, claiming to understand the struggle that each migrant faces but also underlining the lack of ‘space’ in Italy (in terms of work but also intended as overcrowding the Italian territory) and the increase in criminality, seeming especially prejudiced against Islam. When confronted and asked whether they felt the same regarding the vast Muslim community in the Philippines, they responded that

"Mediterranean Muslims" where different. Hence, one could argue that they reproduced the hegemonic discourse that is disseminated by the right-wing political parties, that generalise accounts of Muslim people and spread the idea that ISIS members might be entering Europe by crossing the Mediterranean with these infamous treacherous dinghies.

4.3.2 ZONA 9

4.3.2.1 PERUVIAN HOUSEHOLD

However, the situational circumstances of open dialogue I encountered with the Ecuadorian family did not replicate themselves during the time spent with the Peruvian place in 'Zona 9', when I was confronted with Camila and Bruno (who is Italian), in particular the husband's views on migration. I met them via a Sri Lankan acquaintance I had in the area.

Camila is Peruvian and had lived in Milan for over 20 years, following in her father's footsteps. She is married to an Italian man, Bruno, though her view on Italians did not appear to be influenced by this relationship. In fact, she seemed extremely resentful towards Italian people and was not in favour of allowing her two children to gain Italian citizenship. She would prefer to live in Peru and in fact was thinking of moving there with the entire family in five years' time.

Camila preferred to meet directly at their home after she had left her children at school. I spent the day with her on Monday, Tuesday and Friday, going to pick up her children at 4pm, coming home and having to leave before dinner. She worked on Wednesday morning, thus I went there just before lunch which I had to do on Thursday morning as well, as her father visited her that day. I saw Bruno on his days off on Wednesday

and Thursday. Saturday was spent mostly with Camila in the morning and briefly in the afternoon at their home. She preferred me not coming on Sunday.

Camila and Bruno appeared to always disagree on the subject of migration. She believed that the portrayal of the 'crisis' in Italian media was more than questionable, showing overall skepticism with the way migrants generally are portrayed and viewed in Italy. On the other hand, Bruno was of the idea that most of the new migrants who were entering the country would only cause distress to the nation as they would increase criminality in big cities. He also underlined the gravity of "letting terrorists into Italy". Camila, though, would remind her husband that he, as well as most other Italians, was not aware of what it meant to come from a different country, the struggle and desperation that led people to move. She explained that TV news, which they watch daily on *Canale 5*, wrongfully informed Italians that migrants have or only desire luxury smartphones and that therefore they cannot be regarded as in desperate need for help.

It can be argued that Camila's husband did not perceive her as a migrant but Camila does identify as such, even though she is encircled mostly by other migrants, such as her own father who visits her regularly. Because of this she seemed to deeply disagree with her husband: "He talks like them, like all the Italians". She explained that she does not let her children watch TV as she prefers them to talk to each other, however, then she revealed this to be untrue since she switched on the TV as soon as they got back from school.

4.3.2.2 INDIAN HOUSEHOLD

Diya lived with her husband, Aditya, and their three daughters. The eldest took part in the research and was interviewed as she is 16 years old. Diya worked sporadically as a domestic worker and nanny and was starting her own catering business to support her husband who works as a butcher. Her husband first moved to Paris and then settled in Milan 20 years ago.

Diya was not enthusiastic in remaining in Italy. In fact, she would prefer moving to France or the United Kingdom as some of her relatives live there: it is her belief that the whole family would live better in these countries on a social level (in her opinion, they are less discriminatory). She too emphasised the fact that not many migrants occupy high-level positions.

She feared that even her children are now distant to what she believes is their 'primary' culture. She recounted their last visit back to India when she perceived that her daughters were outsiders in their 'own motherland'.

Her eldest daughter, Priya, was a participant of the observation as she was 16 years old. She as well did not feel completely Italian. She believed that although her peers and school friends make her feel welcome, it is mostly from some of her professors that she senses a type of resentment as even in class they feel free to express their own (racist) opinions regarding the current 'wave' of migration. Contrasting to her mother and father's view, Priya does not hold a negative view of Muslim people as most of her friends at school are of Islamic faith.

I spent every day that week with Diya, morning and afternoon. She didn't mind me staying at their house, having lunch together or me following her at school in the afternoon. We went out on Thursday and Saturday during the morning to the market and supermarket. Aditya would come back from work around 6.30-7pm and we would dine together. On Sunday, they invited me to a Hindu function near Famagosta in Milan.

They both claimed not to watch TV or follow any particular channel but similarly to other participants, once the family went on with their daily activities, Diya switched on *Canale 5* and sometimes *Rete 4* as a form of entertainment in the background.

They also were worried about the presence of the Egyptian community in the area where they lived in: "Half of their community live in this street. Even we are foreigners, but...you know". This sentiment was somehow explained when I was

invited to their Sunday Hindu function. This lasted for three hours and it delved into politics as well: since I couldn't understand Hindi, I managed to record one of the speeches and sent it to PhD colleagues who understood Hindi. Allegedly it was nationalist rhetoric praising Hinduism in India and discriminating all other religions especially Islam.

4.3.2.3 FILIPINO HOUSEHOLD

Through Diya, I came to know Arnold and Joyce. Arnold moved to Italy in 2002 and his wife Joyce followed him in 2005. They have a daughter who is 12 years old and they plan to go back to the Philippines in two years' time. They both work as domestic workers on a part-time basis. They appeared to have a conflicting relation with Italians as they often feel discriminated against (they recalled a comedic sketch on a famous Italian show where an Italian comedian imitated a Filipino domestic worker). They desired a better future for their daughter as they did not believe she will be able to succeed at work in Italy.

It was Arnold you accompanied the daughter to school in the morning. I would meet him there every day and on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday I joined him on his commute to work. I noticed that he read the 'Metro' newspaper on his way to work on the tube in the morning (free copies are distributed to commuters at stations around the city). I would meet Joyce in the afternoon and together we would pick up the kids and go back home or to the markets. Arnold came back around 6.30-7pm. They watched TV news on *Canale 5* daily before dinner. On Saturday I followed Joyce to the local market and on Sunday we all went to Mass and to the cinema in the afternoon.

They didn't agree with the way the 'migration crisis' was reported on Italian news, finding the latter sensationalist altogether. Joyce was not well-informed about the issue (for instance not knowing about the existence of *Lega Nord*), however she was aware of Matteo Salvini and of his racism. They both empathised with the new migrants, recalling their own struggle when they first moved to Italy. However, they

did seem to fall for the general argument that sees the entrance of some Muslim people as a threat to the well-being of the communities in Italy, especially with regards to their own area. Incoherently though, they also informed me that they had built solid relations with the Egyptian and Moroccan street vendors in their area. Hence, it could be argued that they partly reproduced the common argument and discourse about dangerous Muslim people in Italy concerning 'new migrants', and not resisting it by acknowledging their own positive experience with the Muslim community in the area they lived in.

4.3.2.4 EGYPTIAN HOUSEHOLD

One of the most unmanageable situations that led to the premature ending of my research was the one I encountered with the Egyptian family in 'Zona 9'.

Omar has lived in Milan for 16 years and Fatima joined him 5 years later. They had four children who are aged between twelve and two, all Muslim. The ethnographic research only lasted one day: the whole family had agreed to participate and be interviewed. However Omar withdrew from the research and convinced Fatima to do the same. Unfortunately, they did not provide a specific reason to why they were suspicious of me interviewing them, but it could be suggested they might have wanted to guard themselves, possibly feeling the pressure or of being observed as Muslims in Milan.

4.4 PROBLEMATICS OF THE OBSERVATION

Firstly, Lila Abu Lughod (2000) explained in her book, what inevitably is missing when putting in writing the ethnographic notes is the vividness of the conversations and the different shades of the everyday "lived life" (Riesman, 1977).

Moreover, the problems of conducting such fieldwork in the urban context were several. Above all, the intrusion that I the researcher posed in their livelihoods by accessing the confined spaces of their houses, too small even just for their presence, almost impossible with mine as an addition. Moreover, the interruption of their daily routines, which I tried to avert as much as possible, and the difficulty to adjust to their jobs and work times, are factors that need to be addressed.

In fact, all of the participants of the observation were employed in part-time or full-time work, which meant that I could follow them/their households in the anthropological canonical manner. Most of them were employed in cleaning, caretaking, and domestic work, and the time schedule varied day by day and also by employer. Maybe this form of observation should not have been conducted to gather this type of information. On the other hand, this format showed the inconsistencies in how participants claim to use media technologies at home, and the reality of such practices.

In fact, this brought to surface another query relevant to conducting media centered observations: the reality of media consumption is not easily quantifiable and cannot be, and participants' own account of it cannot be considered fully reliable. How can one really analyse the way that people consume media now, especially online media? I was with my participants from approximately 8.30, when they would drop their children at school and at times even before, until 9pm when we would eat, watch TV at times, and then they would retire to their bedrooms. However, I didn't get access to their actual mobile phone use: at bed before sleeping, on their way to work while using public transport. Yes, it is possible to analyse this type of media use via surveys and interviews, yet as it was revealed during the research, not everything one tells when questioned mirrors the actual reality.

Furthermore, what featured as a problem during fieldwork and still poses an issue in the actual writing process of the research is the use of the correct terminology, if there

is one, that identifies the main participants: migrants, immigrants, foreigners, *extracomunitari*. In the end I have opted to use the Italian term *immigrati/e* to define the participants, as it's the word which is mostly used in popular Italian media and political discourses to nominalise and identify migrants living in Italy.

Finally, as specified above, snowballing was the main method through which I got access to all informants. The research continued in the months of July, August and September of 2017 as there persists a lack of participants of Muslim religion, who are central as subjects in the fieldwork and their own perception and opinion in regards to the 'migration crisis' was deemed to be crucial to the outcome of the research. However, during those months, I encountered several similar episodes of refusal by possible participants. Always through snowballing, I asked the participants and other acquaintances living in 'Zona 2' and 'Zona 9' to ask other 'Muslim parents' to participate in the research. I was also open to the option of carrying out solely in-depth, semi-structured interviews. I approached three different 'Muslim mothers' who initially agreed. They, however, told my acquaintances that they would not be able to do the interviews as their husbands had refused to agree to the idea, and would not 'allow' the wives to go through with the research.

Why did Muslim people back out? Why was it difficult to find Muslim participants? It might be questioned whether the sense of being continuously analysed/investigated/scrutinised by the larger society, linking to Foucault's concept on surveillance, might have prevented the potential Muslim participants from agreeing to take part to the observation.

In hindsight, I should have insisted more and continued asking other Muslim families. However, in all honesty, I got disheartened by these rejections, possibly because the pattern showed that the men of the families would most likely disagree to participate. At least, this was my preconception (post-conception?) during the research, that might have/ has influenced my performance during research. This was mostly due also to my position as a female researcher and my lifelong sense of insecurity being female generally.

Contacting local NGOs and other organisations in the areas would have aided the fieldwork process. In the end I contacted and interviewed three Muslim residents in 'Zona 2' and 'Zona 9', yet they obviously cannot be considered as households. The lack of further Muslim informants does render the overall study partial.

4.4.1 GENDER IN OBSERVATION

As already mentioned, it can be argued that my gender affected the relationships and ties created during my fieldwork. In fact, at the beginning of my research I noticed that I seemed to bond more with female participants. This was possibly due to the commonalities that we had, the possible trustworthiness that I showed in listening to them (at times listening to their marital issues), but mostly due to the work schedule that determined their family life. In fact, most male participants were employed in full-time jobs, whereas their female partners were engaged part-time and occasional work, so that they could be more present in the daily family organisation. In this respect, the interviewed domestic groups mostly revealed themselves to represent and hold the 'normalised' family structures.

However, as already stressed, it should be noted that my own body and mentality informed the development of the observation. One must admit, the bond that occurred primarily with female members was due not only to their flexibility compared to their male counterparts, but mostly to the complicity and affinity that was inextricably connected to our gender. It can be said that we felt more attuned to each other, or at least this is my perception; the conversation was more fluid and I gained their trust more spontaneously.

Seyla Banhabib (1987)underlined how it is the gendered nature of women researchers that constructs a particular type of observation. "The contextuality, narrativity and specificity of women's moral judgement is not a sign of weakness or deficiency, but a manifestation of a vision of moral maturity that views the self as being immersed in networks of relations with others" (p.78).

For the most part, in the development of the anthropological field, observations have reflected the male standpoints, which were given as the 'norm', hence neglecting the difference that gender makes to observation (Bell, 1993: p.2-3). Yet, the outcome of this very own fieldwork reflects the role that gender holds when accessing the field.

My belief system as a 'brown/minority' woman in particular had an impact in the way I approached the female informants first and then their families in the various households. This mode of accessing the field in itself shaped the study and in the end also contributed to the complications I faced in acquiring trust in certain households which were patriarchal in their domestic structure, as the women who I first approached needed to get the consent of their male counterparts.

Generally, my positionality as a second-generation migrant informed the observation as much as my position as a woman. This will be discussed in detail in the following section.

4.4.2 REFLEXIVITY

Pat Caplan (1993) explains the importance of every aspect that constitutes the life of the researcher when she/he accesses the field. As editor of the book 'Gendered Fields', a collection of different fieldwork accounts that highlight the importance of the reflexivity of the anthropological ethnographer and observer she explains that every particularity of the anthropologists that contributed to the book had an effect in the outcomes of their research. "Being alone or accompanied, being seen as young (the more so if unmarried) or mature, had profound effects on the encounter with the subjects of study" (p.20).

Despite agreeing with Caplan's statement, another further dilemma arises: what is the praxis for an academic observer when she/he is both the researcher and the subject of the study? Following Karim's (1993) framework, I could be considered as a 'native

researcher' conducting 'anthropology at home', within what can be regarded as in part my own community of origin (p.249).

In the article 'Women's Worlds- Three Encounters', Leela Dube (1975) explores how she had to negotiate her own subjectivity in diverse ways according to the different field situations. In Leela Dube's view, being an insider is more difficult to negotiate (Dube, 1975: p.166). I came to the realisation that this represented my case as well.

I am a researcher that comes from a particular context, the context of the research itself. Hence one could argue that I am/was not immune to the content and findings of my research, not objective in regards to the data and perhaps especially with the method it was collected in. Observation, in fact, turned out to be psychologically invasive method of research, to myself mostly.

It is not usual to change during research, when doing a PhD, even more so when conducting an observation. The fine lines between research objectivity and subjectivity are ever the more blurred. However, uncovering the perspectives and media habits of a community that could be regarded as that of my own uncovered several different problems. For instance, this happened while closely analysing what was their daily lives in the end, with 'them' embodying many of the aspects that had been central to my upbringing, but which I had perhaps tried not to think about in the following years. This research hence gave me the opportunity, or perhaps forced me, to seize the opportunity to unravel my own development process and uncover some aspects that I had hidden long ago or simply was unaware of.

First, it might be best to explain my upbringing and life in Milan. I was born and raised in Italy, but my parents are Sri Lankan (of Sinhalese heritage). Until the age of five we lived in the northern suburbs of Milan, in an area called *Certosa*, bordering one of the most infamous neighbourhoods of the city, *Quarto Oggiaro*. At the beginning of the '90s, it was still predominantly 'white' as only few households of the neighbourhood had foreigner tenants, including our own. Ours was a very much usual/canonical/stereotypical immigrant experience there: we lived in a one-bedroom

apartment with my aunt and uncle, and we were joined by several other friends/relatives at the weekend, or when they needed a place to stay in Milan. I went to kindergarten there and when I was five I went to live in the city centre as my parents' managers had asked them to live in the free/unused apartment next to theirs. The managers owned a renowned design lighting company, somewhat part of the elite of the Milanese society. We lived on the same floor of the same building as where the managers lived, therefore living in extreme proximity to them and their daughter.

Obviously, my life changed drastically and I assimilated into their lifestyle (I now understand). A lifestyle that is now termed as 'radical chic', made of riches, "glamour", "high society" experiences that represented 'whiteness' and 'Italianness'. Perhaps they did not represent all Italianness and whiteness, but in my mind, they did, or they represented something that was completely distant and opposite from what I had previously experienced, an extraordinary 'upgrade' from my earlier life, or so did my 'child self' believe. In fact, it wasn't solely the relation with the managers' daughter, but also the acquaintances that I made in that area that led to me connecting with 'white', privileged kids, so different from the people I knew in the suburbs, leading a completely different lifestyle.

I experienced very different, confused existences in some ways, and my memories up until recently reflected this confusion: they represented the migrant life and that of "servitude", but also that which was associated with the high-end 'glamourous' lifestyle that my friends and managers' daughter lived. Hence, in front of my Italian acquaintances I had long renounced my 'immigrant self', although due to Italian legislation I was officially considered an *extracomunitari* until the age of eighteen. Until coming to London in 2010, and perhaps even until conducting this research, I had viewed my life in a compartmentalised way, without an ability to syncretise or to embody a space of liminality.

Yet, all this slowly shifted in the years living in London, thanks to my education but also to the city itself. Without a 'clear' identity, and with its 'multicultural' sense of belonging, London numbs each strictly defined cultural box and gives way to creating

a more malleable, unique one. I am still not certain as of now whether I had fully reembraced my immigrant/Sri Lankan side when I started this research, or if I had yet to accept it again and was convinced otherwise.

Nonetheless, the observation that lasted six months (not long enough and yet sufficient time for my cathartic existential process), made me question my identity as an Italian and Sinhalese, but also my positionality as researcher and participant. I embarked on the research journey in a seemingly detached way: I did see a sense of agency in analysing what I called 'my group/my community' (without fully subscribing to it). Yet admittedly, I considered the entire research topic as self-serving to myself and my career, searching whatever might render the study 'interesting'. I looked at the 'participants' as detached from me, denoting them with this scientific aseptic term, without considering the real implications that his would entail, with a delusion that I could be unbiased. Viewing myself as other than *immigrata*, as an Italian, I started looking into *immigrati/e* communities with the same 'colonial gaze' used by anthropologists in the early fieldworks, as I thought they would be 'objectively interesting' to be analysed.

Yet, as Ien Ang (2010 [1989]) queries as well in discussing the purpose of audience theory "[w]hat does it mean to subject audiences to the researcher's gaze? How can we develop insights that do not reproduce the kind of objectified knowledge served up by, say, market research or empiricist effects research? How is it possible to do audience research which is 'on the side' of the audience?" (p. 456).

During fieldwork thankfully my own position shifted almost naturally, as I was spending much time talking to the respondents about their experience as *immigrati/*e. However, rather than being simply 'on the side' of the audience/participants, I felt completely invested in their story and ultimately empathized with them because of my personal background. The observation changed the way I perceived myself in the Italian society: from desiring to be completely Italian as a child, to adjusting to the fact that I embodied two different cultures, and now to seeing myself mostly as an *immigrata*. I have come to the realisation that I have more in common with the *immigrati/e*, where they/us understand each other and I do not feel the need to reveal

only one side of myself that makes them feel comfortable, hiding other parts of myself to be in order to be accepted.

Some aspects, such as going to the schools and hearing how the children were affected by certain episodes of discrimination, reminded me of certain events during childhood. Consequently, I began empathising with the people I was interviewing, which decentred my position, leading me astray and diverting the purpose of the research. In fact, I became so enthralled by the lives of the participants that instead of mainly focusing on discovering how they perceived the 'migration crisis', I became more interested in analysing their struggle living in Italy as *immigrati/e*. In this way, I possibly internally justified my own struggle, confirming the validity of certain types of discrimination that I had 'brushed off', or which had not been considered with their gravity by my other Italian acquaintances. It might be worth questioning whether in recognising myself as a victim during the observation, I applied the same type of victimhood/victimisation to the participants as well.

After the fieldwork, when it was time to start drafting my analysis, I felt blocked as I was ashamed of the realisations I had had during the observation. Mostly I felt uncomfortable embodying the identity of the *immigrata,* and yet occupying the space of a PhD student, an academic, detached again from where I felt most comfortable and at peace.

I started writing the analysis of the research as I was entering a phase in which I dispelled everything that was Italian, completely going against what used to be my behaviour in the past. I became aware of my own wrongdoing – I was ashamed of negating myself and the community that I felt I now belong/ed to. I felt as if I was being disloyal to my community once again, disloyal to my parents and becoming a 'radical chic' myself. This was due to my own insecurities of firstly resenting and detaching myself from the 'immigrant life' when I was little, followed by the utter shame of this attempt to renounce to my own roots as I grew up and came to London.

Having morphed into a participant myself during fieldwork, it was painful renouncing it to regain the researcher's position. At least, I believed (possibly still do) this binary opposition perception in researching to be have been central in this academic journey so far, and the true cause of a continuous block. "Should ethnographers, then, be stressing difference or sameness, or both?", questions Caplan (1993: p.21). This dilemma around the ethnographer as a participant-observer, hence simultaneously "detached and engaged" (Bell, 1993: p.1) was very much an issue that persisted throughout my fieldwork.

In my case, both of these were true to my standpoint as a researcher and the subjects I interviewed. The liminality that characterises my own personal background and history, very much affected in my fieldwork as well, especially with regards to my ethnicity and national and cultural ties. Lila Abu-Lughod's personal identification is perfectly fitting to my case: she denominated herself as a "halfie" (Abu-Lughod, 1990: p.26), hence as someone between cultures, inspired by the term from Kirin Narayan. My presence was sometimes perceived as a threat, I could argue. I constantly questioned how I myself was perceived as this was not clear: it was uncertain whether I was seen as an Italian, hence almost as an outsider, or as a *extracomunitaria/immigrata* like them. In the end, I concluded that most of the participants saw me as one of their own, and if not directly similar to them, with a personal story that closely resembled that of their children.

Similarly, to the ethnographies conducted by Back and Amandiume (1993) studying what had constituted my community once evoked childhood memories and went hand in hand to a constant feeling of nostalgia. Hence, my day-to-day experience as a 'wannabe' detached researcher were juxtaposed to personal empirical memories as an *extracomunitaria/immigrata*, rendering objectivity problematic, if not completely tainted a priori. In fact, this fieldwork constituted a personal evaluation of the changes that had taken place in the city of Milan, the *extracomunitari/immigrata* experience that could be seen/perceived in the daily lives of the new migrant communities and in the way new second generation migrants grew up and their lives were moulded. It

could be said that all this was rather different from the context I had left when I moved out of Milan originally.

Moreover, the power relations that constantly feature during observation did not fully manifest in my case. The constant dilemma with regards to the researchers' privileged position against that of the interviewed subjects, did not appear to constitute an issue in my fieldwork. On an anthropological level, it should be noted that by the end of the 1980s, anthropologists distanced themselves from the overtly distinct categorisation between researchers and the natives. However, it was through reflexivity that these power relations finally succumbed. This is true to my fieldwork especially. I was not perceived as superior and, in my opinion, I did not consider myself as such, although this vastly subjective statement might be disputed, as I began to re-imagine myself as an 'almost native'. While it was difficult to gain most of the participants' trust at first, the majority of them became less distant during the final days.

However, the instances where these power relations remained to various degrees, involved observing families that were debatably 'culturally distant' from me, their migrant selves and journeys were perhaps not as similar to mine as were those of certain other participants. In fact, this was perhaps the case of the Muslim households where the categorisation between the researcher and the native was more evident, as was obvious by the breakdown of researcher and researched subject. It might be argued whether they felt they were being regarded as objects of the research, pressured and scrutinised perennially in Italian society and lastly by someone who, regardless of being 'second generation migrant', did not share their faith and culture. In fact, it also might be questioned whether in their minds they held this type of differentiation between their own experiences and other *immigrati/e*'s experiences of living in Milan/Italy. Perhaps I myself was influenced by the 'warnings' I had heard from other participants, who told me about the difficulty of contacting and accessing Muslim participants. This might have informed my positioning towards them during our initial encounters.

Furthermore, the question of impartiality towards the environment and the ambience that surrounded me marked another questionable fact. Detachment from the local surroundings was problematic: as specified above, the difficulty lay in my own personal attachment to the two studied areas, as I had preconceptions and life-long memories and knowledge, having visited my relatives residing there since childhood. The issues were mostly linked to the fact that I myself was rediscovering the two areas.

All in all, because of my personal development, the ethnic and national identification appeared to me as problematic for research purposes, but cathartic for my own development. I have noticed that the cultural identification is mostly contingent on the person/people I encounter and interact with, and their perspective on where my ethnic and national ties lie. This has been especially relevant to me and my fieldwork, as after considering myself as Italian through the eyes of my own Italian acquaintances, I embodied the *immigrata/extracomunitaria* (or semi) through the recognition that my participants gave me. This will be further explored in the following chapters.

