

Childhoods on the move

Twelve researches on unaccompanied minors in Italy

Andrea Traverso
(Ed.)



Educare

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Introduction

Andrea Traverso, University of Genoa

This book is a collective work that collects some of the research papers (in translated and expanded form) that have already been presented in the Italian version (Traverso, 2018). In Italy, UMs (Unaccompanied Minors), despite a drop in landings and arrivals, remain an urgent social and educational thought because that thought is about a fragile part of the population that lives in towns and cities alongside us.

The subject discussed in these pages is not, however, the “UM”, understood as a social or juridical category, but the stories of many childhoods, experiences very far from us and from our daily reference points. The research and educational design ask questions of themselves and work within this distance, to listen, to explain, and to tell.

These *childhoods* are *in motion*, because we imagine tears and jolts (the painful and violent migration they had to undergo); leaps and shoves (which have shoved these children away from their homes), chases and escapes (from something or someone); because to be accepted they need *educational movement* based on *creativity*, on *expressiveness*, and on *emotion*.

These babies, now children although unaccompanied have survived. They have crossed the thresholds of different countries, only because of an infinite dedication to life, towards which we too have a duty: to build new theories and practices, which can be transferable to different levels and different contexts, to make politics, research, people, and places enter into dialogue with each other.

The adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the “New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants” (A/RES/71/1)¹ obliges Member States to monitor possible rights violations and to pursue policies to combat racism, xenophobia and trafficking in human beings. In addition, it undertakes to activate specific actions in favour of refugee and migrant men and women: guaranteed outpatient and hospital care, medical assistance, prophylaxis, diagnosis and treatment of infectious diseases, the right to education, and compulsory education for minors.

The Declaration focuses its attention, and those of the Agendas of all Governments especially on living conditions and the protection of children in accordance with the *Convention on the Right of the Child* (1989).

¹ For more information see: www.unhcr.org/newyorkdeclaration [last access may 2020].

In particular

“We recognize, and will address in accordance with our obligations under international law, the special needs of all people in vulnerable situations who are travelling within large movements of refugees and migrants, including women at risk; children (especially those who are unaccompanied or separated from their families); members of ethnic and religious minorities; victims of violence; older persons; persons with disabilities; persons who are discriminated against on any basis; indigenous peoples; victims of human trafficking; and victims of exploitation and abuse in the context of migrant smuggling” (2.2).

“We will protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all refugee and migrant children, regardless of their status, and giving primary consideration at all times to the best interests of the child. This will apply particularly to unaccompanied children and those separated from their families [...]. We will work to provide for basic health, education, and psychosocial development and for the registration of all births on our territories. We are determined to ensure that all children are in education within a few months of arrival, and we will prioritize budgetary provision to facilitate this, including support for host countries as required” (2.11; then reiterated at point 3.19).

The MNA are in all respects considered “children” (Traverso, 2018; Granata & Granata, 2019), to be protected with social interventions and educational action. For this reason, all governments have declared:

In Italy, the debate on the protection of minors is kept alive by the civil and social commitment of UNICEF which repeatedly invites the international community, and with it in particular our country, to strengthen the commitment to six specific actions to support children (especially considering refugee, displaced and migrant children):

- protect refugee and migrant children from violence and exploitation, particularly unaccompanied;
- put an end to the detention of migrant minors or asylum seekers by proposing alternative solutions;
- work in favour of families, support them, unite them, protect children in order to guarantee them legal recognition;
- ensure educational opportunities for all children, access to health and other social services;
- promote actions that intervene in the causes of mass movements of refugees and migrants;
- promoting training and information initiatives to combat xenophobia, discrimination and marginalisation (UNICEF, 2020)².

² For more information see: <https://www.unicef.it/doc/7009/unicef-su-dichiarazione-di-new-york-sui-rifugiati-e-i-migranti.htm#> [last access may 2020].

In Italy it is the Law 47/2017 (Zampa) to draw a very precise line of attention to the subject. Article 2 gives a clear definition of UM: “*means a minor who does not have Italian or European Union citizenship who is for any reason in the territory of the State or who is otherwise subject to Italian jurisdiction, without assistance and representation by parents or other adults legally responsible for him according to the laws in force in the Italian legal system*”. However, the Italian regulatory system (by the approval of D.L. 113/2018), shows fundamental inconsistencies that have significant impacts on services: stays are often prolonged due to an insufficient number of places in second reception facilities and the lack of useful resources for management and accompaniment; many situations of admixture between minors and adults which risk perpetuating situations of abuse and strong conditioning; the weakness of courses on literacy and the approach to the world of work; the lack of specific structures and interventions for victims of trafficking, be they male or female.

Foreign minors are subject to a paradox: they are protected, as minors, by numerous international treaties; by law they must be guaranteed, among other things, the right to non-discrimination (art. 2) and the right to the best interests of the minor (art. 3).

In the same way, they are subject to regulations designed to control and for public security, as foreigners. This ambiguity translates into tension, contemporary and contradictory, between protection and control, which simultaneously pushes towards inclusion and exclusion: their legal status has been defined as “an interesting territory in which, as at the mouth of a river, both fresh water and salt water flows, they meet and merge and collide, two crucial issues today in Italy: that of minors and that of foreigners” (Miazzi, 1999).

If this ambiguity applies to all foreign minors, those who are the bearers of a greater vulnerability such as UMs suffer the consequences directly in the process of social inclusion.

In addition to the problems of inclusion related to the context of immigration, there are issues related to cultural differences. Those who move from one place to another, crossing different languages and cultures, face the suffering that Moro defines as “exile syndrome” (Goussot, 2011), which occurs frequently among immigrant foreigners: the symptoms are disorientation and a sense of abandonment and helplessness; the person moving does not have the network of the system of affection and shared symbolic representation. What was clear and understandable and shared in the country of origin is questioned and stops working. Those who emigrate must learn to manage multiple affiliations in a dynamic, constantly evolving mestizo structure.

The unaccompanied minors we welcome have bodies like maps, on which physical traumas have left a mark, a trace. While the scars are visible and can facilitate the recognition of refugee status, the wounds of the mind are less evident and often make social inclusion even more strenuous. UMs carry with them everywhere, in refuges, in school, in society, the heavy baggage of traumatic experiences lived before and during their trip. That same baggage can be weighed down by the conditions that they live in after their arrival, in a foreign country without points of reference and with the constant thoughts, on the one hand, about one's roots, on the other hand about the expectations fuelled during the trip.

From a more general point of view, however, we agree with Agostinetti when he says that the UMs, “have no substantial voice, resulting in them being - in all respects, even on a legal level - entirely 'dependent' on our ability or willingness to accept the requests of which they are bearers” (Agostinetti, 2018, p. 47). In recent years, despite attention and the development of intercultural skills (Portera, 2013; Reggio, Santerini, 20149), a decentralised view and “partial

points of view” (Granata, 2014, p. 79) which are capable of reading the phenomenon in a non biased way, seem to be missing, at least as regards to public opinion and politics.

After a period of exponential growth (Fondazioni ISMU, 2019), the number of UMs in Italy has drastically decreased (leaving however some more relevant problems uncovered, the most evident of all: what happens to the many minors who seem to have disappeared into thin air?) In the face of the overall drop, the relationships between males and females (+2.1% male) and the breakdown by age groups remain substantially unchanged. 87.8% of the MNA are young people between 16 and 17 years old, now close to the path to autonomy and to start in the world of work, with the consequent repercussions of an early transition to adulthood (Agostinetto, 2017, p. 443) and on their school careers (Giusti, 2017; Scardigno, Manuti, Pastore, 2019).

As for origins, however, there is a further increase in children of Albanian (dal 22 % al 29,8 %), and Egyptian origin (dall'8,7 % all'11,1 %) and a decrease in minors from the Ivory Coast (da 6,5% a 4,1 %) and Gambia (da 5,2 % al 2,5 %).

Tab. 1. UMs received in Italy (data updated as at 30 April 2020)

	30 june 2019		30 april 2020	
total	7.272		5.111	
males	6.778	93,2 %	4.870	95,3 %
females	494	6,8 %	241	4,7 %

Tab. 2. Age of MNAs received in Italy (data updated to 30 April 2020)

	30 april 2020	%
< 7 years	17	0,3%
7 - 14 years	238	4,7%
15 years	369	7,2%
16 years	1.297	25,4%
17 years	3.190	62,4%

Minors who arrive in Italy migrating from their country of origin to escape wars of persecution, conditions of extreme poverty, by personal choice, forcibly, or for a wider family project to which they remain attached during long periods of stay in the host countries (Di Rosa et al., 2019) live experiences ethically and morally unsustainable for their age. Many of them (88%) report having suffered physical violence during the trip: beatings, injury by firearm or being cut, burns, deprivation of water and food (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali,

2019); many victims or witnesses of sexual violence (84% females, 44% males); as it is also felt at European level:

“The particular needs of vulnerable groups, such as children, and other individuals at particular risk, shall be duly taken into account at all stages. In particular, special safeguards for asylum seekers who are unaccompanied minors should be ensured. These include the need to appoint a guardian and/ or representative. Unaccompanied minors shall be provided with extra protection and care and shall be protected from all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation. They should, as a rule, be accommodated in a specialised establishment for children. They shall not be held in centres that are ‘ill-adapted to the presence of children’. Deprivation of liberty of children shall be a measure of last resort, limited to the exceptional situations where the deprivation of liberty of the minor would be in the best interest of the minor – to preserve the family unity for example. Children deprived of their liberty should enjoy the same right to education as children at liberty”³.

What is necessary for social workers and educators is, therefore, to relaunch solidarity pacts (Deluigi, 2017) that can no longer be ascribed only to formal and non-formal places of education but which require adhesion and collaboration also in informal contexts, first of all all the family Cadei, Ognissanti, 2012; Granata, 2018), the spontaneous nucleus of welcome and cooperation and solidarity work of the individual, of each belonging to a global idea that we translate into relationships every day.

The cover of this volume is embellished with photography by Nuccio Zicari which in 2018 won the photo contest, linked to the seminar of the same name (Genoa, 5 April 2018). I thank Nuccio for the trust he has placed in us and for his always attentive gaze on the world.

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Chapter 1

The multiple transitions of unaccompanied foreign minors. An investigation in the Province of Padua

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Barbara Segatto, University of Padova

Alessio Surian, University of Padova

1.1 Introduction and research purpose

The Italian Legislative Decree 142/2015, and the more recent Law 47/2017 provide the legislative framework concerning the “National Plan for confronting the extraordinary flow of non European Union citizens, foreign adults, families and unaccompanied minors”, including the principles to guide the support to unaccompanied foreign minors. Such support includes two types of actions.

The first type concerns the “activation of highly specialized governmental structures with the functions of their identification, determination of the age and status and also for the purpose of speeding up the reunification with relatives already present in other EU countries, identified and authorized by the Regions under the coordination of the Interior Ministry”⁴; the second type of action occurs within the SPRAR system and it involves authorized second level welcoming structures at a regional or local level (Pavesi, 2018).

Furthermore, some of the new developments introduced in the second type of action, as per art. 7 of Law 47/2017, specify how important it is to consider family fostering as the practice to be applied as a priority every time this can be applied (Valtolina and Pavesi 2017). This practice of reception was applied as pilot action, even before the decree was issued although there is a limited number of foster families available. The majority of the unaccompanied foreign minors are therefore hosted in family communities⁵ or in other types of structures that meet the essential levels of performance established by the State⁶ and the requirements of the respective regional regulations.

Therefore, we chose to analyze the various types of reception and to discuss their implications on the basis of an analysis of a specific Italian territory.

⁴ Rapporto sulla protezione internazionale in Italia (Report on international protection in Italy), 2017.

⁵ See the Interior Ministry circular of 9 April 2001.

⁶ Principle enshrined in art. 117, clause 2, paragraph m) of Italy’s Constitution.

1.2 Reference framework and context of the research

The 2016 VI Anni Cittalia report on “*I Comuni e le politiche di accoglienza dei minori stranieri non accompagnati*” (Italian Municipalities and the reception policies of unaccompanied foreign minors) documents “the growth in the percentage of the territories that in recent years have activated a service, a resource, an orientation activity, an intervention for protection or a reception programme for unaccompanied foreign minors”. Concerning the “authorities that declare that they have contacted or taken responsibility of minors, more than half (52.4%) are in the North West, 25.3% in the North East. As a whole, the northern regions represent 77,7%” of concerned local authorities (Giovannetti, 2016). However, apart of the Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano, the Veneto is the Region in the North East that receives the lowest number of unaccompanied foreign minors living in Italy. As of 20 April 2017, there were only 323 unaccompanied foreign minors in the Veneto Region, i.e. 2% of the total number of unaccompanied foreign minors received in Italy (MLPS, 2017). In the Padua municipality, the territory where we conducted an exploratory study on the second system of reception of the unaccompanied foreign minors, of the 124 minors that fall under the responsibility of the Local Municipality⁷, only 20 were hosted by families while 104 unaccompanied foreign minors were hosted by educational communities, especially in small-size centres that are considered one of the most suitable settings for the integration of the minor (Kalverboer *et al.*, 2016; Horgan and Raghallaigh, 2017).

1.3 Objectives and research question

Through the analysis of the Padua territory the study analysed the creation of the regulatory indications for the reception of unaccompanied foreign minors and highlights the fragile elements and the strategies activated from below to allow the achievement of the minimum standard needed to scaffold the integration process.

1.4 Research methodology

We carried out a qualitative exploratory study gathering data in the Padua⁸ Province between February 2017 and February 2018. The study involved different actors of the reception

⁷ As of 30 November, 2017, the unaccompanied foreign minors taken in charge by the Local Council of Padua were 124, of which 44.3% came from Albania, 22.6% from Kosovo, 24.2% asylum seekers who mostly originated from countries bordering the Gulf of Guinea and the remaining 9% belonging to other groups. They were mainly adolescent males aged between 15 and 17 (Data made public by the Local Council of Padua through a press release dated 18/01/18 that can be consulted online through the institutional website padovanet.it).

⁸ The research work was made possible thanks to funding from Padua University under the grant programme “*Progetti Innovativi per gli Studenti*” (Innovative Programmes for Students) which financially supports a number of activities designed by the students of different degree courses under the supervision of university staff. The group of students who collaborated with the research included Irene Bonotto, Sara Carucci, Lucrezia Comini, Elisa Defrancisci, Alessandro Fabri, Alessio Menini; Antonio Pietropolli, Mariasole Pepa, Anna Scapocchin, Alice Tria, Serena Varetto of the Degree courses Culture, Education and Global Society, Linguistic Mediation, and Local Development.

system (institutional representatives, professionals, families and minors) in order to understand the way they function, the strong points and the problems related to the hosting of the unaccompanied foreign minors.

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with: the representatives of local cooperatives that were hosting unaccompanied foreign minors; the institutional representatives of the local Municipality; unaccompanied foreign minors; and host families, both foreign and Italian.

Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews concerning the reception operational practices, the purposes of the activities offered to the unaccompanied foreign minors, the resources and the efforts of those who operate in this specific territory, the point of view of those interviewed on the needs of unaccompanied foreign minors and on the room for improvement of the reception system.

1.5 Data gathering and analysis

All the interviews were audio-recorded and the contents were transcribed, noting the pauses in the dialogues. Through narrative inquiry (Daiute, 2013) of the contents of the interviews we were able to compare the priorities of the various actors involved in the reception system and to outline key issues concerning resources, risks and innovation. In virtue of the exploratory nature of the research and in order to safeguard the privacy of those who were interviewed, when writing the chapter we chose not to select the extracts of the interviews but simply to supply a reformulation of the content expressed by those interviewed.

1.5.1 The hosting of the unaccompanied foreign minors

Listening to the voices of the professionals makes it possible to better understand the hosting practices that were implemented until February 2018. The Padua Municipality has been promoting fostering practices since 2000. In the beginning, such invitation was oriented towards the migrant population that was already established in the local territory. Later, the call was also making use of the usual foster family networks, therefore expanding the potential number of families. Contacts with potential foster family were carried out through awareness raising activities concerning the reception of unaccompanied foreign minors by cultural mediators in the different migrant communities that could relate to the unaccompanied foreign minors who were already present in the territory. In the following years the increasing diversity concerning the age and the country of origin of the unaccompanied foreign minors encouraged the local administration to slowly move towards what the administration calls a “generative welfare” perspective (Vecchiato, 2011), i.e. encourage the reception by resident migrant families, even if they did not come from the same territories of the unaccompanied foreign minors. Therefore, in the beginning the fostering that was encouraged in the territory of Padua mainly concerned the matching of the unaccompanied foreign minor with a migrant family with a similar cultural background. Later, the social services worked to include as foster families migrant families that were already in contact with the local social services even if they did not have the same background as the unaccompanied foreign minor. The core idea was that such

families could provide the unaccompanied foreign minor a viable integration process in terms of housing, relationships, work and family. In addition, for about two years in the light of the arrival of younger and younger unaccompanied foreign minors, with growing needs for care and the provision of longer family fostering, it was considered useful to activate a collaboration with the *Centro per l’Affido e la Solidarietà Familiare del Comune* (CASF, Council Centre for Family Custody and Solidarity), especially for the unaccompanied foreign minors aged less than 16 for the purpose of encouraging Italian families to make themselves available as receptive families for the unaccompanied foreign minors as well.

The interviews with the foster families give us indications concerning the different motivations behind the choice to host unaccompanied foreign minors by the Italian and migrant families (it must not be forgotten that the families with a migrant background that were interviewed during this study were part of the group of families that were financially supported by the local municipality). The reasons that motivated the Italian families to choose to be a foster family focuses on a solidarity attitude. Such families show a solidarity sensibility towards welcoming migrants in general coupled with a specific focus on hosting young people with a different cultural background, as in the case of the unaccompanied foreign minors. Families with a migrant background choose the foster family project as a way to improve their own migration experience and condition.

It is worth noting that at the time of the research all the Italian families had attended a training course for foster families. Such training was not necessarily designed around the needs of unaccompanied foreign minors and it included only few or no references neither to the international and migratory contexts nor cultural diversity issues. Families with a migration background had received no training about foster care. The local municipality seemed to assess that their own experience of migration and integration as well as the ongoing parenthood experience should be considered sufficient for the foster project. Furthermore, the Italian families that were interviewed had previous foster family experiences that had ended positively (with the return of the youth to the family of origin, or with an adoption and/or with the minor reaching a condition of autonomy), while for some of the families with a migration background those with unaccompanied foreign minors were the first experiences as a foster family.

In relation to the experience, all Italian families described the fostering relationship in terms of substantially positive outcomes with Italian children, with migrant children, as well as with unaccompanied foreign minors. The narratives of the families with a migration background described a greater number of situations that, due to complex problems (for example, having to face deviant or extremely oppositional behaviour; declared age not consistent with the real age of the young person) made it necessary to interrupt the family foster experience ahead of time. Despite the different outcomes of the experience, all interviewed families reported that they would make themselves available for new family fostering. When foster care is not available or feasible then the reception is organised within the Italian SPRAR system and in second level hosting structures that are accredited and authorized at regional or local municipality level.

1.5.2 The lack of support to unaccompanied foreign minors hosts

The data from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies show an exponential increase in the arrivals of unaccompanied foreign minors: there were 5,821 arrivals in 2012, while in 2017 they had increased to 15,939⁹. Today 65.8% of the unaccompanied foreign minors are hosted by so called “second level” welcome structures that should facilitate their social integration and autonomy in order to guarantee equal opportunities for all children and adolescents.

Giovannetti and Accorinti (2018) highlight how the failure to create the reception conditions, the absence of accurate indicators at the national level, and the culture of emergency that continues to characterize the approach to the migratory phenomena as contingent and as extraordinary burden the work of the professionals in this field and make it harder to achieve the processes of inclusion and autonomy of the unaccompanied foreign minors.

In particular, according to the professionals involved in the interviews, the fragility of the policies of reception is to be traced back to the instability of work, in the lack of specific training (CONNECT, 2014) and the difficulties that prevent proper networking within the reception system.

The turnover of the professionals hinders the creation of stable bonds of trust, as well as the consolidation of good practice and makes it harder to construct an educational and relational setting in which to redefine the life trajectories of the unaccompanied foreign minors. The sense of frustration concerning their work emerges in the professionals’ narrative, especially as they are clearly aware that the outcome of the potential integration process is depending on the possibility of structuring a climate of cooperation and sharing that can provide a solid support network to the unaccompanied foreign minors (Simoneschi, 2017).

Furthermore, the absence of stable reference professionals within the communities is accompanied by the absence of specific training that has direct repercussions on the practice of reception within the community. The centrality of the educational dimension in relation to the reception context is perceived as a priority by the professionals who often find themselves as having to manage the complexity of their work without having the necessary skills. The outcome of the intervention remains strongly tied to the social and professional skills of individual professionals as well as to the organizational dynamics of the community (Saglietti, 2011; Wade, 2011; Sirrieh, 2013; Giovannetti, 2016; Kauko, Fonsberg, 2017).

Finally, the scarce collaboration between the institutional actors involved does not allow the construction of working networks (Giovannetti, 2008; 2016). The lack of collaboration between the various subjects that make up the formal secondary network (Municipality Social Services, Police headquarters, Local Health Companies and the Third Sector/Cooperatives and Communities) hinders the creation of the individualised educational programmes for the unaccompanied foreign minors. In addition, the fragility of the networking efforts undermines the efforts that in the initial reception phase are directed at the analysis and assessment of the situation and resources available to the unaccompanied foreign minor and related development of supporting measures.

The principle of collaboration, teamwork and coordination of actions would require organizations on the one hand to rethink their approach on the basis of the unaccompanied

⁹ Monitoring Report, 30 April 2017, MLPS.

foreign minor needs and, on the other hand, to enhance the presence of professionals who are competent in communications, in the management of decision making processes and the construction of collaborative spaces - which seem to be lacking.

The difficult collaboration among the different reception bodies and the lack of shared practices forces the professionals to “replace” the public service by building more or less formal relations with the other institutional actors. Furthermore, the absence of protocols and guidelines, as well as leaving a wide margin of discretion to the professionals for their actions, risks promoting dynamics that favour the spread of stereotypes and professional prejudices (Di Masi, 2017).

The networking fragility also emerges by analysing the narratives by the professionals when they describe the drafting of the *Progetto Educativo Individualizzato* (PEI, Personalized Educational Programme). PEI is the main tool used by the communities in structuring the “integration” opportunities for the unaccompanied foreign minors.

At the time of their arrival the age of the majority of the minors is close to 18, i.e. their legal adult age (60.6% are aged 17, 23.4% are aged 16)¹⁰. Therefore the PEI objectives tend to be aimed at covering, in the shortest time possible, the requirements needed for the conversion of the residency permit at the age of 18¹¹.

Therefore, this scenario makes it necessary to redefine the priorities and, in line with what happens in the majority of Italian local councils (Giovannetti, 2016), also, in the communities interviewed literacy prove to be the first step taken in the minor’s path of reception.

However, inclusion of the unaccompanied foreign minors only in the literacy courses risks not guaranteeing the success of the path of reception. International literature highlights the importance of school as a place of aggregation and integration for the unaccompanied foreign minors and considers it the fertile and comparative ground that can generate occasions for dialogue in an intercultural context (Pastoor, 2013; Bitzi, Landolt, 2017).

Although the number of unaccompanied foreign minors enrolled in school is growing (mainly in professional institutes and some very rare exceptions in high school) the work network with the school is made difficult by at least two critical issues. The first depends on current legislation in matters of compulsory education, such as how to harmonise the legal obligation to education with the actual training opportunities. A second concern addresses the expectations of the unaccompanied foreign minors who often have undertaken their migratory project mainly for economic reasons. The professionals in Padua interviewed work with young people who ask first of all “When can I go to work?”

On top of the difficulties that are encountered in defining the educational and training programme, other difficulties concern the labour dimension. In the past the professionals of Padua could count on the support of the Province that financed apprenticeships for the young people who should attend compulsory schooling and had left their school. As the Province does not provide such support, professionals describe a condition of loneliness when it comes to look for companies where they can activate unaccompanied foreign minors internships and apprenticeships. These elements create a situation in which it becomes increasingly harder for

¹⁰ Data MLPS, Monitoring Report of 30 April 2017 on the unaccompanied foreign minors in Italy.

¹¹ For the requisites refer to DLgs 86/98, art.32, clause. 1-ter.

professionals to involve unaccompanied foreign minors in the definition and identification of their education and professional career.

1.5.3 Approaching eighteen years and beyond: suspended identities and multiple transitions

The life projects of these minors intersect with migratory projects and these often appear “suspended”. First of all they are “suspended” with respect to communications with the family and the different expectations of the members of the family that contributed to encouraging (or not) their journey and that read the possible consequences in different ways. Being able to achieve “results” in different geographical locations, in social and economic terms allows (or not) to also recover or acquire a different capacity to communicate with the family group and its individual members and to respond to responsibilities that the migrant minors feel are attributed to them. In addition, the minor experiences a condition of suspension of the interaction with the context of reception, encountering difficulties in defining priorities and taking into account the limitations and the administrative and legal obstacles that also concern the continuation of their migratory experience and project.

As shown by Segatto, Di Masi and Surian (2018), the adolescents interviewed show different attitudes towards the migratory experience. A first group of minors left their family (and in some cases they can count on relatives spread around the world) on the basis of a project that aims at a good job and the possibility of earning a decent salary in order to be able to improve their financial situation and to help the family. This is often a migratory project that counts on a basic motivation and was built up over time. It is an individual project that tends to develop social skills and a capacity to observe and to listen for the opportunities that are available in relation to training and jobs in the country of reception. A second group of minors has not matured their own migratory project. The arrival in Europe is tied to a youth peer cultural context that sees the migration experience as an advantageous rite of passage for those who know how to take advantage of this opportunity that is often tied to belonging to a “group” of friends. This is a more impromptu step that generally counts on a lower level of individual motivation and autonomy.

In Italy, the recent Law 47/2017 (art. 13, clause 2) gives to the social services the responsibility to plan a period of up to three years from the moment the unaccompanied foreign minor is 18. Such measure gives priority to triggering and scaffolding a process that should lead to autonomy and that involves different welfare services of the local territory. Which places and services are taken into consideration? Social inclusion and autonomy are the two priorities highlighted by the law. Autonomy firstly concerns work and the obstacles that characterize the search for paid jobs. This labour dimension also influences the living and social dimension and the starting position with respect to social “inclusion”. Difficulties and discrimination in renting houses or an apartment persist in Italy when the nationality is identified as other than Italian. Alongside the challenges that this situation poses in terms of contrast and cultural growth in respect to the phenomenon of discrimination, it is evident that these difficulties call for measures of accompaniment towards autonomy and for reflections and initiatives that take into account the social capital and educational dimension that intersect those of training and job orientation.

As an example, here are summarized the choices made by the professionals of a cooperative in agreement with a minor. Knowing that she would have been “ready” for an autonomous life after her 18th birthday, the cooperative managing the community that hosted her created the conditions that allowed her to be fostered by an Italian family. This new family condition allowed her to attend and complete high school. In turn this allowed her to enroll in the university. This was not simply an educational issue. On the legal level, in regards to her resident permit, this choice allows to ask for a study visa, avoiding her to be obliged to look for work in order to obtain a work visa (her only other alternative to stay in Italy). This example shows how important it is to have, as far as possible, an in depth awareness (on the part of minors and professionals) of the ways in which the four dimensions of the home, work, training and legal status interact. Often this greater awareness seems limited to the months that come immediately after the eighteenth birthday. It is especially during the “final ten months” before the eighteenth birthday that the attention of the professionals concentrates on the two aspects linked to the world of work. On the one hand training is addressed, generally identifying a training course that lasts from four to six months. The professionals actively search for apprenticeships opportunities for the migrant minor. On the other hand, the minor is accompanied by a volunteer or by an operator in the drafting of their curriculum vitae and to search for a future job. The responsibility for this search is entrusted to the minor and is monitored by the professionals, for example, by using forms in which to write the workplace contacted and the answers given.

In principle therefore, the minor is encouraged to autonomously look for a job by visiting potential employers, supported only initially by a professional. It is not surprising that they struggle to find a job on their own, just as subsequently it will be very hard to deal with the difficulty of finding a place to live, also in the face of pervasive racism towards “migrants” looking for a home. Therefore, the initiative of the professionals and their skills concerning whom and how to contact for directing the minor towards a possible job plays a key role. These issues and the choice of the training course that should support them should be reflected in the PEI, the individualised educational programme, a sort of training “contract” between the minor and the cooperative that hosts him or her. For the most part, the PEI does not come to terms with the generally low level of initial schooling. Or better, the low schooling becomes the reason for concentrating the efforts on the search for job that is compatible with low schooling.

The main tool for the transition to legal age then becomes the training apprenticeship paid for by extraordinary solidarity funding - work grants in coordination with the local Job Centre. The grants are sums between 2,000 and 2,800 Euros that should cover 500 working hours. In fact, if managed with an eye to savings, this money allows for having a small reserve for dealing with life after having left the community. From the point of view of the resident permit, up to the eighteenth birthday minors have a permit for child integration, a kind of child’s permit/visa. It appears obvious that the accumulation of challenges concerning the resident permit, work and housing make the transition to autonomy quite difficult. Therefore these difficulties turn into a “grey” phase that sees various outcomes depending on the profile and the professional and social skills of those who have just become legal adults. In some cases it is possible to rely on family support, if present in Italy. In optimal cases the work grant allows the identification of an employer who can also take care of housing, But in many cases, the idea that the evening before the eighteenth birthday the minor has to have the suitcase ready and the day after he or

she will have to leave the community and will start to face the clashes with the lack of working and housing opportunities suggests, when possible, that the community extends the reception (often informally) or try to establish a new “working” relationship with the “new adult”, for example, by giving him or her the task of “tour operator” for the new youth that is being hosted by the community. In this case, he or she takes care of the young people who have just arrived by establishing a relationship, accompanying them, acting as a mediator in the cases in which the professionals take the newly arrived to public services, for example, for medical examinations. These are functions that do not commit them for all the day and allow them to continue their training (when available), for example as an assistant cook in view of a better arrangement.

1.6 Discussion and conclusions

With regard to the family fostering of the unaccompanied foreign minor, the experience in Padua shows a diminishing relevance of the attention for the cultural (diversity) dimension and a growing attention given to the dimension of reception. When it comes to unaccompanied foreign minors, the Padua Municipality is moving away from the initial reception based on families with a migrant background similar to the background of the unaccompanied foreign minor. Local reception policies now involve both families with a migrant background as well as local families (Segatto, Bonotto e Tria, 2018).

Overall, the professionals and the families who were interviewed provide a positive evaluation of family fostering of the unaccompanied foreign minors. The families involved describe the experience as enriching, regardless of the “success” in terms of length of the stay and the social integration and autonomy of the minor. For families with a migrant background the theme of *empowerment* becomes a relevant one while for the local families the core theme is mainly that of personal growth.

The narratives by those who were interviewed highlight a number of risk factors concerning the migrant families involved in the “generative welfare” programme. For these families it appears relevant to improve the foster process in order to avoid the risk of promoting the fostering activity mainly as an activity generating an economic income. This type of relationship between the municipality and the family puts at risk the unaccompanied foreign minors that are being hosted, as it tends to neglect the very important role of accompanying their psychophysical development and overall well-being (Fornari and Scivoletto, 2007; Long and Ricucci, 2016). Local foster families, on the other hand, understand the reception of the unaccompanied foreign minor as a commitment aimed at the minor and not necessarily taking into account the broader context of relationships with his or her family of origin. Nonetheless, the latter is a crucial dimension which is usually being taken into account in the fostering of Italian minors and that encourages the possibility for the minor to maintain a space of relationship with his or her family of origin, a dimension that should not be underestimated in the case of unaccompanied foreign minor as well.

Promoting proper practices of family fostering of the unaccompanied foreign minors across the local territory seems an important policy as it increases the number of families and single people available for fostering and the potential for the unaccompanied foreign minors to find

their way in terms of education, job opportunities and social ties. It becomes increasingly necessary to plan specific training and preparation opportunities for the fostering of unaccompanied foreign minors as they present specific features connected in particular to cultural differences, to migratory life experiences and related adolescent dynamics. Once more it appears important to provide services that are able to support the specific needs of these welcoming families by collaborating with cultural mediation and education professionals who should be available to support the minors in terms of education and communication opportunities and skills, especially in the initial phases of their insertion in the family and local contexts.

In relation to communities and cooperatives hosting opportunities, the narratives by the professionals focuses on creating “networks” aimed mainly at accessing relational resources that provide the cooperative and associative world with a dialogue with other relevant territorial actors.

In the narratives of the professionals very limited attention is provided to the tools for the shared construction of the PEI. In a similar way, limited attention is provided to collaborative practices that could enhance the ways the unaccompanied foreign minors can play a critical role within the educational and career programme that they are presented. The involvement of the unaccompanied foreign minors in the definition of the individualised educational programme (PEI) remains therefore in the intentions of the professionals who declare that in practice they cannot really work at enhancing the way they can provide the minors with tailor made options. Their prevailing understanding is that “the aims of the unaccompanied foreign minors are more or less the same, i.e. learning the language, looking for a job, eventually concluding the school cycle, and therefore the PEI is more or less a standard thing”.