My own Milanese background, carrying all the previously attached preconceptions with regards to the city and a personal knowledge of what being classified as *extracomunitaria/immigrata* entails, did not represent the sole issue in this research. In fact, the fieldwork represented a form of exploration of my personal self and past, a journey I embarked upon as part of self-discovery, or discovery of my city of origin. I regarded it as a novelty experience, not solely for it being my first observation but also as it marked my first stay in Milan after having lived in London for six years. It clearly represented an event that formed a new knowledge and understanding of Milan, crafted through what were believed to be familiar encounters, but revealed as unfamiliar as my own identity had deeply altered since my last stay in Milan.

The research (and along with it, current affairs in Italy e.g. the debate on the *Ius Soli*, Luca Traini, the worsening of the '*immigrazione'* issue) changed the way I position myself in Italian society and view the person that I embody. Despite the undeniable ease entailed in conducting an observation in one's own country and city, it also raises problematic ethical and methodological issues. "This heightens the tendency of the

ethnographer's biography, politics and relationships to become part of the field and indeed, for the reverse to happen- for the field to become an inescapable part of one's life" (Caplan, 1993: p.21). That said, this newfound balance will most likely shift again in the coming years, but in the moment of writing this thesis, this is the position I embody.

Admittedly, confessing and writing this has truly been challenging, primarily to myself, as I have studied diversity and the media, and generally have always prided myself on being open, accepting, and fighting for the minorities. But it is especially this stance of 'fighting for the minorities' that underlines how distant I saw myself from the group I actually belonged to. I too embodied a 'colonial gaze', and it is with this that I embarked on my research; it is with this sense of distance that I interviewed the participants.

CONCLUSION

Examining the context of the fieldwork is extremely important, as this has a fundamental influence in the outcomes of the research. The context of Milan, its history, social, and urban development were briefly analysed to explain the reasoning behind the setting for this particular study. Participants and the researcher occupy diverse positions that though are intrinsically invested with power. Therefore, also questioning the role of the researcher, especially in observation fieldwork, is essential as it establishes the subjectivities that might influence the framework and outcomes of the research. Because the participants' and my own migratory journey partly overlap, I believed it was important to acknowledge my own positionality prior to analysing the information gathered during the observation.

In this particular fieldwork conducted in Milan, my personal history profoundly impacted on how the research was carried out, the choice of informants, and their

participation in the study. My background as a second-generation migrant in Milan and my gender represented an immensely important denominator in the field and influenced the outcome of the findings, as these were primarily from a female perspective. However, this should not be considered as problematic. “The contextuality, narrativity and specificity of women’s moral judgement is not a sign of weakness or deficiency, but a manifestation of a vision of moral maturity that views the self as being immersed in networks of relations with others” (Benhabib, 1987: p.78).

The most compelling aspect of this fieldwork was the constant questioning of my very own beliefs, foundations, suppositions, and preconceptions in regards to the city of Milan. Hence, the boundaries between field and non-field life were rather permeable throughout the research.

5 NARRATIVITY

While undertaking the observation in the two areas of Milan to evaluate whether *immigrati/e*, who had been living in those areas for more than 10 years, were reproducing the main discriminatory discourse in Italy towards the new migrants, one of the most important aspects that kept surfacing was that of identity, or better, the multiple narratives that moulded their sense of self. Although it can be said every participant held various different narratives to their identity, most *immigrati/e* seemed to share a common narrative, a common malaise with their inferior position in the Italian society. In fact, the findings of this research highlight a general sense of discontent by the *immigrati/e* participants in being identified as solely *immigrati/e* in the country and a dissatisfaction with their condition.

In revealing their empathic positioning vis-à-vis the refugees, and exposing their reasoning for such stance, the different themes that emerged uncovered a similar sense of self and narrativity amongst all participants, but above all, almost parallel incidents of discrimination. In describing whether they identified with 'new migrants' or not, one of the most common narratives that defined all of the participants' identities and

lives in Milan was the sense of alienation and powerlessness that they experienced as part of the Milanese society.

This chapter will examine and deconstruct the sense of narrativity that participants demonstrated during the observation. It will make use of the theory first put forward by Somers (1994), Iris Marion Young (1990), and Charles Taylor (1989) who went further in underlining the need to acknowledge the importance of narrativity when analysing the self.

In particular, this section uses as frame Somers' (1994) account of the four dimensions to narrative. Somers specifies four different dimensions to narratives, most importantly the ontological and public narratives which are here central in deconstructing the narrativity around migration, *immigrati/e* and 'new migrants'.

5.1 THE IMPOSED NARRATIVES OF MIGRANTS AND *IMMIGRANTI*

Analysing the participants' sense of narrativity is central in deconstructing their sense of self vis-à-vis the Mediterranean 'migration crisis' and the newly arriving 'new migrants'. Margaret Somers (1994) underlined the centrality of narrativity: "we come to know, understand, and make sense of the social world, and it is through narratives and narrativity that we constitute our social identity. [...] [A]ll of us come to *be* who we *are* (however ephemeral, multiple, and changing) by being located or locating ourselves (usually unconsciously) in social narratives *rarely of our own making*" (Somers,1994: p.606).

Narrativity entails analysing the meaning behind single events only by considering their spatial and temporal connection to other events. "Indeed, the chief characteristic of narrative is that it renders understanding only by *connecting* (however unstably)

parts to a constructed *configuration* or a *social network* of relationships (however incoherent or unrealizable) composed of symbolic, institutional, and material practices" (Somers, 1994: p.616).

In narrativity, this connectivity of parts is what transforms events into episodes, which are then sequenced in chronological order through emplotment. It is through the latter that one can understand the episodes that have built the identity of a person, made him/her what he/she is in the moment being, the creation of a network of relationship that he/she has created and why /what configures him/her *other* than someone else.

In fact, in her words, social actors are not able to create narratives at their own will and have to adhere to ones that have already been fabricated, which make up a rather reduced repertoire of representations: "[w]hich kind of narratives will socially predominate is contested politically and will depend in large part on the distribution of power" (Somers 1994: p.629). Moreover, these available repertoires are always culturally and historically specific to each relational setting. With the latter Somers refers to a substitute to the concept of society and intends it as "a relational matrix, a social network" (Somers 1994: p.626) where identity-formation takes place in. Furthermore, it is crucial to take into consideration the historical developments of a given relational setting in order to better comprehend the interactions between institutions and narratives.

Taking into account Italy's relational setting, its historical development has seen a clear shift in its targets of racism, as already explained in Chapter 2. Particularly the Northern regions of the country have been the focal point of ongoing processes of Othering in the last 70 years, which firstly developed towards Southerners of Italy who were moving to the North in the 1960s and then was aimed towards migrants coming from outside the national boundaries. This was exacerbated with the rise of the *Lega Nord* primarily in the North, as migration became the focal point in the far-right party's discourse, with a discriminatory rhetoric directed first at Southerners (Mollica, 2014), then to *immigrati/e,* and lately to 'new migrants' (Colombo, 2017: p.163).

The *Lega Nord* over the years has been instrumental in constructing the narrative of the general migrant as a 'threat' and as an 'invader' who must be expelled, contributing to the securitising discourse around migration in Italy, especially on a mediatic level. The images of migrants that are regularly shown on Italian TV channels depict emotional scenes of migrants amassed on dinghies somewhere in the Mediterranean Sea, or them being rescued and taken to shelters. Videos show migrants in temporary camps around Italy, for instance in Rome, Milan, or other 'bordering' cities situated proximately to neighbouring European countries.

W. J. T. Mitchell, who explains how the issue of migration in contemporary life is deeply connected not solely to law but also to that of images (iconology), terms this phenomenon as a "contamination by images" and a "migration of images" (Mitchell, 2010: p.13).

"Law and migration engage the realm of images as the location of both the sensuous and the fantasmatic: concrete, realistic representation of actuality, on the one hand, and idealized, or demonized fantasies of migrants as heroic pioneers or invading hordes, on the other."

(...) "Images "go before" the immigrant in the sense that, before the immigrant arrives, his or her image comes first, in the form of stereotypes, search templates, tables of classification, and patterns of recognition" (Mitchell, 2010: p.13).

This was a common theme in all of the participants' experience of living in Italy. The impossibility of escaping such rhetoric was something they all suffered from. Camila, Peruvian from Zona 9, would highlight the fact that she didn't enjoy watching TV news anymore, not only because of the suffocating negativity around 'the migrant' figure, as everyone else said, but also the simple and utter sadness of hearing about the death toll at sea.

However, in front of such images, viewers can have different reactions. As Francesca Falk, who studied the 'Iconology of Illegalized Immigration', observes:

"Such pictures are often polyvalent, their sense can change according to the context, as they contain a multiplicity of possible meanings; the viewer can feel either pity or fear— or both. Nevertheless, generally, packed ships have the potential to evoke a feeling of threat" (Falk, 2010: p.85).

All social actors - some more than others - for instance minority groups such as *immigrati/e*, hold no power and control over their narratives. Somers underlines this sense of powerlessness and victimization that some social actors experience. Branches of social sciences such as gender studies have highlighted the importance and necessity of breaking free from this tradition of exclusion by constructing new public narratives. *Public narratives* go beyond the single individual to more institutional narratives, also commonly known as traditions.

Hence, in relation to this research, it is worth considering not solely *what immigrati/e* think or their perception on the 'migration crisis' but especially *why* they think that way? Why do they position themselves in such manner? What has led them to do so and what has brought them to think that way? Which social agent leads to that positioning? This consequently follows the question: what is the social constitution of their narrativity in Italy and does this affect the way they see the Mediterranean 'migration crisis'?

5.2 IN ACCORDANCE TO PUBLIC NARRATIVES

Valmir and Elira, Albanian of origin living in Zona 2, held conflicting views towards Italians because of how they felt they were being represented as Albanian *immigrati/e* in the Italian society. Valmir recalled the discriminatory past against Albanians in Italian media history (the Vlora ship accident and the enduring nominalisation issue) and admitted that for this reason he did not feel at ease being considered Italian. Valmir was referring to the Albanian exodus that took place after the collapse of the

Communist regime, one of the largest migration movements in Europe after the Second World War.

In August 1991, Italian authorities in Italy disembarked thousands of Albanians from the ship *Vlora* and transferred them to the local football stadium in Bari to be then repatriated. The incident was brought into spotlight on a national and international mediatic level due to the appalling conditions in the stadium where the Albanian migrants were forced to stay (Ginsborg, 2001). The Albanian community then became one of the first recipients of the general racist discriminatory rhetoric. In relation to this, during our first dinner together, Valmir claimed: "First they (Italians) were upset with the Albanian people, now it's the Muslims. They always have to be against someone". Because he is both Albanian and Muslim, he feels that he has had to struggle in the face of both waves of prejudice. "They put everyone in the same bucket. For them it's a normal thing to do - finding someone else to blame".

Elira explained that she is used to other Italians associating the word *Albanese* with that of criminality. Now it's mostly been replaced by Islam and the discourse around it: "It's all for an external façade, a fake political socio-economic reasoning. It's Salvini's plan and they all follow it", said Valmir during that first dinner. It can be argued that Valmir was alluding to the securitisation process on the subject of migration in Italy, hence in the first place the creation of a sense of "insecurity" (Huysmans, 2006: p.2). The current 'migration crisis' in fact has been often linked to terrorism, due to the alleged possibility of letting members of ISIS into Italy and Europe generally. During the following days Elira admitted to how she was worried about her husband as he often complained of the lack of understanding in Italian people.

In the Ecuadorian household living in Zona 2, everyone remarked on the impossibility of connecting with Italians as well. There is the belief in the family that there is a lack of respect towards *immigrati/e* in Italy, or at least less than for others. For Ana, Italians were primarily "self-absorbed and cruel" in front of *immigrati/e*. Diego and Maria claimed how in Milan, Italians would simply concentrate on small futile things in order to point out the differences, for instance the fact that one might like other types of

coffees than espressos: “They just can’t conceive that we like Caffè Americano. For them there’s only espressos, so if you like something different you’re different too”. It was these types belittling comments that mostly bothers them. Diego often got teased at his workplace because of his coffee taste which is not traditionally Italian. Also, he often receives bewildered reactions and comments when he reveals to Italian people that he holds a degree in mathematics. Hence the *immigrato/a* identity corresponds to people who are less likely (if not at all) to hold a degree or simply be ‘educated’.

All of these remarks pointed to a common public narrative that the participants felt they had to embody and carry in order to exist in Milanese society. Deviance from this narrative of the *immigrato/a* was simply impossible, at least in their eyes. It is this public narrative that offered the context for identity building (Somers, 1994), in this case of a particularly crafted figure of the *immigrato/a*.

When asked what concerned them the most about living in Italy, Maria, with whom I spent most of the time in the family, told me that she just didn’t feel at home. Repeatedly throughout the week that I stayed in their household, she constantly expressed that despite her attempts, she just didn’t feel comfortable in Milan, that she didn’t feel as if belonged in the city. “I have no prospects here. Italy didn’t give me anything good. I didn’t find my suerte (fortune) here”. Her identity had been mostly constructed in Ecuador, where she felt that she had power over it, having the possibility to join university and study physics for instance. Instead, from what she revealed during the week, it appeared that the public narrative in Milan constricted her to a bidimensional subject, where she could not attain what she strived for due to her *immigrata* position. Once, as I tried to better analyse that statement with Diego and Ana at the dinner table. Ana said: “We should have some sort of acknowledgement, we pay for taxes and live here. We should be able to vote”. Diego tried to explain this to one of his colleagues once, who replied “You can go to your own country if you want to vote”. This alienation and eternally imposed self-containment has been a key factor over the years in Italy that has deeply shaped her identity formation. As Somers

(1994) pointed out, these are central aspects, despite being traumatic, that define the narrative of one's selfhood.

Diego confessed: "It is true that we are foreigners, but they only see us as *extracomunitari*". For this reason, they don't feel the need and will to apply for Italian citizenship, they underline the fact that they will always feel like *immigrati/e* in Italy. "*Non ti serve a nulla*", it's not useful.

Aida, an Ethiopian living in Zona 2, recalled the frequent racist episodes she was a victim of particularly when her children were little: for instance at the park or when using local transport. In fact, getting her usual bus was often problematic as others (all Italians as she specified) "Other Italians are always complaining of the space I was occupying with my stroller. When I asked another mother with the stroller if could make some space for me, she told me with one "*Ah, gli extracomunitari"/*"Urgh, these *extracomunitari"*, Elira, Diya, and Camila, I have interviewed for the research experienced such insulting episodes on the bus as well, where people would often complain about their strollers particularly.

5.2.1 SEMANTICS: EXTRACOMUNITARI VERSUS STRANIERI

Participants found it challenging to adhere to the identity labels enforced on them in Italian society. It seemed that they felt as though they were being forced to choose between identifying as *immigrati/e* or Italians, as they appeared to be aware of the impossibility of becoming 'fully Italian'. On the other hand, the term *immigrato/a* carried the undesirable features that the wider majority of the Italian society has attached to it over the years. Therefore, they found it completely degrading to be called *immigrato/a* or *extracomunitario/a*. But it must be underlined that given the prominence that these two terms have had or still have in the media and the everyday urban sphere, it appeared that most of participants were victim to the terms' power and seemed to be forced to embody them as well.

Paula, an Ecuadorian living in Zona 2, claims: “Italians see us as *extracomunitari*; for them we are almost as people from another planet. We are aliens for them, we shouldn’t be here”. Here she is alluding to the resemblance of the two words *extracomunitario/a* and *extraterrestre*, aliens. For this reason, she believes that it is better to call her foreigner rather than *extracomunitaria*. In fact, some participants were attempting to create another separate identity, by using a different term to define themselves, that of *stranieri*, foreigners, as opposite to *extracominitari/e* or *immigrati/e.* This was deemed to be less entrenched with negative connotations and provides them the possibility to create a separate narrative.

Diego, an Ecuadorian living with Paula, confirmed this preference of terms, as did Amila and Piyumi, Sri Lankans living in Zona 2, Denis, Filipinos living in Zona 2, and Diya, an Indian living in Zona 9. They all regarded the term *extracomunitario/a* as unacceptable because of the use of it in the media and just an impossibility of defining themselves as such. Amila said: “It sounds like a bad word almost”. Auri explained: “*Extracomunitario* makes you feel so different from the other Italians, like you are not at the same level and inferior”. But she acknowledged that Italians viewed her solely as such. Similarly, *immigrato/a* despite being thought as more positive, carried various negative connotations in their view. By using *straniero/a* they were self-defining as indeed outsiders, as still inarguably part of the ‘Other’, but without forcibly having to use the terms *extracomunitari* or *immigrati/e* .

In this way they are creating their own narrative, providing a negotiated if not oppositional reading to the does and messages associated to the term *immigrati/e* through a process of identity building in which the ‘traits’ they acquire are not completely defined by third parties but instead are outlined in their own will, seemingly finding a compromise.

As Somers (1994) explained, it is fundamental to break free from the main supressing discourse and hence necessary to create new public narratives. Here, though, arises the dilemma: what can one do if the discourse in Italy around migration is perennially negative? How can one find a solution if the portrayal of the *immigrato/a* is in the

hands of the Italian media? How can migrants control their own representation? These representational silences are the main factors that lead to invisibility.

"Choosing narratives to express multiple subjectivities is a deliberate way of rejecting the neutrality and appearance of objectivity typically embedded in master narratives" (Somers 1994: p.630).

These homogenous dominant narratives potentially damage identity formation in already 'frail' or 'unstable' social actors, such as the *immigrati/e*'s children, the second generation *Other*. One might claim that the vast, shared desire/will to return to their countries of origin, particularly with reasoning to provide a better life for their children, can be traced to the lack of available narratives in Italian society that do not adequately or completely represent the participants but especially their children. In this way participants feared that their sons and daughters might not be able to resonate with the master narratives, having to choose between being *'Italiano/a'* or '*immigrato/a*'.

Having expressed quite deep resentment towards both of these narratives, one better comprehends the participants' need to leave the country and provide their children an arguably more 'stable' environment to cultivate their identity-formation. "Struggles over narration are struggles over identity" (Somers, 1994: p.631). People who live in privileged positions, in this case Italians in most of the participants' view, are not prone to seeing the multiplicity of alternative narratives around them and possibly unconsciously do not allow these to flourish, by inadvertently continuing to use terms such as *extracomunitari/e* and *immigrati/e*. On the other hand, the participants are quasi mobilising themselves by identifying themselves with the term *straniero/a*. They were embracing their otherness and the awareness of the impossibility of being 100% Italian, on their own terms.

5.2.2 INSTITUTIONALIZED RACISM

"Until they get to know you properly, they're a bit racist". This was what Diego claimed. Despite initially telling me he had a positive experience working with other Italian colleagues and would then earn a promotion five months after the observation, he later admitted the lack of respect from his co-workers. It was due to different factors, majorly the accent he had when he spoke Italian, and his Evangelical faith.

Here it is important to ponder the concept of racism and that of being racist. I pose this question as one might justly interrogate whether these comments can be regarded as racist or rather result from mere ignorance, or simple curiosity. However, in this case one must take into consideration the different voices of complaint that denounce the same types of subtle abuse. It is the repetitiveness of all the various comments and the fact that they mostly go unnoticed that renders them dangerous.

Aida, an Ethiopian, for instance, explained that racism is still very present in Italy, and recalls a racist episode that her son Ermo was victim of: "In second grade, a fellow classmate had called Ermo a *'brutto negro'*/ugly negro". She also admits that the overall situation has improved in regards to racism in Italy; however in her opinion it is still worse than in other countries such as England and France. Her husband Yonas also admitted once that he has been victim of racist insults, but it appeared as if he was reluctant to admit the gravity of those incidents in front of me. It was Aida who revealed to me that he was and still is regularly victim of racist remarks from his colleagues at work, in the hospital. It appeared that he himself had normalised such behaviour, such racism, or perhaps was ashamed to recall such instances.

Noteworthy was also the way the participants perceived Italians' opinion of them, how they were/are being identified by Italians. Yonas, for instance, believed that most Italians didn't differentiate between ethnicities but group all foreigners on low-income jobs, mostly in the caretaking/cleaning/service sector, as *immigrati/e.* For this reason,

he is certain that most Italians don't differentiate between the diverse African ethnicities: "They only know I'm African. They assume also that I'm Muslim".

One might add to this discussion the importance that appearance holds in Italian settings, as some participants have noticed. For instance, Elira and Valmir, Albanian, are both fair skinned and one could argue they appear as Italians somatically. Elira acknowledges that this might be the reason why she hasn't yet been victim of grave instances of racism. However, she is well aware of the discrimination that takes place around her. She tells me of a friend of hers from Cameroon, one with whom she is closest here in Milan, who is regularly insulted due to the colour of her skin and her hair, once even in front of Elira. "Most people in Milan get stuck on perception, on appearances. My friend from Cameroon always gets noticed in the street. She's catcalled all the time ". When one is of a minority and is therefore constantly regarded as less in a given country, one has difficulty embracing such a nationality.

5.3 MOULDING AN ONTOLOGICAL NARRATIVE

Because the public narrative that is usually fixed on them is the one associating them with the image of *immigrati/e*, a mixed narrative that is created with the one of their own ontological and public narrative does not involve them recognizing themselves as Italians, not even in the slightest. The interviewed participants seemed compelled to adhere to the *immigrati/e* public narrative, moulding it somehow to what they felt most comfortable with as already explained, letting these narratives shape their own ontological narrativity. For this reason, they appear to reject being identified as Italian or even associated with *Italianità*/Italianness.

Valmir explained:"I don't like the [Italian] traditions and values: I don't think people are true". Valmir confessed that he had no desire to return back to Albania. However, at the same time, he did not think highly of Italy.

What became evident during the observation was that Elira doesn't feel Italian, but neither Albanian. "I don't feel like calling myself anything. I don't know what I am. I don't feel Albanian as I once did, but I don't feel Italian either. I don't want to embrace the Italian identity". Despite living in Milan for over 10 years, she seemed to show resistance towards the idea of being identified as Italian. One could argue she demonstrated herself to be rather ambivalent in recounting and explaining her sense of identity. "I feel like I am neither", she said. It must be partly because of the impossibility of advancing socially in Italian society that most of her relatives have had to face. She revealed that her sister, for instance, was a graduate of 'Classical Letters' in Albania, but since arriving in Milan eight years ago she had not been able to find a job other than in caretaking for the elderly. What bothered her the most was this immobility, the impossibility to advance in their relational setting as their given identity was fixed and already written for them. Linking it to Young (2014), it is the sense of marginalisation but especially powerlessness that Elira appears to be referring to in this instance.

"The powerless are [...] those over whom power is exercised without their exercising it; the powerless are situated so that they must take orders and rarely have the right to give them. Powerlessness also designates a position in the division of labour and the concomitant social position that allows persons little opportunity to develop and exercise skills. The powerless have little or no work autonomy, exercise little creativity or judgment in their work, have no technical expertise or authority, express themselves awkwardly, especially in public or bureaucratic settings, and do not command respect" (Young, 2014: p.21-2).

However, it can be argued that Elira herself is a symbol of counter-narrative, of mobilisation, as she is now attending university in Milan, despite the economic difficulties the family has to face. It should be noted that other participants, as well, are highly-qualified as they claim to have attended university in their countries of origin, or in general have had a good education, and yet they carry out low-skilled jobs

as it seems that they are blocked into inferior categories of labour, indeed "the lowest of the urban subproletariat" that Chakravorty Spivak was referring to (1988: p.283).

Because of this constant marginalisation and demonisation from the likes of Italians and Italian media, participants showed a type of rejection in being identified or identifying themselves as Italians. Their collective memories of living in Milan were so highly stained by acts of discrimination and a sense of powerlessness that instead of desiring to be identified as Italians or obtaining even the citizenship that would have facilitated their stay in Italy and mobility globally perhaps, most preferred to inhabit a place of instability and liminality.

For instance, Yonas, an Ethiopian, didn't desire Italian citizenship but he applied for it for the sake of his children, so that they would acquire it as well and wouldn't have to wait until their 18th birthday. He specified that he doesn't feel Italian but he applied out of fear for his children.

"I don't feel like being Italian, but you never know though. It's only to have this piece of paper that I did it. It's safer for my kids too". The acquisition of that piece of paper, the passport as the main document for citizenship, is regarded as obviously beneficial in technical terms. It is on this aspect that the priority lies, only on a logistical level. However, when it comes to a 'sentimental' attachment, sense of pride of or belonging to being Italian, all this is null. Pride towards Italy as a nation, to their new adoptive country, was out of the question. One could argue this to be the case in other countries as well, where migrants continuously question (and are questioned about) their sense of belonging to the new country of residence. However, due to the unquestioned racism and marginalisation, perhaps it is easier for migrants in Italy to dissociate themselves from the country of settlement.

On the last day, as I was thanking the family for participating to this research, Yonas told me it was their pleasure and mostly duty to do so. He underlined the fact that, differently from Italian ones, Ethiopian customs requires them to be welcoming when hosting others: "We accept everyone". Recounting my personal experience among

Italians, I questioned his affirmation, explaining that in most Italian household it was common to be well-received as a guest. Yonas, agreed yet explained that it was a general criticism of how Italians look after each other, the growing number of homeless people particularly in Milan, and the now common practice to take the elderly into retirement homes. "In Ethiopia the whole family stays at home, you're supposed to take care of your parents, grandparents. No one thinks of taking the elders to a retirement home".

This represented a clear-cut positioning of them versus Italians, a perceived incompatibility. This showed a resistance to be lined to these particular aspects that mould parts of Italian narratives, or rather it showed his own specific unwillingness to analyse and better understand the situation of the place he lives in and the people around him. Possibly his resentment towards the treatment he and his family were subject to, led him to adhere to generalising narratives that worked out of favour of Italians, but in the end reproduced the same types of stereotyping that he complained about.

Camila, of Peruvian nationality living in Zona 9, was the participant who had the most striking opinion on Italians, particularly due to her ongoing marriage status to Italian Bruno. It was my assumption that she would hold a positive perception of what 'being Italian' entails, yet her firm views were close to being the polar opposite.

"I don't want my kids to grow up here and become like...Italians. I don't want them to have an Italian personality. Her complete rejection to being identified as Italian went as far as denying her own children of acquiring Italian citizenship. Despite this not being the main concern of the research, the continuous belittling of her Italian husband was also telling of her opinion regarding Italians.

In addition, it is important to note how Camila made use of the affiliation and knowledge about her husband to generalise and to stereotype all Italians. During the dinners that we had together and in particular the last one, she would constantly contradict her husband. When I asked about the occurrences in Lampedusa and about

the Syrian refugees arriving to Greece, Bruno would share that he didn't like the idea of 'Africans' arriving in Italy, and Camila would adamantly challenge his opinion, telling him that he didn't understand what it meant to be migrating to another country. She would look at me while Bruno would try to defend his stance and she would say "*tu non capisci"*/"you don't understand".

The following day, when I asked her about the last discussion that we had, she admitted that she was used to constantly disagreeing with her husband. "I am a migrant so I know what it means to be a migrant and to make sacrifices. He doesn't know what it means to be a migrant, to go to another country and start your life again". Camila portrays herself as similar to 'new migrants' and her own positioning vis-à-vis the refugees appears as empathic, especially in the way she exposes the problematic depiction of the 'migration crisis' in the media. It can be argued that by doing this, she was also denouncing the way the media portrayed people like herself, the 'other', the *immigrati/e* as well. While talking about the current 'migration crisis' in fact, she would show herself to be in solidarity with the latest 'other'.

Moreover, Camila's view on Italians seemed to be highly influenced by her own relationship with her mother-in-law. She constantly disagreed with her and confessed to feel sentiments bordering on hatred towards her. One of the reasons for their animosity was due to their discord precisely on the 'migration crisis' discourse. Her mother-in-law appears to be very much against *immigrati/e* and 'new migrants', as Camila reports. "Television influences her a lot. She believes that the government detracts money from her pension in order to give it to migrants". She then added: "They are no more Christian people with morals". It was not clear who "they" referred to, possibly to people who hold negative views against *immigrati/e* communities in Milan or the current 'migration crisis', but from the overall tone that our conversation had taken it could have been referred to Italians as well.

Similarly, Fatou didn't want to be associated with what she considered represented being *Italianità*/Italianness. For Fatou, a Senegalese woman living in Zona 2 with her husband and child, the values that are at the core of Italian identity are not as

exemplary as Italians think. Her personal view has very much been affected by the continuous episodes of racism she has been victim to over the years.

For instance, possibly due to her striking presence but also the colour of her skin, which she underlines as the real reason instead, she has been repeatedly catcalled in the streets and most gravely mistaken as a prostitute. As mentioned in the last chapter, the last of these occasions had taken place only the week prior to our research, when an Italian man had stopped in front of her while driving and started publicly masturbating. She used these types of examples to explain what Italianness meant for her. Because of these negative episodes, she repeatedly told me that she wanted to leave the country.

This common negative view of Italianness is obviously given by the fact that participants have had to struggle during their stay in Italy. But what is truly astounding is the commonality of such experiences, the common sense of disengagement, perceived inferiority, and hopelessness.

Almost in opposition to the 'they' stands the 'we', which gathered by Fatou's stance, represented general migrant selves, *immigrati/e*, 'new migrants', refugees. As Charles Taylor (1989) has theorised, ontological narratives do rely on public narratives, and the public narrative in Italy around migration influenced so extensively the ontological one that Camila and other participants held as to create a differently raw perception of self.

This case was verified by Piyumi and Amila, a Sri Lankan couple living in Zona 2. Piyumi was aware of her position and identity as an *immigrata*, which was often underlined to her by the *nonna* she worked for. When they discussed the daily news, mostly concerning criminal occurrences in Italy that *nonna* has seen on TV, she often hinted to the fact that it has been another *extracomunitario*, at time referring them to Piyumi as "One of your people". She did not make distinction and called everyone as *immigrati/e*, which then is always linked to criminality.

This arguably posits Piyumi in a very defined group in her mind, that in the eyes of the *nonna* is other to being Italian. It can be claimed that Ruth embodies such a position, makes it involuntarily her own as her narrativity is explicitly narrated by the dominant discourse through the *nonna* and her own positioning in front of such discourse.

Recalling this event, Piyumi admitted: "If we live here, Italians prefer us to be more like them, to become like them without our own things, without our culture". Hence, Piyumi does not identify as Italian but she believes she is different as well to Sri Lankans in Milan: "Among other Sri Lankans, I feel Italian. I have lived here [Milan] too long to feel Sri Lankan". This is because she has lived in Milan for over fifteen years. She could potentially denominate herself to be Italian and present herself as such. Nonetheless because of a constant hopeless sense of inferiority, which goes unquestioned because of a state of governmentality that arguably expresses itself through the voice of the *nonna*, Piyumi seems incapable of identifying herself as being, even marginally, Italian. In fact, on a general level, there was a sense in certain participants of unquestioned adherence to a sense of inferiority, and a sense of duty and acceptance in being viewed as *immigrati/e*, which is unquestionably embodied.

What is the objective narrative in Italy for *immigrati/e*? Or perhaps, what are the available narratives in Italy for people who live there but are foreign and placed in lower income jobs? From the research, these seemed to be limited to a few, if not only one.

What constitutes their identities is an assembly of memories. However, the narrativity they associate with living in Milan specifically comprises of collective memories as *immigrati/e*. Various participants recounted past experiences of their daily lives in Milan that altogether created a sense of communal narrative of what it entails to embody the *immigrato/a* self. Most of these collective memories narrated of deleterious and mentally debilitating events of residing, working and starting families in Italy, which all featured hardship, struggle and (mental) abuse. It was through the recollection of these memories that the *immigrati/e* participants were able to formulate

their disagreement with the prospect of new 'new migrants' coming to Italy. Not merely because they felt adverse or in competition with them, but precisely because they acknowledged their experiences of being *immigrati/e* in Milan as demeaning and possibly dehumanising.

5.3.1 THE CHILDREN: THE LIMINAL NARRATIVES PER ECCELLENZA

The importance that each participant gave towards identity was most notable when they considered their children's growth and development in a country that was different to that of their parents, hence leading to a possible sense of unsettled identity, uncertain narrative. In some cases, preoccupation subsided to parents wanting to reinforce a type of narrative on their children that did not completely encompass the latter and that possibly the children would enter into conflict with in the years to come.

As a matter of fact, one of the most pressing issues in most of the households was the distance that participants' children seemed to have with their parents' culture and nationality. Most of the participants recalled occasions when they would return to their home countries for vacation and their children would appear lost, different to the rest of the children.

In respect to this, the one that was most striking was that of the Ethiopian family who lived in Zona 2. Despite Yonas, the husband, having a strong sense of Italianness, Aida, the mother, was completely against her children growing up to share the similar sentiment. She in fact desired solely to return to their home country, as she considered it, Ethiopia, as she didn't envision any prospect for her children in Italy. She was extremely oppositional to her children, Ermo and Jonathan, acquiring/developing an Italian identity. She was aware that it might be too late, however. She recounted how the different times she went to Ethiopia," "My family told me off for the ways in which I raised my kids. Even now when I call my mother she tells me they are too spoilt, that they are Italians". This demonstrates that she does not see/refuses to consider her own

children as Italians. “They were born here, they grew up here, but they will never be Italians”.

It can be argued that she might be trying to protect her children from the disenchantment of persistently being regarded as part of the ‘Other’ and never being accepted in the Milanese society, despite having been born and raised there. It can be claimed that she is projecting her own experience on to her children, but she is justified by the fact that the latter have already had to face racist discrimination at school. Because of this, she does not believe that Ermo and Jonathan will ever be integrated and that their skin colour will always be a physical marker that will set them aside from the rest of the Italian society. Their otherness will always define them.

In fact, Aida feared as well that her children will not have the same possibilities to succeed as other ‘Italian’ kids have. She was adamant to recognise the possibility that it might be too late to change her children’s character development, that she might hold a chance to redeem their personality, that their personalities (and arguably also their narrativity) might be still ‘salvable’. Or better, she was aware of the probability of their identities being fondly shaped in Italy but also was hopeless in front of the ‘degrading’ reality which might follow.

With regards to her children, Fatou, a Senegalese woman of Zona 2, explained that she could not fathom how they would or could identify with being Italian. In fact, it was rather impossible for her first child, as her eldest daughter was born and lives to this day in Senegal. Her youngest was once rejected from a group at school while playing by her fellow classmates due to her blackness. Fatou told me about this event while at dinner in front of her daughter who then confirmed that she had few friends at school and that children made fun of her continuously. It can be argued that both Fatou and Aida acknowledge no matter how much they consider they are Italians, their children’s experience will always be mediated by ‘their ‘Otherness’.

Similarly, throughout the week, Peruvian Camila who is married to Italian Bruno showed to be completely adverse to the idea of her children 'becoming'/ growing up to be Italian. She told me that she wasn't fond of the circumstance of raising her kids among Italian children: "My children grow up too spoilt and bad mannered, they always say bad words". She seems worried about her children Diego and Laura growing up without proper religious values. She underlined the fact that her own husband did not have faith before he met her, hence placing much importance on faith. Being a fervent Catholic, she wants her children to grow up with the same beliefs, but she did not think that embracing Italian identity would lead to that. It appears that she is linking faith with the potential and ability to do and act good. Faithlessness equals a lack of morality in her mind, hence she is indirectly justifying the lack of empathy of her husband Bruno. If Italian society appears to be incapable of empathy, this is due to its secular nature and the lack of fervent faith, which on the contrary in her opinion characterises her country of origin and many of her Peruvian friends and relatives in Milan.

However, on the matter of raising their children to be on some level Italians, Ecuadorian Maria and Diego were less concerned than the others. They were aware of the inevitability of this taking place. However, their set plan to return back to Ecuador to raise their children has to be taken into account. They both confirmed that this decision was the result of a desire to provide the same 'spatial' freedom, in terms of external playgrounds/parks and especially larger houses (the four of them slept in the same room in Milan), but also the practicality of growing up among an extended family in Ecuador, of having, in their opinion, a narrative that could have more commonalities with the people around them. In this case as well, one can note a sense of absence that drives the participants away from Italy, yet while still central to identity it does not originate from discrimination.

Indian Diya and Aditya both showed their concerns to the influences that were marking their children's growth. Diya explained: "My daughters are distant from India and from our culture. When we went back to India the last time after six years it was as if our daughters were completely out of place."

Nancy, Diya's eldest daughter whom I was able to interview, told me " I do not like to be identified as Italian". She herself was born in Gujarat and then moved with her mother at the age of seven. But this sentiment of misplacement is also the result of growing tensions at her high school. The rhetoric used by some of her professors on the matter of the 'migration crisis' is often confrontational and derogatory of migrants. When I asked her who in particular 'migrants' referred to, 'new migrants' or *immigrati/e,* Priya admitted that she was not sure of it herself. "In general", she told me.

However, it is evident that a type of binary opposition discourse is being reinforced at school, at her school in particular, divulging the eternal idea of the 'us versus them'. Hence, she herself primarily had befriended other students at school who are 'second-generation' migrants themselves. In front of her professors' stance on the subject of migration, Priya positioned herself with the 'Other', identifying her own selfhood as more similar to that of the underdog of society. Vis-à-vis the refugees, she hence showed solidarity, due to experiencing a similar narrative of alienation. The representation of the marginalisation and voicelessness that refugees experience is a reminder of Priya's own marginalisation and misrepresentation she feels her, her family, *immigrati/e,* and 'new migrants' undergo as well.

In fact, the general *immigrato/a* narrativity is never solely one, but in the wider Italian relational setting is sold as fixed and ever immobile. This is true to 'new migrants' as well. The participants embodied a similar sense of strife and stasis as they also shared various episodes of racism during their years in Italy, which reinforced their sense of inferiority. Within this common *immigrati/e/extracomunitari/e* narrative, specific group identification arises, possibly also for individuals to adhere to social groups that are less tainted with the negative criminal image, which is ultimately that of the *immigrati/e.* It can be argued that the representations of the newcomers remind *immigrati/e* of their own status in Italy and the portrayal they are subjected to in the Italian media. The level of inferiority, and the allusions to a rise of criminality that migrants generally are subjected to, might be a common denominator between the

representations of ‘new migrants’ and *immigrati/e* and the reason why the latter empathise with the newcomers to Italy.

5.3.2 GROUP IDENTIFICATION WITHIN GROUP IDENTIFICATION

One of the most focal network environments that helped build relationships in the community seemed to be the schools that the participants’ children attended. Naturally within a larger social group, smaller, more specific ones might arise due to a need to find members with more common traits, such as language, culture, or tradition.

Whereas some participants such as Diego or Fatou viewed *immigrati/e* as whole, highlighting a sense of self that is influenced by the definition that Italians have regarding them, others do in fact point out their differences among *immigrati/e*: Aida for instance. While at the park one day, I asked about the area in which she lived in and the people/neighbours that inhabit it. She underlined that it feels like a difficult place where she doesn’t feel safe : “*Via Padova* isn’t a good area, there are many Latin American transsexuals who prostitute themselves. There are Arabs and Moroccans and other many races but we are not all the same. But they (Italians) only have to see our skin colour and we’re grouped as *extracomunitari*. They don’t know how to separate us, even if you have (Italian) citizenship”. Aida mostly acknowledged the sense of desolation in being constantly classed as inferior or ‘Other’ in the eyes of Italians. Yet, it was also interesting how this sense of inferiority, despite being the result of long-lasting marginalisation that had affected her, also signalled new forms of Othering, where what is considered the ‘Other’ simultaneously ‘others’ another in order to improve its own level of Otherness.

This was true for the two Filipino households as well. Auri and Denis, a Filipino couple living in Zona 2 with their two children, seemed to be the most at ease with their sense of identity as outsiders, or at least so they claimed. While at dinner on the Saturday of the week I conducted the research with them, Denis told me he was certain

not to be or feel Italian, and was certain of his position as an *immigrato*, although preferring to address himself as a *straniero*, acknowledging or arguably reinforcing his given position in society. Auri appeared to agree with her husband. Denis clarified that he primarily identified as Filipino, despite having resided in Italy for fifteen years. In the following days, I realised that although they were much involved locally and had befriended other parents in their children's school, such as the other participants of research (Diego, Maria, Amila, and Piyumi), Denis and Auri valued the larger Filipino community in Milan more. Usually on a Sunday they preferred going to the Filipino Mass in central Milan, at the *Basilica di Santo Stefano Maggiore*, the 'Migrants Parish' of Milan. They meet up with other Filipino relatives and friends weekly, an event to which I participated in. With 48,364 compatriots as of 2017, the Filipino community is the third largest in the province of Milan (tuttitalia.it, 2018).

This resembled the social habits of Arnold and Joyce, part of the Filipino family living in Zona 9. The latter, however, completely opposed the idea of embracing a sense of Italianness due to the continued discrimination they felt was directed towards Filipinos in Italy. They had a conflicting relationship with Italians as they mostly made notice of the popular erroneous use of the term *'la Filippina'* to call all domestic workers. "Why do you have to use *Filippina* to describe this work? Not every Filipino is a domestic worker. But they (Italians) always have to generalise. They make fun of us on TV, with that comedian". As mentioned in the previous chapter, Arnold also recalled a comedic sketch on a famous Italian show where an Italian comedian imitated a Filipino domestic worker. "It was so degrading. I have seen other Italians imitating it as well, we work and we get insulted too". They deeply valued their Filipino communities in Milan, they felt reassured to have other 'Others' who shared narratives which deeply resembled one another, especially in the sense of 'homelessness' and alienation in their 'new country'.

In relation to this, Iris Marion Young (1990, 2000) reaffirmed the importance of acknowledging the reality of social groups, discarding the theory whereby the eradication of oppression entails first the elimination of social groups, as it frees individuals from norms and stereotypes. Instead, Young highlights the significant

implications that adhering to particular social groups entails for certain people. “Even when they belong to oppressed groups, people’s group identifications are often important to them, and they often feel a special affinity for others in their group” (1990: p.47). However, that said, Young does acknowledge the singularity and heterogeneity that each individual might hold in the various social groups.

“The same discussion has also led to the recognition that group differences cut across individual lives in a multiplicity of ways that can entail privilege and oppression for the same person in different respects” (Young, 1990: p.42). Individuals who belong to a certain group might hold certain affinities, shared experiences, which on the other hand they don’t have with those not identified with said group. “Group identification arises, that is, in the encounter and interaction between social collectivities that experience some differences in their way of life and forms of association, even if they regard themselves as belonging to the same society” (Young, 1990: p.43).

One could therefore argue that the two Filipino families’ narrativity was still very much entrenched with their sense of nationhood and national belonging, which was reinforced by the presence of other countrymen/women in Milan; being part of a larger community that shared a common narrative in terms of communal stories of origin, language, culture, and more. Simultaneously, however, this community also shared the sense of belittling and marginalisation described above, and perhaps this reason reinforced their bond.

5.3.3 THE NARRATIVES OF RELIGION: THE ROLE OF CATHOLICISM

Religion played an important role in how the participants positioned themselves.

Living in a predominantly Catholic country such as Italy additionally complicates the ability to narrate oneself. One’s positionality also has to be confronted in regards to the religion in a the Italian social context, religion is valued as a fundamental marker of identity. One might argue that Italianness is also closely linked to Catholicism and carries certain connotations and narratives that people need to adhere to. You do see

differences in positionality, in understanding one's position amidst a society that is predominantly Catholic.

The Catholic tradition with its codes and customs, has been ingrained into people's way of conduct, continuing from generation to generation. Not being Catholic might be seen as an important marker that distances a person from what is considered to be Italian. Religion is a marker of difference and in Italy, that which is not Catholic is classified as the 'Other'. It is possible that 'new migrants' might be considered through this Catholic lens. There might be a tendency to see people as not belonging to Catholicism as different, unable to be part of the society.

It is through this perspective that Muslims in particular, due to the various misrepresentations in media globally and especially, are perceived as not belonging to the community. This also is linked to the long history of struggle between Catholicism and Islam, the Holy Wars, the dominion of the Moors in Southern Italy.

What is not Christian and Catholic is classified as 'Other'. Yet, specifically in Italy, the Italian Catholic society has a long historical relationship with Islam, that has mostly been antagonistic.

Islam, or rather Muslims, are thus unwanted subjects in Europe. But Islam shouldn't be considered as a novel and external factor in Europe, if we keep in mind its presence in Southern Spain, the Balkan region and Southern Italy as well. In Italy in particular, one ought to remember the Arab presence in Sicily since the seventh century, or for instance up to the eighteenth century in the northern and central regions (Allievi, 2007). But it is through wider historical accounts such as the Crusades or the clashes with the Ottoman Empire that Islam is seen as the enemy of predominantly Catholic Italy.

Yet, Allievi argues that from a sociological point of view, the presence of Muslim communities is indeed a new phenomenon, as in fact people coming from 'Muslim countries' represent the more recent flows of migrants (compared to other groups).

Moreover, this ‘Muslim cycle’ is more varied when compared to other countries in Europe.

This has developed pre-inscribed ways of ‘Othering’ that have close links to forms of identification and exclusion that have been passed down through generations, a mentality that is very much part of the Italian society. This has led to socially preinscribed forms of ‘Othering’, whereby who you are is reflected towards who you are not. Memory, oral history, the past might be part of processes of formed ideas of what ‘Italian’ entails, which involve being Catholic as well. That which is not Catholic inhabit an antagonistic role in the Italian society. This particular reading, this meaning though is difficult to oppose and reject.

Immigrati/e living in Italy, especially if Christian, might adopt this type of resentment that is intrinsic to social mentality and social norms and Italian culture. In fact, as it will be further explored in Chapter 7, in most cases, participants showed concern in regards to Muslim people residing in Milan and entering Italy.

CONCLUSION

Somers emphasised that identity construction is in reality a constant interplay between ontological and public narratives, between one’s own individual traits of being and his/her positioning in society, be it active or passive. Identity formation is enacted within this relation, with aspects such as victimisation and powerlessness being central in such development.

The last point was particularly highlighted by the participants of the research during the observation. What most participants admitted was a shared sense of exclusion and invisibility in the country they now lived in. They felt blocked into an already constructed categorical box, from which one simply could not escape. Their identities

are fixed and remain accordingly in this specific Italian relational setting. The public narratives in Italy around *immigrati/e* and migration in general influenced the participants' own ontological narratives profoundly: public narratives along with ontological narratives helped to construct new senses of selves, that helped the participants to define themselves and be defined in the Milanese context/relational setting. This was central in their narrativity.

"[P]eople make sense of what has happened and is happening to them by attempting to assemble or in some way to integrate these happenings within one or more narratives; and that people are guided to act in certain ways, and not others, on the basis of the projections, expectations, and memories derived from a multiplicity but ultimately limited repertoire of available social, public, and cultural narratives" (Somers, 1994: p.614).

Therefore, this chapter explored the *immigrati/e* participants' positionality in relation to the 'migration crisis', the way they make sense of themselves vis-à-vis the narratives that they are coerced to inhabit. The resisting ontological narratives that are shared by the participants when asked to reflect on the depiction of the 'migration crisis' emphasize a detachment from the public narratives linked to them by the media and the Italian society at large. The identity/narrativity building that the participants experienced entailed a rejection of being defined as *extracomunitari,* but also an unwillingness to adopt for themselves and their children signs of Italianness, due to ongoing experiences of discrimination from the likes of Italian people/acquaintances. Moreover, they quasi-reluctantly accepted being identified as *immigrati/e*, as the narrative was inescapable, but attempted to create their own narrative by identifying themselves with the preferred term of *straniero/a.* The decreased sense of agency and the incapacitating inability of expression will be explored in the following chapter. It will highlight the importance of 'Voice' in self-narration, in finding one's positionality in a particular context such as the one in Milan, Italy, but especially in regards to the stereotyped representations in media, decoding the message affixed to this representation in an oppositional way .

6 VOICE

To deny someone the ability to express himself/herself is to deny one of the most basic dimensions of human experience (Couldry, 2010, p.7). Hence, this chapter will examine how the participants of the observation made sense of embodying the status of voiceless *immigrati/e*. In order to do so, the chapter will examine *immigrati/*e's oppression by using Iris Marion Young's (2005) 'Five faces of Oppression' theory. Then it will uncover the concept of voice as theorised mainly by Nick Couldry (2010), Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988), and Kristie Dotson (2011). These theories will be central to analysing how the lack of agency and voice in media and forms of epistemic violence render the migrant subjects living in Italy voiceless, ultimately deteriorating the process of identity construction and self-expression which have already been discussed in the chapter on 'Narrativity'.

The figure of the migrant seems bound to hold centre stage on most media platforms, and yet at the same time, despised and voiceless. This might be true in any context and place, with any ethnicity, as was the case for instance with EU migrants during Brexit (Krupa, 2016), but the rhetoric that identifies the migrant body is on average the same: 'overwhelming swarms', 'invasions', 'floods', are the key terms of xenophobic

discourses in defining current migratory phenomena. Yet in the chaos, the voice of the migrant, who in theory is the subject of the news, is rarely heard. Therefore, the migrant is placed as the object in the news stories and silenced.

Whenever footage is shown on Italian TV news depicting the arrivals of migrants by sea at Lampedusa, what is shown to the viewer is exactly this type of image, generally with a correspondent's voice over explaining the gravity of the current 'migration crisis'. This type of report is usually accompanied by data regarding leaving or arrival numbers, along with general death tolls. Videos of dinghies crossing the Mediterranean with the now (in)famous bright orange rescue vests aboard have almost become part of the daily news agenda, deeply familiar to every household in Italy.

But what do they actually depict? What is the main purpose of such images? Are the migrants that are shown interviewed as well, and allowed to provide their first-hand experience? In fact, one should question whether migrants' agency is nullified by these portrayals, and relevant to this research, what this incites in the everyday lives of *immigrati/e* who witness these arrivals as the 'Other' people in Italy.