Within this scenario each hosting community interviewed answered in a different way, on the basis of their own organizational and professional resources. Even though the organizational structure is similar across all the communities, the analysis of the interviews reveals a plurality of educational models and their implicit relations with the ways the relationship is being shaped with relevant resources and issues such as food, money, rules, times and conflicts (Di Masi and Defrancisci, 2018).

In relation to the transition to legal adulthood (18 years), a possible step forward could be represented by making available apartments to be managed by a resident couple, where the “new adults” can stay as temporary residents and experiment and support each other in the transition to autonomy, supported by key responsible persons supervising the educational and social areas.

Overall, the study conducted in Padua, consistently with previous literature, highlights differences between the priorities of the different actors involved in hosting unaccompanied foreign minors when it comes to their reception (Wernesjö, 2012), educational choices and careers (Attanasio, 2016), employment and social policies (AA.VV., 2015) and highlights the multiple transitions (Roberts et al., 2017) to which the minors are subject. Specific attention should be given, in the transition to legal adulthood (Wade et al., 2012), to the social capital of the unaccompanied foreign minors (Sime and Fox 2015) and to the way in which the local bodies should consider the minors as migrants with their own characteristics and problems (Giovanetti, 2016; Pavesi and Caneppele, 2011).

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Chapter 2

Models and innovative practices for welcoming and safeguarding unaccompanied migrant minors¹²

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2.1 An overview of the phenomenon

The number of unaccompanied minors (Uams) arriving in Italy, and in all parts of Europe, has been rising significantly in the last few years, and constitutes a particular phenomenon that has demanded considerable re-organization of the welcoming system and, more generally, the welfare system.

While the first unaccompanied minors started to arrive at the end of the 1980s, the first significantly large influx of immigrants occurred between the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the second millennium, comprising under-age children from Eastern Europe. Of course, these minors had their own specific needs and expectations, distinguished mainly by a certain characteristic: the fact that they were migrating alone, without their families or any adults as travelling companions (Consoli, 2015).

In order to deal with this category of migrant, distinguished by the very fact of having to be protected principally because they were minors, Italy launched a specific system of welcoming, also laying down regulations regarding the protection of unaccompanied minors, in which the needs of the migrant minors would be integrated with those of all minors safeguarded in Italy.

The organization of a dedicated welcoming system was established over a certain period of time, through an approach of adaptation and experimentation. The first interventions were characterized by a continuous state of emergency, which prevented effective activation of programmed action. This critical situation still exists in certain Regions up to the present day. Despite the recent development of a national welcoming model, there are still significant differences in their application in local contexts, from which there emerges an overall picture of rather fragmentary and fluctuating interventions that depend on local variations as regards both access to resources and Regional social policies (Di Rosa, 2017).

¹² This paper refers to data from the project up to 31.12.2017. The project ended on April 14, 2018.

Because of their particular vulnerability, the Uams require specific protective measures and there emerges the need to improve methods regarding disembarkation and the initial welcoming phases (Save the Children, 2017). Preliminary evidence suggests that collaboration with the social players involved in the various stages of welcoming the minors is a determining factor in the success of the operation. Quite often there is a lack of opportunity to compare and integrate interventions; actions geared towards safeguarding and integrating the minor run the risk of overlapping with each other or leaving areas uncovered.

The minor receives information from various sources, but not always in a co-ordinated manner, nor in accordance with logical continuity between the various phases and the persons responsible for their welcoming programme.

The need to ensure that every minor is listened to adequately, receives an accurate assessment and is accompanied effectively on his journey into the community, has been put to the test both by variations in the characteristics of the phenomenon, as linked to geopolitical events in recent years, and the growing number of arrivals, which reached a peak in the year 2016. Monitoring of the phenomenon in Italy was assigned to two accountable ministries (i.e. Home Affairs and Social Policy); the former logs data regarding arrivals¹³, and the latter logs data regarding numbers present in the whole country¹⁴.

Up to December 2017, there were 18,303 unaccompanied migrant minors present in Italy. This figure showed an increase of 5.4% over the same period surveyed in 2016 and a 53.5% increase over figures for 2015. On the other hand, with regard to the number of arrivals, there was an evident fall in numbers in the last year (up to December 31, 2017), with 15,731 minors against a figure of 25,846, up to December 31, 2016.

Tab. 1. Minors present and officialized by the Census
(Source: Annual Reports by the Ministry for Labour and Integration Policy, personal processing)

Year	Minors present and officialized by the Census
2013	6,319
2014	10,536
2015	11,921
2016	17,373
2017	18,303

¹³ Ministry for Home Affairs, Daily Statistical Instrument Panel, curated by Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration,
http://www.libertaciviliimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/allegati/cruscotto_statistico_giornaliero_31-12-2017.pdf.

¹⁴ The Director General for Immigration and Integration Policy conducts a census of data regarding Unaccompanied migrant Minors in the data-base set up in accordance with Article 4 of the d.p.c.m. n. 535/1999. The Director General processes and publishes monthly Statistical Reports with data regarding Unaccompanied migrant Minors,
<http://www.lavoro.gov.it/temi-e-priorita/immigrazione/focus-on/minori-stranieri/Documents/Report-MSNA-mese-dicembre2017-31122017.pdf>.

Fig. 1. MSNA in Italy
(Source: Annual Reports by the Ministry for Labour and Integration Policy)

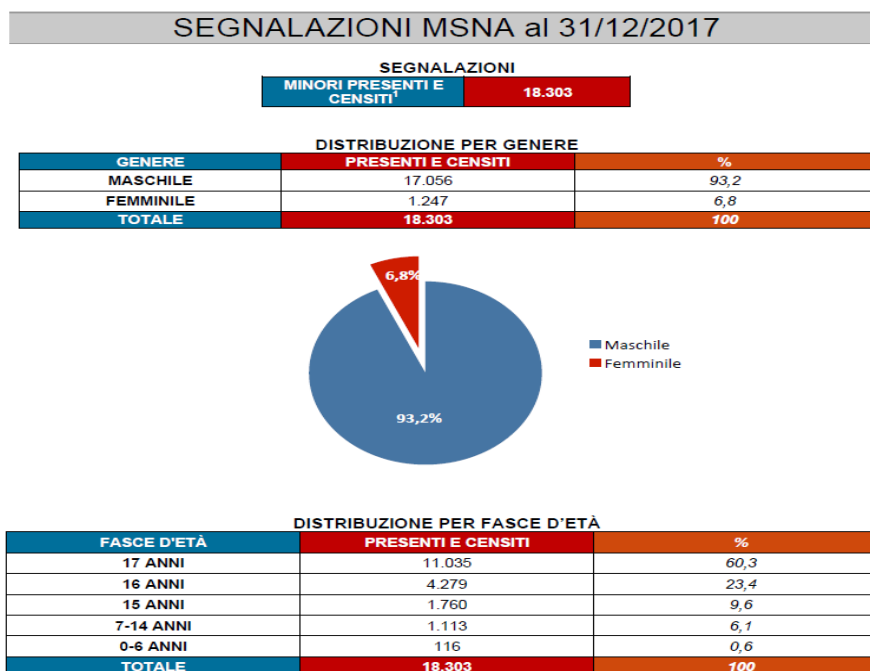
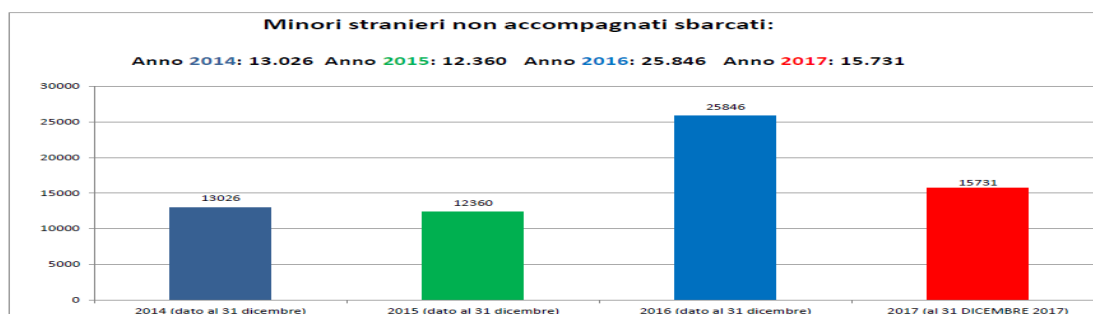


Fig. 2. MSNA in Italy 2014-2017
(Source: Ministry for Home Affairs, Daily Statistical Instrument Panel)



In 2015, but, more specifically, as from 2016, the services assisting Uams were proving insufficient in responding to the innumerable landings on the coasts of southern Italy. The most important indicator as regards the need to implement new measures is the number of untraceable minors:

Tab. 2. Untraceable Minors
(Source: Annual Reports by the Ministry for Labour and Integration Policy, personal processing)

Year	Untraceable Minors	Untraceable % of the total
2013	2,042	32.3
2014	3,707	35.1
2015	Data not available	-
2016	6,561	37.7
2017	5,838	31.8

Ever since this phenomenon started to grow, the functions of protecting and safeguarding minors on the part of the Italian state have been integrated with numerous organizations working in the field of safeguard of minors and immigrants; these have given their contribution to tackling emergency situations and the growing problems of taking charge of the Uams.

2.2 The P.U.E.R.I. project– *Pilot action for Uams: Early Recovery Interventions*

In 2016, the Ministry for Home Affairs presented the European Commission with the P.U.E.R.I. – *Pilot action for Uams: Early Recovery Interventions*, which was approved and financed with funding from the “Fondo asilo, migrazione e integrazione (Fami)”; it was set in motion in February 2017, and run by the National Association for Social Assistants and the Centro informazione ed educazione allo sviluppo.

P.U.E.R.I. is an experimental project, whose aims are to improve the welcoming system by personalizing it at the moment of arrival of the Uams; this would be done through an initial, professional evaluation to forestall any risk of trafficking and exploitation and prevent the minors from abandoning the welcoming centres. The project was conceived in full compliance with the law: L. 47/2017, “Disposizioni in materia di misure protezione dei minori stranieri non accompagnati”, and provides for guarantees and specific support measures as stated (Triestina, 2017).

Starting from a formulation of the principle of “Child’s best interest” and all the hopes expressed in national, European and international documents of reference on this issue, the project proposes to *experiment a working methodology* that consents a structured approach to welcoming Uams, via an *all-round evaluation*; this would be capable of laying down the necessary preconditions to create an individual welcoming process that is more suitable for the under-age child, *interacting with all the players involved*: the NGOs, which are already collaborating with the Ministry for Home Affairs, *voluntary organizations* present at the moment of disembarking, together with *Central Police-stations, Prefectures and public services and the management of welcoming structures for Uams*.

2.3 Objectives and actions

The project aims to welcome the minor not merely in the sense of a material welcome, which is already being tackled through other funding and methods, but “*in taking charge of the child*” and *in support for the minor from the moment of his/her arrival, in order to corroborate a system of immediate welcome* for the Uam, who is then to be integrated in a structure operating throughout the country. The project envisages an initial interview with the minor in the *hotspot* and a further three in the centres for *immediate welcome*, to be carried out by a Team composed of a social assistant and psychologist, with the back-up support of a cultural mediator. This system of personalized accompaniment along the Uam’s path to social inclusion begins with the immediate welcome and an assessment of any potential vulnerabilities (to be passed on to local Prefectures and Social Services).

It is also proposed to try out and corroborate tools that will help to avoid dispersion of the Uam’s “history”, which is traced and traceable by means of a “*scheda di rilevazione*” (SdR), (data-collection instrument), in accordance with provisions laid down by the law, (legge 7 aprile 2017, n. 47); professional monitoring is guaranteed, along with assessment of the Uam’s progress, by professionally-trained and co-ordinated teams that, in the child’s best interest, will be able to provide support for under-age children from their moment of arrival in Italy and set in motion *Child protection* procedures.

In general, therefore, in order to guarantee the child’s best interests, a professional intervention is provided, which can give the minor some support from the moment of his/her arrival in Italy and can collaborate with the organizations involved in running the centres of immediate welcome.

Computerized “scheda di rilevazione” (SdR), (data-collection instrument)

This data-collection tool collects information regarding the minor, his/her background, his/her migratory route, a description of his/her strongpoints and weakpoints and a first prognostic assessment to help work out a realistic plan of accompaniment. This is handled by a team put together and organized in the *hotspots* and is detailed to collect information about the Uams on 4 occasions:

- a first meeting in the *hotspot* soon after arrival (1° assessment);
- three subsequent meetings at centres for immediate or secondary welcome (Final Assessment).

The specific aims of this tool are: to avoid the dispersion of the Uam’s “history”, which is traced and traceable; to encourage a rational dispatch to the structures in question, by using clearly-defined and agreed procedures; to ensure correct and professional monitoring and assessment of the Uam’s progress.

The elements present in the SdR have been conceived to interact and be integrated with the documentary instruments (the child’s personal file) already being used in the centres of immediate welcome and, in the system as outlined by the law L. 47/2017, with the social folder (art. 9); this is to be compiled by the staff in the welcoming centres, also on the basis of the first interview (as laid down by Article 5, which introduces Article 19-bis in the D. Lgs. 142/2015),

a documentation instrument considered central to the process of evaluation of the child's best interests.

The information obtained from the interviews and arranged in the SdR is to be shared with both the persons responsible for the Structures where the minors will be accommodated, and with the social assistants in the local bodies dealing with the safeguard of minors. This will constitute a tool that is useful in delineating the welcoming and inclusion processes, thus favouring the work of all those involved in subsequently taking care of the Uam (centres for secondary welcome, local bodies responsible for SPRAR projects, Prefectures and residential communities where the minors might be inserted).

Operational units

The units are made up of a social assistant, a psychologist and a mediator with a co-ordinating function, operating at the Prefectures of Taranto, Ragusa, Agrigento and Trapani. The support provided by the PUERI operative nuclei at the Prefectures has the objective of: organizing interventions; carrying out the linking-up role with the other components handling the reception of unaccompanied migrant minors; and setting up a network with the players from the other four welcoming areas that might contribute to improving the welcome given to these minors.

Professional teams

The (well-trained and co-ordinated) professional teams are made up of a social assistant, a psychologist and include the presence of intercultural mediators to back up the psychologists, social assistants and Uams in mutual language exchanges and in assessing ideas and behaviour linked to the minor's culture of origin. The Teams were mobilized in timely fashion by the OUs; as soon as they received news of the landing of minors, they hurried to assist the welcome at the actual moment of arrival. They also provided reassurance and orientation for the Uams. This offered valuable support and an interface after initial contact with the network of organizations involved in the local welcoming structure. The under-age children are subsequently always attended by the same Team in the three subsequent interviews at the immediate welcome centres for Uams (financed under the aegis of FAMI).

2.4 Project centres

The project envisaged the introduction of PUERI personnel in the *hotspots* in Trapani, Lampedusa, Pozzallo and Taranto and in the governmental centres for immediate welcome (funded by Fondo FAMI), where the minors in care are sent for an immediate welcome, through a coordinated system that has been integrated with the existing one. The choice of local areas is based on observation of previous landings, as well as an examination of national data regarding the welcoming process. Sicilia and Puglia, despite the differences linked to specific local aspects, are the key Regions in the Italian welcoming system. Sicily, for example, turns out to be the Region that receives the greatest number of Uams (43.6% of the total), followed

by Calabria (7.9%), Lombardy (6.6%), Lazio (5.7%), Emilia Romagna (5.6%) and Puglia (5%)¹⁵.

Comparing the number of minors received in the various Italian Regions up to December 31st, 2017, with the figures for the same period in the years 2015 and 2016 (Tab.2), it can be seen that the Regions with the greatest number of minors have remained more or less the same. It is worth pointing out that there was an increased number of minors accommodated by the Sicilian Region from 2015 to 2017, with a figure, in absolute terms, that had almost doubled, as well as a commensurate fall in numbers of minors accommodated in the other Regions (with the exception of Sardinia, Basilicata, Marche, Abruzzo and Molise).

2.5 A preliminary evaluation

The expected results as indicated in the planning phase were: to single out vulnerability, forestall the risk of trafficking and exploitation, create the conditions to be able to plan the unaccompanied migrant minor's future life via suitable orientation (for an effective process of social inclusion), and to limit the phenomenon of abandonment of the welcoming centres on the part of the minors.

The innovative and decidedly experimental character of the PUERI project demanded a period of shadowing and identifying the phases and strategic steps in implementing the project. In the activation phase it was necessary to tackle the contingencies linked, on the one hand, to the need to launch the Operational Units at the Prefectures, and on the other hand, to the need for the professional Team to begin their interviews, often in improvised settings and in areas occupied by other public players and those from the third sector.

So far, a differentiation has been observed between the various centres, also owing to the environmental conditions that affect the work of the OUs. The networking has required varying amounts of time and different strategies in the various Regions; this is the reason why there are discrepancies among the centres with regard to an interchange of information with the agencies dealing with (institutional and non-) unaccompanied migrant minors; however, in all Regions it can be observed that there is a growing trend towards integration with the welcoming players.

The data that emerges from the experimentation highlights a clear reduction in voluntary abandonment on the part of the minors involved in the project, when compared to the average total abandonment figures (in the period June-December 2017, the percentage abandonment stood at 14.7%, compared to 30% abandonment on the part of new arrivals).

Tab. 3. Pueri project abandonments 2017
(Source: Pueri Monitoring Report, 31/12/2017)

Total abandonments 2017	Pueri project abandonments 2017
30 %	14.7 %

¹⁵ Ministry for Labour and Integration Policy, Director General for Immigration and Integration Policy – Div. II Monitoring Report, I Minori Stranieri Non Accompagnati (Msna) In Italia, Data up to Dec. 31st, 2017.

Furthermore, it emerges that time devoted to actually listening during the four interviews enhances personalized support and encourages the emergence of specific problems that can then be treated in a timely way, facilitating the minor's process of social inclusion¹⁶. Significant progress was observed in the relationship established between the minor and the Team, the latter proving to be good interlocutors for the minors, who generally accept them gladly and, over time, begin to consider them as reference-points. This can be observed in particular when the Team accompanies the minor from the *hotspot* to the immediate/secondary welcome structure. In this case, the opportunity to shadow the minor through these various stages helps establish a relationship of trust, which, if maintained over a period of time, helps the minor not to feel so much confusion due to these continual changes nor the fear of estrangement¹⁷.

The PUERI strategy does seem to be a winning one, in supervising the welcoming process from the initial phases until, if possible, entrusting the minor to a secondary welcome structure; this strategy does tend towards a successful outcome with regard to the under-age child's road to safeguard and integration.

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Chapter 3

Unaccompanied adolescents in Tuscany's welcoming system. Flows, characteristics and life stories

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3.1 Introduction

The phenomenon of immigration is nowadays considered a founding element of society, and so the complete integration of migrants into the welcoming society has become a fundamental goal. Intercultural education is outlined as the promotion of the capacity to constructively coexist in a varied cultural and social network. This capacity leads to acceptance of, and respect for an other or diverse individual and also to the recognition of his/her cultural identity. Our complex society leads us to face a plurality of individuals, which often becomes an obstacle, rather than a resource. We are afraid of being in contact with diversity, we try in every way to avoid it and to eliminate it, choosing approval rather than a linear thought. This fear is fed by the idea that if we stave off the diverse individuals, it is possible to be safe, and to live sheltered in our reality. The same thought is transmitted to the world population by international politics, which leads citizens to believe that *Human Security* can only be achieved by putting distance between “us” and all those individuals who “threaten” or “attack” the dominant traditions, cultures and identities, and who deconstruct efforts of approval and demonstrate difference. Every human being, influenced by these policies, and by contemporary society, which enhances individualism, personal safety and distrust, firmly starts to doubt that real personal freedom is only obtained if we fight to be equal and to eliminate differences. The situation of unaccompanied minor migrants (UAMs) constitutes a point of particular interest, making them the new protagonists of the migrating processes. The UAM phenomenon is in constant progress; the number of UAMS stated to be on Italian territory at the date of 31st. December 2017 was 18,303. These individuals represent an increment of 5.4%, in comparison with the same period in 2016 (MLPS, 2017).

Also, in data provided by the Reports of the Ministry of Work and Social Policies (MLPS) on 31st. December 2017, some 90.8% of the 18,303 minors appear to be hosted in welcoming structures, while 3.1% appear to be hosted by private individuals while for the remaining 6.1%, as we know from General Direction reports, there are no data available regarding their placement. As we can easily imagine, the Region mostly involved in welcoming

unaccompanied foreign minor migrants, is Sicily, which hosts 43.6% of all those in Italy. Following Sicily, according to MLPS (2017) there is Calabria (7.9%), Lombardy, (6.6%), Emilia Romagna (5.6%), Puglia (5%) and Lazio (5.7%), Sardinia (3.9%), Campania (4.0%) and Tuscany (3.7%).

Often, unaccompanied minors come from lands tormented by war, from poor countries without any resources; they come for survival purposes or to look for new work opportunities, together with a generational restlessness which brings them to experiment new life models. The analysis of the welcoming environment and of migrants' life stories, becomes an essential element to comprehend their features and their social integration modalities.

3.2 The situation in Tuscany

For some years, the Region of Tuscany has set in place the constant monitoring of this phenomenon with the Regional Centre for Childhood and Adolescence Documentation, together with other monitoring systems, which aim to collect information on minors in residential structures and on interventions activated to help these minors, including placing students in school. Monitoring of data, furnishes an interesting picture about the actual attendance and the type of formative school path chosen by unaccompanied foreign minors. UAM presence in welcoming structures is significant and it has experienced a substantial growth in the last few years, even though the residential community is often a place of transition. This happens both because minors reach the legal-age limit, and because the community is often only a step ahead of different stages. UAM stay in welcoming structures exceeds a period of two years only for a minute number, while almost half of them do not stay more than one year. This situation makes their school and professional collocation very complex, since it requires educational structures to adapt not only in terms of language and general competences evaluation, but also in terms of time. Monitoring data coming from residential structures gives an interesting picture about school attendance/non attendance and type of educational path in which UAMs are involved. Doubtless, letting aside the fact that circa a quarter of them is not involved in any educational path, the vast majority is concentrated in middle school, even though some of them should be in different, maybe higher, grades. The low presence of minors in vocational paths, is often due to the necessity to acquire firstly the Italian language and obtain a middle school certificate. Vocational paths also have a longer timeframe than the average amount of time that minors in communities have, as well as a migratory project which entails that they settle in the territorial area. The Regional Centre of Tuscany observes the residential welcoming of minors, thus UAM welcoming, is seen from two privileged observation points, and acquires complementary information. It collects data on minors under the control of the local-area social services and located in social/educational residential structures, through the annual monitoring undertaken by the same services. Moreover, the Centre collects data on Tuscany's residential structure flow (territorial social services are not necessarily in charge of this). Even though a community appears to be welcoming and prone to use all its energies to help the entrusted minors' growth, it is not a normal environment to grow up in. It is not possible to programme the time to become adults and this is not a neglectable feature. This phase represents the period during which operators

try to promote individual identity development, trying to build, together with them, balance between the period of their stay and a future life project, by promoting the development and acquisition of inner confidence and relational skills. The welcoming community, in its different dimensions (family, education and foster home) must represent one of the web-knots of intervention/action/opportunity of growth for a hosted minor. This objective can be reached both by increasing contacts and relations with territorial agencies, and by making them a “landmark” and a place in which they promote and support minors (Istituto degli Innocenti di Firenze, 2012). The survey undertaken in secondary and middle schools in the Tuscany Region in 2015, wanted to uncover educational, biographic and school paths, together with integration and inclusion paths in order to get a better understanding of UAM presence and characteristics. (Biagioli, 2016, pp. 221-248). This research made it possible to know which school paths and in which schools the minors were located, but, above all, it made it possible to analyse the way in which schools and welcoming communities relate to each other and to minors and which resources are implicated in order to face any possible situations. Data collected led us to make operational proposals in order to read better the UAM phenomenon and the possible actions suitable for a path to improve inclusive didactics in secondary schools. Among those proposals, it was possible to speculate about improving work on class-group strategies; improving assessment of starting levels of minors; envisaging a major presence of linguistic/cultural mediators in school; improving literacy workshop-courses for students; envisaging teacher education on citizenship's rights. Some good practices emerged from 5 Institutes (2 middle schools and 3 secondary schools) from areas in Florence, Pisa, Grosseto and Arezzo. Those good practices are related to welcoming protocols translated in different languages, a specific training for teachers, the use of the district's external resources, teamwork practice through cooperative learning methodology. Unsuccessful school paths of UAMs, highlight that school is a place where some of them experiment big or small failures. Those failures tell us about weaknesses of the individuals facing migration, but they are also a mirror of the whole welcoming/social integration system. This mirror's function, together with its systemic perspective, must be well considered when looking at minors, in order not to fall into improper reductionism. Other critical points relate to the fact that these minors are not used to studying, to organizing time for study and to organizing autonomous ways to study. Thus, they need a well prepared path, with gradual steps and calibrated exercises. The major challenge in didactics and organization, is due to disciplinary schedules and lack of school time, variability in starting levels, availability of materials, difficulty in the evaluation of educational/linguistic needs. The need to build adequate mediation tools must be considered important, since the meeting-confrontation is between native students and minority groups from different ethnicities. In this situation, in addition to misunderstandings which normally occur in meetings and communications, we have those due to devaluation and trivialization of minority cultures and to the stereotypes on which these elements are based. It is necessary to put in action an intercultural approach, based on the promotion and comparison of cultures, through the production of new activities and didactic materials. Intercultural education can operate on an affective/representation level, and also on a cognitive/knowledge one, which aim to critically compare and acknowledge identity and differences. Life stories have to be heard, written, read, recommended and collected; those stories could become an extraordinary intercultural opportunity.

3.3 Collection of life stories in second welcoming centres: the interview methodology.

The situation of UAMs is a reason of particular interest, such as to make them the new protagonists of the migrating processes. Foreign UAMs enter into different social contexts, in which, for need or by will, they take on roles and develop relationships. Each context interdependents on the other, which means that the residential community necessarily has to enter into a wider dialogue with different services and interlocutors (that cooperate with each other): diverse social service, school, centre for professional education, health system, companies in which minors do their internship: places where minors do activities, takes on roles and establish relationships; places where relationships exist even between the ones with which minors establish a contact, contexts which are created to interact. Those relationships involve minors directly and indirectly; minors not only influence other individuals in the context in which they act, but are also influenced by other individuals.

As an opportunity for pedagogic reflection on the significance and value of educational interventions, an empiric research was conducted in the context of second welcoming centres. This research used the semi-structured interview as an investigating tool in order to collect life stories about some painful and sometimes traumatic experiences, which have to be heard in a wider context in order to regain trust in a hostile and stigmatizing world. The story collection became an opportunity for pedagogic reflection which, not only gives visibility to a moving generation, but also, permits us to reflect on the significance and value of educational interventions (Biagioli, 2015). In fact, a basic relationship exists between research and narrative thought, since no “important” experience is possible without some element of thought, thus the narrator gives structure to the experience (Mortari, 2007, p. 177-179). The semi-structured interview is characterized by the role of the interviewer. (S)He is free to modify the interview during construction, both regarding content and regarding sequence, as well as possible ways to formulate questions. The interviewer is free to choose the style of conversation that (s)he thinks more appropriate and is free to develop unexpected topics. Since we are talking about a semi-structured interview, the questions developed represent a track which can guide the process, but can even be modified during the interview. This particular type of interview is characterized by its flexibility and adaptability, but it also envisages some open questions, capable of investigating a certain topic, situation or fact as much as possible. Flexibility and adaptability are the main characteristics on which the interviews are based, in order to manage them without constraints and with more freedom within topic choice. The research sample is represented by eight unaccompanied foreign minors aged between 15-17 years old, all of them are males and are hosted by the educational Community of Florence. Four of them are from Albania, two minors are from Kosovo, one minor from Egypt and one minor from Sierra Leone. The minors were asked by educators if they wanted to participate or not in the research and no one declined. During this experience, it was possible to observe that minors from the Balkan region tend to interact more with each other, maybe because they share the same linguistic/cultural background. The minor from Egypt, instead, fit into the whole group and demonstrated to be respected and involved even within the Albanian/Kosovo group, so much that he learnt many words and expressions in their language: for Community educators, it was

amazing seeing him joke in a language so different from his own¹⁸. The minor from the Sub-Saharan region seems less interested in activities and themes which involve the other group of peers.

For what concerns school and education, two Albanian minors attend both the first year of evening classes at middle school, and the first year of vocational school at the Centre for Professional Education (cooking and mechanics); one Albanian minor and one minor from Kosovo attend with fair success the first grade of the Cellini Professional Institute, within a mechanical track; one Albanian minor, who has been in Italy from a long time, is attending the third grade at Istituto Alberghiero Saffi (hotel management school); one Albanian minor is attending the first year of a cooking course at the Professional Education Centre (PEC). The minor from Egypt is attending a coach-builder course at the PEC. The minor from Sierra Leone is attending the third year of middle school and a non formal theater course. The three minors who are studying to be cooks, in addition to curricular practice, are volunteering at the pizzeria Circolo dell'Antella. Educational support is essential to successfully overcome difficulties and issues which can emerge, such as a sense of cultural inferiority, tendency to isolate oneself, insecurity and imbalance in their own life. Building identity in UAMs causes the development of two different spheres of social/cultural values, one for the native country and one for the country of arrival; moreover, there is the constant need to become something else than their own migrating experience. There is a need to feel recognized for what they are and what they will become, not only for their migrating condition. The need to detach from the picture of a migrating and foreign individual is very high, even though they still want to adhere to their own origins. From the interviews, it emerges that all unaccompanied foreign minors come from families with multiple siblings. No one was an only child. Before leaving their country, seven minors out of eight, were living with their mother and father and possibly brothers/sisters. Only the minor from Sierra Leone lived apart from his parents, in an extended family with his grandmother, uncles, aunts and an indefinite number of cousins: more or less thirty people. He says that he has not ever met his father and that he was abandoned by his mother when he was two years old, since she, due to work needs, had to emigrate to Libya, and left her small son with the grandmother. She came to take him back in 2014, willing to save him from the Ebola epidemic. Then, looking for a better future, they faced the journey to Europe, hoping to reach Germany.

Regarding their decision to leave the country, the minors says that they told their parents first, and got their permission, apart from one of them, who received the proposal to leave directly from his parents and apart from the minor from Sierra Leone, who did not want to leave, but was forced by his mother. The minors talked willingly, maybe because narration permits them to give vent to and express feelings which are often inexpressible, since they are perceived as being negative. Comparison that comes from narration lives in the possibility to externalize the problem, creating a sort of sense of freedom, caused by a symbolic expulsion of inner ghosts. UAMs need to tell about their stories which come from a pain which needs to be reconsidered and, the answer to the question “why did you leave your country?” was always: “because I was hoping for a better life”. In particular, the Albanian minors, added to the answer:

¹⁸ Interview collection was made by Susanna Stagnati, educator at the Centre for Secondary Welcoming. Stagnati completed her graduation thesis with Professor R. Biagioli.

“Because it is well known that Italy offers more than Albania and you can work even as a mechanic or as a cook”. Even the minor from Sierra Leone highlighted the fact that in Sierra Leone, since 2014, there is a disease called ebola and people run away from it.

3.4 Data collection. Voices and witnesses

Narration is the mirror of what we have been and what we are. The individual who talks or writes about his/her past, strives both to comprehend him/herself, and to be comprehended. Through words (s)he commits to paper in a constant exercise by interpreting sequence and meaning of events which occur in his/her experience. Despite the will to improve their economic conditions, it is necessary to consider the individual will of each minor, their emotions and their dreams. They do not leave their country exclusively for the money, but, above all, they do so to pursue their dreams and their wishes in which deep feelings, linked to personal realization, are placed. In this way, we can see a double drive: on one hand, the need to feel useful for their family, and on the other, the wish to realize and affirm themselves.

E.A. Albania:

“In Albania I couldn't finish school, I didn't have money, my family didn't have money, I asked to my cousin, so he came with me, I asked him and he said: here they can help you so you can go to school, you can do anything, anything you want. So I left and everything is going well”.

F.F. Egypt:

“I left because there is no work, no money, my father is ill, he has a broken leg, I have to do something, otherwise it's a bad situation! Leaving my family like this...Honestly I don't like seeing my mum working. Nor my sister. I worked for two years on a cab, but there is no money. There is nothing. Not much...and my siblings want money to keep studying and for my dad, for his medicine. And my mother...of course, for all this!”

S. Kosovo:

“I had a dream. To become like my brother, because even my brother arrived with me. He has been in the community, went to school, everything. Everything went well. I wanted to become like him, so I think I am going with him”.

V.P. Kosovo:

“I left because I wanted a, let's say, brighter future. Because in my country the future wasn't so bright. There is no work there. I came here to find a school and then look for a job”.

V.H. Albania:

“I wanted to change country because I wasn't feeling well in Albania. With the economic situation and everything. I wanted to properly attend a school, a school that I like. I liked to go to a hotel management school, to be a cook. I like to cook. And even to have a better life. Yes, to have a better life. Because Albania is not that rich and economy is everything. Albania is not rich, nor very poor. We are “so so”. We managed until now. I want to help my family”.

F.F. Egypt:

"I want to become something important. For my family, not for any other reason. I will always be something important for my family, but I want to do something for them. This is my dream. This is still my dream".

E.B. Albania:

"I remember when I was little, when I was ten years old I took my bike and I fixed it on my own. I like it".

It is interesting to find out if minors went through the journey by themselves or with an adult as reference. The minor from Egypt and two minors from Kosovo left their countries on their own, trusting in adults who were largely paid to do their job. For what concerns the minors from Kosovo, the reference adults were proper passeurs, professionals in crossing borders. The Albanian minors reached Italy together with a relative (two of them with their mothers and one with his grandmother) or with quasi-relatives/friends (one of them trusted a family friend who lived in Italy, another one came with a friend who might be a distant cousin). For what concerns minors of African origin, the journey was full of violence, suffering and loneliness.

F, a minor from Egypt, says that he left his small village by car, together with a man, in order to reach a place in the desert where they stopped for a few days. Then, they got back on the road, until they reached a place and waited to be boarded. Probably, this place was previously used for poultry breeding. F. says he spent three days there with probably 600 people: *even many families, everybody. So many...many Africans, black, very black...*

After three days, he tried for the first time to reach the boats, unsuccessfully. The minor says he has been smashed by a man driving a car and that he cried so much because of the pain. Because he was crying, he was violently beaten by the man who managed the refugee camp: *he beat me. Because I was shouting and crying...he beat me so hard...*

Once arriving at the sea, all migrants were forced to wait for many hours, hidden, in order not to being found by the police. Boarding was through small dinghies which ferry them to the boat.

"We waited for, I guess, three hours because of the police, hidden. After three hours, these tiny tiny boats came. They carry, I guess, 25 or 15 people. I jumped into the water even though I can't swim. A friend saved my life. Thanks to him..."

Then, he spent 25 days floating on the Mediterranean waves, in a boat which was trying to hide into the emptiness of the sea. His shelter was the boat's hold, where he stayed crouched with 600 people, who were, just like him, waiting for the new land. He suffered hunger and drank dirty water during the whole journey. He arrived in Sicily on a Red Cross ship, where he was offered food, clean water, assistance and blankets:

"Yes, the Red Cross. It was a gigantic boat, really. They fed us, all of us. Blanket for sleeping, they took me to the bus and we went to another place, like a community. They gave me food, they showered me, and the blanket, everything, medicine, everything. They asked me how old are you, what's your name, do you have a family or not...The first thing that I thought was that I wanted to speak with my family because it had been a long time and they thought I was dead".

F. loves writing about himself, narrating through biographies and poems and, recently, he was awarded within the competition “Tell me, multimedia migrant diaries”, a project supported by the Tuscany Region, which aims to make citizens sensitive to and involve them in themes such as peace, memory and intercultural dialogue. Within this project, F's voice finally found space, hearing and dignity.

The story of A's journey, instead, is quite difficult to follow. It is blurred in terms of places and time lapses. Africa, in fact, is enormous and he reports feeling tiny in the middle of that emptiness.

“My mum took me away and paid the ticket to travel in a Toyota together with a bunch of people. More difficult than the boat to enter...and you stay there, under the people. So many, I don't know what to say, so many. A tiny Toyota with so many people. There were petrol tanks and we were standing on petrol tanks. The Toyota left and a lot of people fell down...and if you fall...goodbye...eh...without water”.

The journey flows in his memories, following the exhausting rhythm of his confusional words, as if those images were still clear in the present:

“They drive from 8 in the morning until midnight. At midnight, they stop and sleep on the ground. In the morning the journey goes on and it is extremely hot and the wind! It burns all your face, it hurts...then, there's no more water to drink the day after Agadez. There was nothing left. There was money, but there is nothing. Then we arrived in a place where there was water. A small place where the animals drank water. Where the camels drank, we drank too and everybody was shouting, fighting and beating each other!”.

They reached Lybia, where they were locked into a refugee camp.

“We arrived in Sabha, Lybia. From that moment on, we stayed in a refugee camp. We have been there for one week. You can't go out. All night long the Arabs were shooting...Eh...Let's say we have been lucky here. The problem is that you can't go out, if you go out they kill you right there. Arabs will kill you...”.

The minor says he slept on the ground for one week and then, one night, both mother and son managed to escape by paying a dealer, so they could reach Tripoli. His mother knows the city well, since she spent many years working there. Thus, before facing the sea, they stayed for one week at the woman's friend's house and, finally, they made it to the boat.

“That boat...believe me...something incredible! Really!!...Migrants escape by night, always by night. There were a lot of people on this boat on the sea. And there, an Arab calls my mum, because they wrote down names of people who paid. They says mum's name and mine, come forward! I was so scared, I didn't want to get in. Anyway, there was no space, really”.

The minor says he got on the boat with approximately 200 people, woman and children:

“Everybody, Muslims, Christians, everybody preyed! They cried a lot...and from there, we arrived at the boat: Italians so many to check our hands. And they were saying: don't worry, there are doctors and policemen. Now I feel good in Casa Sassuolo”.

Everybody feels a big sense of belonging to the Community, which is seen as a source of security and guidance, despite the rules which must be followed. Dreams that minors declare to have right now, correspond to those that led them to leave their countries. This represents quite an important piece of qualitative data, since coherence between before and after, permits us to maintain stable the motivation for their individual life project, preventing that sense of bewilderment, typical of that age. Moreover, it is to be underlined that objectives to reach are, for the major part, linked to the concreteness of life necessities: studying, finding a job, helping the family. Their sensation is to invest a lot of effort in order to reach their goals.

V. H. Albania.

“I feel safe because I am in a community right now. With the educators I feel safe, because I am not on the street”.

F. F. Egypt

“I want to be a good guy. And, another thing, be a mechanic! ”.

V. P. Kosovo

“When I am 18 I want to work and help my family”.

V. S. Kosovo.

“In the future I see myself older and working! ”.

E. B. Albania.

“Slowly, slowly I am learning Italian, I am attending a school to be a mechanic, third class of middle school, everything. I am happy”.

E. A. Albania

“I miss my family, but I am not alone. What I wanted is going where I want it to go. My biggest struggle is that I am not that good with the language”.

A. U. Sierra Leone

“I am more happy being in Italy and in Europe, because in Africa there is nothing. Here in Italy there are so many things to do”.

Minor migrants in their teen years are the ones most at risk, because of the trauma of leaving the place of their origins, but, above all, because they might not always find a good “climate” in Italy. In order to explain the individual tracks of minors, it is necessary to take into consideration various factors, as emerged from the interviews: salary, familiar capital and the relational heritage built. Educational work should not constrain and rethink differences, but it is appropriate to answer their needs so as to be the same considering their need to be listened to, and valued in their diversity (Santerini, Milano 2017, pp. 56, 77).

Using a semi-structured methodology gave them the opportunity to be heard and helped them understand the meaning of their experience. This, also meant conducting a socio-educational research in which the interviewer continuously used his/her eye, ear and attention,

and was capable to penetrate the thematics, not to explain but to understand the sense which they mean to the individual being interviewed, in order to record what (s)he sees through a reflective skill (Milani & Pegoraro 2011, p. 14-15). In this case, narration acquired the method status, since the research was thought of as “experience” and the objective was to comprehend the meaning of the experience.

3.5 Conclusions

UAMs are in the middle of several rule systems. In fact, it is a matter of finding a touch point between needs of protection (which exist because of the migrants' age and are imposed by international childhood conventions) and also, with policies on irregular migration flow control. Among those rules, the international, European and internal norms stand out, and create a juridical web of protection for children and adolescents which are distant, not only from parental care, but also from their native country, aiming to protect them as children and adolescents. Together with these laws, there is a legislation which refers to their condition of extra-EU citizens, such as, migrants asking for asylum, refugees or trade victims. This legislation recognizes its main objective in protecting them and must not leave aside more general protection norms. Thus, minor migrants should firstly be treated as minors, and then as migrants. The professional duty of welcoming centre operators is, firstly, to give information and guide them linguistically. Also, they play an important role when supporting intersubjective relationships, which can enrich the relationship between two people. This is essential, overall, because these minors do not have any adult who can guarantee their protection. Unaccompanied foreign minors represent a social discomfort complaint in our era, that we cannot neglect. Choosing to look away from their needs and to not evolve our understanding towards the value of their rights, is not an admissible educational choice.

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Chapter 4

Supporting unaccompanied young people for their migration and life project

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4.1 Introduction and research problem

The concept of autonomy refers to a broad and complex construct, frequently used, at a theoretical and practical level, in the pedagogical field and which often takes shape, declined in various ways and in different areas of educational intervention and projects. The achievement of autonomy is aimed at early childhood, disability, children, adolescents or adults who find themselves in particular social disease. Promoting the acquisition of autonomy is not an easy task; it requires services and practitioners to implement strategies and synergies that move on several levels. As Bertolini (1998) said, autonomy does not develop in an empty space, but constantly confronts the constraints, dependencies, the relational dimension, personal identity and self-representation, the sense of commitment and responsibility, as well as with the opportunities/obstacles present in the socio-cultural context.

In this paper we focus on the “effort” of becoming independent of young people who, with the coming of age, find themselves forced to leave the system of protection (residential care or foster care), often regardless of the results achieved, which have yet to be consolidated. The scientific literature defines these young people “care leavers”. The transition from care into adulthood is a difficult step for any young person, but young people leaving care have a high risk of social exclusion, both in terms of material disadvantage and marginalisation (Stein, Munro, 2010).

Specifically, the attention turns on unaccompanied young people who arrive in Italy and in the protection services. 61.7% of these young people, present and surveyed in Italy at 30 November 2019 (Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, 2019), belong to the range aged 17 years and, consequently, they need a longer time and targeted interventions in order to achieve their goal of integration and autonomy, which also clashes with others bureaucratic and legislative issues.

In this perspective, the research problem concerns the following aspects:

- what are the good practices of educational accompaniment to the autonomy of migrant young people, in relation to their needs and to the peculiarity and motivations of the migration path?
- what are the main characteristics of the projects for autonomy funded in the Sardinia region and aimed at young migrants aged between 18 and 25 years old?

The survey was born from the experience of collaboration between the Sardinia Region and the University of Sassari, in order to promote greater scientific knowledge and use the results of research in order to develop the assessment of the impact of the measures implemented and to improve the optimization of public resources (Viganò, 2016; Martini, Trivellato, 2011).

4.2 Theoretical framework

To define unaccompanied foreign minors, we use UNICEF's 2009 definition, according to which, an unaccompanied foreign minor is a minor who is a national of a non-EU Member State or a stateless person under 18 years of age who, on entering European territory, is not accompanied by an adult. Unaccompanied young people are a particularly vulnerable group facing multiple challenges.

In recent years, the European Union has adopted new provisions addressing the situation of unaccompanied minors. In the Italian legal system, UAMs (unaccompanied foreign minors) have always been considered on a par with Italian minors, as subjects without an adult figure providing them with assistance and representation. The law 47/2017 is specifically dedicated to unaccompanied foreign minors. Law 47/2017 contains substantial innovations concerning the practices for the reception of minors and, more generally, the strengthening of rights and protections for them.

Internationally, there is much variation in the care and protection offered to unaccompanied migrant youth. The policies across countries within the Europe vary, as do practices across local authorities.

With regard to their placement, most were placed in institutional care. In Italy 48% of the minors placed in the residential youth care are migrant youth, of which 67%, or more than half, are unaccompanied foreign youth (Autorità Garante per l'Infanzia e l'Adolescenza, 2017). The protection system of unaccompanied minors is for the most part entrusted to placement in residential care rather than foster care. As regards distribution on the national territory, more than one third of the unaccompanied minors are concentrated in the residential care services of island Italy (35%).

Unaccompanied minors in Italy enjoy a high level of protection and security, conditions that disappear when they turn 18 years old. If, in general, for care leavers the leaving care represents a very critical and delicate transition phase, for care leavers who also have a migration path behind them, the situation presents further factors of complexity. In the first place, in fact, it is necessary to consider that the transition from care to adulthood adds to the previous transition (but also rather close in terms of time) that they have experienced in their migration experience, without reference adults and between often distant worlds. Secondly, it is important to understand the reasons behind the migratory choice, which also attribute a particular meaning

to their permanence in the residential care. The reasons for the migratory journey often go back to the intersection of different elements, such as, for example, the intent to improve their living conditions; to reach family members or friends in the country where they have settled and/or to contribute to the support of their family members who have remained in the country of origin (Pierce, 2016, Gozzoli, Regalia, 2005). This means that, in most cases, there are no difficulties related to the vulnerability or situations of neglect and abuse experienced in the family of origin (reasons that are often, however, decisive for the placement of Italian children in the residential care). On the contrary, the family is almost always present and has supported the child in the migration process, also with an economic and emotional support (Saglietti & Zucchermaglio, 2010). The family is often committed and sacrifices financially to allow the journey.

Furthermore, for many of the unaccompanied minors coming in Italy, it is chronic civil unrest that has threatened them, not material or emotional deprivation.

It is the intersection of all these elements, factors of economic, political, humanitarian, family, and even personal fulfilment, that lights and supports the course of the migration path.

In this perspective, Dixon and Wade (2007) highlight how unaccompanied young people have a good chance of obtaining positive outcomes, in terms of commitment, in training and work contexts; they have a good relational network (compatriots and their family of origin, physically distant, but present on an emotional level); a good level of self-esteem and less emotional and behavioral difficulties deriving from childhood trauma. These elements are configured as important protective factors that various studies (Pandolfi, 2015; Driscoll, 2013; Stein, 2012) identify as predictive, in a systemic perspective, for the construction and development of resilience in the life paths of care leavers. Other authors (Kohli, 2007; Kohli & Mitchell, 2007) also underline possible risk and vulnerability factors for unaccompanied young people, namely: traumatic experiences lived during the migratory journey; sense of loss; absence of the family; poor social support; difficulty learning the new language; lack of job opportunities.

From the empirical evidence it is clear that the educational intervention, both in residential care and in the leaving care phase, needs to be calibrated in relation to the different paths and life stories of young people and to the different objectives based on the experience migration, with specific attention to psychological, identity and educational processes.

As a professional, social and educational work has a key role to play in promoting the rights and welfare of unaccompanied migrant youth (Clyton, Gupta, Willis, 2019).

In this direction, the results of some researches (Rania, Migliorinia, Sclava, Cardinalia & Lottia, 2014), revealed the perception and experiences of unaccompanied young people regarding their migration process and the educational interventions carried out by the residential care system. Specifically, the aspiration of young people to change their lives and to have new and better opportunities is highlighted, together with the desire to meet the expectations of the family of origin. There are also feelings of stress, loneliness, frustration, especially related to the difficulties or impossibility of finding a job, because this aspect strongly contrasts with one of the main reasons why young people have left their country of origin.

Regarding the educational opportunities offered by residential care services, if on the one hand the activities (training, school, sport) are recognized as positive by the young people, on the other hand they are not considered fully responsive to current needs and aspirations, as the project educational does not always adequately analyze the real reasons for migration, the

migration path and family expectations. This happens because these young people arrive in Italy with a very strong and clear project: to find a job, fulfilling their family's hopes. The response of social services may not always adhere to these expectations:

“social services consider them to be passive receivers of proposals designed for them. This condition could create a situation in which minors are considered to be children, but they do not perceive themselves like this; rather, they think of themselves as adults because the migration experience has been a moment of growth. The image of children held by authorities frequently does not correspond to the children's status in their country of origin; therefore the expectations and life plans of the unaccompanied minor do not always agree with the educational interventions of social services. Socio-educational services propose them a standardized model of interventions, based on Italian adolescents who have different feelings and experiences” (Rania, Migliorini, Sclavo, Cardinali & Lotti, 2014, p. 309).

Therefore, it is necessary to change methodologies and intervention policies in order to implement innovative programs for supporting unaccompanied young people, respecting their cultural and biographical specificity.

4.3 The context of the research

The territorial context of the research is the Sardinia region, that recording a significant increase in the presence of unaccompanied young people in recent years. In 2016, the region issued a regional plan for the reception of migratory flows. The Plan represents the programming tool through which the Sardinia Region promotes socio-employment inclusion programs for vulnerable targets of the immigrant population, through the strengthening of partnerships with professionals and public and private companies in the labor market. In particular, the Plan provides specific protection measures for unaccompanied minors, such as:

- active inclusion projects aimed at unaccompanied foreign minors, aged between 16 and 18, placed in residential care, focused on hospitality, orientation and educational support to social and work inclusion;
- educational projects for autonomy aimed at unaccompanied young people, aged between 18 and 25 years.

In relation to projects for autonomy, it should be noted that unaccompanied minors in Italy enjoy a high level of protection and security, conditions that disappear when they turn 18 years old. Sardinia region it is the only region in Italy to have introduced specific legislation (L.R. 4/2006, art.17) to finance projects for supporting care leavers. This legislation to provide a more focused response to the core needs of care leavers – for accommodation, personal support, assistance with finance and help with careers. In 2018, the Sardinia region extended unaccompanied young people to the care leavers benefiting from the support measures provided for by law.

4.4 Research objectives

The aim of this study was to explore the characteristics and contents of the projects of autonomy for unaccompanied young people financed in Sardinia in the period January-December 2019. Specifically, the following variables were examined:

- individual characteristics of care leavers: age, nationality, gender, life path and migration project;
- needs for autonomy; objectives; planned activities; times and phases of implementation;
- aspirations and desires of the care leavers regarding their future.

4.5 Methods

Data were collected from the head office for social policies of the Sardinia region. We set-up of a database for the data collected.

Twenty five projects of autonomy for unaccompanied young people funded by the Sardinia region in the period January-December 2019 were examined.

Data will be catalogued according to the following criteria: age, nationality and gender of care leavers; geographical area of Sardinia; life path and migration project; objectives and planned activities of individual projects of autonomy; aspirations and desires of the care leavers regarding their future, with special attention to analogies and peculiarities.

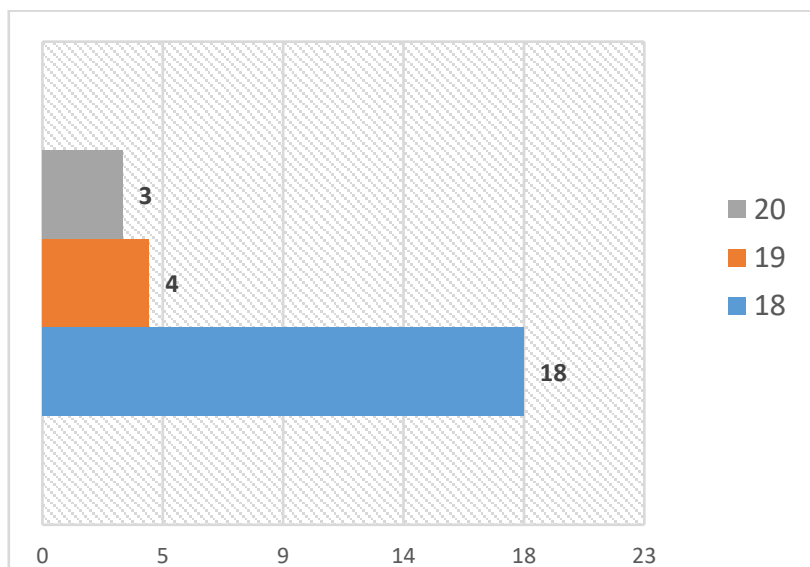
4.6 Results

The analysis of the data collected highlights the following outcomes.

4.6.1 Gender and age of unaccompanied foreign young people beneficiaries of the project for autonomy

All 25 unaccompanied young people are male. The most representative age group is 18 years old.

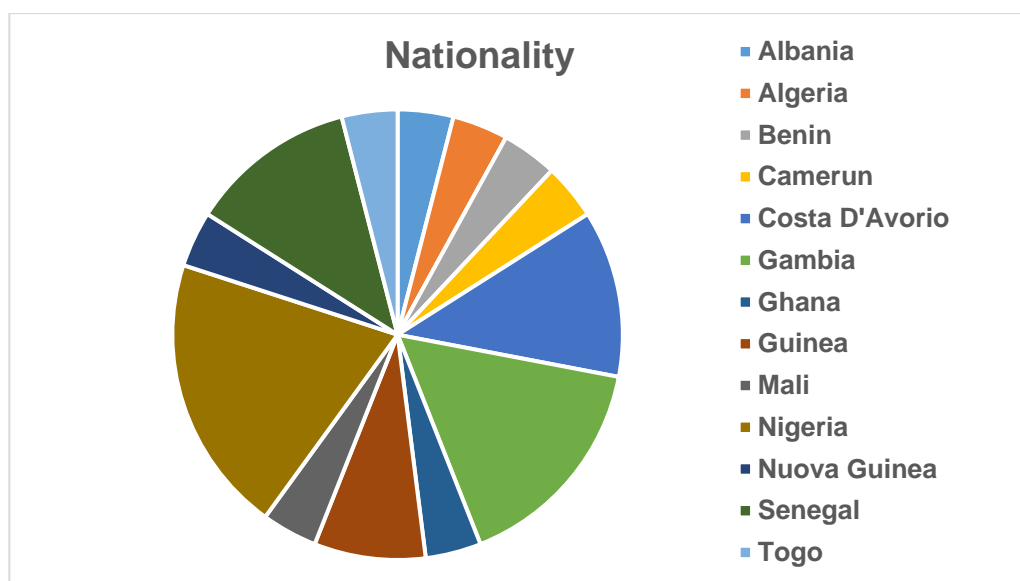
Fig. 1. Age of unaccompanied foreign young people beneficiaries of the project for autonomy



4.6.2 Nationality of unaccompanied foreign young people beneficiaries of the project for autonomy

As can be seen from the following chart, the most representative countries from which unaccompanied young people come are: Nigeria, Gambia, Senegal e Costa D'Avorio.

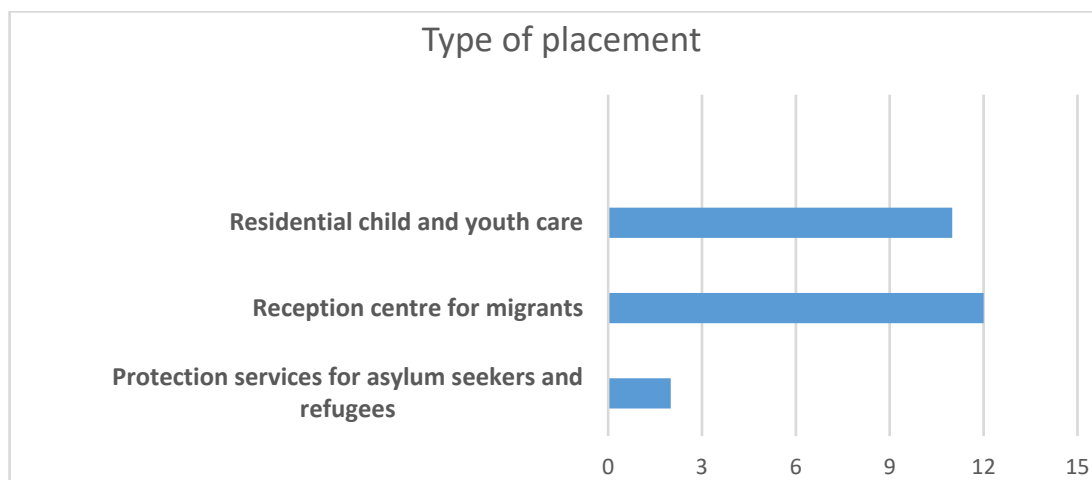
Fig. 2. Nationality of unaccompanied foreign young people beneficiaries of the project for autonomy



4.6.3 *Type of placement where unaccompanied foreign young people come from*

About the type of placement where unaccompanied foreign young people people beneficiaries of the project for autonomy come from, as the following graph shows, most young people come from residential child and youth care and reception centre for migrants.

Fig. 3. Type of placement where unaccompanied foreign young people come from



4.6.4 *Geographical area of Sardinia*

Most of unaccompanied foreign young people beneficiaries of the project for autonomy young people live in southern Sardinia, especially in the metropolitan city of Cagliari and in small neighboring countries.

4.6.5 *Life path and migration project*

The analysis of the life stories of unaccompanied foreign young people beneficiaries of the project for autonomy shows, first of all, motivations for which they chose to undertake the migratory journey emerges.

The main reasons are the following:

- situations of economic and material poverty in the country of origin;
- desire to change one's life, to find a job and to achieve economic independence;
- to help their family of origin;
- situations of family violence.

Regarding the migratory journey, almost all the young people have lived traumatic experiences, often caused by the passage through Libya and to the maltreatments and abuses suffered.

4.6.6 Objectives and planned activities of individual projects of autonomy

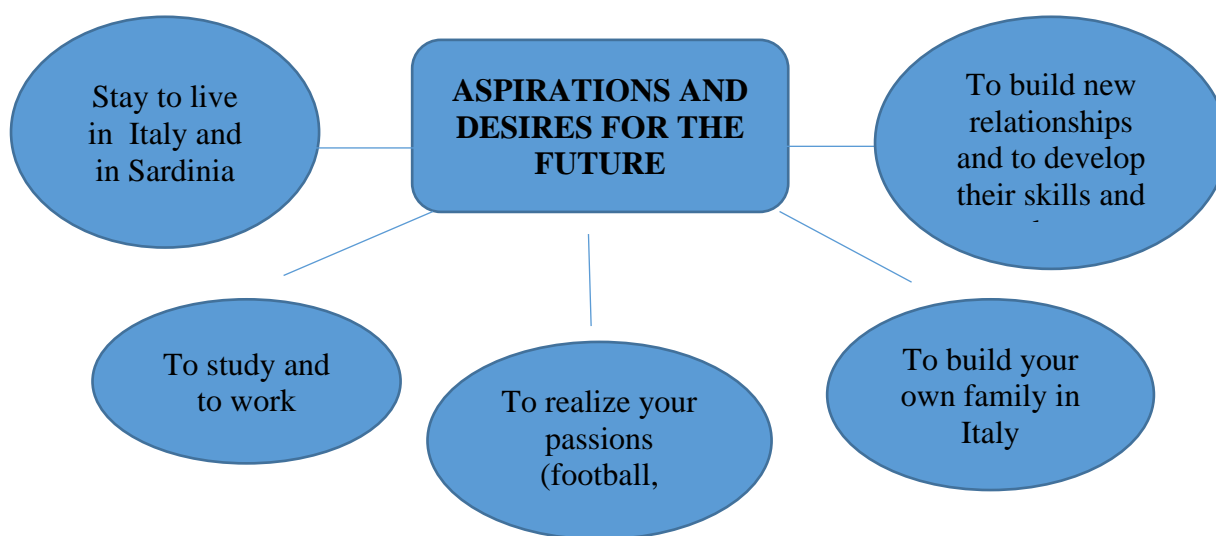
A common goal of all autonomy projects is to achieve compulsory schooling and learning a good level of knowledge of the Italian language. Training activities that characterize the autonomy projects of the young people focus mainly on the internship/stage in the professional fields of catering, cooking, agriculture and dressmaker. Only 4 out of 25 young people will attend an upper secondary school. One of the passions common to many of the young people is to play football.

Individualized projects for autonomy are long-term projects (three years). During this period the children are supported both by the social service and by a tutor and, in some cases, by the cultural mediator.

Aspirations and desires of the care leavers regarding their future

The project of autonomy provides a space written by young people, in which to express their desires and aspirations for the future. The analysis of the content revealed some recurring themes that are pre-sented in the form of nodes (categories).

Fig. 4. Aspirations and desires for the future



Some meaningful sentences of care leavers are reported below:

"I wish I could possibly live in Cagliari near my school. I'd like to work in a bar. I have a passion for music and singing, I would like to help my family of origin" (Care Leavers, Senegal, 18 years old).

"I have been living in Italy for 3 years, I arrived with a boat together with 150 other people. The residential care has been my home for two years, I have learned many things. I like learning and going to school, I have to improve in reading and writing. This year I will have to face the exam for the compulsory schooling. I would like to stay here, work and build a family in the future. I am happy because my life has improved in Sardinia" (Care Leavers, Nuova Guinea, 20 years old).

"I want to grow up and become an adult, to work. I would like a peaceful life, with many projects to carry out" (Care Leavers, Gambia, 19 years old).

"During the experience in the residential care I learned many skills; the support of educators will help me overcome any obstacles and difficulties. My main aspiration is to find a job in the restaurant. I still need guidance and support from educators; they represent an important point of reference" (Care Leavers, Algeria, 19 years old).

"In the future I would like to find a job and return to my country just to visit my family, I would like to live in Sardinia" (Care Leavers, Nigeria, 18 years old).

"I would like to continue my integration in Italy. I would like to become a professional footballer, although I am aware that such a career is difficult. I would like to achieve economic independence, I would like to establish more relationships in the local community" (Care Leavers, Guinea, 18 years old).

"My desire is to stay in Italy and, in particular, in Sardinia. I like this project because I have the opportunity to study. In my country I was unable to study because my family did not have the money. I have loved football since I was a child. I decided to leave to find a better future. But football is not the only way because I think it is important to learn how to do a job" (Care Leavers, Gambia, 18 years old).

"I wish my dreams would come true, I would like to have a normal life than before" (Care Leavers, Ghana, 18 years old).

4.7 Conclusions

This first descriptive mapping of the autonomy paths undertaken by unaccompanied foreign young people in the Sardinia region highlighted the peculiarities and main purposes of the support interventions carried out.

The point of view of these care leavers allows us to understand the motivations and their needs and expectations for the future.

The process and outcome evaluation will allow the collection and systematization of quantitative and qualitative data, with the aim of measuring the effectiveness of the intervention measures carried out. In particular, the research aims to examine the changes and effects caused by the actions implemented both in the individual paths of autonomy, and at a wider level (territorial, social, etc.).

Finally, future research steps will be able to identify dimensions and operational actions that “works” and that can be considered as protective factors, as well as any critical issues that need to be reviewed and remodulated, with a view to improvement.

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Chapter 5

Migrating Childhood and educational interventions in emergency contexts for Unaccompanied Migrant Children. A participative action research

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5.1 Introduction

The asylum seekers crisis - particularly the unaccompanied Children asylum seekers - requests to every country - those they leave, those they cross and those in which they seek asylum - a duty to protect and safeguard the rights guaranteed under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). The sheer scale of this crisis has strained welfare systems both in first hosting countries and second hosting countries, despite efforts at all levels in society to provide support. According UNICEF's seven points plan for refugee and migrant Children (UNICEF, 2016):

- Unaccompanied or separated Children must be kept safe
- The best interests of the Child should be a primary consideration in any decision concerning that Child
- Children must be given access to services such as health and education.

In order to pursue these objects, European Governments need to deal with this problem using a double approach. On one hand, hosting countries need to face to a political dimension, concerning different themes as citizenship, rights safeguard and responsibilities requirement, healthcare, sanitation and education access. On the other hand, they need to protect newcomers from xenophobic attacks and stigmatisation, that can lead to a feeling of alienation and social exclusion. Moreover, as well underlined by several studies¹⁹, unaccompanied Children asylum seeker can experience a sense of frailty due to the asylum process.

A huge effort in preventing unaccompanied Children from social exclusion and psychological suffering is thus required, through the promotion of specific social policies and educational actions.

All national and local Authorities, and all public and non-public social services, consortiums,

¹⁹ See for example Anderson B. & Conlan S. (2014), *Providing Protection Access to early legal advice for asylum seekers* (Online) Available: [http://www.compas.ox.uk/media/PR-2014-Early Legal Advice.pdf](http://www.compas.ox.uk/media/PR-2014-Early%20Legal%20Advice.pdf) (last seen February 2020).

associations that operate with unaccompanied Children - as well as formal education institutions (Biagioli, Lischi, Papa, 2015) - must be committed to bettering their hosting interventions in order to identify specific action models able to respond both to the political and the social requirements of the welcoming issue. Moreover, into all the various structures of the reception system - from the 'hotspot' to the local 'hub' and CAS (extraordinary reception centres) until the SPRAR centres (Protection System for asylum seekers and refugees), Minors must be protected for their specific conditions - Children, migrant, unaccompanied - that are for their own nature characterised by frailty (Premoli, 2013; Crotti, 2016).

Local social services thus need to overcome a merely welfarism action-model, in order to promote educational design and research grounded on social workers professional skills.

The Social Consortium Agorà, in the city of Genoa, tried to react to this issue through an action-research partnership with the research team in "Educational Design" of the Education Department (Dipartimento di Scienze della Formazione) (University of Genoa), with the aims of qualify social and educational intervention in services for migrant Children asylum seekers, and improve skills and knowledges of social workers, educators and national service volunteers.