While conducting the observation in the areas of Zona 2 and Zona 9 in Milan and analysing how different *immigrati/e* households perceive the so-called 'migration crisis', what transpired was a common sense of inferiority, a constant disposition to racism and a feeling of embodying a powerless status. In fact, as explored in the previous chapter, the identity construction, or better, the ways in which the *immigrati/e* in Italy mould their own narrativity, was one of the most crucial aspects uncovered during the research. Discrimination and powerlessness underlay the different concepts that have been addressed before. However, these have not yet been uncovered from another dimension: that of voice. This is to be analysed here not for its sonic aspect but with its "role as the means whereby people give an account of the world in which they act" (Couldry, 2010: p.91).

One of the factors that renders a group a minority is in most cases the inability to speak, or to communicate their experience to a wider part of society; the incapability to access certain platforms, but equally, the unwillingness of others to listen to them. One might claim that citizens and residents in a given society should be theoretically acknowledged and 'seen'. However, despite *immigrati/e* having an obvious physical voice, they don't appear to be able to exercise it, and divulge their opinions on a national level. It can be suggested that this heavily influences not only their status as social and political actors but also their ongoing processes of self-reflection and of narrativity. As Nick Couldry explains:

"The value of voice articulates some basic aspects of human life that are relevant whatever our views on democracy or justice, so establishing common ground between contemporary frameworks for evaluating economic, social and political organization (...) and it links our account of today's crisis of voice to a variety of sociological analyses (...)" (Couldry, 2010: p.3-4).

6.1 THE CONSTRUCTION OF NARRATIVITY THROUGH VOICE

Voice is key in how one shapes and makes sense of himself/herself. The ability to express it or denied it is a central characteristic of how one envisions/moulds his/her identity and defines the lived narrativity. For voice to emerge, it requires both social resources and a form, which Nick Couldry delineates as the aspects of its materiality. He underlines that "we do not generate the means by which we narrate, we emerge as subjects into a narrative form" (Couldry, 2010: p.9). Couldry makes use of Judith Butler's concept of narrative and the idea of "giving an account of oneself" to underline the importance that voice as process entails.

"What we do – beyond a basic description of how our limbs move in space – already comes embedded in narrative, our own and that of others. This is why to deny value to another's capacity for narrative – to deny her potential for voice – is to deny a basic dimension of human life" (p.7).

Being denied the possibility of expressing oneself, of defining oneself and how others should see and recognise him/her, is a substantial form of oppression. As Couldry explains:

"If, through an unequal distribution of narrative resources, the materials through which some people must build their account of themselves are *not* theirs to adapt or control, then this represents a deep denial of voice, a deep form of oppression. This is the oppression W. B. Dubois described as 'double consciousness', a 'sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of the others'" (p.9).

When I was conducting the observation in Milan, what became apparent during my stay with the participants was the amount of influence Italian people exercised on the *immigrati/e*'s sense of self. As a matter of fact, the only voice that was predominant and constant in the participants' lives was the one of their Italian acquaintances. Paula, from Ecuador, living in Zona 2, recalled her '*signora'*, the manager she worked for, complaining to her about all the foreigners living in Italy currently "*Ah gli stranieri*"/ "Ah the foreigners" she would exclaim to Paula when they would watch the TV news. Piyumi, a Sri Lankan living in Zona 2, would have a similar experience whereby her own neighbour *nonna*, whom she assisted most days as an informal part-time job, would complain about *immigrati/e* in front of her telling her "now you're too many". Lastly, Elira, an Albanian living in Zona 2, reaffirmed that "If they (Italians) say something about *immigrati/e* it's always something bad, and there is nothing we can say about it". Hence, refuting these affirmations is not a possibility, or at least this is how some of the participants felt, and remained quiet.

In fact, it became apparent that they felt a type of hopelessness in facing and changing that particular idea held by their fellow Italians. Despite *immigrati/e* having a certain sense of self it appeared as if they couldn't escape that particular narrative. Most of the participants envisioned themselves as everything but that which was affixed upon them by Italian society. Nonetheless, their apparent 'pseudo'-acceptance was possibly due to a self-awareness of not having the power to oppose the negative, deep-rooted discourses on immigration, or perhaps the knowledge of not possessing the adequate tools to fight them.

As already explored in the chapter on 'Narrativity', Somers and other theorists explain that narrative is an "ontological condition of social life" (Somers, 1994: p. 614), and social life is something that is already storied. Hence, people mould their own identities by locating themselves or by being passively located in a collection of overlapping, intertwined stories. It is perhaps for this reason that participants such as Piyumi, Paula, and Elira face the above quoted remarks with despondence, accepting a pre-settled position and narrative of the *immigrato/a/i/e*, but simultaneously creating a sense of who they are through other people's determination, through this very type of 'Othering'.

Thus, the suppression of voice is a deliberate form of oppression, which has a more permanent or long-lasting effect than discrimination, and is ultimately structural. In relation to this point, Iris Marion Young (2005) distinguishes the concepts of discrimination and oppression as she underlines that the latter can still endure despite there not being clear discrimination towards a particular group. Despite legislation and policies towards particular minorities improving in a given society, leading to a decrease in direct discrimination, Young argues that such groups might still be subject to oppression in their daily lives (Young, 2005).

Oppression, as Young defines it, is a condition that is embedded in the society we live in and manifests through unquestioned norms, assumptions, or habits. Despite acknowledging the impossibility of strictly defining the term, Iris Marion Young reflects on the meaning of oppression by focusing on the experience of social

movements in the USA since the 1960s, focussing on the oppressed groups. She argues that the degree of oppression varies among these groups but claims that in political discourse the term oppression denotes particular situations and structures (Young, 2005). Whereas oppression was firstly intended as the exercise of tyranny by the hands of ruling classes, new left social movements that developed between the 1960s-70s gave the term a new meaning.

"Oppression in the structural sense is part of the basic fabric of a society, not a function of a few people's choice or policies. You won't eliminate this structural oppression by getting rid of the rulers or making some new laws, because oppressions are systematically reproduced in major economic, political, and cultural institutions" (Young, 2005, p. 92).

By oppression, Young refers to a state in which certain people are inhibited from developing and expressing their thoughts and needs, due to their belonging to a particular group. In relation to this, Young claims that oppression can be manifested in five different conditions, the first of which is exploitation (Young, 2005, p. 93-101). The latter is defined as using people's labours to profit, but not retributing them financially in a fair way. This is closely related to Marxist theories of the capitalist profiting on the surplus value. The second condition is marginalisation, which entails the dismission by the system of labour of certain groups. Young argues that this is true for large parts of the population e.g. old people, disabled people, single mothers etc.). These groups are somewhat denied their rights as citizens, and of their moral agency. These people lack autonomy: there appears to be less free choice to decide how to live one's own life.

In relation to exploitation in particular, during each of my stays in the different households in Milan, every participant complained about the average wage they all received in comparison to the actual work they carried out each week; it was disproportionately low. The participants who were working as domestic workers or babysitters protested against the flexibility they were expected to show in regards to hours (for instance Maria, Ana, and Piyumi), with their own family lives not being

taken into consideration, even though they voiced these worries. As Saskia Sassen (2003, 2010) has already explored, this is a common practice in most urban environments where urban professionals assign "individual workers industrial homework" (2003: 258). It is indeed an accepted system. Nonetheless, it is all the more suspect considering the participants' own everyday struggle.

What aggravated this was exactly the sense of being marginalised. As Fatou, a Senegalese woman from Zona 2, pointed out "When they need you, they talk to you. If not, you don't exist." The type of invisibility that Fatou suggests directly opposes the visibility that migrants seem to have on Italian media, or at least their voiceless image/representation. Fatou herself underlined the abundant presence of migrants in TV news outlets one night while watching another '*Telegiornale'*: "They always talk about the same thing, they just show the boats. The news is all the same". The ubiquity of such images though denotes a marginalisation of narrative, whereby migrants are, and probably will, always be classified as such. As discussed in the Chapter on 'Narrativity', the figure of the migrant will be forced into this stagnant category with the constant production and the distribution of such images. Moreover, the fact that they only "show the boats", as Fatou pointed out, signals to an absence of migrants' own testimonies and their own voice.

The third face of oppression is powerlessness. Young refers to the powerless as those who lack authority, and on whom power is inflicted instead of exercised. In society, on a professional level, they appear not to hold expertise in a specific field of work, and are not able to exercise their creativity. Their social status, a term that Young highlights instead of 'class', is usually low, as is their income. Young juxtaposes them to what she denotes as 'professionals', people who are college educated, have acquired a specialised knowledge, are autonomous, hold a set of privileges, and are assumed to hold 'respectability' (Young, 2005, p. 100).

The fourth condition that underlies oppression is cultural imperialism. Young discusses the presence of the dominant group in the media for instance. She refers to how the values, goals, and experience of a/the dominant group are used as

representative of the culture of a whole society, possibly of humanity as well. Consequently, those who are oppressed become stereotyped and have the 'culture' of the dominant group imposed upon them. Imposition of the Italian culture would specifically start at school, as Priya, the eldest daughter in the Zona 9 Indian household, revealed to me.

However, culture might be expressed in terms of language as well, which was an issue for some of the mothers interviewed in the observation. Maria, an Ecuadorian mother of Zona 2, simply pointed to the disappointing reality of her children not learning Spanish while living in Italy. Diya, of the Indian household, on the other hand, viewed the fact that her eldest daughter, Priya, would mostly speak Italian with her friends as a complete threat, as it implied the possibility of her absorbing the Italian culture as well: "It's different values", she once explained. Camila, a Peruvian mother of Zona 9, showed a similar opposition towards Italian culture, specifically to her children acquiring it, but also an equal sense of powerlessness in front of such development happening in the future. Priya and Diya perceived it as a quasi 'cultural invasion' in her household.

The final face of oppression is violence. In fact, not only are oppressed groups subject to victimisation, but they live with the awareness that they are liable to violation due to their group identity. Young argues that this constant state of threat denies them of freedom and dignity, which is tolerated by most of the population and hence is legitimised over time.

At the end of the article, Young applies these criteria to other oppressed groups in the States. Similarly, as we've seen, this can be applied to the group in question of the research, the *immigrati/e.* The real issue lay in the fact that the state of hopelessness and powerlessness of their subaltern position brought the participants to autonomously envision themselves as not having the right or power to express their opinion, for their voice to be heard.
In most cases, the frustration that underlined in what the participants were expressing was the lack of agency and control over their own narratives. To be seen through and

given solely a very limited communal narrative, which is that of *immigrati/e,* disempowered them as residents of the society which they were part of now, and mostly as human beings.

"[A]lthough we may be corrected in various ways by others, we take ourselves to have authority when it comes to the narratives of our own lives... in general, we think it constitutive of a person having a life that he or she claims some authority over saying what is happening in it" (Lear, 2006, p. 56).

What transpired the most in the observation was a sense of privation of being acknowledged, as it seemed their voice did not count in the grand scheme of things in Milan or Italy. Some episodes of their daily lives were closely linked to this sense of hopeless rejection. For instance, at times, it was older Italian people who voiced their disapproval of *immigrati/e*'s presence in Italy, for example during quarrels on the bus. Many of the female participants revealed they had been told off by other travellers for using the baby buggy on the bus due to space limitations, interactions that have ended up by these older travellers telling the participants to "go back to your own country". People like Aida, of the Ethiopian household living in Zona 2, despite recalling the episode, did not seem to lament the gravity of it, as she explained that these episodes became almost 'normal' to her, and she wouldn't reply to them. These episodes highlighted not solely the underlying hints of racism, but also a diminished sense of self, of the possibility of giving an account of oneself and the world around them, the option of expressing their views, and possibly of responding to their racist perpetrators.

6.2 VOICE IN POLITICS

This self-accepted oppression that participants seemed to adopt stems not solely from political practices, but from media as a whole. In relation to this, Couldry explores the ways neoliberal economics deny the possibility of voice in society, and the ways

neoliberal principles are therefore embedded in media as well, the main outlet for voice.

"What if, under particular conditions (themselves connected to neoliberalism), the general space for 'voice' that mainstream media provide works in important respects to *amplify* or at least normalize values and mechanisms important to neoliberalism and, by a separate movement, to embed such values and mechanisms even more deeply within contemporary cultures of governance?" (Couldry, 2009, p.73).

The claim that Couldry makes is of fundamental importance: where media's role should consist of increasing voice, in neoliberal societies, this does not happen.

In fact, in relation to the value of voice on a political level, as being acknowledged as people who have something to say and share and lastly contributing to the society they live in, Maria, for instance, was adamant to the impossibility of such a thing happening in the near future. Generally speaking of Italians, Maria agreeing with Diego claims that "They say 'If you want to vote, you should go back to your country". Their voice is hence silenced and shunned as belonging to the realm of the 'Other'. From 'Zona 2', Yonas, Ethiopian, and Amila, Sri Lankan, would refer to the incessant presence of Salvini in the news, the only type of voice that seemed to occupy centre stage in Italian media. Of all the participants, Yonas, appeared to be the most informed regarding Italian current affairs news and general political ongoing events.

Yonas admitted that it is through politics that he feels truly foreign: "They only know that I am an African, possibly a *marocchino* (Moroccan). They don't separate the different ethnicities". The only means through which Yonas can express his voice, he says, is the Internet, specifically commenting Salvini's various posts on Facebook. He believes this is his only outlet. He utilises social media as a form of empowerment, the only platform where his political views can be expressed. In fact, he confessed to me that he does not talk about the matter of immigration in his daily work life or even among his family members.

On the last day, when I asked if he had additional points to put forward concerning the current political, social, and mediatic situation in Italy, he explained that the fact that most bothered him was the lack of presence of any *immigrati/e* on TV shows/News show during the debates on migration. "You never get to see any of us there, they talk about us. We are everywhere, but not in person", highlighting the epistemic violence that non-Italian people in Italy are subject to.

Concern was also shown regarding the lack of representation on Italian TV programmes. It was especially during some late afternoon moments when the TV would be turned on as background noise that some of the participants would make note of it. For instance, Aida, Yonas' partner, once complained to me of the lack of ethnic diversity among the speakers and audience members of a Canale 5 afternoon show (*Pomeriggio 5*).

Elira regarded the absence of other *immigrati/e* in Italian TV programs as problematic as well. In the programs she watched, it wasn't solely the lack of any 'visible' *immigrati/e* participants he was referring to. When I intervened and made her aware of TV advertisements in the afternoon that showed children/adolescences with different ethnic backgrounds (which I told her was not available for me personally when I was growing up in Milan), she agreed but underlined the issue persisted, as although present, the diverse actors were still silent.

Although there appears to be an improvement in diversity representation in Italian media (diversitylab.it), this is still not considered as a sufficient result in terms of representation, at least in Elira's opinion. It is worth considering the presence of *immigrati/e* in Italian media. As a matter of fact, one might consider this to be the most pressing point gathered from the observation, the starting point to the general sense of the uneasiness and (unwelcomed) frustration felt by the participants.

Along with the suppression of *immigrati/e*'s voices, Italy's colonial past and its victims suffer a similar fate. As discussed in previous chapters, Aida would underline

the lack of acknowledgement in Italy of it being a colonial country. The lack of portrayal and absence of voice regarding these issues, which along with the Ethiopian experience also combine that of Somali, Lybian, and Eritrean migrants living in Italy, underlines the seemingly overbearing amnesia of the country's general history and especially its colonial past.

Lastly, the lack of voice and invisibility manifests itself also in the way the culture of *immigrati/e* is silenced or suppressed. Any custom that does not adhere to the Italian way is looked down upon, be it an article of clothing or food. As already seen in the previous chapter, a way of having coffee that is different from the normalised Italian way of taking only espressos is a marker of difference, a deviance from what is acceptable and regarded as Italian. Expressing such taste is looked down upon and categorises you as not part of the heterogeneous Italian voice. "It's because they think they are better than everyone else", claimed Ana, an Ecuadorian living in Zona 2.

6.3 THE LIMINAL SPACE OF IN/VISIBILITY

It is exactly the paradox between a "contamination of images" (Mitchell, 2010: p.13) and the voicelessness of the migrant subject that renders this state of silence ever more crucial to analyse. This type of oppression can be described as a state of in/visibility. In fact, in migration studies, especially in the analysis of the Mediterranean 'migration crisis', academics have highlighted the liminal spaces and politics of visibility and invisibility that simultaneously characterise the existence of the migrant subject, which appears to be true of all migrants, be it 'new migrants' or resident *immigrati/e*.

Federica Mazzara has explained how Lampedusa has transformed itself into a liminal space where migrants hold simultaneously spaces of 'invisibility' and 'visibility', a status that is dependent on who is witnessing/looking, and their own point of view (Mazzara, 2015: p.452). She claims that the 'spaces of invisibility are constituted by those "where the migrants are (re-)identified as mere bodies, masses, numbers" (Mazzara, 2015: p.452). These are the instances where migrants are shown

approaching the Italian coasts, or at sea amassed in dinghies or larger boats, then in detention centres.

The ‘spaces of visibility’, on the other hand, concern those of emancipation in which migrants have the possibility to present themselves as “individuals with names, features and stories”. Similarly, other academics such as Ataç et al. (2015) have highlighted these “in/visible politics of migration”, where the “[i]nvisible politics emerge out of everyday practices in the context of border and integration regimes” (p. 6). On the other hand, visible forms include protests or campaigns led by the direct subjects of ongoing migrations. On the same level, Francesca Falk (2010) explores the liminal position of “in/visibility” of illegalised immigrants (p.94).

It can be argued that Ataç et al. and Mazzara highlight the need for individuals to express their own voices, whether it be in forms of protest or creative practices. This is particularly the case of migrants who should find ways of escaping the media discourses that render them invisible. Voice and visibility are therefore essential to break through the “predetermined and unchallenged identification of all boat-people as illegal by default [which] contributes to their labeling as unruly, and therefore potentially criminal and threatening, individuals” (Mazzara, 2015: 454-5).

The interviewed *immigrati/e* complained in regards to this voiceless, invisible status they inhabited, which was constantly reinforced to them with the report of the ‘migration crisis’. They reflected on their position as second- or even third-class citizens through this type of media portrayal. So demoralising seemed to be the acceptance of their sub-proletariat status, or perhaps acceptance of the social dynamics in Italy, that the participants that were interviewed seemed borderline apathetic to the notion of counteracting the dominant media discourse.

As stated in the Chapter on ‘Narrativity’, all the interviewed *immigrati/e* denounced the nominalisation/stereotyping issue and underlying discrimination inherent to Italian media. However, in particular, Yonas’ statement was emblematic: “The TV makes me

feel like a foreigner". This was emblematic of the way Italian media 'Other-ed' him. But above all, it hinted to the fact that, despite residing in Milan for over 20 years, he identified himself with the migrants that he saw on TV, identified with those images and the figure of the voiceless disempowered migrant. In fact, they especially seemed to be powerless in their inability to express, and not solely their inability, but more so lack of interest. The daily racism they encounter in the society they live in, the lack of interest of mainstream media, and the Italian society in listening to their accounts of daily discrimination has taken them to a point of disheartened acceptance. These phenomena can also be regarded as an active form of epistemic violence and silencing.

6.4 SILENCING

In her essays, Spivak went further and described these occurrences as part of practices of 'epistemic violence'. Spivak proposes the term "epistemic violence" to explain the process that undergoes the silencing of oppressed groups, which she defines as the "general nonspecialists, nonacademic population across the class spectrum, for whom the episteme operates its silent programming function" (Spivak 1988, p.282-83). Furthermore, she identifies them as "the illiterate peasantry, the tribals, the lowest of the urban subproletariat" (p. 283).

Most of the participants are highly-qualified as they claim to have attended university in their countries of origin, or in general have had a good education, and yet they carry out low-skilled jobs as it seems that they are blocked into inferior categories of labour; indeed "the lowest of the urban subproletariat" that Spivak was referring to. Their subaltern position renders them victims of silencing. What the participants describe is in fact a type of alienation, first described by Marx and still relevant as Couldry explains. "First workers may feel a lack of meaning in their work, because one dimension of meaning they *do* know as important is regarded as meaningless at work, trumped by the overriding value of profit and market position. (...) As a result, the

necessary conditions of work become detached from the conditions of voice" (Couldry, 2009, p.34).

In particular, Kristie Dotson (2011), in deconstructing this - particularly the act of silencing -emphasises firstly the need for reciprocity in a linguistic exchange between a speaker and an audience. Reciprocity as explained by Jennifer Hornsby consists of people understanding one another's speech and in "speakers being able not only to voice meaningful thoughts but also to be heard" (Hornsby, 1995: p. 134). Hence, this entails also a level of dependency that a speaker holds in regards to its audience that cannot/should not be in any way forced. As Dotson summarises "to communicate *we all need an audience willing and capable of hearing us*. The extent to which entire populations of people can be denied this kind of linguistic reciprocity as a matter of course institutes epistemic violence" (Dotson, 2011: p. 238) (Young, 2011).

Nonetheless, this exchange of reciprocity might not take place due to pernicious ignorance, meant for the author as any form of reliable ignorance which depending on a specific context results in harming another person. "*Reliable ignorance* is ignorance that is *consistent* or follows from a predictable epistemic gap in cognitive resources" (Dotson, 2011: p. 238). Consequently, this might lead to instances of silencing or practices of silencing. Dotson differentiates the two and explains that the first one is less harmful than the latter.

"An instance of silencing concerns a single, non-repetitive instance of an audience failing to meet the dependencies of a speaker, whereas a practice of silencing, [...], concerns a repetitive, *reliable* occurrence of an audience failing to meet the dependencies of a speaker that finds its origin in a more pervasive ignorance" (p. 241).

In fact, Dotson explains that epistemic violence is mainly the result of pernicious ignorance enacted repetitively and consistently, hence as a practice of silencing. "Pernicious ignorance that causes failures in linguistic exchanges constitutes epistemic violence, [...] on my account, not simply because of the harm one suffers as a result, but because epistemic violence institutes a practice of silencing" (p. 241).

An instance of silencing if left unaddressed and repeated further on might become detrimental, and evolve to a practice of silencing, becoming a type of discrimination that is the 'norm', as was encountered in Milan as well. While chatting one afternoon to Priya, the eldest daughter in the Indian household living in Zona 9, she confessed that some dubious racist remarks from some of her teachers constantly went unquestioned in class. When I inquired if she or her other classmates, who she previously had confessed were of mixed background as well, together could possibly challenge this affront, her response came as a silent shoulder shrug, a sign of discouragement and acceptance. This signalled an acceptance of forms of pernicious ignorance and possibly obvious tolerance to ongoing practices of silencing. It is clear how her unquestioned stance to these racist occurrences, their frequency and the fact that they were delivered by the same *pernicious ignorant* professors who held a higher-power position as well, produced a form of auto-silencing or as Dotson explains, practices of silencing.

Moving to more subtle practices, during the observation in Zona 2, Yonas acknowledged being treated differently because of skin colour, that 'gave away' his Otherness. "They only have to see my colour and I'm immediately an '*extracomunitario*"'. Fatou complained about the same issue: "Because of my skin colour, they see me as another from another species. Sometimes Italians think of me as bad or even as a prostitute". She denotes the preconceptions that another Italian person would have before meeting/speaking/listening to her. The possibility of reciprocity is already tainted, as they both believe that the Italian people (audience) they address are not "willing and capable of hearing us" (Dotson, 2011), or at least this was their claim. This imposed identity, hence constitutes a block, a type of wall which in Yonas and Fatou's case he believes cannot be surpassed.

This was one of the reasons why most female/mother participants would seem unimpressed with the idea of remaining in Italy with their families. In fact, what mostly frightened them was the possibility that their children would experience the same silencing in the future. Aida for example claimed that "They don't care whether

you have Italian citizenship or not, they only see your colour". She was thereby hinting to a type of silencing that is not only common in Italy in her opinion, but most of all a type of mind-set accepted as the norm.

These instances can be described as a practice of silencing that is a result of pernicious ignorance. Specifically, Dotson identifies testimonial quieting as a practice of silencing, claiming that it occurs when a given audience does not recognize the speaker as knowledgeable. This occurrence has already been widely covered in the work of women of colour in the United States. For instance, Patricia Hill Collins denounced the lack of credibility that black women in the United States have suffered/suffer by virtue of being black women (Collins, 2000: p.69). Ideas and images around black womanhood are defined by what she defines as the elite groups, who in exercising power, exploit existing stereotypes or create new downgrading symbols which black women can't escape from.