5.2 Theoretical Framework: Rights and Childhood

Moving from (or forgetting) the production of innovative educational theories and models (Dewey, Agazzi, Montessori) that played an important role in underlining its peculiarities, it is possible to assume Childhood as a particular stage of life bound in a confluence space of cultural, historical, political, socio-economical, scientific variables. This specific position, characterised by a very narrow area of life and agency, needs to be protected and somewhat released. The ONU Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989) represents the highest recognition of Childhood and Children rights, especially as it states - regarding the subject of our study -:

States Parties shall ensure that:

- no child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Neither capital punishment nor life imprisonment without possibility of release shall be imposed for offences committed by persons below eighteen years of age;
- no child shall be deprived of his or her liberty unlawfully or arbitrarily. The arrest, detention or imprisonment of a child shall be in conformity with the law and shall be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time;
- every child deprived of liberty shall be treated with humanity and respect for the inherent dignity of the human person, and in a manner which takes into account the needs of persons of his or her age. In particular, every child deprived of liberty shall be separated from adults unless it is considered in the child's best interest not to do so and shall have the right to maintain contact with his or her family through correspondence and visits, save in exceptional circumstances;
- every child deprived of his or her liberty shall have the right to prompt access to legal and other appropriate assistance, as well as the right to challenge the legality of the deprivation of his or her liberty before a court or other competent, independent and impartial authority, and to a prompt decision on any such action.

The importance and the central role of the Child is thus declared as primary necessity. The pedagogical roots of these principles are clear and, precisely because of this, an educational point of view is required in order to prevent from documents and conventions ratifying without a focus on Children real life conditions.

Since an intercultural approach seems to be a coexistence model that guarantees safeguard of human rights, able to overstep prejudices and to build social changes (Cambi, 2001; Santerini, 2003), a scientific reflection on the dimensions of values and education into the hosting system is required, in order to understand which educational design allows to safeguard the best interest of Children and is able to generate long term goals in terms of autonomy and inclusion building (Bochicchio, 2017).

Unaccompanied Migrant Children risk to be trapped in social categories (like ‘refugees’ or ‘foreigners’) that don’t have to deal with education (Catarci, Macinai, 2015) and that are unable to describe young lives already traumatised by the migration path (Maragliano, Piccinini, 2017) while they have to face the welcoming society systems. This is more real when the experience of migration has been carried out by Minors alone, without a parental or adult support. The linked risk of lose identity landmarks is thus concrete for these Children. As consequence, Unaccompanied Migrant Children are often forced to be involved in fast processes of loss of childhood in order to become adults (Rania, Migliorini, Sclavo, Cardinali, Lotti, 2014), mostly withstanding violation of educational and - most important - human rules.

All adults involved are aimed to be responsible in order to convert hosting procedures in human rights ensuring practices. This conversion of specific needs in fundamental rights is possible when the Adult pays particular attention to the dimension of Children’s care. (Allison, Prout, Jenks, 2002). As Premoli (2012) argues, a pedagogical approach rights-based and care-based is essential in order to safeguard all vulnerable individuals. In fact, the identification of rights represents the turning point in the process of recollecting general and specific aims of each educational intervention (Bertolini 2003).

Moreover, the assistance-based approach is integrated by a care-based approach, whose characteristics imply not only needs safeguard but especially the promotion of individuals’ identities, capabilities, wishes and hopes (Grange, 2014).

In this vein, a care-based approach progressively defines - throughout a dense dialogue between general principles and operational circumstances - the conditions that better allow an integral growth of the Child, that is considered as an active, engaged and creative rights-holder (King, 2004).

From the services’ point of view, it’s necessary to understand how they could evolve themselves from an emergency to a social support and finally to an integrated educational support (De Pieri, 2003).

To better clarify how to endorse a right-based and care-based approach in this context, theoretical concepts as:

- intercultural education (Cambi, 2001; Benhabib, 2002; Mantovani, 2004; Abdallah Pretceille, 2013; Pinto Minerva, 2015);
 - intercultural sensivity (Bennett, 1986; 1993);
 - intercultural competence (Spitzberg, 2009; Deardorff, 2009; Berardo & Deardorff, 2012; Jackson, 2012; Reggio & Santerini, 2014; Martin, 2015; Odag, Wallin & Kedzior, 2015);
- need to be declined in order to promote educational design models able to enhance Children

sense of possibility (Gennari, 2006). This approach allows - as latter consequence - a complete well-being (Nussbaum, 2011) and capability development (Sen, 2001).

5.3 Objectives and research questions

The aim of this study is to investigate the construction of social representations of Childhood in contexts involving unaccompanied asylum seeker or refugee migrant Children, with the objective of develop skills and functions of social workers in order to:

- encourage a reflective, transformative, design-based (Traverso, 2016) and practice-based approach (Fabbri, 2007; Mezirow, 2016; Romano, 2016; Fabbri, Romano 2017) to education;
- promote circularity and dissemination of different design models (Stroppiana, 2009);
- improve organisational set-up (Bochicchio, Rivoltella, 2017) of services for Unaccompanied Migrant Children

The following questions were thus addressed in this study.

1. Which ideas of Childhood emerge in contexts involving unaccompanied migrant children?

Since ‘Childhood’ is a social and cultural construction, we hypothesised that each actor involved in emergency contexts (migrant Children, educators, social workers, services coordinators, volunteers, municipal decision makers) has his own idea of what Childhood represents.

2. Is the idea of Childhood liable to change in migrant Children’s view in relation to their migration patterns? How does it change?

As education, culture and environment are important in the construction of the idea of Childhood, personal experiences and life paths play an essential role in defining this concept. This assumption suggest that a narrative reconstruction of Children’s travel is necessary in order to describe a possible evolution or involution of their idea of Childhood.

If this premise is true, we would expect to find a gap between believes or attitudes before Children’s departure and believes and attitudes after Children’s arrival - taking into account the fact time passed.

3. How could the externalisation of the ideas of Childhood (and of the link between their images and reality) guarantee Minors protection and the safeguard of the Childhood condition?

Since actions are taken or carried out due to attitudes, opinions, believes, emotions towards a “social object” (Folgheraither, 2009; Donati, Folgheraiter, Ranieri, 2011), one might argue that different ideas of Childhood would lead to different educational choices according designing, needs and objectives analysis, and related educational actions.

5.4 Methodology

Since the research was born in order to promote educators and volunteers skills and competencies, a participatory action-research (Rapoport, 1970; Whyte, 1991; Kaneklin, Piccardo & Scaratti, 2010; Johnson, 2012; Kemmis, McTaggart, Nixon, 2014) based on a

qualitative approach (Berg, 2001, Berg, Lune, 2012; Creswell, 2012), has been used.

A profession-based collaboration between researchers and social workers (coordinators of hosting services, educators, Municipality decision makers, volunteers) has been obtained with this approach in all the research steps (definition of the theoretical framework, construction of the research tools, sample selection, data analysis).

In particular, the participative approach allowed:

- a good accuracy of the search tools in a linguistic (comprehension) and intercultural (disambiguation) perspective;
- a strong adhesion and a good attitude of Children involved in the research;
- the cooperative generation and transfer of knowledge and research skills for all the participant social workers and a better understanding of behaved elements for all the research team.

The first research step lasted 18 months²⁰, structured in five design levels (in this paper we will focus on level two results):

Tab. 1. Timetable

<i>Level 1</i>	<i>May September 2016</i>	Research group building Research problem and research object definition Research group training: theoretical framework and research questions definition; research tools construction Population and sample definition Research group training on tools employment and data analysis
<i>Level 2</i>	<i>October 2016 May 2017</i>	Interviews with Children hosted in first welcoming centres (CAS) Interviews coding and analysis
<i>Level 3</i>	<i>September 2017 February 2018</i>	Interviews with Children hosted in second welcoming centres (Sprar) Interviews coding and analysis
<i>Level 4</i>	<i>July 2018 September 2018</i>	Interviews with educators, social workers, national civil service volunteers that operate in first and second welcoming centres Interviews coding and analysis
<i>Level 5</i>	<i>October 2018</i>	Definition and design of the final interpretative model Results dissemination and research process closure

5.5 Research Tool

In this step, that aimed at understanding unaccompanied migrant Children's ideas of Childhood, a semi-structured face-to-face interview has been chosen as research tool. The interview has been constructed through a training program which involved the research team

²⁰ The second research step is still ongoing and involves a second group of National Civil Service Volunteers. This step aims to explore social representations of Childhood in educators and coordinators ideas.

and the national civil service volunteers, as well as the educators of the hosting structures, in order to gain the best intelligibility and reliability (taking into account the significant incidence of cultural aspects).

Each interview (structured in five concepts and nine questions) has been conducted by a University researcher, with the support of a civil service volunteer as non-participant observer.

In some cases - usually if required by the Minor, that needed a more comfortable setting - also the reference educator attended the interview.

In order to facilitate the understanding of the questions and to provide effective responses, four interviews has been totally conducted in english and two has been partially conducted in french.

Tab. 2. Concepts & Questions

Concepts	Questions
Childhood in the country of origin	<i>Could you tell us how was Children's daily life in your country? When you were in your country what did you want for your future? Why do you think so many guys leave from your country to come here?</i>
Childhood traveling	<i>Based on what you saw, how are these trips for Children? We know that on these trips there are Children traveling with parents and Children traveling alone. Do you think kids and teens are helped in their difficulties? From who? And how?</i>
Childhood and landing	<i>When they arrive in Italy, who help kids and teens that travel alone?</i>
Children and reception	<i>How are organised your days now? Are you happy?</i>
Childhood and the future	<i>What would you like for you, now? Today, what expectations do you have for your life?</i>

The conceptual progression that sustains the interview is that of a narrative that allows to explore the personal path from the country of origin to the country of current residence through the critical moment of the choice/obligation to leave and travel.

5.6 Population and sample

Due to many variation because of different kind of minors movements - as escapes, abandonment, transfers, exits - the population was considered in the period from September to November 2016.

A non-probabilistic research unit has been constructed on voluntary-based recruitment, because of the frailty of the research subjects.

This choice safeguarded participants' cognisance and privacy.

Fourteen minors from Mali, Guinea Bissau, Ghana, Niger, Bangladesh, Afghanistan thus participated in the study.

5.7 Data Analysis

The interviews were recorded and later transcribed; then they have been analysed by manual coding by the whole research group.

A grounded theory analysis (Charmaz, 2006) has been used.

The focus of this article is the first interview question, concerning the theme of Childhood in the place where Minors grew up. The objective of this question was to understand which are the emerging dimensions and features of Childhood in different places and contexts, and which conceptual categories could be linked with them. The question aimed to evoke memories about Minors' life, granting them - thanks to the impersonal construction - the possibility not to speak about their personal experience, which could potentially bring them feelings of sadness or pain.

Analysing the related answer frames, six different focused codes (Tab. 3) have been identified:

Tab. 3. Focused codes

Focused codes	Coding	Occurrences
Playtime	15	20
School	19	23
Work	10	12
Parents and family	6	6
Spaces, places and contexts	14	14
Life conditions and differences	31	32

Playtime

The codes related to this focused code show that it is possible to address to Children two different experiences. In fact, despite most of them report playing experiences,

“after school we were used to play. We played football, we went to the river... only that... with friends” (frame 1 interview 12)

“when I was seven we all played. We played football, basket...” (frame 2, interview 2)

“I always played, with my friends” (frame 1 interview 4)

some of them told us about the impossibility of playing:

“in my country there is nothing like here. Not even playtime” (frame 1 interview 11).

This impossibility is not necessarily directly experienced by the interviewed, that in some cases reported an overview of life conditions in their place of birth:

“children whose families have money can play and can do a lot of things. Children whose parents are poor can’t do anything. Even play. Their parents don’t carry them to play” (frame 2 interview 11)

Spaces, places, contexts

All the interviewed expressed the possibility to stay outside, living and playing in cities, streets, squares, roaming wherever they wanted:

“when I was Child I was used to go to school. After school, all Children were used to roam in the city, always” (frame 4 interview 7).

In all these places Children report to spend playtime and free time always together with other Children:

“during the weekend we were used to walk and play around in the city. All Children. All together” (frame 4, interview 4)

“children were used to stay outside and play. We spent all our time playing with other children” (frame 5 interview 12).

In their tales, Children don’t report episodes of home playtime. Home place is merely recognised as a ‘coming back place’:

“we were not used to stay at home” (frame 2 interview 9)

“at noon we came back home from school, we had lunch, then we were used to walk outside all together. I’ve never done anything else” (frame 1 interview 10)

“we were used to stay outside all day long. Then the night we were used to going back home” (frame 6 interview 4).

Parents and family

Strictly connected to the “playtime” and “spaces, places and contexts” ones, this focused code shows that tales about family life or time shared with parents are totally missing. Here some of the sporadic frames referring to relationship with parents at home:

“my mother was used to spend all her time at home... she had to wash our clothes” (frame 1 interview 1)

or activities:

“we were used to come back from school for lunch. Then we were used to go outside and to come back in the evening. At home we were used to watch TV or to do homework, or to read books, and then to sleep” (frame 3 interview 10).

The interviews furthermore show a lack of parental control. Parents seem not to look after Children and not to spend significant time with them:

“During the day Children can roam and stay outside... parents don’t look after you” (frame 4 interview 2).

“We were used to play, every time, but that way of playing was different. It was not as here. Here Children stay at home and their parents teach them good things. So we grew up with... nothing” (frame 5 interview 7).

Furthermore, not only a lack in the exercising of the parental role seems to arise; also the real presence of parents into the family represents a critical element:

“I’ve never know my father, because he died when I was child. He died in a car crash” (frame 2 interview 1)

“I had only my father. My mother died when I was child” (frame 3 interview 10)

“I was alone in XXXX. There were a lot of troubles when I was child... no father, no mother... all dead” (frame 1 interview 3).

School

The educational experience of Unaccompanied Migrant Children requests a conceptual explanation because of cultural specificities of places they come from. The religious tradition, in this case, represents a distinguishing factor in Children habits and lives. Minors report tales about two kinds of school: the public school and the confessional school, that has religious pursuits. In this frame, interviewed report different experiences.

In fact, there are those who can attend both schools:

“children were used to go to school in the morning. Then they were used to come back home and have lunch. Then they were used to attend the muslim school in the afternoon” (frame 2 interview 3)

and there are Children who attend only the confessional school:

“when I was child I went to school, but only the koranic school and not the official

school” (frame 5 interview 8)

“After five years I wanted to quit koranic school, that was the only I was attending. But my father didn’t want me to quit. I wanted to learn french, as my friend. They studied french at the public school, but I didn’t attend the public school... only the koranic one. Then my father brought me to an other town, to the koranic school. I didn’t want to study at that school” (frame 2 interview 6).

According to the interviewed, the possibility of attending public school seems to depend on families economical conditions:

“Children whose parents don’t have money can’t go to school. They have difficulties not in feeding... but you grow up without attending the public school” (frame 1 interview 5)

that could foreclose or enhance educational experiences and the construction of belonging social networks.

Work

Economical parents’ condition has consequences not only in Children’s attending school, but also in the possible or necessary Children’s experience of work. As a matter of fact some interviews codes report the impossibility of attending school:

“there also were children that didn’t attend school. They were many” (frame 3 interview 11)
“I was used to go to school, then I was used to help my father and my uncle in cutting trees” (frame 3 interview 13).

Often the impossibility to attend school (that Minors report with feelings of discomfort and regret) is due to the need of earn money:

“I wanted to go to school. But it was impossible. I had to work” (frame 2 interview 12)
“I’ve never attended school. I’ve worked as grower” (frame 1 interview 12)
“I’ve worked as shepherd until I was thirteen. We were some kids, all together, all day long, for days and days. We knew each other, very well” (frame 2 interview 13).

Life conditions and ‘different childhood’

In addition to reported focus, data seem to show cultural backgrounds characterised by frailty. As they arrive, or during their travel, Unaccompanied Minors report (or tell about friends’ or relatives’ tales) about different childhood conditions. Life conditions in their place of birth (mostly in specific and recognisable geographical areas) are very different from life conditions in this Continent, and they don’t miss this huge diversity.

This difference is somehow not definable or - perhaps - it’s impossible to define it because it’s impossible to relate it to everything else.

“we were used to play in a different way, compared to here in Europe” (frame 5 interview 13)
“childhood is different from here” (frame 5 interview 1)
“education is very difficult, because it is not as European education” (frame 6 interview 1).

Life conditions seem to depend on the economical conditions related to need and opportunities of families with children:

“there is a difference between those who have money and those who don’t have (...) There are some who have big difficulty in eating and having a roof. They have difficulty to survive” (frame 4 interview 11)
“if you have money, you have more opportunities. You can play, you can do more things” (frame 5 interview 11)
“we had to pay everything. Hospitals, school... everything” (frame 6 interview 8).

The consequences of this gap obviously relapse on families social conditions. Children can attain formal or non formal educational experiences that are very different, but referring to Unaccompanied Migrant Children, they almost inevitably seem to be ‘sentenced’ to suffering and social exclusion. These conditions facilitate the decision to leave:

“we had no control. We were used to play a lot, but without parents. Here in Europe parents play with Children. They stay a lot of time together. In my place only few Children have this opportunity. So you don’t have a lot of experiences” (frame 6 interview 2)
“some children attended public school. Only those whose parents had money” (frame 6 interview 11)
“if your family doesn’t have money, you grow up without going to school” (frame 8 interview 11)
“you can’t go outside and play with other children, if you are poor” (frame 7 interview 8)
“if you are twelve years old, you are a worker. A hard worker. You are no more child” (frame 4 interview 13).

The analysis of the whole interviews and the focused codes according the referring conceptual frame shown a core concept that is often analysed only with an ethnocentric point of view and from a legal perspective.

The “unaccompanied” condition, that we are used to address to alone Children basing on their migration path and only at the moment of their arrival in Europe - seems to forerun the condition of “migrant”.

In fact, these Children seem to be “unaccompanied” before the beginning of their journey. The high percentage of Minors reporting parents’ death events doesn’t represent the principal element contributing in the construction of this category. Rather, the interviews of those Children who still grew up with their parents suggest a lack of significant ties and relationships between Minors and their parents, that represents one of the most important principles of the protection of Children rights. None of the interviewed reports episodes or memories of Childhood linked to care-based or emotional-based relationship with parents.

Parents seem to be involved in their Children's growing up process only for those aspects concerning a functional control of their school attendance. And this control seems to be primly and strictly carried out, with no participation in Children's daily life, even at home.

This approach doesn't seem to be strictly connected to a voluntary educational choice. On the contrary, it seems to descend from precarious socio-economical life conditions (Macinai, 2016), that reveals a huge gap between people, where school, health care, food, home are not for everyone. Those whose Children barely have access to school - even if they don't live below the utter poverty line - seem not to have the possibility to assume a significant role - except a merely control-based role - in their Children life. Moreover, those who live under the utter poverty line need to switch this control from school to work, in order to guarantee the outliving of each family member. In addition, in these extreme conditions the idea of "family" as social unit seems to die out, due to the incisiveness and pressure of each individual to find a way to survive.

5.8 Discussion

As we have seen, the results seem to underline the necessity of a Childhood safeguard able to overcome geographical and situational specificity in order to reach a coordinated and diachronic approach. This could let Infanthood to spread out along its (and our) time. This is more important for Unaccompanied Migrant Children, in respect of which we have the duty to ensure them to be considered Children before "migrant".

Then, in order to prevent Childhood from being undetected in emergency contexts, first results show the importance of an educational design able to enhance the reconstruction of a membership system in which Minors could recognise themselves, as an undamaged family system does. This, trough the promotion of an open and dialectical system of rules and possibilities that regards the formal education but also creative and recreational dimensions.

Such approach allows Children to learn how to live their Childhood condition, avoiding a functional approach to their life project in Europe (sometimes overestimated and sometimes understated), too often exclusively based on the need of work achievement, even if they are not yet adults.

The creative and recreational dimensions refer to the ludic component of learning processes and cognitive, emotional, relational development. The "playing" dimension thus represents "the" condition characterising Childhood, and it must be guarantee all life long (Kaiser, 1995; Sarsini, 2009), because of its capacity of recompose rules, possibilities, successes and failures in a whole system that ensures a capabilities life approach (Colaianne, 2007). This is more important for those - as unaccompanied migrant Children - who have faced conditions of poverty and educational, emotional, relational deprivation, and who have to deal with frailty and identity's reconstruction. The process of reconstruction comes also from the possibility to recognise personal hopes and wishes in a ludic way; from the opportunity to slow, to take time, than to catch it; from the chance to believe a (magic) place where you know you're happy does exist. A place were the "play" become life.

Lastly, and with consistency with an idea of Childhood built on inclusive and cooperative principles, it has to be said the methodological choice of the research team seems to have

enhanced the social dimension of each step and level. This approach led to effective benefits in services (both regarding educators and social workers, and Unaccompanied Children involved in the research in a unexpected and significant way). Participant action-research represents a hard and challenging choice, even regarding the dimension of time (the whole research project will last three years). Despite this, it allows us the possibility to give our contribution in changing the world in a very cooperative way.

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Chapter 6

A young refugee in the family. Intercultural relations during a hosting experience in Milan.

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6.1 Introduction

Intercultural relations are usually studied in specific contexts such as education, health and business. Typical fields of intercultural studies are school classrooms, youth centers and other institutions in which cultural differences are widespread. However, according to Roy, also in this field of research can we distinguish two different intercultural ways: “institutional” and “non-institutional”, with different relational dynamics (Roy 1992, 55). By non-institutional ways we mean contexts without specific written rules for interpersonal relationships, where cultural differences may also emerge in a most spontaneous way.

This essay aims to explore when intercultural relations take place in a domestic environment and people from different cultures share daily life, outside a regulatory framework. The main difference is between a context of rules and norms also concerning intercultural relations, on the one hand, and a more spontaneous and informal context on the other. The fundamental theoretical reference is Michel de Certeau’s (1990) thinking about everyday life.

The project was inspired by some Italian experiences of hosting young refugees inside people’s homes for a short and long period²¹. Domestic hospitality is a diversified experience in European contexts, involving people for varying reasons such as international experience (i.e. exchange students) or accommodation in a new country (i.e. foreign refugees). Host families as actors in international youth exchange projects or as accommodation for refugees have not been investigated. There are only a few empirical studies that consider this topic (Lowe, Askling, Bates 1984; Weidemann, Blüm 2009). On the contrary, the construct of

²¹ The reflection of this essay starts from a project conducted in Lombardy between 2016 and 2018, promoted by the O.N.G. Action for a United World (AMU) and the New Families (AFN onlus) association and financed with the FAMI Fund of the Ministry of the Interior. It involved 40 minors and newcomers residing with a host community in eastern Sicily and focused on experiences of training internships and family stays within the national territory. A deepening of this experience as a whole is reported in the books Granata A., Granata E. (2019), *Teen Immigration. La grande migrazione dei ragazzini*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano.

“multicultural daily practice” (Baumann 1999, 98-99) has had a certain success in sociological studies (Beck 2002).

The general topic of this research was to explore how daily life could influence the cultural experience of all people involved in a domestic context.

The aim of this study was operationalized in the following research questions:

- (RQ1) in which situations do cultural differences emerge during domestic life?
- (RQ2) how do people manage cultural differences in their different roles?
- (RQ3) how does culture change by experiencing daily intercultural relations?

The essay first sets out the theoretical and social context, exploring the relationships between daily cohabitation, cultural differences and intercultural relations within the domestic walls. The core of the paper presents qualitative analysis of an auto-ethnography of intercultural relations inside a domestic context, during a year of co-habitation between an Italian family and a young refugee from Gambia. Auto-ethnography can allow researchers to offer insider accounts of families, study the everyday, unexpected experiences of families, ‘especially as they face unique or difficult situations’ (Adams, Manning 2015, 350). The essay concludes with the implications of the findings for intercultural studies.

6.2 The theoretical standpoints

I propose two theoretical standpoints to investigate intercultural relations within the domestic walls. The first theoretical standpoint concerns *everyday life and cohabitation* as a specific framework in which intercultural relations take place in a specific informal way where people manage cultural differences. The second theoretical standpoint regards *culture like a non-Newtonian fluid* or a plural and dynamic construct, according to Ogay and Edelmann (2016). These two standpoints are closely connected.

Everyday life and cohabitation

Michel de Certeau (1990) has introduced the concept of everyday life as a fundamental framework for social relationships. In this essay, the author explains that ordinary people are not merely passive consumers of culture but active through everyday actions. De Certeau distinguishes between strategies and tactics to explain this dynamic: strategies are a method for following the rule of institutions and their objectives (such as discipline or profit), while tactics are individual actions including walking, talking and reading. The latter are not the results of planning but more depend on the situations and opportunities. The author states that everyday practices are a form of political resistance (de Certeau 1990).

The construct of “multicultural daily practice” (Baumann 1999, 98-99) was rather successful in social sciences studies. It describes ordinary practices that take place in daily contexts such as a classroom, a playground or a neighborhood. Ulrich Beck speaks about “trivial cosmopolitanism”: “what is small, familiar, close, delimited and fenced, or rather its own shell, becomes the theater of universal experiences” (Beck 2002, 19). According to Gerd Baumann (1999, 92), the everyday multicultural practices of ‘perfectly unexceptional people’ can improve some specific competences in relationships with people of other cultures. In a global

era, intercultural encounters are a daily experience, in the school, municipality, condominium or university. Taking the concept of daily life can help to overstep visions suspended from reality. Pedagogical studies speak of everyday diversity as a widespread feature in educational environments.

In this paper, we adopt a strong meaning of everyday life by the association with cohabitation and familiar experience. Daily cohabitation in a family context involves activities such as cooking and eating together, waking up and going to bed, sharing free time, managing cleaning and hygiene activities. Within the domestic walls there are specific routines that can bring out gender and intergenerational roles in family contexts. The sharing of common places and borders can explain some dynamics of intercultural relations. In the domestic environment people share daily life outside a regulatory framework, adopting more spontaneous and informal attitudes. Unexpected experiences within a daily routine are the most interesting objects of this idea of intercultural relations.

According to Weidemann and Blüm (2009), an outsider who has been socialized in a different family system (and also in our case in a different national, cultural and religious system) acts, at least at the beginning of cohabitation, according to different norms, values and rules. “Thus, both parties (host family and exchange student) have to go through adaptation processes since both are facing (cultural) differences” (Weidemann, Blüm 2009, 90). Interactional and situational approach we can observe how culture changes through a face-to-face meeting (Goffman 1959). In this case study, intercultural relationship takes place between people from different cultures with different roles: parents of the family, children of the family, and the guest in the family as a full member.

Culture like a non-Newtonian fluid

Culture is an indispensable construct for the social and human sciences. Human groups are different not because of genetic differences but because they live and grow up in different environments and historical periods. Culture is to be understood as an everyday, socially symbolic practice. “It is a way to understand how individuals in their specific social conditions of life symbolically acquire their own lifestyle and attribute a unique meaning to their own life” (Ogay, Edelmann 2016, 390).

Although this concept is frequently misunderstood. Many scholars have criticized in particular a “solid” understanding of culture (Granata, Mejri, Rizzi 2016). Others have recommended for the same reason to renounce the concept (Abdallah-Pretceille 2010).

According to Ogay and Edelmann (2016), we think that culture is an indispensable concept in intercultural education. Metaphorical expressions can help to define, through imagination and creativity, this ambiguous construct.

The most famous metaphor of culture is that of an iceberg (see e.g. Ting-Toomey 1999) - stating that the visible, observable part of culture (artefacts) is much smaller than the invisible part (assumptions, norms, values) - is misleading. It emphasizes the idea that culture is solid and that we can divide cultures into separated objects. Ogay and Edelmann (2016) propose three alternative metaphors of culture, able to overcome a solid idea of the construct: culture like language, culture like the air we breathe and culture like a non-Newtonian fluid. All these metaphors contribute to explain a dynamic, liquid and plural idea of culture but the third is the

most interesting and unusual. This concept of physics can include different states of matter: liquid, fluid and gas:

“We here tentatively propose the metaphor of culture as a non-Newtonian fluid: these special types of fluid become almost solid (their viscosity increases) when a force (like movement, or sound waves) is applied to them; when the force disappears, the fluid turns back to a liquid state. Culture is usually liquid (or gaseous like air), permeating everything in the context but remaining unnoticed. But when there is pressure (for example through identification/differentiation issues as a result of intercultural contact), culture becomes solid and perceptible, and differences are perceived and performed” (Ogay, Edelmann 2016, 396-7).

Through this metaphor we can argue that the relational dimension is crucial in cultural experiences. Group affiliation and relationships between people sharing a same context become salient in intercultural dynamics. A “solid” conception of culture could be the temporary effect of a specific condition of the subject in reference to the context and other people, as well a “liquid” one or a “gas” one. From a pedagogical point of view, understanding culture means not dismissing it when liquid and not taking it too seriously when solidified by pressure (Ogay, Edelmann 2016). In this case study, we approach the ‘specific family culture’ of the members of a family in contact with a new “family member”, coming from another family and national culture (Weidemann, Blüm 2009, 9). People assume a unique version of their culture, starting from his/her personal and familiar experience. Living together in a domestic context they recreate their familiar culture.

6.3 Methods

Social context of the study: domestic hospitality in Italy

Domestic hospitality is not a novelty in the Italian context. Historically, there are many experiences of hospitality of war orphans, young people in difficulty or non-autonomous adults. These experiences were characterized by temporary hospitality carried out by family adoptions and foster care systems. The distinction between formal foster care and informal domestic hospitality is crucial, activating very different relational dynamics. Firstly, because informal hospitality doesn’t regard social services and tribunal. Secondly, because this experience could be short or temporary, very different from adoption. Thirdly, because most of these hospitalities regard adult people and not minors.

In recent years, other kinds of domestic hospitality have been undertaken. In particular, we can distinguish two different voluntary experiences: one, slightly further back, was the domestic hospitality of exchange students coming from foreign countries to study in Italy; another, more recent one was the domestic hospitality of refugees fleeing from their homelands. Refugee hospitality was born as a way to cope to the crisis of refugees in the recent years (Catarci 2016).

The conventional way of hosting refugees in Italy is based on big structures separated from local people. Currently many experiments of domestic hospitality are being introduced. These

experiences aim purpose to promote integration in the social context and build a social network throughout the families.

There is still a lack of systematic findings on the perspective of host families, both regarding the reception of refugees and exchange students, especially in terms of managing cultural differences. There are only a few empirical studies that focus on host families in their research (Lowe, Askling, Bates 1984; Weidemann, Blüm 2009).

Auto-ethnography inside the house

This research was based on auto-ethnography within the domestic context. By auto-ethnography we mean a form of self-narrative that places the self within a social context. Indeed, this method is very useful in connecting the personal and cultural dimensions. Auto-ethnography can allow researchers to offer inside accounts of families, studying everyday life and the unexpected experiences of families. *“The ethnographer also tries to conduct fieldwork in ‘natural settings’ – that is everyday contexts of the practice, experience, identity, or group that would exist regardless of the ethnographer’s presence”* (Adams, Manning 2015, 351).

Unlike autobiography, which concentrates more on personal life, auto-ethnography uses subjectivity and reflexivity to contribute to cultural change. The personal vulnerability and sensibility of the author also contribute to the comprehension of social and cultural context.

Usually researchers used auto-ethnography to study sensitive topics such as gender or racism in families (Adams, Manning 2015). For example, many scholars have used auto-ethnography to investigate the experiences of young gay and lesbian people in their families; others focused on religious experiences between people of different faiths in the same family; others investigated the life experience of same-sex partners or partner separation (Adams, Manning 2015).

Certainly, this method could have also many limitations such as self-referentiality and indifference toward the “outside world”. But in this particular research, studying intercultural relations within the domestic walls, it is the most suitable instrument.

The role of the researcher is very delicate. According to Khosravi (2007), in this method “the distinction between ethnographer and others is not clear. It challenges imposed identities and boundaries” (Khosravi 2007, 322). However, they may be able to report on experiences that outsiders may have difficulty accessing on the long-term and observing in a “natural” setting. The auto-ethnographer is involved as a full member in his study.

The main reason of this study is to investigate the peculiarities of intercultural relations within the domestic context. In particular, we want to observe how cultural differences emerge and change when people share the same place of daily life. Indeed, everyday unexpected experiences are the main objects of observation of this study.

In keeping with auto-ethnographic tradition, my data are comprised entirely of narratives I have constructed. These narratives aim to show how people manage cultural differences in daily life focusing on gestures, behaviors, words and silences. The narratives collected in this study during a year of co-habitation (May 2017-May 2018) include:

- small narratives of daily life and unexpected experiences;
- text messages by different people involved in the cohabitation and other virtual communications by social networks.

Although the small stories did not always constitute a coherent narrative, they were pertinent in describing how people manage cultural differences and how culture changes within a daily intercultural relationship.

6.4 Results

In this auto-ethnography I attempt to describe intercultural relations within the domestic context over a full year (April 2017- April 2018). Based on my family experience of co-habitation and hospitality I will offer a narrative of different phases of intercultural relations in the house. My writing, in the form of an ethnographic diary, is accompanied by transcriptions of small dialogues and photos. The focus is concentrated on small narratives about daily life and unexpected experiences.

Waiting for the new guest

Domestic hospitality starts before the new guest arrives. The emotions felt in the days before the arrival as well the concrete actions to prepare the reception have an important role. As for emotions, I feel a great enthusiasm in the previous weeks but also feelings of fear and suspension in the last days before the arrival of B. This feeling regards how to manage time with the new guest, how my children (G aged 1 and S aged 3) would react to the new member and the consequences of this new experience for my life and my family. These emotions have an important role in preparing me for the new experience. Many people around me have made comments such as “are you crazy?”, or “you are very good and generous”, or “but are your children happy?”. These words and questions have further impressed on me the exceptionality of this experience.

Regarding concrete actions, the weeks before the arrival of B, I prepared his accommodation in our living room. We spent some time deciding where to place our guest and imagining his needs. In particular, we have procured a prayer carpet, knowing that he is Muslim. I did not have any contact with our young guest, before meeting him in the airport in Milan, Italy.

Welcome and approach

The first days spent together were like a holiday. Firstly, because all the members of my family were on holiday during Easter week; secondly, because we had to introduce B to his new context, very different from his city in Gambia but also different to where he started in the young people’s community in Sicily (south of Italy).

Some gestures inside the home characterized our life together during the first hours. For example, taking off outside shoes upon entering the house. This is a habit of our family, unlike other families in my country. B immediately observed and adopted this practice for the future. Through this gesture he implies his intent to enter our family’s life.

Other important initial actions upon entering the house were in the form of questions posed by our guest. In particular, he asked me three things: (1) where is Mecca; (2) a body cream; (3) the password for the Wi-Fi. These three questions are a “business card” for me. The first one

showed me the importance of religion for B. I knew that he was a Muslim but I did not know his relationship with religion. I had no idea of the meaning of the second question: I later discovered that B uses a lot of body cream to protect his skin, like many other sub-Saharan African people coming to Europe. The third request gave me a feeling of normality: the Wi-Fi password is the first things teenagers ask me when they come to my home, for example my nephews and their friends.

In the first 48 hours an important thing happens. During a walk in the park, B starts to tell me and my husband the story of his migration journey: a very dramatic telling about crossing the Sahara, the killing of fellow travelers, his detention in Libyan prisons with violence and torture, his escape and travel over sea and finally his arrival on Italian soil. After that first time, B speaks again about his journey in particular moments of daily life such as at breakfast together after a night of nightmares and memories. Many new details emerge by his telling, related to people lost during the trip. Delivering his dramatic story has a strong meaning for our cohabitation. First of all because it gave clearer and deeper meaning to us for our hosting him, well beyond our first application to the hosting project. Secondly, because his telling of this story is an important step in the relationship between B and us, sharing a delicate and traumatic experience within the family context.

Boundaries of the house

Over the months, we have adopted some habits of common life. In particular, we have many temporal and physical boundaries inside the home. Temporal boundaries are linked to our different working hours during the week. Physical boundaries depend on our different activities inside the home, regarding cooking and eating, domestic work, caring for children, relaxing and free time.

Regarding our time spent together, we have breakfast all together on the weekend, often dinner on Friday and Saturday, B and I also share a tea before bedtime during the week. Meals are moments in which we talk about work and B's schooling, share time with the children joking and laughing, and spend some time speaking about childhood and youth spent in Gambia or the long and dramatic journey from Africa to Europe.

Regarding the physical boundaries of the house, B has a bed and wardrobe in our living room with a screen and a private bathroom. As you can see from the plan, the home is separated in two blocs: one with our bedrooms, our bathroom and the kitchen; the other one with the living room. B rarely comes to the night area of the house without a particular reason. In the same way, my husband and I don't enter his little "room" beyond the screen. On the other hand, the children often trespass over the boundaries of the home, using all the corners of the house to create game spaces or spend time with us and our guest. Our little son in particular loves going behind the screen to spend time with B, watching videos on his mobile or asking B to play with him.

My personal communication with B occurs face to face, during meals or other common moments, but very often by telematic tools. In particular our first period of cohabitation while we were getting to know each other, we shared emotions and words through WhatsApp expressing affection and gratitude to each other from and to various parts of the house.

Unexpected experiences

Daily life and habits are interrupted by unexpected experiences. These episodes and little events reveal important aspects of intercultural relations inside the home, interrupting normal life and habitual relations. Here we pay attention to three little unexpected experiences that occurred during our year under the same roof.

The first experience concerns in particular the boundaries of the house, the relationship between B, the children and me. I report here the ethnographic diary page directly:

“It was evening and I was putting pajamas on my little son (aged 1) in the bathroom. He was tired and complained. At one point he started crying loudly and I was unable to calm him. B, who never comes to this part of the house, arrived and entered the bathroom in a very decisive manner. He took the child and carried him to the living room, and slowly calmed him. When the baby calmed down he told me” (ethnographic diary, October 2017).

I was very surprised by B’s intervention. At first, it seemed an overstepping of boundaries and roles inside the house when my husband was not there. But then, I considered that act as one of help and mostly responsibility regarding child care. Reflecting now on that particular episode it marked a more active and significant presence of B in our family life, even in the eyes of our children.

Many months after, another similar experience occurred. This in particular concerns the roles of the adults inside the house, regarding the relationship with my children and between them.

“It was evening and I was at home with my children and B, watching the TV. My little son (aged 2) was tired and started annoying his sister (aged 3). At one point he exaggerated and hit her on the head. B intervened immediately scolding the child in his mother tongue. The baby did not understand anything but immediately stopped annoying his sister” (ethnographic diary, February 2018).

This experience really amused me. I was surprised by the intervention in itself, almost as the head of the family. But also, I was surprised by the use of the mother tongue: I interpreted that as a way to be more effective and express a strong emotion.

Discovering cultural differences

Sharing daily life, the different conception of life and visions emerged very clear. One of these experiences regards the conception of age. The third unexpected experience revealed a different conception of age between B and us. Starting from first periods, it was clear that B had a strong history and self-conception as an adult. It depends on his dramatic family and migration story but also on a different cultural heritage. As B explained to us, in his country at the age of six children spend a few months in the forest with other male children, no parents and with other adults who introduce them to adulthood. This experience was also marked by some rites of passage.

By sharing our daily lives, this different conception of age and in particular of adolescence emerged very clear. I remember in particular one time I used the term “teen” and he asked me what it meant. He was very surprised and amused by the concept. Another time we were speaking about the child of a friend and, not remembering the name, he said to me “that boy”. I cannot understand because to my mind a three-year-old child is not yet a boy. This little fact - among many others - was very important in becoming aware of our different viewpoints and in getting to know each other more deeply.

Still on the subject of different viewpoints, I remember another dialogue between B, myself and my husband during a car trip. We were speaking about his mother’s name, M. He explained that it is a male name, because his grandparents had many daughters and no sons, and so by naming her thus they expressed the desire to have a son. I was very surprised by this and tried to explain to change his point of view about this choice and experience. He was not surprised and affirmed that it was normal doing this.

Changing habits

Living together influences habits, practices and also viewpoints. Adopting a longitudinal view, I can observe some little and big changes of all the people involved in this experience.

The first example regards religious practices. B is a Muslim and at the beginning of our common life would emphasize this part of his identity a lot. He prays five times in a day, always at the same time; he would excuse himself from the dinner table if it was time to pray, and so on. Over time, these rules became softer and sometimes I asked him if it was time to pray and he answered “later”. In my perception, I see his religious practice as being very strict and serious but he no longer has to prove to us that he was a “good Muslim”.

This was clear also regarding food. At the beginning he would repeat how he cannot eat pork or drink wine. We always respected this rule and, for example, I changed my “ragù” (Italian food usually made with pork) recipe and started using beef. Over time, B no longer needed to voice his choice, but simply organized himself to distinguish his food. Our habits changed very little bit (e.g., ragù), while his habits obviously changed more.

At the beginning he would never drink milk. As he worked in a factory producing milk, he started drinking it in tea. Recently, he has also accepted a coffee when very tired.

B has very clear many habits of his Gambian life. For example, he told us that when an adult person enters a room in the house, children must stand up to show respect. Or, young children call ladies by names such as “mum” or “lady”, never by name. B never calls me in this way, neither does he stand when adults enter a room. It is clear to him that such behavior here is not necessary as in his homeland.

6.5 Discussion

The auto-ethnography of domestic co-habitation between an Italian family and a young refugee from Gambia has shown many important and unexpected dynamics of intercultural relations. No doubt, the domestic context is characterized by informal and spontaneous dynamics that distinguish it from other institutional contexts as school, social and health

services. However, these findings can be considered interesting far beyond the private and domestic boundaries.

In particular, it has revealed many specific traits of daily intercultural relations that we can explain in five adjectives: fast, informal, silent, unexpected, mutual.

Fast. The first specific aspect of intercultural relations emerging from this experience regards the speed of dynamics. People living in the same house share habits, conceptions, stories of personal life, in very brief times. Having a deep and direct experience of the other person and their lifestyle, prejudices about others and “other cultures” disappear more quickly. Making a comparison with the school context on which there has been much research over recent years, we can observe that people have fewer opportunities for exchange, familiarity and spontaneous behaviors at school. Moreover, mutual knowledge is mediated by the rules of institutions that risk influencing the attitude and behavior of different players (i.e., timetables, classroom arrangements, relationships with teachers and pupils’ academic performance).

Informal. Another aspect of intercultural relations inside the domestic context regards the ways in which relationships occur. It is obvious that each member (including the guest) assumes a specific role inside the family, depending on age, gender, parental role, etc. It is also true that the intercultural relation is not completely on a par, involving people of the dominant culture (members of the family, Italians) and only one person of a foreign culture (young guest from Gambia). However, relationships between people are more spontaneous and informal, compared to other contexts of meeting. The rules of familial life are not written rules; something very different from the statement of scholar documents about cultural difference and its place within the institution. In the other context, we speak about the strong role of “structural aspects” of society, which influence people’s choices and behavior. Within the familial context these aspects have less pervasive effects.

Silent. We can say that domestic co-habitation is built more by silences and non-sayings than narrations and declarations of intents. Examples of this aspect is the decision to change some habits by each member of this experience: playing with children, drinking coffee, taking off shoes at home are examples of B’s new home experience; cooking a traditional dish in a different way, accessing just certain parts of your own home, sharing the caregiving of children with a new person, have become new ways of living my home for me. With no precise awareness or explanation of our own choices, we decide to change some habits.

Unexpected. An informal and familial context can easily be the frame in which unexpected behaviors take place. Institutional environments such as school have written rules that decrease this possibility. Instead, the daily and domestic routine is interrupted very often by a change of style or some emotional reactions that reveal deep and hidden dynamics. I had many conversations with B about gender roles revealing different approaches on this matter, but the way he acts inside my family shows me other approaches and attitudes, very difficult to express in words. The unexpected experience is more accessible in a daily and domestic context where each person takes off his cultural mask, at least at some points of the day like when people are tired or relaxing.

Mutual. Each member of the family (including the young guest) is involved in the process of cultural change that we have observed by this auto-ethnographic exploration. The metaphor of non-Newtonian fluid can help us to interpret the different dynamics: first of all, culture is a fluid construct and people change the way in which they present their culture to other people (i.e., our young guest's emphasis on religion in the early days of our); secondly, the relationship with people of other cultures changes the perception of our own culture (i.e., my idea about children's caregiving questioned by B's behaviors and attitudes). This process is unavoidably mutual: even when the people involved have different roles: none of the involved parties can be said to be exempt.

Finally, we can make some general remarks about the research on intercultural relations. We think that this reflection on intercultural relations in the domestic context can have strong implications for intercultural studies in general. In particular, paying attention to informal and silent aspect of intercultural dynamics, beyond the written rules of life within institutional contexts. In that situation, people express their own culture in a more free and spontaneous way. A focus on institutional contexts risks reducing the researcher's point of observation. We hope that many other areas of investigation on intercultural relations can be considered as domestic and familial context.

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Chapter 7

The school experience of unaccompanied minors: a systematic literature review

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7.1 Introduction

Education sciences are increasingly broadening and intensifying their discussions on the topic of unaccompanied foreign minors. The social phenomenon of under-age migrants who arrive in a foreign land without the presence of family members is interesting not only for its growth in numbers but also for the complexity of its implications on different aspects, including legal, psychological, social, and educational ones.

The aim of this study is to analyse the meaning of the school experience for unaccompanied foreign minors, and the conditions under which it can prove to be significant within their overall life project. This research study generates the following questions: “What is the function of the school in the life path of unaccompanied foreign minors? How is this experience contextualised within the various stages faced by these children? What resources does the school offer to unaccompanied foreign minors and what are the current limits?”

A systematic literature review was conducted to answer these questions aimed at understanding the recursive and original elements of the international debate, and to orient approaches and actions in a targeted way.

7.2 The Method

Systematic review as a method was chosen with the aim of mapping the international studies and research, and finding recursive elements, critical issues and open questions. In effect, the hypothesis is that, despite significant changes in the respective socio-cultural contexts, the challenges arising and the issues posed by the presence of unaccompanied foreign minors in schools can be similar to native peers. Furthermore, it may be important to understand the proximal areas of study and the social phenomena that intersect the educational processes in which unaccompanied foreign minors are the protagonists.

As a tool, systematic review emerged in the healthcare context, and has the objective of exploring practices in a certain field in order to assess their effectiveness. It pertains to the framework of evidence-based research, promoting an organisation of awareness that is useful and reliable for the practices (Montù, 2015, p. 37). The main goal of this tool is, therefore, to help professionals and policy makers to orient certain choices on the basis of evidence. The literature is mapped through a verifiable and comprehensible linear procedure, which identifies and summarises significant studies based on research demand(s). This also allows researchers to report results and manage numerous data based on criteria explained by them. Finally, systemic review can also contribute to orienting and planning future specific research based on the integration of the research studies analysed and on highlighting any gaps where new studies are needed.

In our case, systematic literature review proved to be particularly helpful in exploring a specific segment of a larger phenomenon – the school experience of unaccompanied foreign minors – and in focusing the attention on an experiential dimension and on the aetiology of school success/failure.

7.3 Research process

After defining the research questions – presented in the introduction –, we proceeded to define the keywords. For the study we chose “unaccompanied children” and “school”; possible alternative choices can also be “migrant students”, “separated children.” However, the option of “unaccompanied children” and “school” seemed to best represent the segment of analysis, while embracing the most common international orientation regarding the definition of unaccompanied foreign minors.

The keywords were included in the internal search engine of the catalogue of Università Cattolica, which draws information from main platforms, indexing services and electronic archives, such as Web of Science, Scopus, ProQuest, J-store. The time frame chosen was between January 2000 to the present day, and the area from which to draw research was that of the education sciences. Both quantitative and qualitative research studies were analysed, as well as articles in international scientific journals. The criteria for selecting the sources to be analysed were defined according to the objective and the research questions.

The inclusion/exclusion criteria of records were as follows:

- specificity of subject (school environment) and target (unaccompanied foreign minors);
- potential transferability of content to different cultural contexts;
- direct or indirect involvement of unaccompanied foreign minors in the research.

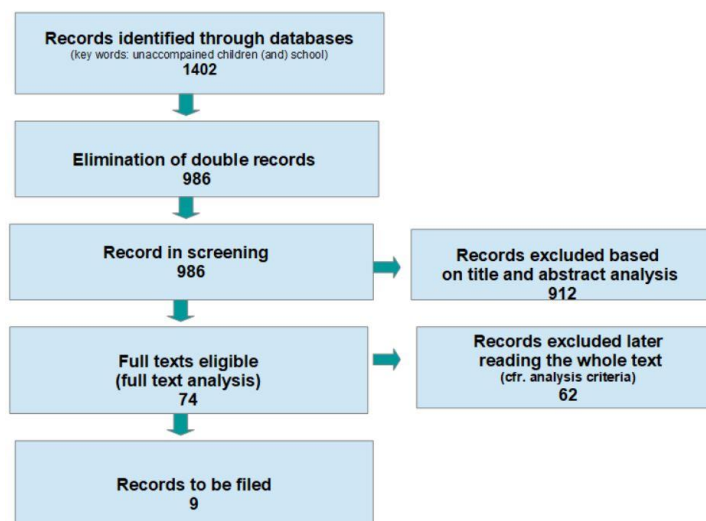
These criteria were based on the progress of research, and were critically re-read and revised. Areas of study closely related to the research topic were also analysed. In fact, we also took note of the themes emerging from the articles that were excluded from the research because they did not meet the criteria. Considerable studies emerged, for example, on the situation of homeless students and on the impact of poverty on educational processes: in this case, some dimensions may be similar to those of unaccompanied foreign minors. However, it should also be noted that unaccompanied foreign minors who benefit from special protection measures do not fully experience the precariousness of homelessness. Moreover, in this case, students in

precarious family or financial situations also include students who come from broken families, children of prisoners, etc. Some articles focused on evaluating vulnerability in schools. Another area closely related to the research topic analysed was that of refugees at school: although many unaccompanied foreign minors are also refugees or asylum seekers, it should be noted that studies on refugee students also require that these students have migrated with their families and therefore are not unaccompanied. In this case, only articles explicitly mentioning or referring to refugees without family members were included in the study. Some critical issues also emerged in reference to students with a migrant background: the category analysed includes a large number of situations and case studies (second-generation foreign minors, foreign minors who migrated with their families, adopted foreign minors) that also referred to unaccompanied foreign minors, which therefore made it difficult to interpret the specific characteristics.

The theme of teachers' skills in managing intercultural situations at school and in their relationship with migrants was also found in the research: in this case, too, it was considered appropriate to exclude these records from the specific analysis, as they are general and not oriented towards the target group. Other interesting elements came from articles that focused on teaching methods and literacy tools for foreign minors. Once again, it was decided not to include them in the study as they are not specific to unaccompanied foreign minors and focus primarily on operational practices.

The list of articles excluded is attached at the end of this study.

Fig. 1. Records



This research phase was interesting as it led to identifying areas of study that were collateral and that intersected with specific studies on unaccompanied foreign minors. Moreover, it prompted reflections on how this specific segment of the migrant population compares with other profiles with regard to the characterisation of their path and their specific needs. The critical keywords chosen for the study also emerged during this research step, allowing us to

explore the different ways in which unaccompanied foreign minors are termed in different European and non-European cultural contexts.

The graph below shows the analysis of the records and the inclusion/exclusion process.

7.4 Data Collection

The articles not included in the index were catalogued and collected in a table indicating abstracts and keywords. This choice was made to offer researchers and scholars the possibility of finding a larger number of texts, given the limited number of specific contributions that were emerging. The aim was also to explain the dynamics connected to the keywords, to the specific sector of the studies, and to the intertwining of similar but not specific research sectors, such as texts dealing with the school trajectories of migrant students in general. The nine texts entered into the archives were instead filed and analysed, highlighting the research method, objective and purpose of the study, the main contents and issues that emerged, through the definition of keywords and any emerging research questions. The section on the main results includes direct quotes and extended thoughts to make it easier to understand the actual concepts.

7.5 Presentation of results

International literature supports the idea that the school is an important intersection for the integration of unaccompanied foreign minors. It highlights both its enormous possibilities and resources, but at the same time, its critical and delicate aspects. As a crucial place, it can act as a driving force for opportunities and change in the trajectories of children, but can also be a place where forms of discrimination and inequality are spread: “schools can either alleviate or intensify risk factors for migrant children” (O’Toole Thommessen, Todd, 2018, p. 229). Research has long supported the fundamental role that schools play in the integration of new immigrants, and of how they can be a unique opportunity to positively affect the lives and paths of unaccompanied foreign minors (de Haymesa, Avrushinb, Colemanb, 2018, p. 82). At the same time, it is noted the difficulty that schools have in identifying specific needs, and in formulating real reception processes: in some contexts, there are different mechanisms that slow down and demotivate minors in the early stages of enrolment. The school system can implicitly contribute to discriminating against unaccompanied minors, and can be “exploited” for the purposes of the current migration policy, supporting a monopolistic model, the same for all (Lemaire, 2011, p. 57). The school curriculum followed by natives cannot be effective for unaccompanied foreign minors, and their placement in Adult Education Centres must be monitored as it could lead to the creation of some forms of ghettoisation that, especially for such young children, could prove to be very destructive. Several studies support the need for schools to devise creative solutions, both in teaching and in networking, so that after-school contributions can be accumulated and enhanced. In effect, knowing that “the participation of refugee students in after-school learning contexts can broaden their potential for development” (de Wal Pastoor 2017, p. 148), the aim that unaccompanied foreign minors hang-out and live-in spaces outside the school should then not only be the responsibility of the host communities

or educational support services, but must be fully considered as one of the tasks of the school institution. In this regard, the Norwegian experiences as also the comparative study between Sweden, Germany and the United Kingdom are particularly interesting: non-formal educational spaces can, in fact, implicitly and naturally stimulate the participatory processes of young migrants, and allow for implementing a “micro-policy” of hospitality and citizenship through the development of informal and friendly relationships. Although dealing with after-school experiences, these studies converge in affirming that unaccompanied foreign minors can be recognised and nurtured by those who manage institutional spaces such as schools and universities (Batsleer et alii, 2018, p. 318). Therefore, sports and volunteer experiences should be promoted that allow for greater openness in the local area and that enhance relationships among peers.

Another interesting aspect of schools is the presence of specialised support staff who help with ordinary tasks; in particular, school nurses and sickbays in the US context (with differences between districts and countries) (Adams, Shineldecker, 2014, pp. 91-95). Although not specifically dealing with unaccompanied foreign minors, we believe this scientific contribution is significant as it highlights the aspect of mental health of these children, and how physical precariousness and psychophysical discomfort can affect school performance and formal schooling. Also in this case, it is interesting to highlight the intersections, the points of contact between the specific responsibilities of those who oversee the training paths of unaccompanied foreign minors. If it is true that some caregivers or caregiving bodies take on most of the responsibilities, such as that of health, it is also true that schools often contribute to intercepting discomfort, disorders and physical and mental deficiencies and can develop important alliances, especially when the child does not have a close adult role-model. These people at the crossroads of the different needs of unaccompanied foreign minors can also have an in-depth understanding of the services and organisations of the network, and therefore take advantage thereof to raise these children’s standards in quality of life and stabilise their styles.

Finally, the theme of school-work connection and the attention to inter-institutional links is also of great significance. The gap in work integration for unaccompanied foreign minors is evident: very often it is overshadowed by mechanisms of job insecurity. Even though unaccompanied foreign minors are well aware of the fact that a higher level of education corresponds to more job opportunities, they find it very difficult to reconcile these two aspects. The lack of family support and the urgency to be independent lead many unaccompanied foreign minors to favour and give priority to temporary work solutions. The school is often regarded by unaccompanied foreign minors as an obstacle to gaining employment, simply because it delays meeting the need to earn money and prompts reviewing and interconnecting the different expectations (Manhica et alii, 2019, p. 540).

The awareness that the complex needs – of unaccompanied foreign minors – correspond to complex answers that the school is unable to produce on its own raises the prospect of creating a network and offering different types of support to allow minors to effectively manage the transitions and to support the search for meaning in their new existence (de Wal Pastoor, 2017, p. 157).

What has been said so far can be identified as an *institutional* level emerging from the literature analysed; however, there is also a *relational* level and a plan that we could call *identity*.

The relational level can express all the dimensions concerning the relationships that unaccompanied foreign minors create at school, and their value both in the integration process and in professional growth. It is interesting to note that the importance of emotional and social support emerges indeed in several studies, as well as the importance of encouragement and the function of competent and sensitive adults in keeping unaccompanied foreign minors in school, but also to allow them to nurture confidence in themselves, to guide their goals and overcome difficulties. Furthermore, it emerges that peer groups and friendships with peers are crucial elements for well-being and integration: without them, unaccompanied foreign minors would not be able to live the “normality” of their youth on the one hand and, on the other, cultivate a whole range of skills useful in their lives and in the professional world (empathy, understanding, patience, management of conflict and emotions, etc.). Knowledge of language and culture is mainly acquired through informal and immediate interactions. The care of relationships is, therefore, a key element, and very often a form of preparation and training is highlighted for all those involved in the life plan of unaccompanied foreign minors, especially for teachers, in order to understand the specific needs and the various resources to be employed.

Finally, the *identity profile* of unaccompanied foreign minors within the school system is also important: it is repeatedly evidenced the extent to which the trauma of the journey and the difficult situations from which one comes can significantly hinder academic performance and behaviour at school. “Traumatic experiences can have a negative impact on concentration, memory and the ability to process information and can also influence the ability to control emotions and behaviour, which teachers can interpret as disruptive behaviour in class and lead to an increase in suspensions and dropouts” (de Haymesa, Avrushinb, Colemanb, 2018, p. 80). In addition, precarious lifestyles and the dispersion of great energy on basic needs and survival hinder the children’s ability to live serenely within the school spaces and times. This life experience of children also leads them to significantly lower their expectations and to lose their centrality, often letting themselves be influenced by external events or emergencies.

An interesting perspective in this sense comes from focusing on the life cycle of the children, and on the integration between *life cycle* and *formal schooling* (Martinez, 2009, pp. 34-48): in most cases unaccompanied foreign minors come from countries where they have grown up quickly, started working at a very young age and had a life cycle that was out of step with their native peers. These are elements to be considered in the inclusion and creation of a school project because, if the school tends to “normalise” the life cycle and this has not happened in the original path of the unaccompanied foreign minor - or if it was abruptly interrupted due to the journey -, a school model focused on this form of normalisation will not be effective and will create discomfort in unaccompanied foreign minors. In other words, a linear conception of school is not the right approach for unaccompanied foreign minors, because they are “adults in adolescence” and therefore traditional school models (classes, hours, resources, etc.) should be deconstructed, and alternative spaces and more flexible times (in the workplace, for example) should be offered.

As can be seen, the three levels are closely interconnected and some dimensions mutually refer to others in a framework of coherent needs and perspectives, while situations and territorial contexts change.

7.6 Conclusions

The strengths of this systematic review can be found in the heterogenic international contributions and scenarios in which the studies have developed. There is notable convergence with in-depth studies and research promoted in Italy, and significant traits keep returning on which debate on formal schooling of unaccompanied foreign minors is being shaped.

However, specialist studies on both target group and school settings seem to be quite limited, and need to draw inspiration from proximate thematic areas.

There are some weaknesses in the documentation found, which leads us to assume that literature needs to explore this subject matter further by identifying other keywords and other criteria.

Tab. 1. List of texts excluded from full text analysis

Reference	Abstract
J. Dag Tjaden, C. Hunkler, <i>The optimism trap: migrants educational choices in stratified education systems</i> , Social Science Research, 67(2017), pp.213-228	Immigrant children's ambitious educational choices have often been linked to their families' high level of optimism and motivation for upward mobility. However, previous research has mostly neglected alternative explanations such as information asymmetries or anticipated discrimination. Moreover, immigrant children's higher dropout rates at the higher secondary and university level suggest that low performing migrant students could have benefitted more from pursuing less ambitious tracks, especially in countries that offer viable vocational alternatives. We examine ethnic minority's educational choices using a sample of academically low performing, lower secondary school students in Germany's highly stratified education system. We find that their families' optimism diverts migrant students from viable vocational alternatives. Information asymmetries and anticipated discrimination do not explain their high educational ambitions. While our findings further support the immigrant optimism hypothesis, we discuss how its effect may have different implications depending on the education system.
Key-words	Educational choices, Migration, Ethnic minority, Discrimination, Immigrant optimism.

Reference	Abstract
J. Lynn McBrien, <i>Educational Needs and Barriers for Refugee Students in the United States: A Review of the Literature</i> , Review of Educational Research Fall 2005, Vol. 75, No. 3, pp. 329–364	Since 1975, the United States has resettled more than 2 million refugees, with approximately half arriving as children. Refugee children have traumatic experiences that can hinder their learning. The United Nations has specified in conventions, and researchers have concurred, that education is essential for refugee children's psychosocial adjustment. However, government officials, public opinion, and researchers have often differed about what is best for refugees' healthy acculturation. On the basis of a large-scale longitudinal study of the children of immigrants and refugees, Portes and Zhou (1993) suggested the theory of segmented assimilation, which accounts for diverse entry situations and receptions of immigrant and refugee populations. This review uses their theory to consider the needs and obstacles to education for refugees, and interventions for success.
Key-words	Acculturation, human rights, refugees, segmented assimilation.

Reference	Abstract
A. Lanfranchi, <i>The significance of the intercultural competent school psychologist for achieving equitable education outcomes for migrant students</i> , School Psychology International 2014, Vol. 35(5) 544–558	This article examines procedures and processes that result in the over-referral of migrant students to separate special education programmes and, as a consequence, their exclusion from general education. The particular focus is on the role of the school psychologist in this process. The empirical study is a comparison of Swiss teachers' and school psychologists' responses to the paper case of a boy with behavioural and learning difficulties whose name and ethnicity was varied so that one version identified him as from an ethnically mainstream, Swiss German background and the other as a migrant and foreign first language speaker. The results show that, compared with teachers, school psychologists' assessments and choice of interventions demonstrated less cultural bias and higher levels of intercultural competence. These findings support the call that school psychologists have a vital role to play in the reduction of discrimination against migrant students and in the implementation of a more inclusive and equitable education system.
Key-words	Discrimination, educational achievement, equitable education outcomes, equity, ethnicity, intercultural competent, migrant students, school psychologist, special education, Switzerland.

Reference	Abstract
A.M. Núñez, R.E. Gildersleeve, <i>Sociocritical Matters: Migrant Students' College Access</i> , Educational Policy 2016, Vol. 30(3) pp. 501 –535	Migrant students face many educational, economic, social, and cultural challenges to college access. Anti-bilingual, anti-affirmative action, and antiimmigrant policies also constrain their postsecondary pathways. With these issues in mind, this article draws on quantitative and qualitative research to examine the influence of a residential outreach program at a public university on migrant student participants' college access. We find evidence that cultivating sociocritical skills to challenge exclusionary political and economic systems while also cultivating academic skills and knowledge about college can broaden migrant students' sense of postsecondary possibilities. To expand college access for migrant students, we suggest that outreach programs address the development of these and other skills.
Key-words	migrant, college preparation, college access, outreach, critical pedagogy, evaluation, policy.

Reference	Abstract
Sarojini Choy & Gun-Britt Wärvik (2019) <i>Integration of learning for refugee and migrant students: VET teachers' practices through practice theory lens</i> , Journal of Vocational Education & Training, 71:1, 87-107	The study reported here used a practice theory lens to understand vocational education and training (VET) teachers' current practices in supporting integration of learning in educational institutions and workplaces – specifically for refugee and migrant students. A case study was conducted with 10 teachers delivering aged care programmes in South East Queensland, Australia and a municipality in West Sweden. During in-depth interviews teachers explained the enabling and challenging aspects of their practice, and specific strategies they used to support students with integration of learning in the two main sites. Analyses of data concentrated on understanding three types of arrangements in the practice architectures at the two learning sites. Teachers extended their everyday pedagogical approaches to support integration of learning and meet the specific needs of refugee and migrant students. Their teaching comprised interdependent practices of VET and aged care in two settings, each with distinct ecologies of practice. Their narratives reflect contestations between practice traditions of aged care practices in Australia and Sweden, and students' understandings and reflections of practices in their birth countries. We conclude that teacher training and adjustments to these arrangements can bridge contestations between the enacted and experienced curriculum in the two sites.
Key-words	Vocational education & training; adult learning; workplace learning; pedagogy; teacher development.

Reference	Abstract
L. Heidbrink, <i>Circulation of care among unaccompanied migrant youth from Guatemala</i> Children and Youth Services Review (2018).	From ethnographic research with unaccompanied children in the United States and Guatemala, this paper explores emergent and, at times, conflicting narratives of care that young migrants encounter while in U.S. federal custody. They are depicted as 'ideal' victims deserving of care and simultaneously as unauthorized outlaws subject to state discipline via detention and deportation. In contrast, Guatemalan youth and their families speak of migration as a cultural elaboration of care in which they are agents of caregiving, employing transnational migration as a collective and historically-rooted survival strategy. By examining the multiple conceptualizations of care that young people encounter and embody, this paper problematizes theorizations of 'care' by tracing the conflicting meanings assigned to it. Informed by the perspectives of young migrants and their families, the paper suggests ways that service providers might better serve them.
Key-words	Unaccompanied children Guatemala Migration Care and caregiving.

Reference	Abstract
Margarita del Olmo, <i>Re-shaping Migrant Students' Trajectories through Public Policy in Madrid, Spain</i> , Anthropology in Action 20(3) · December 2013	This paper focuses on analysing challenges that students coming from different countries face when they come to Spain and continue their school trajectories started in their countries of origin. I use the narrative of one of these students, constructed through ethnographic work carried out in a programme designed to help migrant students ease their transition into the school system of the Community of Madrid. This narrative allows me to introduce some of the challenges these students face and how they re-shape their trajectories and their self-perceptions according to the possibilities their new contexts present them with. With this, I contextualize the case study to show a broader picture of migrant students coming from different countries to stay in Spain during the last decade, and how schools themselves address this situation in Spain, in general, and in Madrid, in particular.
Key-words	Education policies, immigrant students, linking classrooms, students.

Chapter 8

Sicily as a Laboratory. Social-labour integration pathways for UAFM in Palermo

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Considering the large number of UAFMs (Unaccompanied Foreign Minors) received in Sicily, the region has become an extraordinary laboratory - with both positive and negative aspects - where innovative practices concerning UAFMs are being tested which could become good practices to be replicated elsewhere. The actions carried out on the island are the subject of a study known as *Hostis-Hospes - Connecting people for a Europe of diversities*, a research project within the EU 2016 Pilot Project for Grant - Justice Programme, Rights, Equity and Citizenship Programme led by Kore University of Enna as its leader, along with University of Catania, University of Palermo, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, CISS - Cooperazione Sud Sud, [South South Cooperation], the Municipality of Syracuse and that of Palermo. This contribution falls within this broader field of research, but intends to focus on good practices related to the field of UAFM social and labour inclusion pursued through the offer of training internships in the city of Palermo, which is the region's capital, the most populous city in Sicily and a partner of the research project.