She terms these as "controlling images" that "are designed to make racism, sexism, poverty, and other forms of social injustice appear to be natural, normal, and inevitable parts of everyday life" (p.69). Collins argues that even in the case when the conditions that link such images begin to falter, the "controlling images" that objectify and stigmatise a set of people to a specific social group (i.e. black women), attest to being exceptionally difficult to dispel. Dotson adds that this objectification prevents black women from being recognised as "knowers" (Dotson, 2011: p.243). This can be applied to what Yonas and Fatou recounted of his own experience living as an *extracomunitario/a* in Milan.

This type of ignorance is hence an "active practice of unknowing" since "[u]nderstanding certain social groups according to stereotypes that strip them of the ability to be "uncontroversially" identified as knowers results from, and facilitates, a type of reliable ignorance (p.243). Hence, the speaker is deeply dependent on the audience to be legitimately recognised as a knower.

Yet, as previously explored above, some participants confessed that at times they would not explain to their Italian acquaintances the issues they faced living as *immigrati/e*, or anything related to living life as something other than Italian, since they believed Italians would not understand or possibly were not willing to grasp what they were trying to convey.

This is what Dotson terms as testimonial smothering, whereby due to previous experiences, the speaker refrains from even talking, as he/she already believes that what they are attempting to communicate would not be considered legitimate by the audience. "Testimonial smothering, ultimately, is the truncating of one's own testimony in order to ensure that the testimony contains only content for which one's audience demonstrates testimonial competence" (p.244). Dotson adds that this is a type of coerced silencing, as the audience to which one is speaking to shows incompetence in relation to the content of the speaker most likely due to pernicious ignorance. In addition, a factor that aggravates these instances is the lack of awareness of one's own limit of understanding and knowledge or the inability to admit it. This is termed as "testimonial incompetence" and leads to racial micro-aggressions (p.247-8).

It is *immigrati/e'*s subaltern position which they have been made to embody and then to accept as well that silences them and prevents them from complaining about these microaggressions or rejecting the image of *immigrati/e* that has been attached to them. Maria, an Ecuadorian woman, admitted that most of the Italians she had encountered, including her work managers throughout the years, were surprised by the revelation that Maria had attended university studying Physics for two years back in Ecuador, before joining her husband Diego in Milan. "They simply end up thinking that it's because university in Ecuador is easier". The people she refers to are not able to grasp part of her studious identity, as it does not adhere to the image of an *immigrata* that is hegemonic in Italian society.

It's the violence of the external voice, the 'other determination', hence how they are discussed and defined by others, within the context of the hegemonic discourse in

Italy, that impacts on the participants lives, the ones they hear not only in politics but also among the people they know. The episode that highlighted my stay with Elira, an Albanian woman, was illuminating regarding this matter. Although Elira believed she was one of the 'lucky' *immigrati/e* who had the possibility of blending easily among other Italians, thanks to her Italian speaking skills, accurate pronunciation, and 'white' somatic features, she was often a silent, or *silenced*, witness to her Italian friends' discriminatory comments at her previous work for instance.

She couldn't recall the exact exclamations, but the remarks she was a *silent listener/witness* to mostly regarded *immigrati/e* or *extracomunitari/e* as a whole. "They (Italians) are not aware of it, that maybe it is an insult". Together we talked of these instances and she explained how ordinary these micro-aggressions were, almost referring to an almost undetected violence in their language. As mentioned in the previous chapters, we experienced something that could arguably be seen as proof of this claim. In fact, during one of her daily walks with her dog, an Italian woman described the way in which a male dog was persistently and aggressively chasing a female dog as the way a '*Senegalesi'* (people from Senegal, but this term is often used as a generalisation to denote street vendors of African origin, similarly to *Marocchini*) would follow people on the street. Elira then immediately turned to me and told me "You see?", implying the completely unconcerned way the woman turned to Elira and the others and used that term. Leda had identified the problematic expression but did not engage and refute it, or did not deem herself to have the power and position to question it.

This constant sense of powerlessness resonated when I talked with different people during the observation. Powerlessness not only in their belief of being second class citizens, but mostly in the inner held acceptance that their voices did not hold value in Italian society, and so expressing their discomfort in front of discrimination would not amount to anything. The sense of hopelessness that the participants show is demonstrated primarily by the fact that they have become accustomed to racist/discriminatory episodes.

As discussed above, Yonas, an Ethiopian man, states that he is subject to microaggression on a daily basis at work. Similarly, Fatou, a Senegalese woman living in Zona 2, stated that she constantly faces racism. However, they both seem to fall into an almost self-imposed silence in front of others since they revealed that both of their partners did not deem it necessary for the other to complain. Their partners' inner held acceptance of such treatment as 'normality' is telling of this hopeless obedience towards testimonial smothering.

These occurrences also impact on one's own process of identity formation and the moulding of a narrative self, which was discussed in the previous chapter on 'Narrativity'. "Since taking responsibility for one's voice involves telling an additional story – of oneself as the person who *did* say this or that – voice necessarily involves us in an ongoing process of reflection, exchanging narratives back and forth between past and present selves, and between us and others. This process is not accidental, but necessary: humans have a *desire* to narrate". (Couldry, 2010, p. 8) In fact, as Adriana Cavarero (2000) also claims, humans have a deep-rooted desire to make sense of their lives and their surroundings: "narrations reveals the finite in its fragile uniqueness" (p.3).

This constant inner dialogue a person has, and the additional external stories one hears about himself/herself, define how he/she makes sense of his/her own identity. The way in which Yonas, Elira, or Maria for instance rationalise their own state of being is reflective to what they experiences in what is now their home, in Milan, along with the predominant social narratives imposed on them. Yet, Dotson adds that this might also be caused by a different type of "unknowing" that she terms as "situated ignorance", the result of different social positionings that lead to diverse epistemic distances and hence differences (Dotson, 2011: p.248).

However, it must be argued that the unwavering positioning and unwillingness to change such positioning with regards to a certain matter and subject must also be seen as pernicious ignorance. In order to have a successful "dialogue", the added demands of the speaker have to be met, such as demonstrating testimonial competence for the speaker to avoid self-silencing (Dotson, 2011).

However, this precisely seemed to be the issue that caused the participants' overall discontent. It was not merely their inability to use their voices and be heard that they point to, but also the lack of interest they sense from the general Italian public, the unwillingness to do so as it is also discussed in the 'Empathy' chapter. This is then confirmed by the Italian people they encounter in real life. This, in their eyes, demonstrates the fact that most if not all Italians are racists and discriminate against migrants without having direct contact with the subjects. Hinting to his work colleagues' questionable behaviour, Diego, an Ecuadorian man, explained: "When they get to know you, they warm up and they realise you're like them. Then they are nice to you". Yet, if it weren't for the working circumstances and especially for Diego's own effort, for his own proactive outreach, this dialogue would never take place. It appears always to be the *immigrato/a*'s responsibility that to interact with the fellow Italians, at least in this case and for some other participants.

Finally, one could argue that the portrayal of the events of the 'migration crisis', regardless of it done from a humanitarian perspective or else, strips a person who is classed as migrant of her/his own agency. This was the reason why most participants were reluctant of watching or held a negative opinion of TV news reportage, as it reminded them possibly that they do not hold power in the Italian society. Their image is constantly used and yet they are never directly addressed, they are portrayed by white Italians in a somewhat 'colonial' pattern, with no direct agency where power relations dictate how subjects/objects are portrayed.

Similarly, to Spivak's claim in her article 'Can the Subaltern Speak' (1988), subaltern subjects such as the *immigrati/e* believe that they cannot speak, not because they are physically incapable of doing so, but because they are not part of the discourse. They embody a sign of 'possibility', a condition of capability even, but are nonetheless trapped in a state of silence as the discursive conditions in Italy do not allow them to speak. In the words of Charles Taylor (1989):

"I am a self only in relation to certain interlocutors ... the nature of our language and the fundamental dependence of our thought on language makes interlocution... inescapable for us" (p.36, 38).

Charles Taylor therefore argues that humans are "self-interpreting animals", hence interpretation is a fundamental characteristic of a human being (Taylor, 1985: p.75). Drawing on this, to deny someone the possibility to narrate himself/herself, of ultimate self-determination is therefore to deny a basic human right and an indication of freedom.

CONCLUSION

What became apparent from the observation and the interviews was the participants' constant sense of difficulty in expressing a their own narrative and voice which is different from the ones already presented in society, as discussed in the chapter on 'Narrativity'. However, the type of voice that is incessantly present in what the participants say, which is juxtaposed to theirs, is the one belonging to their Italian acquaintances or managers at work. Similar is the over-bearing presence that the voice of politicians and especially Salvini have in regards to the 'migration crisis', a common belief that was gathered from the participants.

What was presented as a persistent issue consisted of the fact that participants did not only seem not to hold a considerable voice but also assumed that they were constricted to such a position of hopeless 'voicelessness'. If ours are "bodies without words" (Agamben, 2004), migrants' bodies are hence deemed to be even more so.

In fact, the most powerful way through which epistemic violence is carried out is by impairing a group's ability not only to speak but also to be heard, deeply affecting

their sense of self. The power and choice a person holds in society to be able to define himself/herself should be a fundamental right. In fact, how a person is bestowed voice, is given the possibility to use it or not, is indicative not only of the society the person lives in but also of the possibility he/she has in expressing the identity, of not being denied the right to convey a personal narrative. Through the observation, what came to the surface was the impossibility of *immigrati/e* to narrate themselves, in their day-to-day lives, but mostly through media. This sense of voicelessness is what brought them to identify themselves with the 'new migrants' depicted in the news related to the 'migration crisis'. They recognized a similar sense of struggle to that which 'new migrants' coming and travelling through Italy might have experienced as well, of being referred to in the daily news on TV, articles on newspaper and social media, yet have no power over such representation. This perceived shared lack of agency is what brought the *immigrati/e* participants to empathize with 'new migrants', a theme that will be unpicked in the following chapter on 'Empathy'.

7 EMPATHY

Following the aspects of narrativity and voice, one of the most significant themes gathered from the data collected during the observation and the interviews was on the matter of empathy, which has also been at the centre of the debates and discussions around the current 'migration crisis' in general (Head, 2016). In these past years as the tragedies in the Mediterranean have unfolded, many journalists, academics and activists have questioned the sense of humanity and morality of 'Europe'.

In the course of the research, I was particularly interested in understanding whether *immigrati/e* families living in Milan, the 'We' in this particular investigation of empathy, when watching and hearing news concerning the Lampedusa events, would be reminded of their own personal history. Regardless of whether they had undertaken a similar migratory journey or not in order to work in Milan, I was interested in examining if they possibly recalled some parts of their 'migrant self' and recognised a shared experience, or if perhaps on the contrary attempted to completely distance themselves from their mobile past. The findings showed different layered opinions.

Hence, this chapter explores the sense of empathy, or lack thereof, that established migrants living in Milan might hold. Before analysing the data gathered from the observation, the first section will examine the concept of empathy in itself. Firstly, Edith Stein's (1916/1989) account of empathy will be central to this, as she questions whether this trait should be considered as innate and natural in human behaviour and the possibility of one being able to 'know' what others are experiencing. The chapter will explore how migrants understand the suffering experienced by 'new migrants', denouncing the lack of compassion from the majority of the Italian society, as shown by the media. However, empathy cannot be reached in certain identifications, thus forms of additional 'Othering' take place. This pattern came to surface also in the observation I conducted whereby the 'established migrants' did indeed empathise with new arriving migrants, but found 'Muslims' to be the new category to be opposed to. Therefore, the ending section of this chapter will question how mainstream Islamophobic security discourses that are centred on Islamophobia affect certain empathic outlooks. It will investigate whether empathy can also be realised in terms of going beyond one's own ethno-religious background, acknowledging that other-'Others' are victims of racism as well.

7.1 EMPATHIC OUTLOOK

On a philosophical level the question of empathy is a rather complex and layered one. It is linked to the wider subject of morality, which questions the validity of empathy as a pedagogical tool (Lickona, 1991; Bennett, 1993; Noddings, 1997). The main query arises in debating the possibility of empathy being a natural in-born trait or an external aspect that is teachable to humans.

In Edith Stein's account, empathy is both primordial and non-primordial, or better, an external aspect that incites an innate trait. The non-primordial experience, which is what one observes of another, brings the observer to empathize with the other" (Stein, 1916/1989: p.10). However, Stein emphasises the impossibility to fully live what

another person is living, and rather proposes a sense of awareness and understating of their lived experience, as empathy is "an act that is primordial as present experience though not primordial in content" (Stein, 1916/1989: p.10). Judith Butler (2005) underlines the importance of acknowledging, however, that the key to empathy is realising the limits of one's knowledge in the act/attempt to understand another.

Regardless of the debates on empathy being a primordial trait or not in humans, one could argue that certain minor empathic behaviours/reactions are mostly common in those who have experienced a level of hardship and suffering in life. Or perhaps this is what was gathered from most of the interviewed *immigrati/e* living in Zona 2 and Zona 9 of Milan.

"I was a *clandestino* as well", Diego, an Ecuadorian from Zona 2, once claimed at the dinner table. He was underlining how he felt on the same level as the 'others', intended as the new migrants reaching Italy by boat. "If we who are migrants don't help each other, we are lost", he confessed explaining that Italians always see them as a 'disease'. He conveyed his perceived resemblance to the perils of 'new migrants' landing in Italy. Despite not having undergone the deadly journey through the Mediterranean himself, he connected with the experience of 'Othering' that incoming migrants face in his opinion. They shared quasi-analogous narratives, as seen in Chapter 4. By watching and listening to the news, he had gathered the same sense of unwelcome that had been directed to *immigrati/e* residing in the country, who represented the most adverse type of 'Other'. He could relate to the latest 'Others' because of this reason.

In general, there appeared to be a sense of commonality or at least assumed similarity in the experiences felt by the participants with 'new migrants'. The most evident connection, as seen above, implied a perception of a common strain, perceived discrimination, and sense of injustice.

In relation to the ongoing 'flow of new migrants', Ana, who lived in the same house as Diego, also believed that 'new migrants' are pushed to come to Europe because of 'the war' (though it remained unspecified) and poverty that characterise the places where they come from in 'Africa'. Due to this, Ana underlined the fact that she regarded all Italians as extremely racist: "They think that all migrants (here intended as new 'new migrants') are criminals, but it really depends on their education". At the request to clarify her statement that Italians were all racists, Ana replied "they just don't have sensitivity towards humanity", adding that they mistreated migrants. "When I overhear Italian women saying 'ah those migrants who steal' I say even you, you are criminals".

Ana held a negative view of Italians, and one might suggest that this was due to her current precarious status as a *clandestina*, a migrant who is technically residing in Italy illegally. She recalled the various times she was exploited by her managers as they would take advantage of her illegal status, not retributing her in full. All the people she has worked for were unwilling to aid her in obtaining the documents and papers for her *Permesso di Soggiorno*, by sponsoring her and hiring her legally. Throughout the observation, she appeared to be most empathic among the interviewed participants, a sense of empathy possibly heightened exactly because of this status as an illegal migrant. Due to this lack of *suerte* - 'luck' in Spanish - Ana held a firm position against Italy, Italians, but also at the prospect of 'new migrants' coming to Italy: she seemed discouraged about their success, as well as she did about hers. She saw her same failure in them as well. Her statement appeared to hold a warning message, a signal for those who are coming to Italy and hoping to improve their lives to abandon these types of dreams.

Therefore, she was of the idea that the people (migrants) who live in Italy but are unemployed should return to their countries of origin. "That's why they end up stealing, it's because they are desperate and in Italy there is no work, it's already full of immigrants". She added: "They are sacrificing everything because they are desperate". She appeared to understand their struggle and the common sense of loss in Italy, especially because of her precarious situation in the country. Her empathic

gaze was most heightened when she was speaking about work. Work, or the lack of it in Italy one might add, seemed to symbolise the reality of the situation, the utter truth. It was her belief that people like herself had no prospects in Italy. “Italy hasn’t given me anything”. Hence, ‘new migrants’ would have no prospect here either in her opinion. “Why should they come here and suffer?” This constituted a different reasoning behind not wanting other migrants to settle in Italy: not simply because of resentment towards the newcomers, adding to the chain of discrimination, but rather a deeply felt empathic gaze towards possible future victims of the discriminatory system and society.

This was a key point, as she applied her own suffering to another ‘Other’ by situating her own experience of suffering to another. However, she highlighted a sense of desperation, the result of exclusion, inferiority, or precariousness, that many of the wider Italian public do not experience.

This sense of collective suffering informed her warning directed to ‘new migrants’ not to come to Italy. Diego, who was at the dinner table when Ana rhetorically asked “Why should they come here?”, believed in it as well. Similarly did Yonas, an Ethiopian of Zona 2. “They think Italy is paradise, but instead it’s like hell”.

Some of the participants, such as Camila, a Peruvian living in Zona 9, were extremely overwhelmed by the death toll in the Mediterranean: “It’s cruel to leave people dying in this way”. It was the struggle and desperation which she constantly pointed out as a factor that associated her with ‘new migrants’. “We migrants know what desperation is, what it means to come here from afar”. What these statements conveyed is a type of brotherhood/sisterhood that is developed through shared experiences and a perceived shared journey, similar to what Tsagarousianou (2007, 2016) denotes as “pilgrimages” that are characterised by “emotional encounters with strangers who are ‘so much like us’” (p.12). Despite the differences in ethnicities, the shared sense of alienation, brings the participants together.

These can be better understood through the social action research framing tools that would regard these stories as part of injustice frames (Ryan and Gamson, 2006), whereby people who share “a common repository of experience” (Tsagarousianou,

2016: p.14) create an intelligible group that transcends the cultural and is ultimately translocal. These types of frames are used by people to help them "locate, perceive, identify, and label their experience" (Goffman 1974: p.21) and to better understand certain injustices. As was highlighted in Tsagarousianou's research (2016), the participants of this particular study raised grievances of common types of discrimination and marginalisation. Similarly, what is interesting "is the deterritorialization of these negative experiences and their rearticulation in a broader [...] discourse of injustice" (p.15). The sense of marginalisation and injustice that the interviewed *immigrati/e* feel they share with 'new migrants' exactly transcends ethnicity, culture, and locality in Italy or outside, embracing all who share similar discriminatory experiences.

Most of the memories the informants recounted matched one another or at least described similar forms of discrimination while living in Italy. The informants understood what the 'new migrants' were facing, or would face, after entering Italian soil as they projected towards the newcomers their preoccupation of being rejected. Despite the different nationalities and ethnicities or general background, they all felt a sense of common injustice due to their shared sense of invisibility and exclusion that serve the injustice frame.

7.2 NON-EMPATHIC OUTLOOK: RACISM

In relation to what has been examined above, one of the most striking aspects is the way the *immigrati/e* participants differentiate themselves from Italians in relation to their empathic behaviour towards migrants. Italians represented the second side of a binary opposition based on empathy. In the study, Italians as defined by the *immigrati/e* participants represented those who did not hold an empathic outlook on the 'migration crisis'. To affirm this statement, they made use of their own past experiences of living as *immigrati/e* in Italy, recollecting traumatic collective memories of discrimination to justify their stance on Italians not being empathic. In fact, most of the participants suggested that generally in Italy, there is an initial

guardedness or detachment to foreigners and migrants in general demonstrated by Italian people.

In fact, as stated above and discussed in Chapter 4, it was evident that most participants, by positioning themselves at the same level of 'new migrants', might have understood better the struggle of the latter. They perceived a shared sense of exclusion, and a relegation to the lowest status in Italian society. On the other hand, what all participants questioned was the lack of understanding by Italian people around them on the matter of migration and in particular of the so-called 'crisis'.

When asked to reason why 'new migrants' leave their countries, the participants from the Ecuadorian family in Zona 2 underlined the gravity of the situation in said countries, the possibility of war and the utter poverty of people there. "Italians don't understand, people don't understand that there it's not easy", Maria would tell me. They related this to the journey 'new migrants' embark in dangerous dinghies "like slaves", said Diego. "Everyone wants to leave but not every country wants to open its doors". He further explained that if you originally come from a sub-Saharan country, Italians assume you are from a lower race *"l'ultimo della ruota",* "the last spoke on the wheel".

If Italians showed some type of empathy, it would be towards something other than migrants. As Diego claimed "They (Italians) care more about their dogs than the migrants". Camila, discussing the issues around immigration and the new arrivals, explained that she is rather used to the constant discord with her Italian husband on the matter of immigration, their opinions have never been harmonious on that level. Camila confessed at our initial meeting the first day, when her Italian husband Bruno was not present, that he is less empathic towards the 'new migrants': "He says that there is more criminality because of them", she told me, visibly disagreeing. "My husband talks like the rest of them (Italians)". She admitted that she believes all Italians to be racists at heart. "They are that way because they've never been through that. We are migrants, we know what desperation is, what it means to come from afar to an unknown land. They try to educate people in order for them to discriminate more.

They invent what they want, but none of it is true, like the stuff on the luxury smartphones". Camila was firm in her belief that Italian television, especially *Canale 5*, spread unchecked facts and disinformation. She hints at the Italian, arguably European, focus on the arguable possession of high-tech mobile phones by migrants.

Camila often reiterated the fact that Italians have a very distinct and different culture. She does appear to disagree on many aspects from the opinion of her husband as well. "They (her husband and Italians in general) haven't suffered, they don't know the sacrifices that one has to make to get here". Due to this and other reasons, she does not want her children to grow up as 'Italian'. "They grow up spoilt, using bad language all day long; Italians always complain about things, they are never satisfied".

However, it was interesting to see how she did not consider Italians to be migrants and did not associate Italians with migration. In fact, in truth the country's contemporary history is entrenched in currents of migration before and after World War II, as already explored in Chapter 2, but also the post-2008 financial crisis that produced a youth exodus termed 'brain-drain' (Tintori and Romei, 2017). Films and books based on this particular mobility have entered global popular culture, collecting public narratives and ontological narratives comprised of diasporic memories. And yet what surfaces from Camila's comments, and generally the participants' ones as well, is a complete disregard or simple unawareness to these specific collective memories, to a part of Italian history that might hint to a possible empathic outlook from the likes of Italians.

This reflects the general status of the country. In fact, academics such as Fiore and Ialongo highlighted that in Italy, there is a general "amnesia and manufacturing of historical and contemporary narratives" (Fiore & Ialongo, 2018: p, 483). Fiore contextualized the 'Migration Crisis' specifically arguing that Italy is historically known to be a nation of emigrants in the past, contributing to one of the largest diasporas in modern era, continuing in the present as the exodus of Italy's youth is increasing each year. Fiore's intention was primarily to dissipate "the preoccupation produced by crisis- and emergency-imbued rhetorics" (p.487). She argued that the fear of invasion is additionally unfounded (Fiore, 2017) as statistics dating to 2018 the

number of registered Italians in the Records of Italians Living Abroad (A.I.R.E.) is almost equivalent to that of migrants living in Italy (agi.it, 2018).

"Despite the fact that they have embarked on perilous journeys as migrants and have been – and are – undocumented immigrants themselves in some cases, Italians are somehow perceived as more entitled to relocate for work than the immigrants who move to Italy from all continents and contribute to the socio-economic and cultural fabric of the country" (Fiore & Ialongo, 2018: p, 483).

Disregarding all this, during the observation, Bruno, Camila's husband, highlighted the problems that now have submerged Italy since the rise of the 'migration crisis': "It's chaos", he told me about episodes that were reported from the media that refugees are discarding/ throwing away the food that they were given in the shelters. "They are given incentives to remain in Italy".

Camila would justify her husband and their discord to me simply by repeating "He doesn't understand. I'm a migrant and I understand the life of a migrant". The life of a migrant, in her eyes, was predominantly made up of suffering, desperation, and sacrifice and it seemed inconceivable for her to think of Italians as migrants. Because of this, her husband Bruno was unaware of these negative experiences exactly because of his being Italian, belonging to the majority in the society he lived in and possibly having not migrated elsewhere ever. In this sense, Bruno represented the "privileged merely safe" who "prefer to ignore" as Susan Sontag wrote (1993). In fact, in questioning the reaction of the wider public to human tragedies, Sontag proposed what could be argued as a detachment from sentimental perspective on them, rather encouraging a more informed approach on the historical and contextual analysis of such events. In one of the most fundamental articles on the topic at hand, "Regarding the Pain of Others", Sontag delves into the issues that rise with displaying an 'empathic look' in front of images that depict 'suffering' by firstly questioning the role of the participants of such action, the use of pronouns in positioning oneself.

“Who are the "WE" at whom such shock-pictures are aimed? That "we" would include not just the sympathizers of a smallish nation or a stateless people fighting for its life, but—a far larger constituency—those only nominally concerned about some nasty war taking place in another country. The photographs are a means of making "real" (or "more real") matters that the privileged and the merely safe might prefer to ignore” (Sontag, 1993: p.9).