8.1 Sicily as a laboratory

According to data from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, of the 18,303 UAFMs present in Italy at 31/12/2017, 7,988 are in Sicily, corresponding to 43.6% of the total (MLSP, 2017). This percentage is higher than in 2016 (5,750 minors out of 17,373, corresponding to 40.9% of the total) (MLSP, 2016) and up compared to 2015 (4,109 minors out of 11,921, corresponding to 34.5% of the total) (MLSP, 2015). These data indicate Sicily as the region which is most involved in the reception of UAFMs. Since the same reports also show that the number of UAFMs present in Italy has constantly grown since 2015, the large disproportion in

²² Although the contents of this article are shared and the general approach is the result of constant theoretical exchange, for the purposes of academic attribution, sections 1, 2, 6 should be attributed to G. Burgio and 3, 4, 5, to M. Muscarà.

the percentage of UAFMs present on the island compared to those of the other 19 regions stands out even more. While considering the fact that Sicily is the region with the largest territorial size and the one most involved with the landings of migrants crossing the Mediterranean, this disproportion could be interpreted as the result of a tacit stipulation of an implicit pact that identifies one of the less-economically developed areas of the country as an ideal place for the creation of a network of communities engaged in the reception of UAFMs, so as to function as a sort of “social safety net” and offer work to people who would otherwise remain without any income. In other words, it is likely that the high presence of UAFMs in Sicily is a generator/source of jobs in a context in which employment opportunities for the population are scarce, so much so that job retraining is promoted for cooperatives and operators who were occupied with other jobs in the past. In fact, according to data from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies of 2016, the reception of UAFMs involves community structures in 92.5% of cases, which in Sicily reached an impressive 389 (MLSP, 2016). The large number of existing communities and UAFMs present makes it easy to understand how the quality of the reception system is inevitably varied and demonstrates excellent experiences alongside highly critical situations.

8.2 Biographical experiences and training needs of UAFMs

The theme chosen constitutes the theoretical recurrence of research that sought to construct a first, brief mapping of the needs expressed by UAFMs. The commitment of one of the authors (G. Burgio) as an honorary judge at the Juvenile Court of Palermo allowed, during the enquiries carried out with UAFMs from March 2017 to January 2018, the collection of narrative interviews of 160 boys (three 18-year-olds, 79 17-year-olds, 43 16-year-olds, 22 15-year-olds, 10 14-year-olds, two 11-year-olds and one 9-year-old) and 28 girls (19 17-year-olds, 7 16-year-olds and two 15-year-olds). These interviews were conducted using the methodological system of ethnopedagogy (Burgio, 2009-2010) and with the help of linguistic mediators (who translated from the native language of the minors who still spoke Italian poorly) for the duration of about an hour-long meeting.

Taking into account the fact that female unaccompanied minor migrants constitute a reduced percentage of the total data and, often being at risk of trafficking, have peculiar characteristics that require a specific theoretical approach, this contribution focused only on the males. These boys come from Gambia (41), Guinea (30), the Ivory Coast (19), Bangladesh (18), Senegal (14), Mali (13), Nigeria (6), Ghana (3), Somalia (3), Eritrea (3), Egypt (2), Tunisia (2), Morocco (2), Sierra Leone (2), Burkina Faso (1) and Benin (1) and - considering the fact that minors are randomly assigned to individual honorary judges - the proportions between the various nationalities seemed rather representative of those of the UAFMs who arrived in Sicily in the months preceding the collection of interviews.

Overall, the narrative interviews of the UAFMs revealed their poor and unrealistic planning capacity in relation to their future work choices. Of the 145 interviews that can be used as a source in relation to this specific topic, the most desired job is that of professional footballer (35 boys), followed by answers such as “any job”, “an honest job”, “a job that will let me help my family”, “a good job” (22 boys), and answers such as “I don't know”, “God will decide”,

“It's still early, we'll see” (21 boys). It is immediately striking that we would likely obtain the same answers if we questioned Italian adolescents about their future job plans. In particular, the dream of football, associated in the social imaginary with extensive earnings, luxurious cars and cover-girl girlfriends, appears widespread among the very young as an expression of immediate and striking social redemption, mistakenly associated with “innate gifts” and deemed not to require any hard work. This prospect, however, does not equate with the small number of people who manage to earn an income from the sporting profession, compared to that of those who try in vain. In the specific case of UAFMs, this dream probably also has something to do with the legends that in African countries have created the notion of child soccer players and seems to involve the world of betting, football schools and a series of sports agents from European countries (Scacchi, 2017). For example, one boy declared that he began his migration with the promise of playing on a professional football team in Burkina Faso and subsequently being diverted to Italy; two other boys had already played in youth teams in their country. Nevertheless, professional insertion in the world of football appears to be uncertain, long and difficult to achieve, similar to the plans of those who declared to want to become a fashion model (1 boy), DJ (1) or singer (1).

The significant number of boys who lack any planning or fail to show a general desire to find any job, even if understandable if we remind ourselves that these are adolescents, clashes with the fact that once they are no longer minors and thus no longer belong to the minor protection system, will have to support themselves like other adult migrants. Taking into account the fact that of the UAFMs present in Italy at the end of 2017, 60.3% were 17-years-old and 23.4% were sixteen (MLSP, 2017), the problem of career orientation and that of the skills to be obtained seems to be more or less immediate for most of these minors.

Other boys expressed desires that would seem potentially achievable if expressed by native middle-class adolescents, such as becoming an engineer (4 boys), doctor (2) or teacher (2), but almost seem to be pipe dreams in consideration of the large number of years studying which are required in order to have such a profession, which are difficult for minors without adults for support, who are forced to earn a living as soon as possible.

Greater awareness of one's own situation - as well as of the model of subordinate integration that Italy adopts in relation to migrants (Catarci, 2015) – is revealed by the boys who anticipated manual labour: mechanic (12 boys), electrician (9), waiter (7), painter (4), tailor (3), shop assistant (3), driver (2), cook (2), pizza maker (2), mason (2), computer technician (2), glassmaker (2), carpenter (1), antenna worker (1), gardener (1), tyre dealer (1). However, all these jobs require a training path that should be embarked on in the years in which the minor still has the protection of the reception system. Lastly, only one boy aspired to a job for which no skills are necessary - unloading goods at the fruit and vegetable market - and another dreamt of a job that, at present, is impossible in Italy: the military.

The theme of career planning of these UAFMs intersects with another area that requires great attention: the census of the work experiences and skills that these boys already have. A small number of these minors had in fact already worked in the country of origin to accumulate the money necessary to leave, others helped their parents in agricultural or small-business activities, but many had to work hard to find the money to be able to continue their long, difficult journey and almost all of those in the Libyan hell were forced to carry out unpaid

labour (in the case of the *Asma Boys* imprisonment) or subjected to serious forms of labour exploitation (such as payment in credit) before being able to embark to cross the Mediterranean.

In fact, the narrative interviews revealed a series of work experiences of the UAFMs. If some of them - also considering that some were very young at the time of departure - have never worked, others have instead carried out various occupations depending on the availability of very often precarious or “day” assignments. 51 had experience in the construction field (as a labourer, tiler...), 31 worked in the countryside (as a farmer, gardener, for harvesting fruit...), 13 had experiences in trade (as a shop assistant, a small seller at the market...), 11 worked in cleaning services (in private homes, hotels or restaurants, schools, public bathrooms...), 11 were engaged in loading/unloading goods (as a porter at stations, warehousemen...), nine worked as car or coach wash workers, in garages or dealing tyres, eight as mechanics and eight in food farming (cows, camels, donkeys, chickens...), four were bakers or pastry chefs, four factory workers (ceramics, bricks...), three boys worked in each of these roles: tailor, electrician, waiter in a restaurant, welder, painter, scrap metal or firewood collectors. Then there were those who worked as garbage collectors or in waste transport (two), carpenters (two), motorcycle taxi drivers (two). There was only one each of boys who worked as a butcher, barber, fisherman, gas station attendant, cook, glassmaker, shoeshine and... water peddler. This synthetic mapping obviously has no statistical value but can serve to give an idea of the variegated type of work experiences that the UAFMs go through. The last relevant aspect is that the work experiences only partially coincide with the career plans expressed by the same minors (and which are described above).

Already from the almost impressionistic review conducted thus far, a primary training need of UAFMs clearly emerges, which concerns precisely career orientation and training paths that can consolidate skills that are already possessed (it is not guaranteed that construction techniques are the same in Libya and Italy for example, nor the rules for site safety...) or produce new ones. Training internships are identified here as a specific focus, given that professional training can hardly be attractive to UAFMs due to the long time-frames and outcomes that characterise it, considering the urgency these young people have to enter the world of work. Furthermore, as is known, the entire sector of vocational training has been blocked for years in Sicily due to judicial enquiries and crossed political vetoes, leaving the subject of work placement the inevitably central place it has in this paper.

8.3 Case analysis: the *Ragazzi Harraga* project

On the basis of an ever-growing amount of literature on UAFMs, as well as that on training internships, the complexity of the subject is dealt with through case analyses within the broader path undertaken with the *Hostis-Hospes*²³ research. We will analyse the *Ragazzi Harraga* project currently underway in Palermo: social inclusion processes for unaccompanied migrant minors in the city of Palermo, implemented by CIAI (Milan) in a network with other Palermo organisations: the Department of Social Citizenship of the Municipality of Palermo, the *Santa*

²³ European project financed with funds from the REC - RIGHTS, EQUALITY AND CITIZENSHIP WORK PROGRAMME - call REC-VAW-AG-2016-02 Round 1.

Chiara Association, CESIE, the *Libera... mente* cooperative [Free... mind], CPIA *Palermo 1*²⁴, the association *Libera*, the association *Nottodoro* and SEND Sicilia, the agency for labour and international mobility that deals specifically with training internships. Interviews were conducted with the coordinator of the entire project promoted by CIAI and with the coordinator and manager of SEND Sicilia. The project is articulated by placing internships within a complex structure of synergistic actions that are enriched in a relationship of reciprocity, and is planned through four actions to which specific services can be connected. On the methodological-educational level, the project is characterised by the principles of empowerment, reflective dialogue between the main actors and the participants' assumption of responsibility and development of personal autonomy.

Action 1 provides for the creation and shared use of a *Social Folder* available on a web platform, which contains all the indispensable information (also in terms of skills and aspirations) for the definition of the minor's individualised plan. The folder will be compiled and made available to all the actors involved in the paths of inclusion of the UAFMs to meet the need to put the information collected online and thus avoid duplicating data collected by other partners and the interviews to which the minors are subjected.

Action 2 - *Active Citizenship* - has the objective of the emergence and development of cross-cutting skills and relational abilities of UAFMs through laboratory training activities to favour their insertion in the territory and knowledge of the services offered by the city.

Action 3 - *Active labour policy* - which our investigation is directly concerned with, has as its objectives the orientation, profiling and assumption of responsibility for 150 UAFMs, the recipients of the project, for the launch of an active labour policy. The system action promoted by SEND Sicilia includes the following services:

- group orientation meetings (five meetings of four hours each for a group of 15 participants at a time) organised into modules that include workshops on available professions and work interests, on the *Career Adaptabilities Inventory* and on the development of active job search skills (compilation of a resume or cover letter, knowledge of job search channels, etc.);
- individual orientation meetings (two meetings of two hours each) dedicated to the drafting of an Individual Action Plan to agree on the personalised path aimed at promoting the employability of the UAFM. Both the individual and group orientation meetings are held in the presence of an intercultural mediator who was a UAFM in the past, held a training internship and a job and finally was recruited at SEND Sicilia;
- orientation activities and administration of questionnaires for profiling in the class groups of CPIA *Palermo 1*;
- promotion of active policy actions and career guidance in the host communities;
- company visits based on the minors' interests;
- awareness raising and vacancy collection actions among companies;
- curricular internships lasting one month, structured according to the school-work alternation model and intended for the students of CPIA *Palermo 1*. The internship experience does not envisage any daily allowance but only insurance coverage, borne by

²⁴ In the panorama of experiences carried out by these recently established components of Italy's education system, CPIA *Palermo 1* - for the number of attending UAFMs - constitutes the largest institute in Italy and an important pedagogical laboratory (Burgio, 2018).

the companies involved in the project. To date, 35 internships have been completed of the 50 planned by the project;

- three-month extracurricular internships (25 of the 35 planned by the project have been completed), including an internship allowance equal to 300 euros per month, in addition to insurance coverage as defined by regional legislation.

Both the curricular and extracurricular internship projects are the result of matching actions between the minors' profiling and the characteristics of the selected companies and allow the UAFMs to have an initial contact with the world of work and acquire the first useful skills for planning their own professional future. The extracurricular training grants are reserved for those who are about to finish their study period at *CPIA Palermo 1* and are about to turn 18-years-old, therefore with a more urgent need to enter the labour market. At the end of February 2018, there were 60 UAFMs involved in internships in Palermo: from Gambia (30), Senegal (10), Guinea (7), Bangladesh (4), Ghana (3), Nigeria (3), the Ivory Coast (2) and Egypt (1). Of the 60 UAFMs, only two were females (and as already mentioned will be disregarded) and 58 were males.

Action 4 - *Housing solution and social enterprise* - this last action concerns the start of a temporary and self-managed housing solution for the nine new adults who have had to leave the Centres for minors. This solution is made economically viable thanks to the opening of a tourist accommodation facility (created from the redevelopment of a building in the historic centre of the city), where another four newly-turned adult UAFMs will work.

8.4 Some strengths and weaknesses of the project

The project is a result of continuous dialogue between CIAI (which constantly evaluates all the planned project phases *in itinere*) and the group composed of ten UAFMs living in Palermo. We deem the sharing of activities and related results as a first and decisive strength: in this way, the UAFMs are not mere targets/objects of the project action, but intervene as main interlocutors in the role of stakeholders, carriers of a migration and existential project worthy of respect and recognition. The relevance placed on the internship experience tends to satisfy the needs for work autonomy expressed by the UAFMs. The second strength is the construction of a multi-sectoral network able to exploit the potential present in the territory that shares the same meaning of social inclusion on the political and ethical level, in which the migration phenomenon is perceived as an opportunity for co-development in the territory and not according to a welfare perspective. Unlike other internships started in the country (MLSP-Anpal, 2018), the close link between the experience of the internship and the training courses of *CPIA Palermo 1* seems to be another qualifying element of the project.

The project also recognises the multi-dimensionality of the challenges (housing, work, social inclusion...) that UAFMs must face as soon as they leave the reception system and, as anticipated, is aimed not only at minors *stricto sensu* but also extends to those who are considered more as adults, involving boys aged between 16 and 21 years. Indeed, the fragility of minors is not resolved at the age of 18: it is likely aggravated in the many cases in which the Juvenile Court does not extend the protection up to the age of 21 (so-called administrative continuation) provided for by the Zampa Law.

Starting precisely from the recognition of the challenges' multi-dimensionality, the various actions envisaged are not intended for the same group of UAFMs (those that benefit from internships do not, for example, benefit from housing, etc.), not only for an obvious rationalisation of resources (inevitably limited with respect to the vastness of needs) but also to promote and support the minor's autonomy. The support provided to the minor is seen from the perspective of activating personal agency, autonomy and accountability, in order to avoid a possible "leaning" that would lead him to feel "assisted" rather than stimulated to act and make decisions for his future.

The companies hosting the interns of this project operate in the sectors of tourism-hotels, catering, motor vehicle repair, logistics, maintenance of green spaces, gardens and fruit and vegetable cultivation. The minors are supervised by a company tutor who does not receive additional compensation, and at the end of the internship they receive a reference letter signed by the company manager. In our opinion, one weakness in the path is the limited duration of the internships, which envisage spending a month in the company in the case of curricular internships and three months in the case of extracurricular ones, compared to paths which on the national scene, for example, usually last between five and twelve months.

8.5 Evaluation of the experience

From the interviews conducted with the various figures involved in this project and from the analysis of the same, the internship experience is in line with the data of the scientific literature. As Zabotto and Bizzi point out, the training value of the internship is traced in the development of the following skills: "ability to understand and adapt to teamwork; ability to establish positive relationships with colleagues; ability to relate to the various figures operating in the work context; ability to respect working times and methods (punctuality, frequency, constancy); deepening of personal resources and professional attitudes of the minor" (2014, pp. 171-173).

In the case of UAFMs, the internship has even greater value because it represents an opportunity to learn about work contexts that are very different from those which were sometimes experienced in the country of origin or in those passed through. Moreover, the experience carried out at the companies allows the UAFMs to free themselves (on a psychological level) with respect to everyday life and the context of community structures, allowing them to interact with adults who are not responsible for caring for them. Contrasting an experience featuring the passiveness and infantilisation related to the status as a guest in a community for minors, the internship is configured as a significant experience for cognitive maturation and the development of social-relational skills, as it pushes the UAFMs to perceive themselves as young, knowledgeable, responsible workers on the same level as native workers (compliance with schedules, reporting and justification of absences, ability to establish correct interpersonal relationships, responsible task learning, etc.). These skills do not always emerge in the contexts of the communities where the UAFMs are guests, also considering the typical adolescent aspect of having difficulty in knowingly self-evaluating one's strengths and weaknesses.

Although quite brief, the experience of the internship allowed the UAFMs involved in the project to become aware of the social reality outside the community, the knowledge of which often remains limited (and this limit conditions the opportunities for functional comparisons in order to recognise their own qualities and skills). In the case of the extracurricular internships, the allowance then favoured the UAFMs' process of managing personal needs connected to the need to provide financial support to the family of origin, to set aside small sums to face the imminent need to find an independent accommodation, or to purchase goods or services useful for the organisation of one's time and relational spaces.

Taking into account the dramatic experiences connected to the migratory journey, the internship seems to have “therapeutic” effects: work experience in protected conditions, such as that of the internship, has positive effects with respect to the creation of meaning (on the individual biographical level) and of belonging (on the social level), to the possible discovery of new interests and passions, as well as the feeling of being part (at least during the duration of the internship) - with their own identity recognised by others - of a social fabric that is not that of the community where they are hosted (Gallina & Mazzucchelli, 2001, p. 33). At the same time, the experience seems to have a positive impact on the individual resilience capabilities of the UAFMs. If it should certainly be identified as a characteristic already possessed by some UAFMs, whose inner balance has survived the trials they had to face, those who arrive with inner wounds need to reconstruct their ability to face life (Vaccarelli, 2016).

As is known, the protective factors that facilitate overcoming the trials and challenges that life poses include: 1) intellectual and emotional abilities, 2) positive relationships with stable, adequate and significant adult figures, 3) availability of resources and educational support (Gallina *et al.*, 2001, p. 38). While it seems difficult that the reception and integration system as a whole can affect the first protective factor, it is possible to design specific training interventions for the second and third which are aimed, in general, at the development of resilience capabilities, among which it is possible to also insert the internship experience. The internship favours an autonomy development process that helps the UAFM identify the real opportunities present in the labour market and the strategies for finding a job (Gallina *et al.*, 2001, p. 158). An additional indirect positive effect of the internship experience - not always guaranteed but certainly desirable - is psychological in that it is connected to the perception of the UAFM somehow feeling “affiliated” with the new context, welcomed in a group and becoming part of the daily work routine, recognised in the new role by adults and peers.

The motivation and satisfaction levels of the UAFMs involved in the project are high: in fact, the experience in the company is perceived as an opportunity to show one's skills, profuse commitment, punctuality and the responsibility that the performance of the tasks requires (see Santagati, 2011, p. 229). However, it is possible to hypothesise some negative “side effects” generated by high levels of motivation to enjoy the internship experience: the first is the risk that the UAFMs can be exploited by employers who take advantage of the vast availability and self-sacrifice shown by the UAFMs (Santagati, 2011, p. 231), while the second is that the same internship experience can lose educational value if not monitored and only be an opportunity for the company, as it can count on free labour.

8.6 Conclusions: between economic crisis and post-Fordism

The internship path organised by SEND Sicilia within the *Harraga Project* certainly shows examples of good practices relating to responsibility, thanks to the choices made rationally and in constant dialogue with the final beneficiaries, also proposing the consistently pursued objective of the autonomy of the same, but is shown to be conditioned by objective constraints with which it is difficult to interact. From what is written in the previous pages, it appears that the proposal of training internships (in general, not only that analysed) certainly appears valid from the educational and social integration point of view, but not as useful for the purpose of job placement. If in fact it constitutes a valuable opportunity for “socialisation in work” (Santagati, 2011, p. 144) and, we would say, the educational effects through work prevail over the professionalising function and job placement, however, this does not depend on the always possible “perverse” effects of any social intervention, nor on the bad faith of profiteering companies, rather than on macroeconomic constraints. In the context of the entire reception/integration system in Sicily, in fact, the theme/problem of UAFMs' job placement appears particularly complex because it is caught between the Sicily which at this point has been experiencing an economic crisis for decades and the Cariddi of the transformations of the production model (and therefore of work) which particularly penalise these boys.

From 2008 to today, the global crisis has reduced Italy's GDP, doubled unemployment rates and raised the number of people living in conditions of absolute poverty to almost five million (ISTAT, 2017). Southern Italy was particularly affected by the crisis, where the unemployment rate is among the highest in Europe and families at risk of poverty and social exclusion constitute 48% of the total, compared to 18.5% in the North (Perna & Mostaccio, 2016, pp. 24-30). If there are signs of economic recovery today, they are not spread evenly throughout Italy, and Sicily, in particular, appears to discount the “negative effects of agriculture, while industry and construction are struggling to consolidate and the services sector has little more than a stationary trend” (SVIMEZ, 2017, p. 17). Young people suffer the most in the South (Burgio, 2017), among which there is a percentage of unemployment which - as is known - reaches significantly higher levels than the already high national level of 42.7% (Colombo & Leonini, 2015, pp. 40-41). Finally, it should be emphasised that in the Italian labour market the strategy for finding a job consisted of turning to parents and friends for 87% of Italians in 2015 (Rosina, 2015, p. 46), which constitutes an objective competitive disadvantage for UAFMs who specifically lack social capital.

Another element that conditions the employment of the UAFMs is the transformation of the Italian production model, which today appears to be divided into three large areas. In fact, the old *repetitive, taylorized work* has not completely disappeared, but is today linked to the rhythms of increasingly complex machines that seem to need worker skills less and less (Sennett, 2002, pp. 67 and 73). Additionally, there are personal services: this is the area that includes carers, cooks, nannies, nurses, *sex workers*, masseurs, etc. (Marazzi, 2010, p. 74). In this second area, the worker no longer only provides labour-power but gives his all - kindness, good humour, availability, *good presence*... - in a context dominated by jobs with ridiculously low pay, low prestige, low achievement and an improbable future. The last work model in our post-Fordist age is represented by *immaterial work*: the manipulation of symbols and ideas, which employs (mostly precariously) secretaries, researchers, call centre operators, teachers,

travel agents, consultants, cultural mediators, classroom tutors, graphic designers, computer scientists, fashion designers, actors, social workers, etc. This post-Fordist worker knows how to continuously adapt to changes, knows how to read information flows, is able to work by communicating, trained to continually update himself (Burgio, 2014). These three models do not appear to be alternative to each other but often interact with each other: repetitiveness and “servility” can coexist with symbolic manipulation, with relational competence and existential flexibility. Common to all three areas is in fact the relational-symbolic-cognitive component of a job that tends to no longer be based on muscular strength as much as for those who work with evermore intelligent machines, as for those engaged in personal services, as for those who produce immaterial goods. UAFMs must enter this working environment, joining a competition in which their relational-symbolic-cognitive competence appears to be fragile due to their primary socialisation having occurred in a different culture and due to their short passage in the formal education system. Their chances of job placement appear to be concentrated in the area of repetitive work and personal services and this confirms, in fact, the choices they expressed in the interviews we discussed above. Even in these areas, however, their inclusion is not easy. In fact, Italy's choice to focus only on active labour policies (which the work placement falls under) and on the improvement of UAFMs' skills (an area which is certainly to be implemented) appears to be insufficient, without affecting the demand side of work, that of the companies which - in the absence of specific incentives - often declare at the end of the internship, “Mousa is very good but do you know how many Italian fathers ask me for a job?”.

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Chapter 9

Educational provisions in Second Reception Communities for Unaccompanied Foreign Minors: what is the value of intercultural perspective in theoretical references and educative practices? Results from a qualitative research in Emilia-Romagna

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9.1 Introduction

My chapter will focus on the second reception communities' daily educative practices for unaccompanied foreign children, which are minors coming from different and disadvantaged parts of the world. The majority of them are male who came to different countries (including Italy) where they are perceived as "foreigners". This is the most synthetic identikit of a very complex reality. Even if it is not a new phenomenon, it is also true that it has increased in the last few years. The start of this phenomenon is linked to the European population's movements just after the Second World War, but in the last few years it has become a wider reality because of major conflicts near to the western European countries (Biagioli, 2016). The coming of unaccompanied foreign children in Italy has become a constant characteristic of migration; in 2016 we registered a growing trend in the total of immigrant's landings, both in absolute and relative terms (Unar & Idos, 2017).

There are different ways in which scholars define this children's category and these definitions have also changed through time, with significant consequences both for their rights and future's possibilities (Agostinetto, 2017). Therefore, the life's stories of these minors are very different and so are also their needs and wishes. What makes these children similar is that they migrate during their adolescence; sometimes close to their 18 years old, in other cases when they are more than 18's, trying to hide their real age to access to those specific benefits for minors who run away from war and poverty, going through awful journeys both from a physical and psychological point of view (Unar & Idos, 2016). Their stories can be linked by the research for better life conditions both for themselves and their family. They are often children who came in Italy with a specific "family demand", which means that the family stays in the country of origin, hoping for the economic support of the son (Rigon, Mengoli, 2013). However, they not always left their country of origin with this particular "demand". As I already specified, this is a very complex reality, which cannot be described only in a few characteristics.

They often run away from violence and war, from the lack of future possibilities, from hunger. Because of these reasons they came across the desert and the sea, exposing themselves to several risks. In the end, they arrive in Italy with a future to build (Muscarà, 2015). In other cases, they chose to leave because of dramatic personal and familial reasons. To pay attention to this variety of stories help us to apply a very important criterion of intercultural education, which is to carefully consider the specific characteristics of each person. This means to try to embrace both similar and particular elements and always take into account the point of view of the subject. We also must consider that these children often have tragic life experiences which might elicit emphatic and solidarity actions, except for the fact that they are also “foreigners” and they often have different physical characteristics from those which are still prevalent in the Italian context. Therefore they are included in a category of people which still suffer from discrimination, which comes from fear, mistrust, refusal and aggression. Therefore the approach with them could be contradictory, mixing both hosting and hostility.

It is also important to underline that a democratic society should have the ability to create the highest level of participation for all, involving everybody in public affairs. Intercultural education promotes pluralism and participation (Bolognesi, Lorenzini, 2017) which are fundamental elements of a democratic society. These values are those who remember us to consider all the children (included unaccompanied foreign children) because they might be future citizens. A positive integration in the social fabric is the necessary condition for the positive evolution of a civil society which promotes the value of tolerance (Genovese, 2002; Bolognesi, Lorenzini, 2017), pluralism, participation and interaction between people with different cultural and experiential backgrounds.

To fully achieve the protection of unaccompanied foreign children it is also necessary an interdisciplinary approach focused on legal protection and educative practices. Indeed, it is also necessary a specific commitment to transform the negative perceptions against the migratory phenomenon in general, which are widespread in the social context. Focusing on the educative perspective, the adults which have an educative responsibility are involved in different levels (Agostinetto, 2017). Therefore, I am going to present you some of the results of a research project which has also focused on the educative approach in second reception communities for unaccompanied foreign children in Emilia-Romagna, Italy. I decided to realize this research project not only because of the increase of the phenomenon but also because of the real interest of the students who attended my Intercultural Education courses (especially Social and Cultural Educators) and because of the relevant connections between this thematic and the intercultural perspective education. I think that thanks to empirical studies, I can also include a teaching objective for those who are going to work with these children. I hope that they could be able to recognize and respect their rights to reach a positive integration in the social context where they come. We also must project a positive hosting in the short term and a positive integration in the medium and long-term, whereby we might be able to contrast risk factors (i.e. social marginalization, negative prejudices, organised crime, etc.). Because of that reason, we must promote the potentialities of the subject, which not also means a burden for the society of arrival, but also a resource.

9.2 The research project

The research project's context: Emilia-Romagna, Italy

This qualitative research project was realized in Emilia-Romagna, Italy. The Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies published data about the presence of unaccompanied foreign children in all the Italian regions (updated on 31 of December 2017). Emilia-Romagna was in the 5th place, with 5,6% of unaccompanied foreign children (1.017 boys and girls). It shall be preceded by Sicily with 7.988 children (43,6% of the total), Calabria with 1.443 (7,9% of the total), Lombardia with 1.216 (6,6% of the total) and Lazio with 1.049 children (5,7% of the total). Focusing on the unaccompanied foreign girls, Emilia-Romagna was in the 4th place with 63 girls (5,1 % of the total). In the first place, we have Sicily again, with 732 girls (58,7% of the total). Calabria follows Sicily with 65 girls (5,2% of the total), Lombardia with 65 girls (5,2% of the total) (Labour Ministry, 31/12/2017).

Emilia-Romagna is a very active hosting region. In February 2018, it starts a teaching training for those who are involved in this field (educators, social assistant, health professionals, etc.) to try to create discussion's moments to make the reception more efficient in a systemic way. Emilia-Romagna as Region states that want to be an excellence in this field, promoting competent and pragmatic reception's realities²⁵.

9.3 Research methodology, objectives and research questions

This qualitative research wanted to deepen know unaccompanied foreign children's reality starting from the point of view of those who daily work with them: educators and coordinators of second reception's communities. The principal objective was to understand their educative practices in Emilia-Romagna. The focus was on the way in which these practitioners wanted to share their experiences and expertise. Therefore, the analysis focused on the representations and reflections of the participants. The structured interview was the research instrument (Corbetta, 2015), used to deepen some topics. It was considered a coherent research instrument thank to whom we had the possibility to gain the information about educators and coordinators' professionally. The interview's scheme (same questions for all the respondents) was used in a flexible way, let the respondents have the possibility to freely answer and to dedicate more time in some parts rather than others (Lorenzini, 2012, 2013). The interview's scheme was composed by 70 questions with several thematic sections: personal data, professional experience, representation about unaccompanied foreign children, daily life, relation with family of origin, autonomy support, emotional well-being, relationship between children and educators, relationship among minors, relation between minors and society, discrimination's episodes (Cardellini, 2018), schooling, work experience, integration project, unaccompanied foreign children's future, educational perspective. The flexible use of the interview scheme allows the

²⁵<http://www.anci.emilia-romagna.it/formazione/Qualificazione-del-sistema-dei-servizi-accoglienza-e-integrazione-dei-minori-stranieri-non-accompagnati-MSNA> (last access: 12 February 2018).

interviewer to have a certain freedom in following the question's sequences or not, even choosing to ask more questions if deemed necessary.

9.4 The reception's communities and the respondent's characteristics

The interviews were realized between February and April 2017. They were audio-taped and totally deregistered. The sample was composed by: 30 interviews (16 men and 13 women) in 10-second reception's communities²⁶ in 5 cities of Emilia-Romagna: Bologna, Ravenna, Faenza, Ferrara, Modena. We realized 3 interviews in each community duration of about 2 hours (1 interview for the coordinator and 2 educators). We only had a female's community. All the communities were quite diverse because of different elements: degree of autonomy, number of users, daily life organisation, educational practices.

The communities were chosen by a non-probabilistic sampling, by directly contacting several second reception's communities, asking them if they were available to collaborate in this research project. All the contacted communities accepted to participate. The respondents gave us their time in their work field.

Among the respondent's characteristics we have: a great prevalence come from the North of Italy (17 subjects) and only a few of them come from the Centre and South Italy (10 subjects). Indeed, one respondent came from Romania, one from Albania and one from Morocco. They were between 27 and 54 years old, with a prevalence of 30-year-olds. Their work experience with unaccompanied foreign children was from a minimum of 1 year and even more of 17 years. Their training courses were quite heterogeneous, with university degrees and even only high school certificate. The university degrees were also quite heterogeneous: Psychology, Philosophy, Law, Political Sciences, Veterinary, International Relations. Only 10 on 30 respondents affirmed to have an educative university degree.

The educative perspective of the respondents

In this paragraph, I will report some of the results of the interviews, respecting the respondent's privacy. I will analyse some of the interview's topics, highlighting both the relevant and frequent elements and the counter-trend opinions. I will support my analysis with the respondent's words, by including some pieces of conversation to try to make my analysis clearer²⁷. Indeed, I will develop some consideration inspired to the intercultural educative perspective. I will focus my attention on the respondent's narration about their educative criteria, paying attention the intercultural perspective searching for its presence both in a theoretical and practical sense.