She explained this by taking Virginia Woolf’s arguments on “Three Guineas” as an example, where she discusses how firstly the concept of war is gender-based, hence inextricably a man’s game, and that in front of the images of War World I, the educated class does not act adequately. "Our failure is one of imagination, of empathy: we have failed to hold this reality in mind” (Sontag, 1993: 9). Sontag argues that these types of images depicting global tragedies might be misread or read accordingly to whichever side one stands, they could give rise to peaceful sentiments but simultaneously to opposing revengeful acts. It hence depends on the audience that receives the images in question, the instrumentality that such images are assigned to.

Hence, to use Sontag’s concepts, Bruno represents someone who seems to lack imagination to do so. Following Sontag’s ideas, it is clear that the “WE” at hand in this research is not constituted by the "privileged and merely safe” that she was referring to. The viewers of the tragic images of Lampedusa studied in this research are similar in most respects to the subjects of such images. At least, as they themselves believe, they are positioned at the same lower level in Italian society.

Central to these particular household cases, but also to a more general debate that featured during the research, is the position that established migrants themselves have in Italian society but also their attempt to distance themselves from ‘the Italian people’. For instance, one of the central features in Camila’s affirmations was her understanding of the suffering that ‘new migrants’ face, but simultaneously also her ability to comprehend, even if reticently, her husband’s stance and detachment from it. It can be argued that she accepted Bruno’s position, not questioning the “opacity” (Butler, 2005: 20) in his judgement of the ‘migration crisis’.

Yet, if the acceptance of the existence of such opacity in one's knowledge is one of the central features of empathy, she appears to complain of the lack of acknowledgement that her husband and other Italian 'spectators' seem to have. Thus, she acknowledges it, but is possibly frustrated with Bruno's disavowal of this opacity. This is what Camila was complaining about, not solely that her husband and other Italians do not understand what migrants' experience is, but mostly the denial of their limit in understanding such issues, and moreover the repudiation of Italy's own (e)migratory past. It might be argued that this arrogance annoyed people like Diego or Ana, for instance, hence the lack of understanding disguised as overbearing knowledge, the unwillingness to understand what most of the participants complain about.

In fact, reflecting on their own experiences of being recipients of empathy or not as migrant subjects in Italy, participants would link the lack of empathy encountered in years in Italy to a factor indicating blatant racism. Diego admitted, for instance, that Italians, in his opinion, are mostly, if not all, racists: "They see themselves as from an upper grade and we are below". In his opinion it was due to this racism that Italians could not fully understand what 'new migrants' were experiencing, generally not being able to embody the suffering.

He and his family, on the other hand, knew how it feels to be an *immigrato/a*, as was Camila's belief. They underlined this aspect constantly during the time I spent with their family in the home visit. They complained about the routine, the job positions that they can't escape from, if they remain in Italy. They constantly reiterated that they feel like *immigrati/e*, never having a stable and worthy position in society, stuck in a static narrative that seemingly could evolve. "We know what position we are bound to be occupying", said Diego, highlighting the distance that exists between them and Italians; the perceived 'superiority' of Italians.

They both argued that this treatment of *immigrati/e* is particular to the Italian setting, as when they compare it to the migrant status of their relatives living in Spain, they notice the difference in treatment of 'foreigners'. Most of the participants claimed that a lack of understanding of 'the other' characterises most Italians, and even worse, a complete unwillingness to reach out to 'the other'.

Some of the participants, such as Diego, equated this lack of empathy with an unwillingness to understand to signs of racism. Racism is, as Umberto Eco (2019) defined, a pathological form to a natural reaction in front of diversity or in proximity to someone who is 'almost' equal to 'us', and it is created and develops on this '*quasi'*. From what participants reveal, these signs that underline the '*quasi*'-ness of their *immigrati/e* status never disappear, and create the type of distance and alienation, analysed in the previous chapter, that arguably produces a lack of empathy from the likes of the majority 'Us' towards the migrant 'Them'/Other.

However, other participants were more cautious in accusing all Italians of being racist, trying to understand why such behaviour was apparently common in the city and country they lived in. Elira, for instance, a participant from the Albanian family living in Zona 2, explained: "Many Italians live with ignorance, but there are others who don't judge your appearance and value diversity". She held more faith in Italians: "From a social point of view they are welcoming at first. Older people are more cautious, but younger people are more open, they don't judge on face-value". Elira recalled the time in the most recent Italian history when the 'enemy' was primarily represented by the Albanese community. This sentiment was at its height in the 1990s when her brother first moved to Italy (1992). She claimed that the cycle is repeating itself with Muslims in Italy. "They paint every *immigrato*, *extracomunitario* with a broad brush".

Fatou, a Senegalese woman living in Zona 2, underlined a similar issue. She showed a deep distrust in Italian people. However, she demonstrated an empathic regard in acknowledging that most of them behave the way they do due their lack of awareness, or travel to other countries. Nonetheless, generally she felt that Italians 'use migrants':

"When they need you, they talk to you; if not, they never bother". She believed Italians not to be considerate of those who are different to them.

This opinion was expressed by Diya too, from the Indian family in Zona 9, who believed that Italians are not concerned with migrants in general: "They don't care about us at all". She explains that what Italians fail completely to grasp is the importance of the culture that each different migrant might feel. "Italians seem all distant and uncaring". This thought was so ingrained in her mentality that she feared her three daughters might become and act similarly in the future if they remained in Italy. The eldest daughter, Priya, believed that not all Italians are the same, but that it is truly a matter of age: "Many professors are very harsh to the many foreign students in my school. They don't understand the difficulty of not being fully Italian and speaking more than one language". She tells me that she has heard many upsetting comments from her teachers at school, as discussed in the previous chapter.

Therefore, the lack of empathy or general understanding from their Italian acquaintances was the main issue that the participants denounced. As stated above, this is even more startling if one considers the migratory history that has characterised the Italian peninsula. For instance, Aida, an Ethiopian from Zona 2, also questioned the concept of being a 'migrant' and embodying mobility, questioning Italians themselves and their own history in global migration. In particular, she recalled Italy's colonial past in her country of origin, Ethiopia. She could not understand how Italians engage in a constant discriminatory stance when they themselves where 'emigrants' (colonisers) in her country of origin, Ethiopia. She complained of the hypocrisy that surrounds the racist discourse in Italy, especially when Italians hail their country using nationalistic rhetoric, and flaunting Italy and its products' superiority worldwide: "There are many *Bergamaschi* (people from the city of Bergamo) in Ethiopia who have opened factories to produce goods that they later sell as Made in Italy." Aida and other participants as well claimed that most *immigrati/e* living in Milan are thinking of leaving specifically because of the constant downgrading and lack of understanding in Italian society: "They (Italians) are not able to see themselves in our shoes because

they don't see us on the same level". It indicates an impossibility for Italians to empathize in Aida's view.

All of these factors highlighted the general amnesia in Italian society regarding the overall migration history that featured on the peninsula. What is striking is the incongruity of the nature of the discriminatory discourse in Italy, and the utter lack of acknowledgement of the 'emigratory' past. If one was to consider empathy as the embodiment of someone else's' experience due to a personal relation to this experience, then one might rightly question the whole Italian migratory history and its attempt to erase the long emigratory past.

7.3 THE MEDIA AND LEGA NORD'S DISCOURSES

As explained above, the unwillingness of Italian people to understand in depth the situation of the 'Others' in Italian society is one of the key aspects that the interviewed *immigrati/e* resented, and which delineated for them a sense of separation and boundary between themselves and wider Italian society. To explain this, and as an attempt to comprehend this perceived discrimination which is being directed to 'new migrants' in particular but also to them, the *immigrati/e* participants questioned whether this was mainly the result of the influence of political parties and persuasive tools of the local media.

As a result of these findings, it is worth considering the effects that the racist discourse produced by the mainstream Italian media has had on Italian society. What role does media play in creating and expanding empathy towards the 'distant other', in reinforcing "distant suffering" through a "spectacle of suffering" (Arendt, 1965/2006; Boltanski, 1991)? It surely renders the latter visually more accessible and hence closer and relatable in a quasi-patronising way.

The reporting of the Mediterranean 'migration crisis' arguably has reinforced the separation between the imaginary 'Us', the Italians, and the 'Them', the outsiders. The latter has been even more accessible to accomplish after the 2008 financial downturn, arguably not solely in Italy, but in Europe and North America as well (Padovani, 2018). Far-right parties have implemented a "politics of fear" (Wodak, 2015), which aims at employing a "rhetoric of exclusion" that frames a distinctive and homogenised sense of community representing "We, the people" against the rest of the "Others" (p.21).

In Italy, the *Lega Nord* has vastly reinforced this binary opposition during its political campaigns over the last two decades, using posters and images to heighten the concept of 'We', and opposes the presence of all migrants in 'Our land' (Richardson, Colombo, 2013: p.191), arguably referring first to the Padania and then generally Italy. For instance, a poster showing an image with the "horde" of migrants on a ship was used in 2002 to signal the possible threat of an invasion of outsiders in their land.

The 'Us' versus 'Them' dichotomy is reinforced by creating posters where images depict and signify the 'Other', and the receivers of such posters compose the 'We' that is empowered by the *Lega* to stop such 'invasion' and distance themselves from this 'horde' of people. This inevitably creates a power relation between those that the *Lega Nord* addresses, the receivers of these images, and the ones who are depicted on them or symbolically represent them in society. This distance, the imbalanced power relation and unequal social status is what many Italians who now adhere to the *Lega Nord's* discourse feel entitled to and embody. One might claim that they act upon this parcelled and sold status in their day to day lives and interactions with *immigrati/e*, or at least this is what was discussed during the observation. It should also be noted that most of the participants were appalled by the *Lega Nord's* discourse and the complete lack of empathy shown towards migrants arriving to Lampedusa.

Out of the Ecuadorian family, Diego, Paula, and Ana knew about the *Lega Nord* and its discourse when asked. Paula held a very negative opinion of Matteo Salvini, for instance, as in his view, Salvini lacked a sense of humanitarianism. He described

Salvini as just an uncaring thoughtless person. “It’s a game of the big politicians. But they need to put themselves in their shoes” says Diego. “It’s easy to talk to chitchat about these issues, but when they’ll get to the nub of the matter they will understand”. He explained “Salvini is drenched with wickedness, he doesn’t see that most migrants would come to Italy to work fairly”.

They are all conscious of their position as well. Maria for instance believed that migrants need to be more aware of the regulations in Italy, because “we are guests”. Paula, however, one of the two other flatmates they were sharing the house with, showed a more layered set of opinions. In fact, she stated that she believed Italy to be a small country to welcome all the migrants that she sees arrive to Lampedusa. She understands that most of them are obliged by grave circumstances to come to Italy. However, she also is of the view that they constitute a further expenditure to the nation.

According to Paula, migrants should be given the opportunity to stay, but if they go against the law, the government should take the right precautions and send them home. She agreed with the *Lega Nord’s* values, which she was aware of in certain respects, although she is not certain of the measures that the *Lega* would have to take in order to achieve its goals, for instance sending ‘new migrants’ to their home country or helping them there. Paula further defended the right-wing party saying: “They are not racists but they need to act in such way to defend the country”. She was justifying the main discourse around the ‘migration crisis’ in Italy, perhaps because of her own discontentment with living in Zona 2 in Milan as she complained: “We are too many here. Via Padova for instance is not safe anymore”. She was linking migrants/*immigrati/e* with criminality in one of the major streets in the area and the city generally. Precariousness, quasi-ghettoisation, and continuous depiction of migrants/*immigrati/e* as criminals might have induced Paula to accept *Lega Nord’s* discourse.

Moreover, as far as Salvini is concerned, Ana was aware of his figure even though she reaffirmed that she is not involved in, or knowledgeable about, Italian politics. She underlined the lack of compassion: “He doesn’t do much for Italy; he does things for

himself, for his own benefit". Generally, Valmir, of the Albanian household in Zona 2, did not seem to want to return back to Albania, but he criticises Milan and Italy generally. In his opinion, people are not "*vere"*, "true" in Milan, Italian culture does not hold firm principles. "I feel utterly sad to see how people who are coming to Lampedusa are seen as an inconvenience, when in reality they are just looking for a bit of luck". He claims that many political parties just take advantage of the situation. "It seems that the fault, the primary cause of Italy's malaise, is the immigrant! But it's not like this at all!"

Yet, one might question whether the solution for empathic improvement in society might reside solely in resetting the political discourse and the main narratives depicted in the local news in addressing the 'migration crisis'. Would 'fixing' media be enough? Would 'silencing' Salvini and other far-right leaders suffice in order to enhance the 'empathy levels' of the Italian population? Would it solve how the single individual understands the 'new neighbour'? The way in which one constructs the 'Other'? One might argue that the impossibility to empathise is much more entrenched in society and not solely in the Italian context.

One could question whether it ultimately is a matter of numbers. As Paul Slovic wrote a central article on this topic titled "'If I Look at the Mass I Will Never Act': Psychic Numbing and Genocide" (2007). The phrase is a direct statement made by Mother Theresa "If I look at the mass I will never act. If I look at one, I will", which could be claimed to be the main reference to which many humanitarian public relations agencies' modus operandi. Slovic explains, regardless of the striking statistics surrounding genocides, the compelling numbers of murders, these are remaining unsuccessful in the aim to "spark emotion and feeling" (Slovic, 2007: 2), failing to instigate an effective response, and lastly action. Hence this sentiment remains solely on the level of *observation* of the suffering 'Other', without surpassing into *action*. This was what the portrayal of the 'migration crisis' created, or at least what Yonas believed as well.

Yonas, an Ethiopian living in Zona 2, was of the idea that politics in general are problematic. However, Italian politics in relation to migration is even more so. First and foremost, the *Lega,* in his opinion, is exploiting the 'migration crisis' to gain more votes: "It's all *egoismo* (selfishness)". He went further to question the use of 'migration crisis' as a term: "It's not a crisis, there have been many migrations throughout history". Yonas explained that whenever he watches news on *Canale 5,* it always features news reports on the 'migration crisis'. "They talk about it especially when there are elections or important political decisions that need to be taken". In his opinion they were using this issue and provoking people, enticing them to find someone to hate. "They don't even know where Africa is" he says as he points out the ignorance of some Italians who follow Salvini.

Yonas claimed that there is widespread ignorance in Italy, as most people are not aware that there is overwhelming poverty around the country, or they are not willing to face the truth. Instead, in his opinion, they focus on other problems such as 'immigration'. He said: "To cover their own '*male'* suffering/evil, they talk about the 'male' of others. To do politics, you always have to be against someone else". Here Yonas underlined the importance that politics has in the entire issue around empathy and migration. One might argue that empathy is dictated by politics. Empathy on this level transcends individual behaviour and enters the social sphere, it follows the mass, and not one's own emotional reaction to certain occurrences. Hence, it is perhaps not empathy but pity.

In this regard Hannah Arendt (2006 [1965]) and later Luc Boltanski (1991) have discussed the differences between empathy understood as compassion and pity. The former for Arendt means to be "stricken with the suffering of someone else as though it were contagious" (1965/2006: p. 70). Similarly, to what Stein (1916/1989) implied, compassion is a visceral reaction, a 'mute' emotion that takes place in the presence of (face-to-face) suffering and that transcends speech (p.86). For this reason, compassion cannot enter the political sphere, since it is singular and wordless whereas politics is based on dialogue and plurality. Therefore, when compassion enters the public sphere

it stops being an emotion, instead becoming a sentiment that Arendt terms as pity, which is "to be sorry without being touched in the flesh" (p.75).

It is based on observation rather than action, and Arendt claims: "By virtue of being a sentiment, pity can be enjoyed for its own sake, and this will almost automatically lead to a glorification of its cause, which is the suffering of others" (p.79) In this regard, as underlined by Boltanski (1999) as well, the 'politics of pity' function on the basis of a difference between fortunate and unfortunate, where fortune and misfortune are conditions permanently attached to people in order to separate the two groups. Pity tends to discriminate between the *small* and the *great* (p.4) and generalise the distant, unfortunate 'Other', who is seen *en masse*.

[Pity] does not look upon both fortune and misfortune, the strong and the weak, with an equal eye, without the presence of misfortune, pity could not exist, and it therefore has just as much vested interest in the existence of the unhappy as thirst for power has a vested interest in the existence of the weak (Arendt, 1965/2006: 79).

Depictions such as those of 'new migrants' arriving to Lampedusa strengthen the politics of pity as the contact between the two classes is provided by media in form of images. Following this argument, it can be argued that pity is the reason why the 'migration crisis' is termed as such, in order to reinforce social/global structures, the separation between the carriers of such pity or the observers and those experiencing the suffering. The "luck" that Valmir explained 'new migrants' are seeking in Europe, cannot be therefore afforded to them as it is the prerequisite of this hierarchy.

Empathy, if the suffering has not been directly experienced, is therefore unlikely to exist in wider society. This is possibly another reason why *immigrati/e* denounce most Italians for not fully comprehending/understating/empathising with 'new migrants' as the politics of pity drive them to merely be distant observers, pitying and not empathising.

Given the impossibility for compassion and empathy to enter politics, the alternative to pity in the public sphere is that of solidarity, which acknowledges the plight of a

certain group and considers citizens to be equal (1965/2006: p. 79). However, this type of solidarity was not perceived by the interviewed *immigrati/e* participants who followed the chronicles of the 'migration crisis' through the discourses of Salvini and the *Lega Nord*.

7.4 FROM VICTIMS TO PERPETRATORS: MUSLIMS AS 'OTHER'

The previous sections of the chapter unravelled the reality of migrant life in Italy: the constant sense of inferiority and voicelessness *immigrati/e* feel living in Milan, the ordinary acts of racism that they experience, and mostly the empathy they feel in regards to witnessing 'new migrants' arriving to Italy on TV.

Despite not fully comprehending the specifics of the racism a particular group/community is victim to, not fully understanding what they are dealing with, or the particular discourses that are aimed at them, it can be suggested that one might still be able to detect the common thread that underlies the racist rhetoric**.** One should be able to understand being portrayed as something that one is not, or repeatedly being represented as the enemy in the media, stereotyped as 'the other', the general patterns of 'Othering' that are entailed. As a matter of fact, this is exactly how the participants were able to empathise with the 'new migrants': they have not experienced the 'Mediterrean sea' journey on dinghies as none of the participants arrived in Italy via sea or via Lampedusa, but they were able to comprehend the perils that this entails. Mostly, they acknowledged the difficulties of living as migrants in Italy, as second-class citizens.

Yet, this type of transference did not take place in relation to the Muslim community/ people who lived in the area. Arguably, they should have been able to understand

them, and empathise with their collective position as victims considering the antagonisation that Muslims are subject to widely in Italian media.

The *immigrati/e* I interviewed had this opportunity. They had the chance to debunk 'trendy', infectious discriminatory remarks, this time aimed at people other than themselves, but most of them decided not to. Most of the participants who expressed their concern regarding the arrival of other Muslim 'new migrants' generally justified their stance by pointing at the presence of Muslim people in the areas where they lived in already. In fact, it was their belief that Muslim people kept to themselves and didn't 'integrate' like others. The Ecuadorian household for instance showed some type of adversity towards this particular group.

During a discussion at Sunday lunch, Maria, an Ecuadorian woman from Zona 2, would go on to explain the situation among their own local community composed of various Muslim people, mostly Egyptians, as she explained: "Egyptians keep to themselves and the wives don't work either". Maria perhaps was signalling a pattern in those communities, a negative one in her eyes, to which Paula then added "women are subdued to their husbands and they try to escape from this slavery. 50% of them are mistreated". When I asked her where she had taken/heard this data, she answered from watching TV. But with my further questions as to where exactly, she didn't provide a clear answer. Ana then tried to explain that "This is passed down in their culture. Even the children witness this." These statements can be argued to be the most typical generalisations that develop around Islam and Muslim practices. They are not well-founded, as when asked, the participants did not know how to justify these statements. Yet, noteworthy was the way they all chimed in at the lunch table and one after the other contributed to the discussion, not refraining from giving away possibly erroneous facts. Diego concluded "There are only few Muslims who open up".

Amila, a Sri Lankan man from Zona 2, underlined that in his opinion, Muslims pretended too much: "If I look at other ethnicities, like Filipinos, they don't ask too much from Italy. Muslims on the other hand expect so much: mosques, prayer time... there are always problems where Muslims live. For instance, in Via Padova, there are

too many of them and there is too much violence. Sri Lankans and Filipinos behave well".

His wife, Piyumi, had a similar perception regarding Muslim people: "There are some good Muslims, but many are way too closed off, they don't want to be part of the community. They don't even smile at you". When I asked them if she felt any type of fear towards them she answered: "Yes we need to be fearful of them, because sometimes they are too violent. Even Muslim women who seem very nice with their veil on, they look calm and quiet but as soon as something bad happens they scream at you. Even at school you only need two Muslims (females) to silence ten Italian women".

When I asked her if she was referring to any particular event or if she could quote similar cases, Piyumi replied that she was suggesting it on a general level. "When they walk in group, they are really dangerous, they instil fear because they always scream and they make themselves noticeable. They don't behave as immigrants should behave, they should be more silent." Piyumi's regard on Muslim people living in Milan, particularly in the same area, was not at all positive. It portrayed Muslim people as unforthcoming and unapproachable, a similar belief to that of the Ecuadorian household, with whom she was close.

In fact, Piyumi's perception regarding Muslim people might have been informed by other people, such as the Ecuadorian family, and vice versa. Some of her statements not only underlined her almost resolute position in front of Muslim neighbours but also shed light on the perception she held regarding herself, the value that she thought she held in Italy, and the 'correct behaviour' she should adopt in Milan. This sense of identity clearly showed a level of self-inflicted inferiority, or a normalised positioning that highlighted a deeply-rooted and insidious result of practices of governmentality. Moreover, it can be claimed that the latter *immigrati/e* participants suffer from 'internalised stigma' (Küey, 2015), which was discussed in the 'Conceptual' chapter and served as a basis of the main research hypothesis. In fact, one might argue that

they have internalised the oppression and become themselves the perpetrators as an act of survival living in the Milanese context.

Moreover, as discussed in the previous chapters on 'Narrativity' and 'Voice', there are forms of epistemic violence and oppression that seem to have been adopted and accepted by some of the participants as they are thought to be a 'given' when embodying the 'migrant self'. For instance, due to a particular look or skin colour, certain *immigrati/e* feel that they will be perceived negatively so they automatically silence themselves. Yet, it goes beyond skin colour as being *immigrato/a* becomes an ingrained state of mind. These unquestioned types of oppression, as they are normalised by the victims themselves, might be reproduced towards other 'Others'. In fact, they consider the Other-Muslims to behave in 'non appropriate ways': be 'too rebellious' and 'noisy' and 'demanding' for migrants who ought to know and accept their place.

Nonetheless, more generally this mirrored a collective mentality with regards to Islam and its practitioners, common in most countries in Europe. It is especially the belief that Muslim people tend to segregate themselves, refusing to 'integrate' or not making an effort to be more 'sociable' in the Western societies they inhabit. Shamim Miah examines this idea of Muslim practices of self-segregation. He addresses the common narrative that portrays Muslim people as self-inflicting ghettoization. In fact, this has become a dominant discourse in the UK, as Shamin analyses in detail, but also in other countries in Europe, particularly in France (Bowen, 2007).

Is it, therefore, Muslim communities segregating themselves, or is it actually a response to continuous patterns of antagonisation they undergo in the communities they live in? A sense of marginalisation was perceived by the interviewed participants that was afflicting *immigrati/e/extracomunitari/e* on a general level, but in fact a grander level of ostracisation might be affecting the Muslim community that lives in Milan, to which a response is to withdraw from the public sphere entirely and protect themselves.

Shamim Miah explains how several media stories after the events of 9/11 have contributed to creating moral panics, which he groups as spatial and cultural self-segregations. He's referring specifically to the British case, but it is applicable to most countries in Europe. With spatial segregation he refers to "themes associated with ethnic residential clustering and 'Muslim no-go areas' (...), [i]t focuses on the idea that Muslims self-consciously live in separate neighbourhoods by deliberately excluding themselves from the rest of the society" (Miah, 2015: p.11). Cultural self-segregation, on the other hand, mostly entails perceived mental barriers due to particular cultural practices: endogamy, the use of the hijab, niqab or burka, and other practices. The author claims that these types of self-segregation are believed to be induced by multicultural policies, which in fact to the eyes of secular liberals might aid further cultural separatism (Miah, 2015).

These preconceptions of self-segregation also lead to presumptions of developing radicalisations from the part of Muslim households. The preconception that Muslims are not only different but tend to segregate themselves might prevent participants from actually approaching Muslim people; it might prevent them from connecting and talking to Muslim parents at their children's school. This might further isolate Muslim people to their own communities. In fact, the amount of agency, or even responsibility, that Muslims living in Milan hold in disseminating the 'self-segregatory' picture associated with them is rather questionable. Yet, this avoidance from all parts, due to mainstream media discourses or accepted social segregations that pressure individuals to live and interact in certain ways, prevents members of larger cosmopolitan networks from interrelating.