²⁶ Second reception community: it is a residential and familiar service which include an educative approach. In these communities, qualified professionals are present to support children in his own autonomy and empowerment research project (Conferenza delle regioni e delle province autonome, Accordo sui requisiti minimi per la seconda accoglienza dei minori stranieri non accompagnati nel percorso verso l'autonomia, 2016).

²⁷ I translated these pieces of conversation from Italian to English, but I will include the original version in note. Some linguistic modifications have been necessary for the sake of clarity.

When we ask the respondents if they referred to an educative perspective in their daily work with unaccompanied foreign children (even personally or as a group decision) the majority of them affirmed not to refer to any specific educative perspective:

E: "Well, not specifically". (9 Educator, F, Girl's community, high educative intensity, Modena) ^{28,29}

Other respondents seemed quite surprised in front of this question:

E: "Not to my knowledge. For the moment... we have not an educative perspective. Do you mean a theoretical framework? Not now. We have not this directive yet, we only have internal rules and coexistence rules, daily routines...we have not yet..." (20 Educator, M, Reception's Community for children and adolescents who are getting away from their families of origin, Errano, Faenza)³⁰

Others specify that they have not an educative perspective because they did not study education. Other states that they have an educative perspective only "theoretically", but not in their practices. Furthermore, the "theoretic" educative perspective seems not to be so "educative" because the respondent mentions psychological and psychoanalytical authors:

C: "I honestly don't. I have this theoretical perspective for many years...when I came here, maybe Roger's perspective. But now we try to answer to the boy's needs and characteristics".

I³¹: "And you?"

C: "Me? I don't think I have... I don't think I refer to any specific psychological of educative theory" (19, M, Coordinator of Reception's Community for children and adolescents who are getting away from their families of origin, Errano, Faenza)³².

E: "Well... do you want to see the Service Charter? Well, we started with active education, where the minor is responsible for all the situation. After that, we move to the relational systemic theory and now we are changing. We participate in some meetings to focus on the needs. Well, it's all about to be into the relationship with these boys, trying to make them the protagonist of their life paths. I don't know how many colleagues

²⁸ E: Cioè una specifica, no. No (9 Educatrice Comunità per ragazze ad alta intensità educativa, Modena).

²⁹ Some other information: E: Educator, C: Coordinator. F: Female, M: Male. Each interview was coded with a specific progressive number. Specific information about the Community are also included.

³⁰ E: No. Non che io sappia. Per ora non abbiamo... prospettiva pedagogica, cosa dici una corrente di pensiero? No, per ora no. Diciamo che non abbiamo ancora questa direttiva, ci limitiamo ad avere un regolamento interno e delle regole di convivenza, delle abitudini quotidiane... però non abbiamo ancora... (20 Educatore Centro di accoglienza per bambini e adolescenti allontanati dalle famiglie, Errano, Faenza).

³¹ Interviewer.

³² C: Sinceramente... no. Sulla carta c'è quella, ancora rimasta da molti anni, da quando sono arrivato io, quella Rogersiana, però poi alla fine adesso sempre più si va a... si cerca di rispondere alle caratteristiche di ogni ragazzo. I: E tu in particolare?

C: Io in particolare? mmm... non credo di avere... di rispondere proprio a una teoria psicologica o pedagogica particolare (19 Responsabile uomo Centro di accoglienza per bambini e adolescenti allontanati dalle famiglie, Errano, Faenza).

explicit their theories...they say Winnicott, Bettelheim...” (18 Educator, F, Educative Community, Bologna)³³.

Even if they affirm to get their degree in a humanistic university (even education), they often say that they work following “sensations”. In a specific case, the respondent (who studied education) states not to refer to any educative perspective and he also expresses devaluation against theoretical aspects with a hyper valorisation on experiences and practices:

E: “I studied Education, I passed my exams and I left with 3 exams to pass. The most beautiful thing that I learn in all these years of school – even if it’s not like the book teaches – is the role-playing. This was the best thing I learned. I worked in that period. There were people who didn’t know what it means to have someone in front of you...only “nice words”. The educative work is like that. It’s another thing. [...] The role-playing was the only interesting thing. It was really complex, but I saw its functioning. I see that if you work you can reach your objectives, but if you don’t work you have no idea. They quit in front of the first strange things” (15 Educator, F, Apartments Group with High Level of Autonomy, Faenza)³⁴.

Among the respondents, we found a widespread affirmation which was “everyone has a different approach”. From this affirmation, we can deduct that every educator has his own approach, which is the mix of experiences, competencies and personal training. Therefore, it seems that the request of an “educative perspective” was perceived as a “rigid rules to follow” and not as a criteria of reference which does not offer definitive solutions but only coursed to follow in a flexible way.

C: “No, well...I try to follow my perspective which is a mix of educative experiences, personal ideas, educative training, other experiences in communities...so there is not a specific perspective which we follow. Indeed, I believe that a specific perspective with these children who came from different cultures it’s quite complex...we cannot follow only one perspective. In my opinion, the best way is to speak and supervise them and try to move on proceeding with attempts, even with the knowledge that it’s not a random attempt, but a specific moment where you can learn something. So, even if it goes wrong you can use other ways and if it goes well you can do it again and...you must be flexible.

³³ E: Mah... guarda, ah vuoi vedere la carta dei servizi? ...dunque, siamo partiti con la pedagogia attiva, con il minore che è responsabile della situazione, passando per la sistemica relazionale e alla fine sono queste attualizzate un po’, abbiamo seguito degli incontri un po’ fatti anche sui bisogni. Mmm... tutto questo alla fine si riduce all’esser soprattutto nella pratica relazionale con i ragazzi e nel cercare di farli diventare protagonisti del loro percorso di vita. Poi, non lo so quanti colleghi dicono quali teorie li ispirano, dicono Winnicott, Bettelheim... (18 Educatrice, Comunità educativa, Bologna).

³⁴ E: No, io ho fatto Scienze della Formazione, ho fatto tutti gli esami, poi ho mollato a tre dalla fine. La cosa più bella che mi hanno insegnato in tutti sti anni di scuola, che poi alla fine no, non è come sui libri, è il role playing, quella è stata in assoluto la cosa migliore, e la differenza. Io allora lavoravo, tra chi lavorava e chi non aveva un’idea di cosa volesse dire avere di fronte qualcuno di vero che non sono le belle parole, la parte pedagogica, si fa così, si fa così... no, non c’entra proprio niente, è tutta un’altra roba [...]. Il role playing è l’unica cosa perché era una situazione di ruolo interessante, complessa eh, però io ho visto che chi lavorava il punto lo portava a casa, gira e prilla ce la fa, chi non lavora non ne ha un’idea, si ferma di fronte alla prima frase storta o strana che ha detto e non va da nessuna parte (15 Educatrice Gruppo Appartamento ad Alta Autonomia, Faenza).

It's more important to have clear objectives rather than an educative perspective in this kind of communities" (12 Coordinator, M, Second reception community, Bologna)³⁵.

In other cases, some respondents highlight the importance of an educative perspective focused on the person's needs:

C: "Ehhh, no. Personally... in my opinion... well... my cooperative... an educative perspective focused on the person... isn't it? So... we must take into account the person. Well...living the life with the person...trying to understand his own needs. I honestly don't have a specific perspective".

I: "Do you have a psychological approach? "

C: "I like when the boy wants to say something to me. For me it's important – from an educative point of view – trying to understand what the boy wants to give you; trying to understand his real needs. The boys often say something, but they are saying to you something else. I also have to understand what I feel. There are some boys which transmit to you lots of anger and if you are not able to listen to them, you follow only the anger. So, it's like to try to understand...well, we talk about transfert which is to try to understand what the boy is transferring to me and what I'm transferring to him. Well... eeeh... (silence)... it's also to understand your role in the relationship, what is your role? What I'm doing? What is my role in this relationship? What am I for?" (1 Coordinator, M, High Autonomy Community, Bologna)³⁶.

The intercultural educative perspective

No respondents mention the intercultural educative perspective. When we ask them if they refer to the intercultural educative perspective we obtain lots of negative answers. In some cases, they said that they didn't refer to this specific educative perspective, in other cases they also explain why:

³⁵ C: No, eh... di mio diciamo che eh... provo ad avere una linea che è un mix di esperienze pedagogiche fatte, di idee personali, corsi di formazione, esperienze di altre comunità eh... quindi non c'è una linea specifica e definita che seguiamo, anche perché credo con un linea precisa ben definita con minori stranieri non accompagnati che arrivano da... diverse culture, anche molto distanti è complicato, seguire una linea sola... Secondo me, il modo migliore è quello di parlarne, supervisionarsi e andare avanti un po' a tentativi anche sapendo che non è un tentativo a caso ma un tentativo che ti debba insegnare, quindi se vedi che non va, provi altre modalità, se vanno li salvi e li replichi e... devi essere mutevole, l'importante più che la linea pedagogica in strutture come queste, è avere gli obiettivi chiari (12 Coordinatore Comunità seconda accoglienza, Bologna).

³⁶ C: Eeeee... no. Io person... nel senso che secondo me c'è... la... emmm... la cooperativa ha... un fondamento pedagogico basato sulla persona, no? Quindi sul... tenere al centro dell'attenzione la persona in quanto tale. Eeee e sul vivere la quotidianità insieme alla persona per poi poter capire i bisogni della persona. Però io onestamente non ho un riferimento.

I: Un approccio psicologico?

C: A me piace molto il... sentire quello che il ragazzo... cioè, per me è importante dal punto di vista educativo capire quello che il ragazzo sta trasmettendo. Capire il suo bisogno reale, perché spesso i ragazzi dicono una cosa, ma te ne stanno dicendo un'altra. Capire anche cosa io sento verso il ragazzo. Nel senso che a volte ci sono dei ragazzi che ti trasmettono della rabbia e tu non li ascolti e vai dietro alla rabbia che ti trasmettono. Quindi riuscire anche a capire eeee... si parla di transfert, cioè riuscire a capire che cosa il ragazzo mi sta trasferendo e cosa io sto trasferendo a lui. Eeee... quindi comunque... mmm... (silenzio)... cioè riuscire a mett... riuscire a capire all'interno della relazione qual è il proprio ruolo. Cosa sto facendo? In questa relazione qual è il mio ruolo? A che cosa servo all'altro? (1 Responsabile Comunità ad alta autonomia, Bologna).

*C: “(silence) Honestly, I don’t know this perspective very well so...I don’t... (silence)”
(1 Coordinator, M, High Autonomy Community, Bologna)³⁷.*

In some cases, the “no” answer was motivated by the absence of specific training related to this educative perspective or, from the point of view of a respondent, by the widespread presence of a “clinic approach” compared to the educative ones. He also expresses a very critical opinion, asking for the need for a “specific training”. Because of privacy reasons, the following piece of conversation will not use the acronym identifying of community and work role:

C: “We have a problem with our teamwork, because [name] has not a professional qualification. He’s doing a course to become educator...a course of a few months, so I don’t know how these courses work from a theoretic point of view. [Name] is a psychologist and she’s studying to become a psychotherapist and she’s not interested in those theories related to children. She’s working here until she graduates. [Name] worked only as pizza-getter. I ask for specific training courses with academics [...] If everybody knew these theories maybe we could activate a conversations to try to understand what we are doing and why...we have a little pamphlet that we give to the social assistants to ask them to send the children and you can read here that we use a “context and familiar approach” but I think that nobody knows what it means. This is a problem. Thanks to our weekly meeting we can follow a common line, working on the life experiences, but we need a theoretical basis that we miss now. We need a specific training. I think that the problem is also a “clinic approach” in education and it’s what happens here³⁸”.

The few answers which affirm that intercultural education is a reference point, are motivated in different ways; among them, the importance given to the different elements which are considered linked with “different cultures”:

C: “Yes... yes, yes. Every year our cooperative gives us the possibility to answer to our training needs and this year we ask for the knowledge of cultures. Of course, we need

³⁷ C: (silenzio) Sinceramente io non la conosco bene, quindi non... (silenzio) (1 Responsabile Comunità ad alta autonomia, Bologna).

³⁸ R: Ma qui c’è un problema relativo alla nostra équipe nel senso che... [nome] non ha nessun titolo, sta facendo adesso un corso per diventare educatore, un corso di qualche mese, quindi non ha un’idea dal punto di vista teorico di queste cose. [nome] è una psicologa, sta studiando psicoterapeuta e non ha un grande interesse di teorie riguardanti i minori, lei sta facendo questo lavoro intanto che non si laurea. [nome] come unica esperienza professionale precedente era un portapizze... (a bassa voce). Ho fatto richieste specifiche di formazione con dei professori [...]. Se tutti conoscessero queste teorie potremmo aprire un dibattito per capire che cosa stiamo facendo perché... qui c’è un libretto che è quello che facciamo vedere agli assistenti sociali per farci mandare i ragazzi c’è scritto che seguiamo un approccio ambientale, di tipo familiare, eccetera come approccio bla bla bla, così. Però di fatto penso che quasi nessuno di noi operatori sappia esattamente di che si tratta. Questo è un problema poi ovviamente grazie alle riunioni che facciamo tutte le settimane riusciamo a seguire una linea e lavorare i vissuti e le varie cose però comunque ci vuole una base teorica che di fatto al momento a molti manca. È necessaria una formazione specifica. Il problema è una deriva clinicista nell’educazione si riporta un approccio clinico quando invece deve essere educativo. Ed è quello che succede qua.

social knowledge, but we also need to know cultures which are totally different from ours, so you're in difficulties to understand some behaviours rather than others. In some African cultures there are a huge prevalence of religious aspects, for example, ...you're struggling trying to understand since you really know that elements... So, we ask for the possibility to have a specific training in different cultures, because we often see them as something too far from us" (19, M, Coordinator of Reception's Community for children and adolescents who are getting away from their families of origin, Errano, Faenza)³⁹.

From these words, we can see both the training need and the idea that to understand unaccompanied foreign children's needs and point of views, educators need to know "cultures". In relation to this, it is also important to highlight some critical considerations. We can share that to know the most important "cultural elements" could give to educators some keys to understanding thanks to whom they can improve their ability to understand specific behaviours, especially in the first phases of the relationship where it could be also linguistic difficulties. However, from an intercultural perspective, only the knowledge of cultural aspects cannot be enough (in some cases it also could be misleading). What we need it to ask to ourselves what kind of idea of "cultures" undergoes these demands, considering that cultures are not homogeneous entities, they are not static and immutable (Sirna Terranova, 1998; Bolognesi & Lorenzini, 2017); cultures are not rigid elements and we cannot clearly pre-define all the ways in which subjects engage with cultural aspects. Values, rituals and traditions might pass down in the same way or they also can change. They can assume different forms related to specific familiar contexts or they can change after migration experiences or when the subject meets other lifestyles. During migration, the country of origin's habits might remain the same (even become more rigid), but they can also be modified, mixing themselves in relation to the new context. Therefore, searching for the "typical" into a culture it could be both interesting and useful and it also could generate a process of stereotyping which is a high-risk, especially in education, because we risk imprisoning the subject in false representations, not consider himself in his uniqueness. It is inappropriate to think that all those who come from a certain place have also the same beliefs, values and habits (Lorenzini, 2015). Therefore, what we can do is to discover what cultural aspects are important for that person, what is their meaning and how those elements are mixed with his/her own life. The educator should relate with these peculiarities, helping these guys to be aware of the possibility (no obligation) to develop a positive relationship with their origins.

Other intercultural elements mentioned by the respondents are: mental and practical flexibility in their daily educative approach, the ability to question the rules, trying to understand behaviour not only referring to the "cultural elements" but also to the journey that

³⁹ C: Sì... sì, sì. Ogni anno la cooperativa dà la possibilità di soddisfare fabbisogni formativi dell'équipe... abbiamo richiesto tra i vari bisogni formativi quest'anno, appunto la conoscenza di alcune culture in particolare. Perché comunque, al di là delle conoscenze sociali che puoi avere, alcune culture sono davvero profonde o comunque totalmente diverse dalle nostre che fatichi a capire dei comportamenti piuttosto che altri. O anche in diverse culture, magari africane, sono presentissimi gli aspetti religiosi, per dirne una... che tu fai fatica a comprendere finché non appuri che quelle cose lì... Quindi, abbiamo cercato di richiedere sta possibilità per avere delle informazioni generali almeno di diverse culture, perché ci sembrano veramente dei mondi molto distanti dai nostri. (19 Responsabile uomo Centro di accoglienza per bambini e adolescenti allontanati dalle famiglie, Errano, Faenza).

these boys often made through the sea (especially referring to the traumas). On these aspects we highlight a specific positive attention:

E: "It's so important [referring to the intercultural approach]. Especially because we have boys coming from different cultures..."

I: "What is its influence in your daily educative practices?"

E: "It's a mental and practical flexibility, which means constantly question our daily work and what we offer to them, rules, conflicts, even our representation of a conflict...trying to go beyond what the boys are doing at that moment or his behaviour. We try to understand the logic which undergoes this appearance, under this behaviour. There is culture, there is a journey, traumas..." (2 Educator, F, High Autonomy Community, Bologna)⁴⁰.

It seems relevant the ability to try to understand the other's point of view, trying to get inside his skin. It highlights the importance to "observe things in a different way". It means to put into practice the "cultural decentralisation", which is to go beyond the "Western thought".

E: "We try to do that. It is a cultural mediation... we often miss some information... We assume that we value and interpret using the "Western thought", so lots of things escape us and we need someone who teaches us to observe in a different way. The deeper we go, the more we need teaching about how things could be observed in a different way" (17, Educator, F, Educative Community, Bologna)⁴¹.

The intercultural approach in practice

The educative approach seems quite absent in the words of the respondents, especially the intercultural one. Only a few of them referred to that approach only after the interviewer's request. In these cases, some important elements emerged, but they might be better conceptualized. The tendency to separate theory and practice is quite dominant in the respondent's word. Therefore, we search if these theoretical aspects were present in their daily work. The educator's role goes deeper than the only material, alimentary, hygienic and health support because of the significant relationship which is activated among them and the children, thanks to which it is possible to have personalized projects related to the different characteristics

⁴⁰ E: È importantissima [la prospettiva interculturale]. Noi poi, avendo ragazzi di culture differenti...

I: Come si riflette nelle prassi quotidiane avere questo riferimento?

E: In una flessibilità sia operativa che mentale, che principalmente porta a una messa in discussione continua e rapida nel lavoro quotidiano. Sia delle attività proposte, delle regole, dei conflitti sorti, delle supposizioni fatte dinanzi a un conflitto sorto, di fronte all'impressione che il ragazzo in quel momento dà, o dell'atteggiamento che pone, cioè la logica è che dietro a quella facciata, dietro a quell'atteggiamento c'è la cultura, c'è un viaggio, c'è una vita, dei traumi... (2 Educatrice Comunità ad alta autonomia, Bologna).

⁴¹ E: Cerchiamo di farcela. Da una parte proprio mediazione culturale... di mancanza di informazioni che abbiamo noi... Cioè, partendo dal presupposto che valutiamo e leggiamo tutto col pensiero occidentale, molte cose ci sfuggono e ci deve essere insegnato a leggerle in modo diverso. Per quello... più andiamo avanti più abbiamo bisogno di una sorta di... di... insegnamento a leggere in modo differente le cose (17 Educatrice, Comunità educativa, Bologna).

of these boys. We also try to analyse this specific aspect through this question: *Are there any aspects of children's culture or experience of life which are accepted in your daily activities?*

In this chapter, we cannot go into the details of all the emerged themes and I shall confine myself to comments two particularly significant elements: food and religion.

Food

Respondent's considerations of this thematic are quite different. Only in a few cases, educators express the necessity to respect children's food preferences, as if it was a limit which the educator has to suffer:

E: "There are some nationalities which impose food to you. Nigeria, for example. Well, it is quite difficult to meet each other halfway when we talk about food, because it's a very important thing for them. [...] Yes, you also can conflict with them because of food..." (9 Educator, F, High Level of Autonomy Female's Community, Modena)⁴².

E: "It's quite impossible to eradicate their food habits, [...] it's hard to eradicate their way of cooking" (16 Coordinator, M, Educative Community, Bologna)⁴³.

Can we ask ourselves why we shouldn't accept specific food preferences? Why have we to eradicate a way of cooking, especially if we know that this is connected with his own origin? In this statements, intercultural education is absent with no respect for the pre-migratory experience of these boys. In other cases, educators highlight the difficulty to find some ingredients. It also seems difficult for these educators to modify their habits, maybe because they are also used to work with Italian users. To meet these children is the change to explore different eating habits and that we can also go to different food shops:

E: "We give them the possibility to reproduce their cultures, their dishes...with what we can afford. They not always make this request and when it happens it was done badly...so they give that up, let's say".

I: "Did you propose that, or did they ask you?"

E: "They ask. We search to respect their traditions. Now we have six Muslims and...of course it was initially quite complex because we always buy pork, meat which they...bacon...cold cuts. Now we search for other foods. Yes, we search to..." (21, Educator, F, Reception's Community for children and adolescents who are getting away from their families of origin, Errano, Faenza)⁴⁴.

⁴² E: Ci sono alcune nazionalità che ti impongono proprio questa roba qui. Tipo la Nigeria. Mmm si fa fatica a non venire incontro soprattutto per i pasti e per il cibo perché è una cosa molto importante... per loro. [...] Sì, se non c'è vuol dire che vai a uno scontro con loro su questo... (9 Educatrice Comunità per ragazze ad alta intensità educativa, Modena).

⁴³ E: L'alimentazione purtroppo viene molto difficile da sradicare, [...] è difficile sradicare il loro modo di cucinare (16 Coordinatore/Educatore, Comunità educativa, Bologna).

⁴⁴ E: Sul cibo abbiamo dato la possibilità di riprodurre, diciamo, con il poco che possiamo permetterci di avere delle loro culture, i loro piatti. Però non è sempre richiesto e quando è stato fatto è stato fatto male, quindi anche loro ci hanno dato un po' su, mettiamola così.

In some cases, educators refer to religious motivations related to their food habits:

E: "Well, first, because of religious reasons. Half of our guys are Muslims, so they have different food habits. Indeed, they have moments of prayer and we search...they cannot eat pork, so when we have something with pork they have always something different. Or, if they have to go to the Mosque, we accompany them. Lots of them pray at home. They not always have to go to the Mosque to be... so, if they need we accompany them" (20, Educator, M, Reception's Community for children and adolescents who are getting away from their families of origin, Errano, Faenza)⁴⁵.

It is also important to observe that some educators affirm that they are available to modify rules and daily organisation in relation to unaccompanied foreign minor's needs, respecting what it a priority for them. This also mean to try to find possible mediations:

E: "Sometimes they ask for ingredients which we don't find in Community, especially if there is a specific and important event. Or, for example, we have lots of Muslims which made the Ramadan, the fasting's month. So, we adapted, and we agreed that it was not a problem, on the contrary! When I take turns, even at night time, I liked to stay with them, eating together and follow their rhythms. So, yes. They make some demands and we try to value, appreciating this diversity richness" (3, Educator, M, High Autonomy Level Community, Bologna)⁴⁶.

In other cases, respondents underline the importance to respect food's tradition to support their origin culture and to connect those who participate during these moments:

E: "We did more than once cooking's cycles. So, for example, on Thursday evening there was someone who cooked its specialities. So, we eat Pakistani, Afghan, Nigerian,

I: lo proponete voi di solito o sono loro a proporlo?

E: Sì, sono loro che propongono. Noi cerchiamo in tutti i modi di rispettare le loro tradizioni, ora abbiamo sei musulmani e ovviamente... inizialmente è stato un po' complicato perché noi ordinavamo sempre maiale, carni che insomma loro... pancetta, affettati di ogni tipo... adesso ci siamo un po' più improntati su altro tipo di cibo. Però sì, cerchiamo di... (21 Educatrice Centro di accoglienza per bambini e adolescenti allontanati dalle famiglie, Errano, Faenza).

⁴⁵ E: Innanzi tutto le questioni religiose. Diciamo che... la metà circa [dei ragazzi] sono musulmani quindi ci sono delle abitudini alimentari diverse, poi ci sono momenti di preghiera e noi compatibilmente con le possibilità... per quanto riguarda il cibo non possono mangiare maiale per cui quando c'è qualcosa... con il maiale... per loro c'è sempre qualcosa di diverso, o se devono andare a pregare in moschea li accompagniamo... però molti pregano qui in casa in certi momenti della giornata. Non necessariamente devono recarsi in moschea per essere dei... per cui in base alle loro esigenze quando c'è bisogno li accompagniamo (20 Educatore Centro di accoglienza per bambini e adolescenti allontanati dalle famiglie, Errano, Faenza).

⁴⁶ E: Sono gli stessi ragazzi ad avanzare..., sì, anche sulla cucina ogni tanto ci chiedono ingredienti che qui in comunità non troviamo però sì, sì, sì... quando c'è qualche festa particolare, no? che è molto sentita per loro, allora sì. Oppure, noi abbiamo diversi ragazzi musulmani e fanno il Ramadan, il mese di digiuno, no? e noi ci siamo adattati, abbiamo deciso tutti insieme che non era un problema, anzi, e quindi io quando mi trovavo a fare i turni e anche quando facevo le notti, mi piaceva stare con loro, mangiare con loro e seguire un po' i ritmi, no? Quindi sì, loro avanzano delle richieste e noi cerchiamo di valutare però apprezzando sempre anche questa ricchezza della diversità (3 Educatore Comunità ad alta autonomia, Bologna).

Gambian, even Italian. It's a way to support their origin culture through food. It's one of the easiest ways. Indeed, we drink a typical tea together, which is made with some herbs. So, we stay together with the same glass, African-style...we also risk hep c (laughing) or tuberculosis...no, well...nobody has these medical problems, but we are available to risk if it means to be together" (12, Coordinator, Second Reception Community, Bologna)⁴⁷.

Food is a privileged channel (Parisi, edited by, 2013) to promote everybody relations, even those of educators:

C: "They include you, in the sense that they say to you: "Come on, eat, eat! Just taste it. Is it spicy? Don't you eat spicy food? We eat a lot of spicy food". They always try to bring their culture to you. Not only food...for example, in the night time we are all happy and we dance. African dance is fantastic and they teach you. They are happy when they see that you dance as they do" (7, Coordinator, M, High Level of Autonomy Female's Community, Modena)⁴⁸.

Cooking according to traditions it is a way to promote relationships with the newcomers:

R: "Typical food preparations...so there are moments where we always eat pork, because of the Albanians which are carnivores... (laughing). There are other moments, like that one, in which you came and it seems to be in...Dakar: perfumes, spices, etc. During food preparation you also can relate with the boy who just comes... kitchen is a very helping place. When you are here and you cook together, well...this helps a lot to know each other..." (22, Educator/Psychologist/Coordinator of the Community, Ravenna)⁴⁹.

Through food it is also possible to bring attention to personal stories, promoting interpersonal exchanges:

⁴⁷ E: Sì, abbiamo fatto più di una volta dei cicli di cucina diciamo culturale, popolare di origine. Quindi non so, il martedì sera e chi proveniva da un posto cucinava le proprie specialità, okay? Quindi, abbiamo mangiato pakistano, afghano, nigeriano, gambiano e anche italiano. È un modo per supportare un po' la cultura attraverso il cibo, che è uno dei canali più facili che ci sono e poi beviamo insieme un tè tipico loro, che viene fatto attraverso delle erbe, quindi ci mettiamo lì in gruppo con lo stesso bicchiere, come si fa un po' all'africano... rischiando epatiti varie (ride) o tubercolosi... no tipo... eh... no, vabbè, nessuno ha questi problemi dal punto di vista sanitario, però si corre il rischio pur di stare in sintonia anche su questo... (12 Coordinatore Comunità seconda accoglienza, Bologna).

⁴⁸ ... ti includono, nel senso che ti fanno "Dai assaggia, assaggia, vedi com'è, tu mangi piccante? non mangi piccante? da noi si mangia tanto piccante" cercano molto di portartela qua la loro cultura ma di farla anche assaggiare. Non solo il cibo ma anche solo... non so alla sera siamo tutti felici e vogliamo e, c'è il ballo, il ballo africano è fantastico, quindi ti ti insegnano... poi rimangono anche molto contente quando vedono che c'è qualcuno che ci si mette lì e fa come fanno loro (7 Responsabile Comunità per ragazze ad alta intensità educativa, Modena).

⁴⁹ C: ... preparazioni anche tipiche, per cui ci sono i periodi in cui mangi sempre maiale, perché ci sono gli albanesi che sono carnivori... (ride), ci sono periodi, come adesso, in cui entri e sembra di stare... a Dakar: effluvi, spezie, eccetera. Lì [nella preparazione dei cibi] viene molto bene, diciamo che riesci a... interagire anche con il ragazzino arrivato da pochissimo... la cucina è un ambiente che aiuta moltissimo. Quando sei lì, cucini insieme, prepari, eh... aiuta moltissimo anche a conoscersi, a relazionarsi... (22 Educatore/Psicologo/Referente pedagogico Comunità, Ravenna).

C: “We try into the kitchen. It’s integration, let’s say. There are lots of psychological values related to food, care, food-culture...It’s about helping them to express themselves, bringing them back to their culture by cooking their ethnic food. Then, they can also explain when they eat these foods, how they eat, because...this is a way to let them see that we take care of them, both to who they were and who they are. This is a way of integration because here we have a small community, but we have 2 Bengalis now, 5 Albanians and this is one of the ways to help them to integrate. They also choose the menu [...]. Especially during festivities where we let them buy extra food for their typical dishes. This helps to take care of the moments where we are all together. It helps to integrate the group” (13, Coordinator, M, High Autonomy Apartment Group, Faenza)⁵⁰.

Religion

Respondents state that they are available to respect and welcome boys’ religious practices and rituals, even modifying community daily routines and organisations, to let them attend Church or Mosque:

C: “Among their religious practices there are five daily prayers. Even at night time, there is someone who woke up at 3 a.m. for...well, let’s say that it’s a coexistence question. Sometimes Albanians said that this alarm clock is quite annoying”.

I: “Is this a conflicting reason?”

C: “Actually, no. They respect each other” (4, Community Coordinator, Bologna)⁵¹.

From the interviews, lots of religious references have emerged:

E: “Most of them are Christians, few are Muslims and you notice them especially during Ramadan and that’s all. [...] Otherwise, you don’t hear them because F., A. and W. pray here. They don’t ask to go to the Mosque. Nigerians...especially on Sunday...because it’s like a party for them, so every Sunday you hear this thing” (9 Educator, F, High-Intensity Educative Community, Modena)⁵².

⁵⁰ C: Principalmente ovviamente proviamo nella cucina. E’ anche una cosa di integrazione, diciamo, sia perché coinvolgendo... cioè... ci sono molte valenze psicologiche riguardo al cibo accudimento, cibo cultura, quindi farli esprimere e riportarli alla loro cultura appunto facendo cucinare loro cibi etnici e facendogli poi spiegare in quali occasioni si mangiano, come si mangiano, perché... è un modo per fargli vedere che siamo interessati anche a loro, a quelli che sono stati e che sono. È un modo per integrarli con gli altri ragazzi perché qui è una comunità piccola ma comunque abbiamo due bengalesi al momento, cinque albanesi e questo è uno degli stratagemmi diciamo per aiutarli a integrarsi... Sicuramente tramite il cibo... almeno una volta a settimana facciamo cucinare qualcosa di etnico. Il menù è deciso dai ragazzi [...]. In particolare, per le festività diamo la possibilità di comprare cose extra per i piatti tipici delle feste, che poi servono a creare momenti di condivisione e integrazione del gruppo (13 Responsabile uomo Gruppo Appartamento Alta Autonomia, Faenza).

⁵¹ F: Tra le pratiche religiose c’è questa delle 5 preghiere giornaliere. Quindi anche di notte c’è chi mette la sveglia alle 3 per... qui è, diciamo, una questione che riguarda la convivenza. Quindi sì, quello è un elemento che alcune volte, i ragazzi albanesi ci dicono “beh, effettivamente sentire questa sveglia e... alle 3 è un po’ pesante”.

I: È motivo di conflitto questo?

F: In realtà no... i ragazzi tra di loro si rispettano molto (4 Responsabile Cooperativa, Bologna)

⁵² E: Sono cristiane la maggior parte, sono poche mussulmane che vengono, mussulmane le senti soprattutto nel mese del Ramadan, basta. [...] Del resto non si sente perché F., A., W.... pregano qui dentro, non chiedono di

Thanks to the coexistence in Community, boys and girls could experience different ways to be Muslims. With the support of competent educators, it is also possible to develop mutual understanding:

C: "There is a very interesting question which has opened a continuous debate, because theoretically, we have all Muslims...Bengalis and Albanians. However, Bengalis are observant, while Albanians are Muslims only because they have Muslim families, but they even don't know how to pray, they don't know religious rituals, they don't respect precepts because they eat pork. They don't pray five times a day, they don't go to the Mosque, they like alcohol, etc. This opens a debate among boys and the debate has been solicited by us. For example, those who came from Asia, where Islam is very cultural eradicated, they don't even know that it exists a secularisation and that a person can define himself religious without practice. It's only a cultural thing and this is very interesting..." (13, Coordinator, M, High Autonomy Educative Apartment Group, Faenza)⁵³.