7.4.1 MOBILE DISCRIMINATIONS

Noteworthy was the amount of prejudice each of the participants carried from their countries of origin. It is worth asking whether the cultural heritage, but also the current

affairs, developing in their original countries and the social demographics there, might have an effect on their current daily social interactions in Milan.

This was Diya's case for instance, an Indian man living in Zona 9. Renowned is the ethnic and religious diversity in India, yet similarly infamous are the religious/class issues that characterise the country, hence her opposing stance against Muslims. These attitudes are then reinforced in their new country of residence not solely by the general media discourse but also in the religious services they attended. As a matter of fact, this became clear during the weekly prayer/function. As mentioned already in the previous chapters, the most salient speech that the preacher gave was of a nationalistic undertone, particularly regarding the religious upheavals in India, the importance of protecting the country's main religion, in their case Hinduism, and condemning the presence of Islam (I secretly recorded the speech, sending the audio to Hindi speaking colleagues who translated it to me). Therefore, it was clear that Diya, Aditya, and their daughters as well were being persuaded to see Muslims as enemies, initially in their country of origin, then in the new country they live in. The sectarian violence and religious discrimination that have characterised India have travelled and spread globally as well.

One might argue this scenario was parallel to that of Piyumi and Amila, Sri Lankans. Sri Lanka has been the setting of one of the most direct forms of discriminations against Muslim communities in Asia, following a similar path to Myanmar. In both of these Buddhist countries, Buddhist nationalist groups have identified Muslims as a problem for the nation and have showed this sentiment through acts of violence (Schonthal, 2016). In Sri Lanka, anti-Muslim campaigns and riots have been led by Buddhist extremist group *Bodu Bala Sena,* which entered politics in 2012 (QuartsIndia.com, 2018). Much of its anti-Muslim rhetoric mirrors that present in other countries, such as claiming that Islam is "taking over" the majority Buddhist Sri Lanka, but also linking their fear to the seemingly over-present global 'Islamic-food-issue', by accusing Halal-certified food industries of funding international terrorism.

Muslims account for 10% of the population in Sri Lanka. Piyumi and Amila settled in Italy before the rise of *Bodu Bala Sena* and mainstream anti-Muslim sentiment in Sri

Lanka. Yet, they seemed to be impacted by the events in Sri Lanka and the rhetoric of the *Bodu Bala Sena*. The most direct form of contact with their home country was possible through social media, particularly Facebook, which they used on a daily basis. Apart from checking their feeds on their mobile phones, at night, after dinner, Amila would log on to his Facebook profile on the main computer situated in the living/dining room and would scroll through the newsfeed. The videos that he played so that everyone could hear were of Sri Lankan politicians debating Sri Lankan current affairs and policies, Buddhist monks talking about lifestyles and meditations and videos of other monks filmed at rallies/conventions talking about Sri Lankan politics.

One of these monks, I recognised and checked after, is the most prominent monk of *Bodu Bala Sena*, Galagoda Aththe Gnanaaera. In the days I conducted the observation, the videos of the speeches that were played did not feature direct discrimination towards Muslim communities in Sri Lanka, which I could understand due to my knowledge of the Sinhalese language. Nonetheless, it is quite evident how Amila and Piyumi could easily access videos of *Bodu Bala Sena* nationalists, be influenced by the rhetoric and adopt the same line of thinking while living in Milan. This shows general media dynamics in relation to diasporas, as the happenings in Sri Lanka impact on their position in the diaspora. It was interesting to see how the nationalist discourses of the *Bodu Bala Sena* spread worldwide through the diaspora, and how they perpetuate hatred towards Muslims on a global level. This does not concern solely Buddhist Sri Lankans, but Sri Lankans of other religious backgrounds as well, since Amila and Piyumi were Catholic for instance. In general, the information gathered during the observations at the Indian and Sri Lankan households revealed how the nationalisms of a migrant's country of origin influences him/her in their 'other new lives' elsewhere, as nationalisms become part and parcel of the diasporas, with their expansion facilitated through various media tools so that they become translocal.

Yet, every participant seemed to carry their countries' nationalism with them. In fact, despite holding ambivalent views regarding Muslim neighbours and general Muslim residents of Zona 2, Filipinos Denis and Auri didn't demonstrate adversity towards Muslim communities in their country of origin. In the predominantly Catholic Philippines, Muslims account for 5% of the population, the second largest religious

group (indexmundi.com). Since the 1970s, there have been rising tensions, especially in the Southern areas of the country, where a Muslim faction has attempted to gain independence from the mainly Catholic country (scmp.com). President Rodrigo Duterte, born Roman Catholic, has shown sympathies towards Islam, heavily criticised members of the Filipino clergy and created a law that could potentially provide the Southern regions the autonomy they desire.

During the period in which the observation was carried out these, events hadn't yet unfolded. The Filipino households that took part in the research did not show a particular opinion regarding the Muslim communities in their country of origin. Both households believed the Philippines not to have grave social issues. In fact, when I questioned whether they held any particular view regarding the popular media narrative regarding Islam and the alleged threat posed with the arrival of 'new migrants', as the *Lega Nord* had professed, the Filipino family living in Zona 2 only showed concern regarding the Muslim people living near Via Padova. "Mediterranean Muslims are different" Denis once told me, possibly referring to the cultural differences altogether that he sensed would incapacitate him to sympathise with the fellow Muslim neighbours. Due to personal reasons, which neither made clear, they felt that Muslim people were different from them.

Perhaps this was caused by certain experiences of living in the area. One might also argue that they seemed to be influenced by the hegemonic discourse that was disseminated by right-wing parties but also by the hegemonic mentality that was present in the school area they lived in, and in the parental acquaintances they socialise with. In fact, this way of thinking is similar to that expressed in the Ecuadorian and Sri Lankan households, with which they bonded at school. One can see how they might influence each other at school, but this is speculation as it was not directly confirmed during the observation.

7.4.2 (UN)BREAKABLE PATTERNS

Going further, perhaps it is worth considering that this also is the result of a system of mental and psychological control that is deeply entrenched in the everyday life, that Foucault (1990) termed as governmentality. How does a particular system, in this case a system of racism that reproduces particular hegemonic political and economic relation, work on 'Othering' Others?

This process is very important because it creates categories, where it categorises people into 'good' and 'bad' people; 'Christians' and 'Muslims'), and then controls people through these categories. But why do people fall into these patterns? Is it possible to break away from this particular system? These are the effects of a "normalising society" (Foucault, 1990: p144) that entails politicising the body itself, which is what Foucault terms it as the "biopolitics of the population" (p.139).

In his 'Les Anormaux' lectures, Foucault, explains that from the end of the 19th century there has been a need to protect society from that which is abnormal (Foucault, 1999: p.299). He defines this as 'internal racism': "an internal war that defends society against threats born of and in its own body" (Foucault, 2003: p.216). Hence, that which is abnormal and considered from the outside needs to be cleansed. The forms of ethnic nationalism and the pursuit of eugenics that characterised the 20th century are a result.

Moreover, during his lectures at the College de France in 1976, Foucault clarified that modern racism differed from past traditions of racism as it is not bound to a "form of mutual contempt and hatred between races" (2003, p.258). Nor was it an ideological process with which States attempt to uproot the hostility opposition directed to them, directing it to other mythical entities.

"The specificity of modern racism (...) is bound up with the technique of power, with the technology of power. It is bound up with this, and that takes us as far away as possible from the race war and the intelligibility of history. We are dealing with a mechanism that allows biopower to work. So racism is bound up with the workings of

a State that is obliged to use race, the elimination of races and the purification of the race, to exercise its sovereign power" (2003: p.258).

One cannot escape racism. It is deeply entrenched in any modern society, part and parcel of it. Racism has to exist for sovereign power to exist, it is a form of government devised to control a population. Kim Su Rasmussen in his article 'Foucault's Genealogy of Racism', claims that contemporary neo-racist discourses such as Islamophobia or the anti-immigration one can be described as a "third and minor form" of racism (2011: 46) "[N]eo-racism enables a neo-liberal government to intervene directly in a number of issues where the market is deemed to be insufficient" (Rasmussen, 2011 : p.47).

Hence, one could in this way explain the never-ceasing continuation and prolongment of the chain of discriminations, as in order for the sovereign power to survive, it needs constant creation of new forms of 'Other'.

The system of governmentality works with this control that is self-reproduced because it is widely internalised. Foucault underlines the lack of agency that governmentality thrives upon in order to work. This system though is not imposed onto people, but it 'naturally' becomes part of them, as members of society. It is embodied. This affects the ability to empathise. One can escape it, but one needs to enter into a process of self-questioning which Elira, an Albanian woman from 'Zona 2', Yonas, an Ethiopian man from Zona 2, and Camila, a Peruvian woman from Zona 9, mostly showed during the observations.

In fact, my initial supposition was that the ones who did not lean onto these tendencies, even if in the slightest, were the ones who had a link to Islam and Muslim people. Elira's case is most relevant here, as she identified with the struggle undergone by Muslim communities as she felt that they occupied the position first held by Albanians in Italy. Most importantly she empathised with them because her own husband was Muslim. "I feel sorry about it" she told me, "It's a religious war". Valmir, the husband,

felt sorry and disappointed on a human level: “people can say what they want, but also believe in what they want”. Elira continued, “I fell in love with him, regardless of everything else”, emphasising how religion was not taken into account when they married. In Albania in fact, Muslims represent the majority 80.3% of the population, while Christians consist of 18%. Albania and Italy hold opposite demographics in terms of religious affiliations.

Yonas and Aida, Ethiopians living in the same area, behaved and thought similarly to Elira: they ‘justified’ their stance by emphasising that in their country of origin, people with different ethnic and religious backgrounds lived harmoniously. In particular, people like Yonas and Fatou, a Senegalese couple from Zona 2, would try to defend Islam and Muslim people in our conversations, would discourage common narratives associated to Muslim people and condemn the recent Islamophobic global trend. Especially Yonas, who appeared to be one of the wariest of the power of media influences and persuasions would underline how this hatred against Islam was for him just a political game: “It’s easier for them to say that ‘all Muslims are ISIS’, but we need to understand who created it: America.”

He then continued to suggest other conspiracy theories asking “Who really carried out 9/11?”, one might argue demonstrating the type of political stance he leans towards. Another time when we were talking about the ‘migration crisis’ he questioned this definition itself, asking if one should refer to it as crisis, and added: “It’s all programmed from here, the landings are organised from here (Italy)”. In a way, following his case and what Elira demonstrated as well, it appears that in order not to fall into Islam-defamatory rhetoric, one ought to either have close/intimate links to it, or have high literacy/knowledge/interest in media discourse patterns. They appeared to be aware of the governmental strategies and dynamics to which people are constantly subject to.

Most importantly they acknowledged the reality that sometimes groups are contingent on the existence of other groups. As Iris Marion Young explains:

“Sometimes a group comes to exist only because one group excludes and labels a category of persons, and those labelled come to understand themselves as group members only slowly, on the basis of their shared oppression” (Young 1990: p.46).

These are the premises for the development of solidarities on the grounds of empathising with ‘similar’ oppressed ‘others’. As was discussed in the previous chapter on ‘Empathy’, there is research focusing on social movements and social action that uses framing situations around injustices (Ryan and Gamson, 2006). Through these ‘injustice frames’, solidarities and shared understandings are born. These also entail the construction of shared contexts of interpretation of one’s situation, and shared processes of identity formation, which applied to some of the respondents that were critical of the overarching hegemonic discourse. However, this implies the opposite too, whereby groups that are framed by certain injustices do not or cannot relate to others who suffer further/different injustices, continuing the chain of discrimination. Some of the respondents, who did not have a direct link to Islam did not seem to understand the religiously racialised injustice that Muslim people seem to endure in Italy.

For instance, Arnold and Joyce, Filipinos living in Zona 9, had a similar stance, as they seemed to fall for the general argument that sees the entrance of some Muslim people as a threat to the well-being of the communities in Italy, especially in regards to their own area. Incoherently though, they also confessed that they had built amicable relations with the Egyptian and Moroccan street vendors in their area, which I had a chance to witness as well during an outing to the local market. Hence, it could be argued that they partly reproduced the common argument and discourse about dangerous Muslim people arriving to Italy among ‘new migrants’, not resisting it by acknowledging their own positive experience with the Muslim community in the area they lived in.

In the Ecuadorian household as well, on a Sunday lunch after the evangelic weekly function, when we were discussing the general Italian media landscape, the *Lega Nord,* and the 'migration crisis' one final time, I raised the fact that Muslim people were now seen as the public enemy. They all agreed (Diego, Maria, Ana, and Paula) that Muslim people were '*prepotenti'*, arrogant and unwilling to put into practice the culture of the new country they lived in. On the same matter, Ana in particular said "of course terrorists will come", without any solicitation or link from me between the words Muslim/terrorist, but referring to the sense of threat in media discourse regarding the 'migration crisis' and Islam. Diego then intervened and added that they kill in the name of Allah: "they don't see the irreversible wounds. I respect their faith but I don't share it". Whether he was referring to Muslims or terrorists was ambiguous from his speech. Yet, this ambivalence, juxtaposition, and in the end confusion, was noteworthy as this is the blurred line to which many falter by following the global Islamophobic trend.

Diego concluded "There are only few Muslims who open up. But I do have a friend. He's very kind, I can ask him if he wants to talk to you" This was when he started telling me of this other friend, Adam from Senegal, that he went on to invite one night over for dinner while I was there. Diego and the family were arranging this for me, as they thought they could help out with the research. However, he didn't qualify as a possible participant as he lived in another area of the city and had lived in Milan for only seven years, but I didn't stop him from arranging this meeting as I was interested to see how the household would behave in front of a Muslim person.

During said dinner, in which Paula could not partake as she was working, we started by having general conversations about the family life, with Adam talking about his family back in Senegal, working and living in Milan, and how Diego had helped him find a work position in a local Supermarket. Diego is in fact a delivery man and had met him while he was a so-called "vu-cumpra'" (a racist term used to denominate street sellers of African origin) outside the Supermarket. Adam would always aid Diego in carrying the packages to the shop and Diego, being moved by his behaviour, then recommended hiring Adam as staff at the supermarket.

At one moment during the dinner, the conversation shifted towards religion (quite the norm in the house as the members are fervent evangelicals) and Adam was asked about his faith. Adam replied to all of their questions regarding Islam but also ISIS, where he had to explain how these two were separate, though by also stating how 'Arab countries' are different from Senegal. He claimed that terrorism is a political game that doesn't involve Islam. The Ecuadorian participants listened with attentiveness and seemed more understanding of the issues surrounding Islam and Muslim people as they found commonalities in their belief in God.

This highlighted how straightforward it was to defeat orally spread stereotypes around Muslims by 'simply meeting and openly talking' to them. This is the norm in many situations that involve discrimination and prejudice, whereby actual dialogue appears as the only solution. Nonetheless it was interesting how even Adam tried to distance himself from Muslims in Arab countries. He regarded himself as different from them, and didn't want to associate himself with them. It seemed that the ongoing chain of discriminations was inherent among Muslim countries in this case, creating figuratively smaller less visible rings to the chain.

Taking into consideration Adam's self-justifying stance, it would appear that there persists a constant attempt of distancing oneself from someone else, from some/something else that could be sold as a culprit. In Adams' case, instead of defending others and empathising with other fellow Muslim people who might be experiencing the same type of discrimination he is victim to, he blamed the Other in order to protect himself/herself.

Hence, following his words, Arab Muslim identity differs from his own, which is why he can separate himself from such groups and accuse them. Generally, certain identities are imposed by others and are defined by how others perceive and identify you, how others allocate you to groups that are already associated with particular sets of norms, attributes, and stereotypes (Young, 1990: p.45). Yet, while Adam identified as Muslim, he did not associate with being grouped as an Arab Muslim, since the latter represented in Milan the negativity around Islam.

On this matter, Young underlined the importance that one's agency has in rejecting and leaving a group identity or entering new ones (p. 44-6). One also holds the power to reimagine and redefine the meaning of group identity of the collective he/she is embedded in. Young claimed that group identity is first as given, but Adam wanted to distance himself from the given identity he was associated to in the Italian context.

CONCLUSION

One of the key aspects that featured in this research was that of empathy. The way a person might go beyond their own self, beyond their own victimisation, beyond their ethnically and culturally defined community: this transference is empathy. This is a type of empathy that creates community. The priority of this research was to investigate whether the participants' victimisation has informed them about how to treat other people without preconceptions or general detachment. The interviewed participants are victims of racism, they understand it, they know it, they can and do clearly state that they are victims of racism. Because of this, they acknowledge the difficulties and sacrifices that 'new migrants' might face, also in terms of being categorised as such and classified with negative attributes, and create a type of transference. Their self-identity is part-and-parcel of how they are seen and their victimisation.

Empathy can be considered to be a complex and multi-layered concept which has been analysed in various fields. In the pedagogical and philosophical one specifically, it raises diverse queries that culminate in questioning the validity of considering empathy as an innate trait in humans, and the possibility of it being teachable, therefore a skill. Edith Stein argues that empathy is indeed non-primordial but recalls for a primordial experience, hence an external event that incites a personal lived experience to surface.

The interviewed *immigrati/e* are aware of their shared, lived experience with 'new migrants', despite recognising the limits of their knowledge. They believe they hold a relatable sense of strife to the migrants arriving at Lampedusa, as they perceive that the same type of discrimination and exclusion which they have been victim to, now be directed towards them.

However, the participants question the empathic/emotional transfer that is involved by the likes of Italians, which goes as far as remaining detached in such engagement in the participants' regards. The interviewed *immigrati/e* problematise this "opacity" that cover their Italian acquaintances'' judgements, possibly recounting the lack of understanding they were victim to in the first place. In fact, not only is there an absence of empathy perceived in Italians by established migrants, but a complete disdain and indifference towards the matter. For this reason, when considering the arrival of 'new migrants', and the possible settlement in or near their communities in Milan, some of the participants demonstrated that they were doubtful of their success, almost conveying a warning to the further suffering new migrants would encounter if they chose to settle in Italy.

Finally, most of the participants denounced the ubiquitous portrayal of the 'migration crisis' in the media, underlining the fact that rather than instigating compassion towards new arriving migrants, it was instead reinforcing hierarchical relations between fortunate and unfortunate, increasing the distance between these two groups and strengthening the 'politics of pity' (Arendt, 1965/2006; Boltanski, 1999).

Nonetheless, despite their own victimisation, this does not entail showing empathy towards all 'others'. In fact, perhaps the latter is not/cannot be embodied and demonstrated in an absolute form towards everyone. Or at least, that is what was found in this research. Despite participants being able to transfer their strenuous lived experience as *immigrati/e* onto 'new migrants', they seemed to be incapable of achieving a similar level of empathy towards Muslim people and the similar patterns of discrimination. Some respondents demonstrated carrying the nationalist sentiments from their countries of origin.

From what was gathered during the research, Muslims were not part of the immediate community and did not belong to the same 'injustice frame': although having children who attended the same school, Muslim parents seemed to be either excluded, or were seen by the interviewed *immigrati/e* as self-segregated, and overall different from the rest of the migrant communities living in the two areas.

What was mostly asked was "what is it is to be 'the other'?" Does it mean that the injustices you suffer 'make' you empathetic and understanding of universal experiences of exclusion and marginalisation, of misrepresentation and false negative portrayals on media? The premises of being 'the Other', of experiencing alienation and hence understanding it on a universal level, come to falter as perhaps even 'the Others' do not fully comprehend the state-driven patterns of discrimination that are involved.

It should be noted that there was some amount empathy from certain interviewed participants, but this was achieved only through their own of self-questioning process. They recognised themselves as victims of social discourses, drawing out the social and media patterns that represent them as 'Other', and acknowledging how these might be adapted for different communities from their own.

8 CONCLUSION

This research set out to explore how *immigrati/e* living in Milan perceive the 'migration crisis', how they define their own position vis-à-vis the securitising debates and discourse on 'new migrants'.

The research highlighted how discourse around the 'migration crisis', be it of a securitising type or of humanitarian nature, even if built on a call for action and empathy, seem to detriment the narrativity that has developed around the figure of the *immigrato/a*, holding people who are identified as such in a stagnating, fixed position.

Furthermore, the thesis aimed to highlight not solely their positionality but also navigate through e *Lega Nord* produced and influenced discourses that set migration in general and the 'new migrants' in particular as a threat to the security and coherence of the nation. Thus, a sub-question of the thesis aimed to determine whether the *immigrati/e* participants reproduced the discriminatory discourses or emphasized with the 'new migrants' represented on mainstream media, finding commonalities between their positions.

What the research showed is a sense of close affinity that established *immigrati/e* feel with 'new migrants': not because of the journeys they have taken to reach Italy, but the same sense of 'Otherness' and marginalisation that the former group believes the latter will experience during their stay in Italy. This almost constitutes a warning of future alienation, and the impossibility to progress on a social level. The respondents reflected on their public narrative being fixated on them embodying the 'Other', and therefore they also rejected any type of affiliation to the idea of 'Italianness'. This was mostly due to the perceived unfairness and exclusion that most of the participants witnessed while residing in Milan, experiences that represented forms of oppression and epistemic violence that silenced them. It was because of these feelings that the interviewed participants transferred their own 'baggage of oppression' onto the migrants that they saw arriving to Italy in dinghies in the 'voiceless images' on TV, newspapers or social media. Their revealed perception of the 'migration crisis' clarified their own marginalisation in Italy.

In examining how *immigrati/e* respondents learn / access these debates and discourse, what came to surface was a perceived lack of agency, a sense of voiceleness that the participants felt when accessing mainstream Italian media.

The types of media they consumed was what really interested me initially. I supposed that observing media consumption habits would help me answer how their perception of the 'migration crisis' was shaped. However, once I began the observation in 'Zona 2' and 'Zona 9' of Milan, the initial plan and scope shifted almost involuntarily. Not only did I come across adversity from certain households who decided to withdraw, but also one of the major problems was that I found myself torn between understanding the participants' perception of 'new migrants' coming to Italy and their own life as *immigrati/e* in Italy. Due to my personal upbringing in an *immigrati/e* family, the line between researcher and participant was ever more blurred as I tried to make sense of my own background through the respondents I was observing. Each day in the different households I would try to force myself to go back to analysing the perception regarding the arrival of 'new migrants' to Italy, yet most times I would fail at this. I was drawn into their own narratives, the way they embodied their imposed status as

immigrato/a in Milan, how this was influenced by the interaction with each other and, possibly more importantly for me, the way they tried to mould and make sense of their children's narratives.

One might argue that even despite the positive discourses around migration that certain Leftist media platforms or NGOs might promote, the lack of direct agency that *immigrati/e* suffer in Italy still locks them into a voiceless position, an 'Othered' position from which they can't escape. Despite the sympathetic stories or the '*buonismo'*, an ironic term that denotes an excessive benevolent/compassionate attitude which the far-right accuses left parties of having in regards to the Mediterranean emergency (Colombo, 2018), foreigners/diasporic communities living in Italy the so-called *immigrati/e* remain objects of the public discourse.

However, the participants' position towards 'new migrants', their demonstration of empathy and visceral/primordial understanding towards them and their sense of shared struggle, partly seem to falter when they were asked to speak about the depiction of Muslims in Italian media, and share their opinions about the latter. In fact, specifically concerning the perception that they held regarding Islam, some participants' display of empathy seemed to differ and contradict their general stance on the matter. The lack of understanding they complained about when referring to Italians, the opacity they claimed blinded Italians, here seemed to permeate their judgement as well. This also underlined the nationalisms that the participants of the observation, and migrants generally, carry from their home countries and embody on their journeys and in the countries they decide to settle. Certain nationalisms are in fact part and parcel of their lives and hold resonance in the way migrants socially interact in the countries they go to.

Thus, the *immigrat/ei*'s positioning in the Italian context highlighted how despite identifying indeed as *immigrati/e* (while rejecting the stigma attached to the term but also any affiliation to Italianness) some of them showed signs of discrimination towards Islam, in a way displaying a level of detachment and superiority to Muslim migrants.

Despite the general romanticisation of the migrant figure, as I created another outsider to this outsider, a different 'Other' to the studied 'Other', the findings revealed ambiguity in the positions of the respondents as they embodied the narrative of the underdog *immigrato/a* while also distancing themselves not from 'new migrants' (as was the hypothesis of the research) but from the one regarding Muslims. This process depicted the primordial dynamics of identity formation and the ways 'original' nationalisms play in each one's discrimination. It was this ambivalent perspective that made the study unique as it attempted to discuss on the 'migration crisis' from the outlook of those considered as 'Other' in the Italian context, while also creating a new 'Other'.

These four years have been a learning process, as I have explained in the Methodology Chapter, with various challenges encountered during the observation that in hindsight I could have dealt more promptly. Better planning on gathering participants would have possibly improved the outcome of the study.

The limitations of the study include the lack of other Muslim *immigrati/e*. This would have added a further layer to the analysis and been more useful in this study. Perhaps meeting and talking to Muslim *immigrati/e* in front of mosques, or directly contacting Muslim organisations to ask for possible participants, would have been more purposeful and achievable.

Conducting focus groups at the end of the observations in each Zona would have aided the consolidation of the final results. Due to the respondents differing work and family schedules, I deemed it almost impossible to organise. Finding a time when even a few of them could take part would have provided a space for me to see the different dynamics between the members of the households and how their claims and opinions changed in a group setting.

Time constraints and resources constituted another important limitation to the research. Conducting an observation over a more extended period would have given me the opportunity to include more participants and depict a wider-ranging view of

*immigrati/e'*s perception on the 'migration crisis'. Also, considering the development of the latter and its reporting and use in *Lega Nord's* rhetoric, perhaps also revisiting the households after the initial week-long observation over the period of at least four years, could have provided a more comprehensive representation of possible shifting perceptions.

In terms of contributions, the research explores the ways in which this *immigrati/e* communities create their own narratives and agency, distancing themselves from unwanted mainstream ones, ultimately deciding to embody the position of *stranieri/e* within the Italian society. The thesis analyses how hierarchies are also created, which place other immigrants according to their perception and definition of 'Other'. It is observed that the Othering among immigrant groups is the product of the biases they carry from their countries of origin in some cases. The methodology used for this research showed the incongruent narratives of the participants between their claimed media habits and their actual media consumption.

This ambiguity could be the starting material for further research that in particular would investigate the links to 'original' forms of nationalisms that migrants carry with them from their countries of origin to the new places they migrate to. The effects of these types of nationalism in the way migrants interact or vote (if they acquire such rights later in life) could be further explored in future studies. Further research could also look into the perception that other Muslim *immigrati/e* living in 'Zona 2' and 'Zona 9' in Milan have developed regarding the 'migration crisis'. This would complete and enrich the findings of this study. Further studies, possible postdoctoral research could also consider whether the term *immigrato/a* has been accepted or rejected by Italians who have migrated to other countries (such as the UK) in the last 15 years. It would be insightful to compare these different positionalities and the hidden privileges that come with the possibility of choosing which terms and names to identify with and embody (such as 'expat'), possibly distancing from *immigrato/a*.

In fact, this thesis has highlighted how the level of marginalisation, underlined by the participants in this study, can be expressed through language, through certain types of nominalisation techniques. Yet, one of the major contributions of this study is the way in which it has shown how this marginalisation is also questioned and rejected. By refusing to be identified as *immigrati*/e, the participants expressed their acceptance of being considered as 'Other' but their preference as well in being considered as *stranieri/e* , manifesting an act of resistance that ultimately creates new radical narratives. Applying Hall's (1991 [1977]) Encoding and Decoding theoretical framework, participants thus manifest an oppositional reading to the encoded dominant ideology that invites them to be passive and voiceless *immigrati/e.*

Moreover, what this research has achieved, and contributed in terms of knowledge, is possibly providing a unique outlook of the 'migration crisis', that is, from those considered as outsiders in the Italian context. The research question placed them in a position of ambiguity, creating for them another outsider.

This research reflects on the concept of 'Other', what this type of positionality entails in a context such as the Italian one, to be perceived as such, subject to overwhelming representation on media. The attempt has been made to contribute to the existing media and diaspora scholarship by exploring the link between 'Othering' discourse and the formation of empathic and possibly discriminatory behaviours from the likes of marginalised groups such as the *immigrati/e* participants in Milan.

This research highlights the presence of empathy in those *immigrati/e* who have experienced racial discrimination and associate with those 'new migrants' that might experience similar prejudice. However, their experience as a minority group does not generate empathy for the Muslim migrants, which is largely determined by Islamophobic discourse and partly participants' own experience within their neighbourhoods and community . This selective presence of empathy makes this group more vulnerable to a particular kind of discourse.

Lastly, the writing process has been especially difficult due to my own interest and sentimental reaction to them as a 'second-generation-migrant'. The researcher's engagement, my engagement to the research is part of the comprehensive argument of the thesis. The detailed narrative about myself in the field was useful to understand the empathic reaction that migrants have regarding migrant journeys and stories, thus additionally exploring another layer of embodiment and reflection of the migratory experience.

As a migrant, the daughter of migrants, getting into the participants' lives impacted my own way of researching, the analysis and reflection of the data, but also more generally my life, which I had to account for as there was another level of empathy.

Finally, not solely the various juxtapositions with my own personal history, but the overlap with the ongoing political and social developments in Italy rendered the analysis and writing process challenging. The rise of the *Lega Nord* and its xenophobic discourse has been incessant, culminating in the success of the *Lega* in the last general elections and appointment of Matteo Salvini as Minister of the Interior. In 14 months, Salvini managed to pass a Security Decree which most significantly prohibits vessels carrying migrants in the Mediterranean to enter Italian waters. It also provides new methods to grant or remove Italian citizenship, along with elimination of 'humanitarian grounds' as an option for granting asylum to refugees (Butini, 2019). As of October 2020, despite the most recent developments, with the overthrow of Salvini, *Lega* conventions such as at Pontida still draw high numbers of spectators (Ansa.it, 2019), underlining the ongoing support for the party and its far-right ideals. The position of the *immigrato/a* is becoming ever more dangerous.

APPENDIX

MAPS

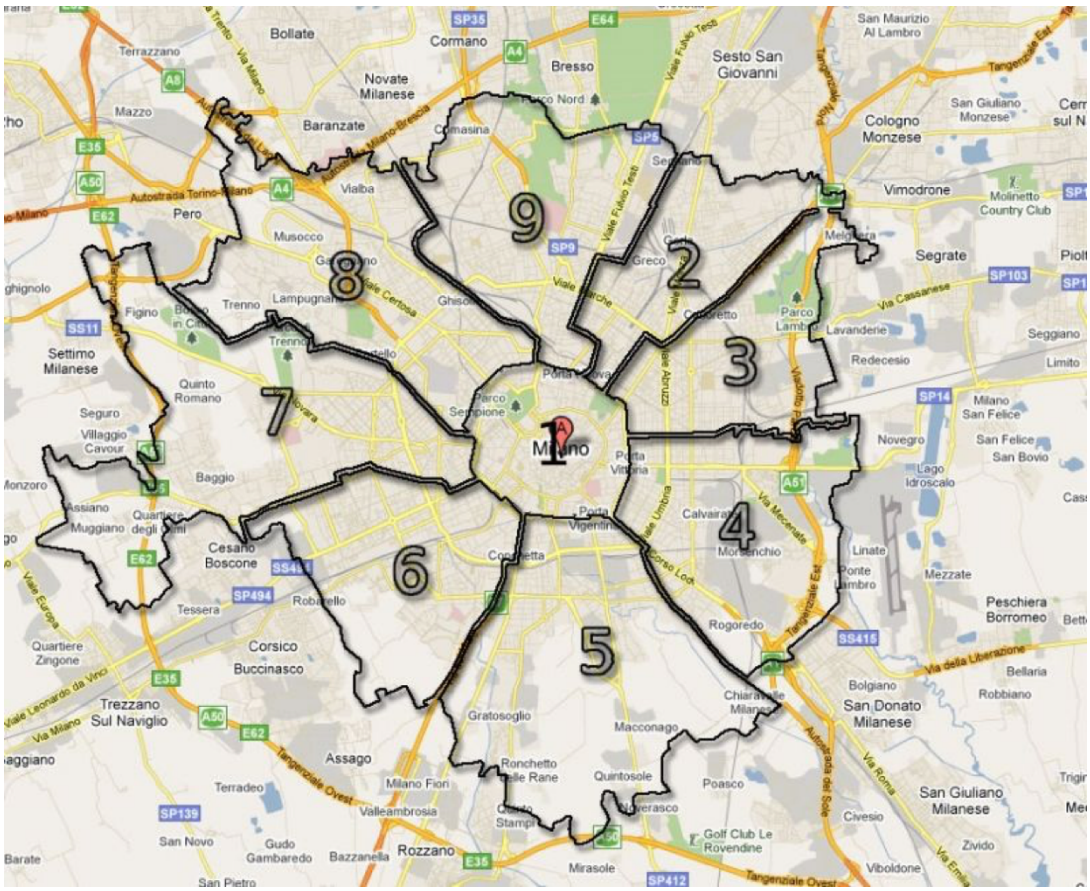

Figure 1: Map of Milan divided into different 'Zone' (Image credit: British School Milan)

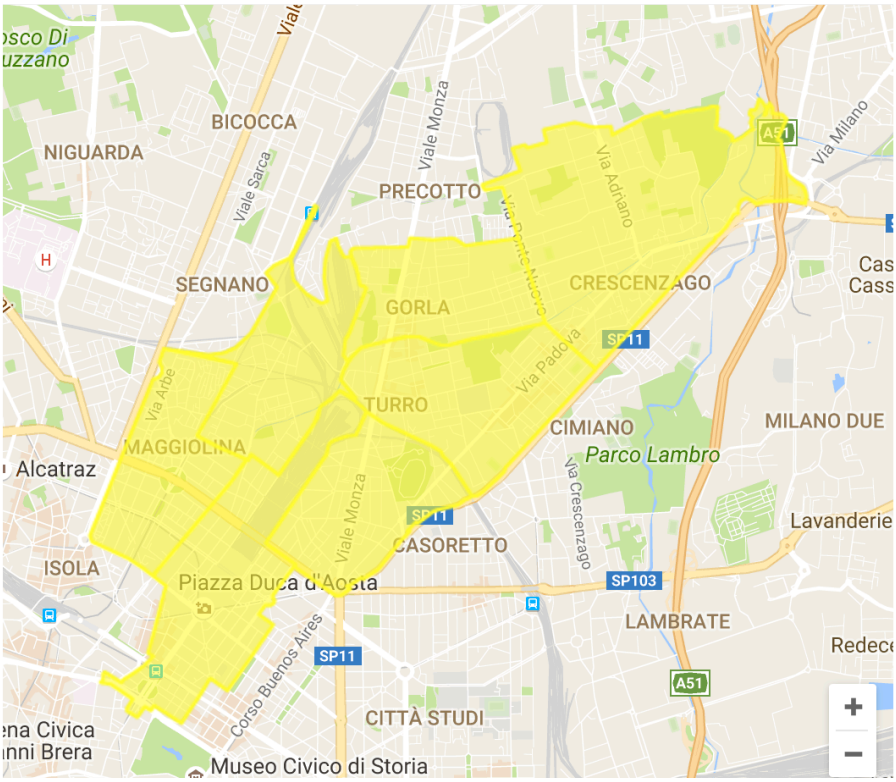

Figure 2: Zona 2 (Image Credit: comune.milano.it)

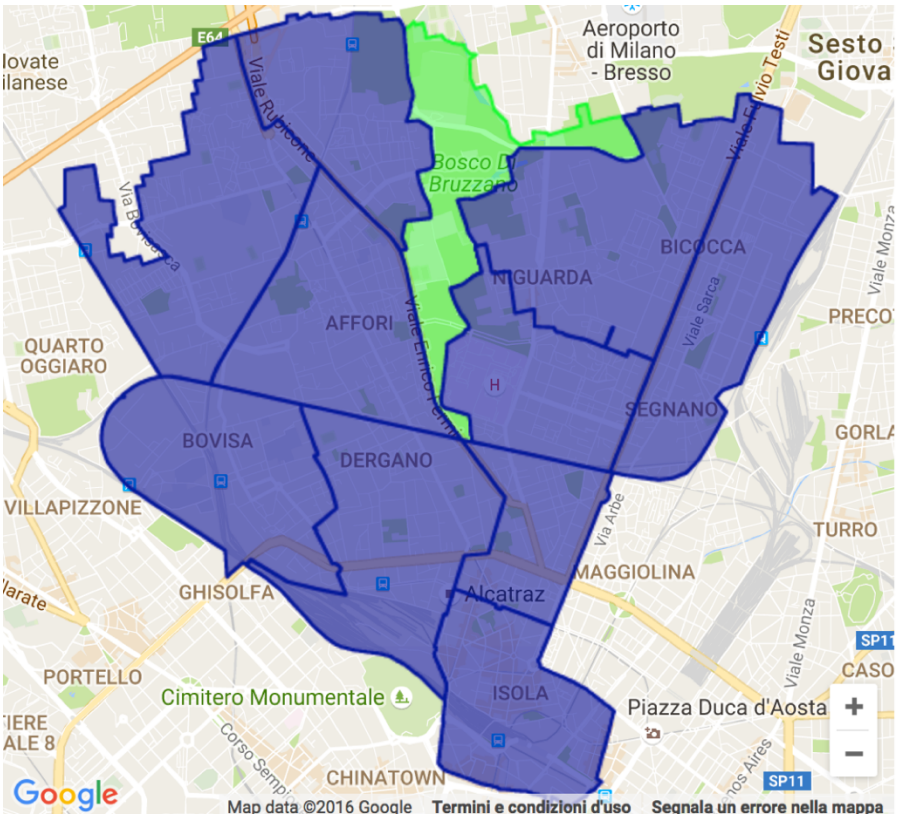

Figure 3: Zona 9 (Image Credit: comune.milano.it)

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE OBSERVATION

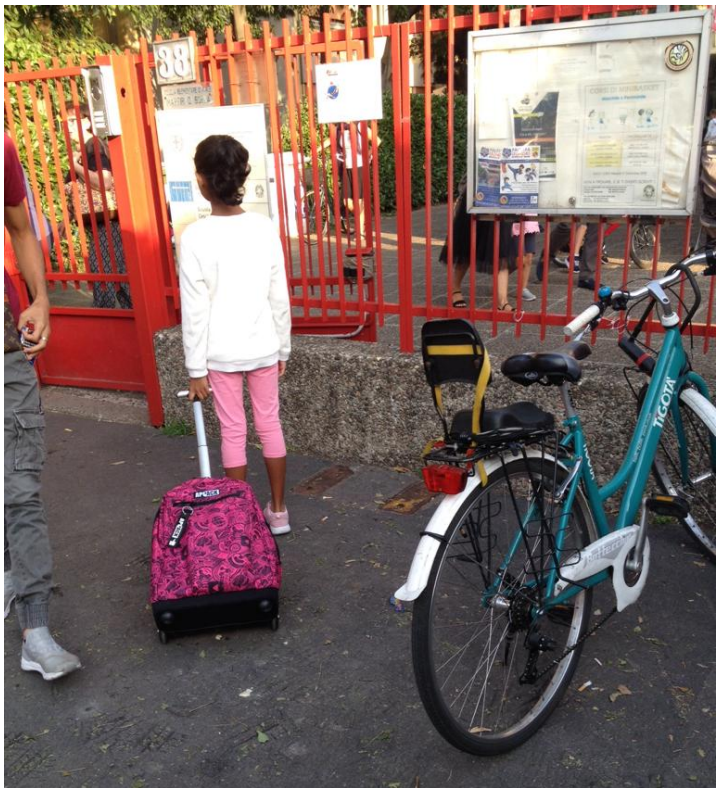

Figure 4: The School in 'Zona 2'

Figure 5: Afternoon break at the park (Ecuadorian household)

Figure 7 : 'Parco dei Martiri della Libertà Iracheni Vittime del Terrorismo', the most visited park during the observation in Zona 2. The building at the back was once occupied by Catholic nuns but had just been transformed into a shelter house for asylum seekers when the observation started

Figure 6: Children from the Ecudorian and Sri Lankan households watching TV (at the latter house)

Figure 9: Food at the Hindu Function

Figure 8: Speech at the Hindu function (Indian household)

Figure 11: A street of council flats in Zara, Zona 9

Figure 10: Maciachini, Zona 9

Figure 12: A typical shop in 'Zona 9'

SAMPLES OF CONSENT FORMS

Liberatoria

Title: Gli effetti della rappresentazione della 'crisi d' immigrazione' in Italia sui migranti a Milano.

Investigatrice::
Nathasha Shehani Edirippulige Fernando,
Piazza San Nazaro in Brolo 15, 20122, Milan, Italy.
0039 3383274572

Ricercatrice:
Nathasha Shehani Edirippulige Fernando, University of Westminster, 2015/2019.

La ricerca:

Sono una ricercatrice dell'Università di Westminster a Londra e sto svolgendo uno studio sulla percezione che hanno gli immigrati stabilitisi a Milano da più di dieci anni riguardo la "crisi d'immigrazione" in atto nel Mediterraneo. Si tratta di uno studio etnografico nelle zone 2 e 9 di Milano. La ricerca viene seguita dalla mia relatrice Dott.ssa Roza Tsagarousianou.

Procedura:

Questa ricerca verrà condotta principalmente nei luoghi domestici familiari cosicché io possa osservare le vostre abitudini/usi mediatici e parlare direttamente con voi. Vi seguirò durante le vostre mansioni quotidiane/settimanali per condurre uno studio etnografico che vi sia di intralcio il meno possibile.

Vi verranno chieste domande riguardanti la "crisi d'immigrazione". A seconda della vostra disponibilità, verrete seguiti per una settimana. La vostra partecipazione è completamente volontaria e confidenziale.

Firmando questa liberatoria autorizzate la pubblicazione delle interviste e della documentazione condotta durante la ricerca. Potrete terminare lo studio qualora lo vogliate e sebbene non possa retribuirvi per il tempo dedicatomi, la vostra partecipazione sarà inestimabile.

****

Il/La sottoscritta ha letto le informazioni riguardo la ricerca e acconsento di partecipare allo studio.

Nome e Data _____ _____

Grazie,

Nathasha Shehani Edirippulige Fernando, Ph.D. Candidate at University of Westmminster.

Dr Roza Tsagarousianou, Reader at University of Westminster

Liberatoria per i genitori

Title: Gli effetti della rappresentazione della 'crisi d' immigrazione' in Italia sui migranti a Milano.

Investigatrice::
Nathasha Shehani Edirippulige Fernando,
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Procedura:

Questa ricerca verrà condotta principalmente nei luoghi domestici familiari cosicché io possa osservare le vostre abitudini/usi mediatici e parlare direttamente con voi. Vi seguirò durante le vostre mansioni quotidiane/settimanali per condurre uno studio etnografico che vi sia di intralcio il meno possibile.

A voi e ai componenti della vostra famiglia (ai figli tra i 16 e 18 anni) verranno chieste domande riguardanti la "crisi d'immigrazione". A seconda della vostra disponibilità, verrete seguiti per una settimana. La vostra partecipazione è completamente volontaria e confidenziale.

Firmando questa liberatoria autorizzate la partecipazione alla ricerca dei componenti famigliari aventi tra i 16 e 18 anni, la pubblicazione delle interviste e della documentazione condotta durante lo studio. Potrete terminare lo studio qualora lo vogliate e sebbene non possa retribuirvi per il tempo dedicatomi, la vostra partecipazione sarà inestimabile.

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Il/La sottoscritta ha letto le informazioni riguardo la ricerca e acconsente alla partecipazione dei figli/figlie aventi tra i 16 e 18 anni allo studio.

Nome e Data _____ _____

Grazie,

Nathasha Shehani Edirippulige Fernando, Ph.D. Candidate at University of Westmminster.

Informed Consent Letter

My name is Nathasha Shehani Edirippulige Fernando and I am a Doctoral student and seminar leader at University of Westminster, London. I am conducting a study on the perception that established migrant communities in Milan hold regarding the current 'migration crisis'. I am working closely with my supervisor, Dr. Roza Tsagarousianou, who will be the main contact person for this project. I would like to know if as a Minor you would be willing to take part in this research study. I plan on conducting an ethnography and interviews with twelve domestic groups/families living in 'Zona 2'and 'Zona 9' of Milan.

On agreement you will have to sign this form which I will then allow me to interview you during the ethnographic research.

I appreciate the opportunity you are giving me. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call me on my mobile number 3383274572.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Nathasha Shehani Edirippulige Fernando, Ph.D. Candidate at University of Westmminster.

****

I have read the information provided above. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Name Date _____ _____

As soon as we receive your informed consent letter, we will commence the ethnography.

Thank you.
Sincerely,

Nathasha Shehani Edirippulige Fernando, Ph.D. Candidate at University of Westmminster.

Dr Roza Tsagarousianou, Reader at University of Westminster

Informed Consent Letter: Parents

Title: The effects of the representation of the 'migration crisis' in Italian media on 'established migrants' in Milan.

Principal Investigator and Contact Information:

Nathasha Shehani Edirippulige Fernando,

Piazza San Nazaro in Brolo 15, 20122, Milan, Italy.

0039 3383274572

Student Researcher's Name:

Nathasha Shehani Edirippulige Fernando, University of Westminster, 2015/2019.

Purpose of Your Study:

Dear Parents,

This study will be a non-participant observation, as I will be mainly conducting the research in your households so that it can be possible to directly discuss with them. I will follow the ordinary/weekly schedules and conduct the ethnography according to your habits in order to interfere in your lives as less as possible.

You and other underaged family members will be observed and asked questions related to the 'migration crisis' topic. I will be following you and your child/children for a week depending on your availability. Your participation will be completely voluntary and confidential.

By signing this consent form you agree to let your underaged child/children take part in this ethnographic research. Your child/children aged between 16 and 18 will be given a separate consent form which is to be signed before commencing the interviews and ethnography. No harm will come to your children.

I appreciate the opportunity to interview you and your child/children. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call me at home: 0258313825 or mobile: 3383274572.

Confidentiality:

All the information you provide will be strictly confidential, and your name will not appear on the study. Instead, you can choose how you want to be named.

Note About Voluntary Nature of Participation and Statement About Compensation:

Your participation is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or may discontinue your participation at any time during the online survey. While we cannot compensate you for your time, your participation will be invaluable to our project.

Information About This Study:

You will have the opportunity to ask, and to have answered, all your questions about this research by e-mailing or calling the principal investigator, whose contact information is listed at the top of this letter. All inquiries are confidential.

Participant's Agreement Statement:

If you agree to let your child/children aged between 16-18 participate in our study, we would appreciate your signing your name and date to this form.

****

I have read the information provided above. I agree to let my child/children aged between 16-18 in this study.

Name Date _____ _____

As soon as we receive your informed consent letter, we will commence the ethnography.

Thank you.
Sincerely,

Nathasha Shehani Edirippulige Fernando, Ph.D. Candidate at University of Westmminster.

Dr Roza Tsagarousianou, Reader at University of Westminster

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

‘ITALIANNESS’

- What do you consider to be the Italian nationhood/Italian identity?
- Do you see yourself as belonging to the ideas of ‘Italianess’? What is ‘Italianess’ for you? How do you see yourself? Do you think that how ‘Italianess’ is considered fits with you?

- How do you perceive/see yourself?
- How do you define your own position in the nation vis-à-vis the current debates on ‘new migrants’ and the general securitising discourse on migration? (**explain what securitisation is, e.g. migrants as threats)**
- Do you think you identify with the image of ‘new migrant’ depicted by the Italian media? (Both that of the *extracomunitario/a* and the ‘new migrant’)

GENERAL MEDIA

How do you get information?

What media do you use?

- Do you watch Italian TV? Do you regularly watch Italian News in the morning/night? Read newspapers?
    - If yes: which channel(s) do you watch/which newspapers do you read Do you think it is (they are) reliable?

  Why do you choose that particular news outlet?
    - If no: Why?

- If you don’t watch Italian news/read Italian newspapers, where do you gather your information/current news from (online, offline)? (If you Have children, do you let them watch the news with you?) **Do you know if your children talk about the migration crisis?**

- How do you keep informed with what goes on in the Mediterranean (Lampedusa)?
- What do you think of the current media debates on ‘new migration’?
- How did you get informed about the killing of the asylum seeker in Fermo, Marche? What is your opinion on that? How do you think the media portrayed it?

- Do you usually talk about current news amongst your community?
- Do you usually talk about Italian societal issues when you meet others/friends living here in Milan?

- If yes, does your opinion regarding Italian current affairs/issues clash with theirs or do you agree? In which ways?
- **What is your position vis-à-vis about the debate? Why?** (Discourses that are circulated on different levels of society)
    - Current affairs:

  'new migrants'' arrival at Lampedusa, its portrayal on Italian media, Salvini's tweets, killing of asylum seekers
  War in Syria, migrants arriving on foot, their treatment in detention centres/refugee camps

- How do you relate in terms with your status as migrant vis-à-vis their status as immigrants?
- Do you think you're at the same level/position in society as new migrants are? Do you regard yourself as different? How/Why?
- How would you define yourself?
- Do you empathise with them?
- Do you think the trend should be stopped? Why?

LEGA NORD

- What is your opinion on the Lega Nord?
- Do you come across news regarding the Lega Nord?
    - Where do you gather that news from?
    - Do you know their stance on the current 'migration crisis' (with 'new migrants')?
    - If yes, what is your opinion on it?

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