9.5 Conclusions

In the theoretical framework of Intercultural Education, we refer to an education which is able to support integration without eradication (Genovese, 2002). Therefore, those who experience migration in young age have the possibility to learn another language, rules and values without suffer of an assimilation and homologations process. They can find places which welcome their specific familiar relation's experience, cultural references and life paths. Focusing our attention on experiences, life's stories and single experiences it might be the way to stop to only focus on stereotypical cultural elements. Therefore, intercultural education focuses not only on "cultures" but especially on people which recognize themselves within that cultures. Second reception communities are places of integration and interaction between people with different cultural backgrounds. It might be an opportunity to give not only material assistance, but the chance to start positive relationships in the respecting of their own origin. Educators should reflect on themselves in the relationship with the Other and his own characteristics to question their theoretical model and educative practices. Relations – if oriented in an intercultural sense (Fiorucci, 2017) – could be a precious chance for social

andare in moschea. Le nigeriane, soprattutto la domenica, perché poi per loro è una festa... quindi tutte le domeniche senti questa cosa (9 Educatrice Comunità per ragazze ad alta intensità educativa, Modena).

⁵³ C: C'è una cosa molto interessante, che ha aperto un dibattito continuo e interessantissimo, perché teoricamente sono tutti musulmani i nostri ospiti, bengalesi e albanesi, però i bengalesi sono osservanti dei precetti diciamo della loro religione mentre per gli albanesi è solamente, diciamo, un'etichetta che hanno perché le loro famiglie sono tradizionalmente musulmane ma di fatto non sanno neanche come si fa a pregare, non conoscono i rituali, non rispettano i precetti perché mangiano la carne di maiale, non pregano cinque volte al giorno, non vanno in moschea, non disdegnano gli alcolici se ne avessero l'opportunità eccetera... Questo ha aperto un dibattito fra i ragazzi, invitato da noi ovviamente, perché ad esempio quelli che vengono da realtà rurali dell'Asia, dove l'Islam è radicato proprio nella cultura quotidiana, non hanno idea che esiste una secolarizzazione e che uno si può definire di una religione senza praticarla, solo per una cosa culturale, e questo è stato un elemento interessante... (13 Responsabile uomo Gruppo Appartamento ad Alta Autonomia, Faenza).

integration. Social communities might be a reference point to those who have a migration background during the delicate phase of migration transition where subject needs to facing with new language, habits, educative practices and stile-life.

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Chapter 10

The everyday racism against unaccompanied foreign children

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10.1 From the verb “to discriminate”

It is a really hard task to exactly define what discrimination is both in a legislative, cultural, conceptual and moral way. Authors and victims of discrimination have changed their characteristics over time: who they are, what they do and the way in which they act. This is why discrimination is such a hard concept to define. All the different attempts to define discrimination clashed into the necessity to become even more specific in relation to the different forms of discriminations. Nevertheless, some discrimination definitions tried to remain more general as, for example, the Peragine’s one which affirms that we have to start from a general model to individuate those that are personal characteristics (observable), dividing them into two groups: relevant characteristics and irrelevant characteristics (Peragine, 2010, p. 135).

Starting from this division between relevant and irrelevant characteristics, we immediately meet some ethical dilemmas:

- what are the relevant and irrelevant characteristics? (i.e.: hair colour, gender, skin colour, stature, bank account, sexual orientation, etc.);
- who decides what is relevant or irrelevant? (i.e.: institution, law, people's perception, etc.);
- when and where we use these categories? (i.e.: a university exam, a job interview, an Olympic competition, etc.).

All the different scholars, which have tried to answer these questions choose to subdivide discrimination in two categories at least: “wrongful” discrimination (or negative) and “on-wrong” discrimination (or positive) (Hellman, 2017; Alexander, 2016; Bruton, 2015; Scharpf, 1998).

“For example, compare the case in which a law firm hires Adam rather than Bob because Adam is white and Bob is black with the case in which the employer hires Adam rather than Bob because Adam passed the bar exam and Bob did not. In each case, Adam gets the job and Bob does not. And in each case, the employer makes a hiring decision in response to some trait of Bob’s (his race or his passing or not passing the bar)” (Hellman, 2017, p. 4-5).

This perfect example offered by a lawyer named Hellman seems to clearly show an illegitimate case of discrimination (Bob was not hired because he is black) and a legitimate case of discrimination (Bob was not hired because he did not pass the bar). In the first case, we have an illegitimate case of discrimination because Bob is evaluated as less competent because of his skin colour; this is a discriminatory act on a racial basis. The law often chooses to punish a discriminatory action when it refers to a person's "immutable" traits as, for example, her skin colours (Eidelson, 2015). However, the author also highlights that having (or not) the control of specific characteristics ~~it~~ shouldn't be enough to determinate what is or not illegitimate discrimination.

"First, discrimination on the basis of religion is often morally troubling, even when people can control their religious affiliation. Second, some traits that have seemed immutable in the past, like sex, are increasingly mutable, yet this fact does not appear to change the moral permissibility of discrimination on the basis of sex" (p.7).

In this sense, what makes a discriminative action legitimate or illegitimate and what makes the discrimination's variables more or less relevant is not their controllability but is the way in which these elements are culturally considered. In fact, the etymological origin from the verb "to discriminate" (from the Latin *discriminatio-onis* word), has not a negative or repressive connotation, but only the "neutral" differentiation ability (Castiglioni & Mariotti, 1996, p. 333).

"Discrimination – used in this way captures both ~~hits~~ negative and its positive connotations – is both ubiquitous and necessary. We routinely draw distinctions among people in public policy and law as well as in business, school settings, and private life. Laws require that drivers must be a certain age (16 is common) and must pass a test to be licensed to drive in all states. These laws distinguish (i.e., discriminate) between people on the basis of age and their ability to pass a test" (Hellman, 2008, pp. 2-3).

So, when we could say that discrimination is "wrong" or "negative"? "Discrimination is wrong when it is demeaning" Hellman says (2017, p. 8). Humiliation is the minimum common denominator between the different forms of discrimination, which happens among different places, period and human groups. Therefore, this ethical and emotive nature does not have to transmit an arbitrariness message. If we could never understand what discrimination is, we also won't be able to sanction those acts of discrimination.

So, jurisprudence chooses to define two categories of discrimination trying to better specify this construct:

- direct discrimination: all the forms of discrimination, which produce a prejudicial and discriminative effect against someone or against a group of people compared to another group of people in the same situation;
- indirect discrimination: when a disposition, a law, an action or an apparent neutral behaviour, put someone (or a group of people) in a particular disadvantageous position compared to other people. This is a more devious way of discrimination. (Tria, 2015, pp. 13-14).

Unfortunately, even though laws are today very protective against the multiple forms of discrimination (gender, religious, racial, ethnic, sexual discrimination, etc.) it is still difficult to recognize them. So, the laws exist, but it is not easy for the discriminated people to denounce the form of discrimination which undergoes because we are not educated to recognise this action. The cultural aspect is extremely relevant because discrimination of course has to be recognized but, first of all, it has to be prevented. It is necessary to spread and share a discrimination recognition's culture to assure human rights not to be discriminated (Tria, 2015, p. 122). In this sense, in order to reflect on discrimination (particularly on racism), in the next paragraphs I will present some of the results of a research project in which we interviewed unaccompanied foreign minors' educators and coordinators of second reception communities. The structured interview was composed of 70 questions. Among them, there was a specific question on the eventual discriminative episodes, which these children have been subject to. It was also interesting to deepen the way in which educators and coordinators intervened in front of these episodes, when these young boys chose to share their feelings and experience with them.

10.2 Discrimination against unaccompanied foreign minors

Some preliminary information about the research

The present research project was realized using a qualitative methodology (Silverman, 2016) with a very structured interview scheme composed of more than 70 questions. We chose to ask that many questions because the main objective of this project was to better understand the unaccompanied foreign children's reality thanks to the words of those who work with them every single day, which are educators and coordinators of the second reception communities where they lived. The educational research perspective that we use was the intercultural education ones (Bolognesi & Lorenzini, 2017). The interview scheme was subdivided into 15 sections to make the interview more accessible and to facilitate further analysis. We interviewed 30 people (16 men and 14 women) in 5 cities of Emilia-Romagna (Bologna, Ravenna, Faenza, Ferrara and Modena) in 10 second reception communities. Every interview lasted at least 1h and 30 minutes/2 hours and it was deregistered, producing a Word file of more than 650 pages.

In this chapter, I will present the critical analysis from the question n. 38, which was

“Have you any knowledge of some discrimination episodes experienced by the unaccompanied foreign minors you work with (especially related to their skin color or their foreign origin)? Can you provide me with some examples?”

We chose to include this question into the interview scheme because the research group was particularly interested in this thematic, especially in relation to the emotive-relational and social consequences of discrimination (Cardellini, 2015; 2017a; 2017b; Lorenzini, 2017) and also in the educational possibilities to contain this form of racism. Indeed, lots of international researcher projects highlight the negative effects of discrimination, especially for those who suffer from the vulnerable condition as, for example, young refugees and asylum-seekers

(Pittaway & Bartolomei, 2001; Montgomery & Foldspang, 2007; Ellis, MacDonald, Lincoln, Cabral, 2008). Nevertheless, there are a few scientific research projects, which focus on the effects of discrimination against unaccompanied foreign children, especially from the point of view of their educators and coordinators. Indeed, we were especially interested in the educative actions made by those who daily work with them.

In the 30 interviews we made:

- 25/30 told about discriminations and racist episodes;
- 3/30 initially answered in a dubious way and suddenly started telling about a discriminative episode;
- 2/30 said that no discrimination episodes have occurred.

So, we can affirm that 28/30 interviews tell about some discriminative episode reported from the unaccompanied foreign children.

Stories of discrimination against unaccompanied foreign children from the words of educators and coordinators of second reception communities

From the interviews' analysis, it was quite interesting (but also really worrying) to see the frequent referring to those we can name the "places of discrimination" (Lanutti, 2012, p. 148). These are different places, connected to each other by the same event, which is racism. This element brings us back to the widespread racist thought presented by Taguieff (1997). Unfortunately, these places are sadly familiar in the racist history even if several decades have elapsed; decades in which a great number of social, cultural and legal demands has happened. Nevertheless, history repeats itself. In the following paragraphs, I will present 3 specific "places of discrimination" emerged through the words of the respondents: the bus, the hospital (or more generally the medical workplaces) and the work place.

The first place of discrimination: the bus

The 4th of June 1956 a US legislation affirm the unconstitutionality of those laws, which allow the racial segregation on the buses. It was a very critical historical moment, because white people started what it has been called "period of terror" against black people, hitting and even killing black people (Gesualdi, 2003, p. 41). This "terroristic and violent period" left the room to a more socially shared racist acts. I refer to those acts with a lower violent impact (so, even more explicit and evident), looks and gestures, which may not be seen. Indeed, even when they are noticed, they do not ripple particular reactions and no clear positions are taken.

"The boys are aware of the social climate. So, there could be some difficulties related to some looks of worries. Even some buses' seats, which remain empty next to them because of their skin color. This leads them to stay with their peers, even if not co-national, who have characteristics, which they find protectives. This happens, yes. This happens

because they need protection, isn't it? I don't know how to say, I think it's because they want to protect their values" (4 Coordinator, M, Bologna)⁵⁴⁻⁵⁵.

"Yes, for example, he told me that there was a boy on a bus that often... he felt he was avoided or that people didn't want to sit next to him, even if the seat was available. Or, more broadly, people's behaviours towards him. They felt the mistrust. But, there is also someone, which told us opposite episodes" (10 Educator, M, Bologna)⁵⁶.

"They often told us: "Why the ladies on the bus move away from me?". These are things that happen! I mean...how you can move away from...I would always like to cuddle him! But it happens...obviously not everybody has this sensibility, people are not prepared and they have not the competences, which help you approaching a foreign person...with something different from you [...] Among their questions there was the one "Why you think that we are different because of our skin color? When we get on the bus...Why people move away from us?" They feel this and they feel a different treatment between us and them...us and the external world" (25 Educator, F, Ferrara)⁵⁷.

These three pieces of evidence tell us about some isolated micro-actions. It is important to try to pay attention to these daily episodes – maybe all of us have experienced this kind of episodes without a real awareness – which is a great opportunity to think in a critical way to these facts to whom we do not pay attention anymore as we were almost blind. Tagueiff, philosopher and political scientist, highlights the increasing difficulty to “reveal” racism. In fact, he refers to the difficulty to recognize “modern racism”, which is structured by social shared actions and words that are often not punishable. We are dealing with invisible elements, which directly hit the interested person without raising the awareness of the surrounding context. To move away to someone because he is black is a very complex behaviour and it is difficult to explicitly understand that the motivation, which led to moving away is the color of

⁵⁴ All the interviews were conducted in Italian and translated in English, so they present all the limitations of a translation. All the respondents' names were covered to respect their privacy. I also chose to put the original Italian version in the notes to allow readers to compare the original words.

⁵⁵ Perché ci si rende conto, i ragazzi si rendono conto di quello che è il clima, no? E che quindi ci possono essere delle difficoltà rispetto a, boh, sguardi di preoccupazione rispetto a loro. Posti in autobus che rimangono vuoti di fianco a loro per il colore della pelle, questo porta poi spesso a trovare nel gruppo dei pari, anche se non connazionali, tutte quelle caratteristiche comuni che diventano protettive per i ragazzi, no? Anche un po' identitarie. Per cui questo accade. Spesso più credo, almeno dalla nostra esperienza, per protezione, no? Non so come dire, per senso anche di necessità di preservare quelli che sono i propri valori. (4 Responsabile Cooperativa, Bologna).

⁵⁶ Sì ad esempio mi raccontava... un ragazzo come sull'autobus spesso... secondo lui aveva la percezione che spesso venisse evitato o che la gente non volesse sedersi nel posto accanto a lui anche se era libero, oppure in generale sull'atteggiamento delle persone... nei loro confronti, sentono comunque una diffidenza di base. Poi però in realtà spesso ci... cioè ci stupiamo che ti portano anche non so... esempi opposti ecco. (10 Educatore Comunità seconda accoglienza, Bologna).

⁵⁷ Perché loro spesso ci riportano: "Ma perché saliamo sull'autobus e la signora si sposta?". Perché queste cose succedono! Come fai a spostarti da uno... che io quando me lo prendo me lo spazzerei tutto! Invece succede... ovviamente non tutti hanno quella sensibilità, la preparazione... le caratteristiche che ti permettono di avvicinarti ad una persona straniera... intesa proprio come differente da te [...] Tra le domande che appunto, le domande che emergevano erano perché ci ritenete diversi per il colore della pelle? Perché quando noi saliamo in autobus... le persone si allontanano? Quindi comunque loro la sentono questa cosa e sentono anche la differenza di trattamento tra... noi e il mondo esterno. (25 Educatrice, Comunità, Ferrara).

his skin. Consequently, it will be difficult to sanction that behaviour as a racist one. How can people know that this person has moved away because of his skin color? Who might have the courage to accuse someone, risking to be accused himself of racism just people he hypotyse this correlation? Isn't true that everyone can choose where to sit on a bus (at least when there are not enumerated sitting, as for the train or aeroplane)? This is a really complex situation which needs – from an educative point of view – to personally involve oneself, asking us what are our level of racism sensitivity. We will never know if these boys have amplified their perception, interpreting an action as a racist one even if it didn't have this connotation. Nevertheless, their emotions are true and real and so does their perception not to be accepted. That is why, as the first educator tells in the interview, these emotions risk to produce protective behaviours, which also produce auto-segregation among peers, especially if they are black.

Indeed, in some cases, the discrimination experiences on the bus are more visible and we can observe the prejudice in a more explicit way.

“It is a global problem and these boys are not comfortable with that because...they are adolescents...if they mistreat you on the bus and also you don't understand what people tell you because you don't know Italian very well...it is really hard” (12 Coordinator, M, Bologna)⁵⁸.

“When you talk with some of them...sometimes, I ask them: “Guys, how is the situation going?” and they say: “Well...we don't care anymore. In Bologna is not too bad...”. Well, it happens that...I don't know...someone says: “It happens on a bus...people think that all the blacks...”. It was just yesterday when one of this boy tells me: “People think that all the blacks don't have the ticket...that we don't get the ticket. But it is not true. Also yesterday I was pulled over on the train and they wanted to see all of my documents, but I had the ticket”. Or: “It was the other day when a ladies said to a ticket inspector: ‘Go to them! They have not the ticket’. But we had the ticket”. We gave him our ticket...well, things like that” (17 Educator, F, Bologna)⁵⁹.

From these examples, we can see more explicit episodes, where we can recognize the prejudice. What we can also observe, is the difficulty of these boys to understand the content of the offense or prejudice because of linguistic problems. This element can only aggravate the situation, making them even more sensitive to the non-verbal language, which helps them to be more competent to recognize even the “smallest” prejudiced act. This also helps us to better understand their hypersensitivity. Not to completely understand what someone is saying to you

⁵⁸ Tutto sommato è a un discorso mondiale e i ragazzi non se la vivono bene, perché sono adolescenti e quindi se in autobus ti trattano male e se poi più non capisci quello che ti dicono e se non c'hai la proprietà di un linguaggio adeguata ehm... è difficile. (12 Coordinatore Comunità seconda accoglienza, Bologna).

⁵⁹ Alcuni quando parli con loro... perché io ogni tanto glielo chiedo: “Ragazzi come va, la situazione...” e loro ti dicono: “Mah non ci facciamo più caso, a Bologna non è neanche tanto male...”. Eh... possono capitare situazioni ad esempio, ad esempio non so, ti dicono: “Mah mi è successo in autobus e... la gente pensa che tutti, che tutti...”. Ieri, ieri me l'hanno detto: “Eh perché la gente pensa che tutti i neri, noi neri non abbiamo il biglietto... non facciamo il biglietto dell'autobus, ma non è vero, vedi vedi anche l'altro giorno mi hanno fermato, in treno, hanno voluto vedere tutto tutto, ma io il biglietto ce l'avevo”. Oppure: “L'altra signora che dice ah andate bene da quelli lì, quelli lì che non ce l'hanno il biglietto, ma noi ce l'avevamo tutti il biglietto”. Gli diamo l'abbonamento... ecco cioè cose di questo tipo... (17 Educatrice, Comunità educativa, Bologna).

and to live discriminated episodes in a foreign language, could be an offense at three levels, at least: (1) they have not the possibility to completely understand what is said, (2) they have not the possibility to answer, (3) the communication risks to remain ambiguous and easily misunderstandable from both the parts. In the second example, the ethnic and racial prejudice is more visible and easy to observe. “People think that all the blacks does not have the ticket” is what the boy said to the educator. This young boy perceives a general and pervasive inference, which led “people” to attribute a specific behaviour (which is not to have the ticket) in relation to a visible element, which is black skin.

“Furthermore, even the possibility that the bus doesn’t stop at the bus station seeing a group o black boys. Well, the bus. I didn’t see that, but our boys often tell us that the bus does not stop at the bus station when the driver sees them. It happens to one of my colleagues to see a bus which does not stop at the bus station seeing them. Well, it means that...we are coming back in the ancient times with these behaviours. They are really crazy! [...] If the bus does not stop and you are...and you understand that it is because of you...and if it happens more than one time, I think it is something terrible. That’s why the guys leave the community very few times. We help them talking with them, but also helping them to make some activities with Italian boys as much as we could, even in the schools” (6 Educator, F, Bologna)⁶⁰.

In this example, the educator tells us about an episode where a bus seems not to have stopped in a bus station seeing a group of unaccompanied foreign children; maybe because the bus driver identified them as foreigners due to their physical aspect (particularly because of their skin color). We can also observe that it seem a really painful experience for these guys, which has been repeated more than one time. Consequently, these guys started to ~~aet~~ show? some protective behaviours, closing and isolating themselves from the rest of the world. In these cases, the prejudices (which could also remain at a level of thought) become an act.

The second place of discrimination: the hospital

The hospital, which might be seen as a care and protective place, became protagonist of some of the discrimination episodes. Even if it could be unusual, research projects which highlights that racism against black people happens also in the hospital are quite diffuse (Corossacz, 2004, p. 46), often mixed with sexism in the case of black women (Leal, Gama & Cunha, 2005, Johnstone & Kanitsaki 2009).

“It happens that I hear some little digs when I go to the hospital. I hear also the nurses that stop to say: “Are you there with our money, isn’t it?” (forse meglio “I bet you’re

⁶⁰ Poi eeeh, l’autobus. Eh, io non l’ho visto però i ragazzi dicono spesso che gli autobus non si fermano. Quando li vede. A una mia collega è successo, in presenza della mia collega, che non si fermasse il bus. Insomma dire che...siamo proprio ritornati nell’antichità ecco con questi atteggiamenti, veramente assurdi. [...] Se l’autobus non si ferma e tu sei... e tu capisci che è perché sei tu e ti succede più volte, cioè veramente deve essere una cosa orribile. Quindi... sicuramente il fatto che... infatti molto spesso i ragazzi escono poco. E... quindi li aiutiamo non solo parlandoci, ma anche facendogli fare attività con i ragazzi italiani il più possibile, anche nelle scuole eccetera, però, insomma. (6 Educatrice gruppo appartamento, Bologna).

here with your money right?”. When you bring one of those boys to the dentist in the Hospital, for example... So... well, yes, it is racism. Crypto-racism. All those half sentences in the middle of the corridor. Those who say: “I’m not a racist, but...” (5 Educator, M, Bologna)⁶¹.

“Yes, very simple things. As, for example, when we are in the CUP⁶² and people talk to each other as if we cannot hear them, maybe they don’t realize that and they say: “Look, only because it is black” or “Where does he find the money? Look, they jump the line”. This is clearly not true. Or: “They don’t pay...”. And you have to explain: “Ok...well...”. You can choose to answer, even in a polite way, or you have to ~~put~~ keep it all aside because you understand that you are going to make the boys feel uncomfortable. You never know how to act in these cases. ~~It~~ This could happen with people in general but also with the sanitary officer which say: “Piss off!”. Yes, that’s right...it happens in the hospital. “Piss off!”. It was a doctor. In that situation, I had to answer because it was too much. [...] Then of course we move away because if you go to the hospital it is because you don’t feel well and in front of this kind of situation...it is not positive” (6 Educator, F, Bologna)⁶³.

*“What I just said about the hospital...it is incredible. For at least two time we’ve been treated in a different way. But really in a different way! It means... They were angry or...in the hospital ***** (the educator named the hospital), I want to say the name because it always happens there, they said: “Well, other tickets which are going into the trash because you are not paying anything”. They obviously not have to pay. This happened in front of the boys, that even if they may not understand, they clearly understand the situation” (6 Educator, F, Bologna)⁶⁴.*

All the three here reported examples show us a common theme, thus of the perception that these unaccompanied foreign children are stealing the Italians’ privileges. The most used

⁶¹ Mah. Più che altro sono delle... sento delle frecciate quando vado in ospedale di... anche di infermieri che si fermano a dire: “Ah con i nostri soldi eh?”. Quando porti un ragazzo a fare una cura dentaria all’Ospedale, per esempio. Quindi, magari... sì, razzismo, sì. Criptorazzismo. Cioè queste mezze frasi nei corridoi, lanciati così, che... di quelli lì che dicono: “Io non sono razzista, ma...”. (5 Educatore gruppo appartamento, Bologna).

⁶² Italian health office.

⁶³ Sì, dalle cose molto semplici, tipo, siamo in coda al CUP per fare un esempio e le persone parlano come se poi noi non sentissimo, forse non si rendono conto e dicono: “Ah, guarda, questo solo perché è nero”, così, oppure: “Dove troverà i soldi? Guardali sono passati avanti”. Cose che poi non stanno né in cielo né in terra naturalmente. Oppure: “Hanno l’esenzione...”. E ti trovi a dover dire: “Va bene”. O si risponde, anche in maniera educata, oppure si lascia stare perché dopo sai che metti anche il ragazzo in una posizione molto spiacevole. Non si sa mai bene come agire in questi casi. Questo avviene con le persone, ma magari anche quando sei allo sportello, mi è successo all’ospedale di sentirci dire: “Sì, si andate fuori dai coglioni”, così proprio da un dottore. E lì ho dovuto rispondere perché insomma, mi è sembrato veramente eccessivo. [...] Poi ovviamente ce ne siamo andati perché sei all’ospedale con un ragazzo e vuol dire che c’è una persona che non sta bene e metterlo di fronte anche a una situazione di questo tipo non... non aggiunge positività. (6 Educatrice gruppo appartamento, Bologna).

⁶⁴ Sì, beh quello che ti dicevo prima all’ospedale, incredibile, ma ci è successo ben due volte di... proprio di sentirci dire, sì di esserci, di essere trattati in maniera diversa, ma palesemente in maniera diversa. Cioè scocciati, oppure di... anche sempre all’ospedale, (l’educatrice fa il nome dell’Ospedale), lo sottolineo, che è sempre stato lì, ci hanno detto una volta: “Ecco qua, altri ticket che vanno nel cestino perché non vengono pagati”. Perché loro hanno l’esenzioni naturalmente. Di fronte ai ragazzi eh. Cioè questo, tutto di fronte ai ragazzi che anche quando non capiscono, capiscono, punto. (6 Educatrice gruppo appartamento, Bologna).

accusatory content towards these boys seems to that of “Not to paying the ticket”, both from other patients and doctors as well (which is a really serious thing). Indeed, this negative experience could also worsen their already compromised physical condition (Pernice & Brook, 1996; Finch et al., 2001; Ellis et al., 2008), without forgetting that these boys often came in Italy already in a very vulnerable psycho-physical situation.

Once again, the repeated discriminatory experiences bring them to assume those protective behaviours, which we already mentioned, together with some generalisation mechanism, which let them think that “all the Italians are racists”. In the example down below, with an ironic tone, the coordinator ends his answer by saying: “They tell us we are racists. They do it 9 times over 10, it’s almost a negotiation mechanisms”.

“It is not a welcoming place...they are quite light stuff but, for example...when I’m out with them...well, despite the evident chromatic contrast between me and them, I also feel a heavy look on me just simply when I was out with them or when we stood in line at the sanitary office for a medical appointment. Nobody has dared to say something in front of me...but I’m used to observing the non-verbal signs and I’ve often perceived looks of disagreement because I work with them. They are almost used to everything...they have to fend for themselves but they came to us saying that we are racist, they do it 9 times over 10, it almost a negotiation mechanisms” (27 Coordinator, M, Ferrara)⁶⁵.

The third place of discrimination: the workplace

The workplace seem to be another place where these young boys might face discrimination, especially during the stages found by their educators, in order to introduce them in the workfield. In fact, it is extremely difficult for these unaccompanied foreign children to find a job. This is one of the major mission of the second reception communities. Moreover, the boys themselves ask with enthusiasm to be part of these working programs (together with the document necessity). This is a quite hard process and it also requires an initial negotiation phase between the young boy and the educators, who have to let them know that they cannot work since they are minor. This is something which is not well accepted by the boys, because they often have to send money back to their families in their country of origin. It is a very delicate moment in which they have to face a quite different reality from the one they were expecting before coming to the host country. First, they often have to participate to an alphabetisation course. The educator tries to explain to the boys the importance of learning the Italian language, in order to be able to communicate in a better way and be able to dive into the labour market once they are old enough to work⁶⁶. However, this is one of the very first

⁶⁵ Sì non è un territorio accogliente non... se devo dire sono tutte cose anche in fondo abbastanza leggere, però ad esempio io...quando vado in giro con loro, a parte va bè l’evidente contrasto cromatico tra me e loro quando sono con i ragazzi di colore, io ho sentito lo sguardo pesante su di me che mi permettevo di portare in giro i ragazzi ma anche solo a fare la coda all’USL o a fare una visita medica. Dopo poi nessuno davanti a me ha mai osato esplicitare perché non... però sono abituato a leggere i segnali non verbali, ho sentito spesso sguardi di profondo dissenso rispetto al fatto che si lavorasse per i ragazzi. Loro sono abituati sai... si arrangiano sopportano anche abbastanza bene, quando vengono da noi e dicono che siamo razzisti, lo fanno 9 volte su 10 è una dinamica contrattuale. (27 Responsabile, Comunità, Ferrara).

⁶⁶ This phase is also quite difficult, because not all the boys have the right motivation to learn Italian because Italy is not their final destination.

frustration they experience because educators put a very high barrier between them and one of their principle objectives⁶⁷. This situation brings lot of negative emotions, expecially an high level of concerns about their families. It is also important to specify that these emotions are related to the fact that most of these families go into debt in order to allow their child to take the dangerous journey through the sea.

“The family often make economical requests related to their brothers and sisters’ school taxes or...even medical payments or to pay off their debts. So, these boys are very focused on this, trying to send some money back home as soon as they can. Some of them also send their pocket money. Someone is not able to do that, but still express his worries. As educators, by trying to understand these concerns we can also better understand the difficulties that can lie under the relation the boys have with their families and also where these difficulties became concerns. Some of the boys, as asoon as they start their 450 euros’ 6 months internship, send everything to their family. This is also a discreet problem because they should keep that money for them and their future, but we saw that, in these cases, we have no negotiation power. They choose to help their families as soon as possible, because they have a great sense of responsibility in their migration route” (4 Coordinator, Bologna)⁶⁸.

At first, this sense of responsibility has to be stopped, in favour of a learning process. Therefore, they start a remunerated intership only when they reach their alphabetisation objectives and when the receipt communities have the opportunity to find some funds. The case manager is often the one who has the responsibility to find a specific workplace that is likely to welcome an unaccompanied foreign minor. From the word of our respondents, it seems really hard to have the possibility to access to these internships.

“It is quite complex for them because not all the employers are available to take a migrant and someone with problems with his documents; or also because of discrimination” (11 Educator, F, Bologna)⁶⁹.

⁶⁷ This is also why, in some case, these young boys are an easy prey for the illegal work.

⁶⁸ La famiglia ha in alcuni casi richieste anche economiche rispetto al pagamento della scuola dei fratelli piccoli, piuttosto che... no? Malattie o necessità di saldare i debiti. Per cui i ragazzi questo lo vivono molto forte e in molti casi il loro obiettivo è quello di riuscire a mandare dei soldini a casa il prima possibile. C’è chi lo fa già con il pocket money, c’è chi questa cosa fa fatica a farla, ma ne parla. E quindi insomma, una lettura anche del benessere dei ragazzi permette di capire agli operatori quando ci sono delle difficoltà rispetto alla relazione con i parenti, ma dove le difficoltà sono preoccupazioni, no? Ci sono ragazzi che appena cominciano un’esperienza di tirocinio, mandano tutto. Ci sono ragazzi neomaggiorenni che hanno fatto un tirocinio di 6 mesi, i famosi tirocini 450 euro mensili e hanno mandato tutto. Cosa che è anche un discreto problema perché poi quei soldini lì sono quelli che devono tenere come loro patrimonio per il futuro e in realtà abbiamo visto che non c’è proprio possibilità spesso di negoziazione di questo. I ragazzi appena possono aiutare la famiglia lo fanno, sono investiti da una forte responsabilità nel loro percorso migratorio e quando riescono loro questa cosa riescono a farvi fronte (4 Responsabile Cooperativa, Bologna).

⁶⁹ È più difficili per loro perché mi rendo conto che non tutti i datori di lavori sono disposti ad assumere un migrante o sono disposti ad assumere una persona con eh problemi con eh i documenti o semplicemente per discorsi di discriminazione. (11 Educatrice Comunità seconda accoglienza, Bologna).

The documents' irregularity is a very cited problem among the educators we have interviewed as it is one of the most problematic bureaucratic problems. Therefore, to be a foreigner with no valid documents seem not to be the only problem for these unaccompanied foreign children, which seem to face discrimination also in the work field.

"Sometimes it comes out some jokes that they maybe do not understand because they still have linguistic problems...but we understand. For example, I send an internship demands in a very well-known food chain, where we already have lots of boys for their internship. I introduce to them a very good boy, which also speaks two languages. I also sent to them his curriculum. "Ah, it's black...we are not racist but...you know...the old people...they struggle to understand". This is discrimination because of their skin color. [...] So, I said to them: "Well, I also have another guy. He's Serbian, he steals everything...but it is fine. You can have that one". That is when you understand that is a skin color's question" (17 Educator, F, Bologna)⁷⁰.

"It is a skin color's question", the educator's ends. She highlights how different the motivations could be in relation to the difficulty to find a job. She also underlines that the skin color element has a significant impact on these dynamics. Indeed, sometimes these dynamics emerged also in the relationship with the colleagues, during the boys work experiences.

"They often tell us...it often happens in the workplaces. [...] Well, for example: "Do you never see the snow in your country, right? Don't you understand that we have to work also with the snow...look at your skin color". Maybe these are nonsenses, but I think that this is not pleasant" (18 Educator, F, Bologna)⁷¹.

This example could have (and probably it has) a comic intention. From an educative and intercultural point of view, it is important to highlight what the boy felt. From the educator's words, it seems that, from the boy's point of view, this experience was not funny at all. "Don't you understand that we have to work also with the snow...", "Do you never see the snow in your country, right?" are ethnocentric sentences, which show a limited and ethnocentric point of view, only related to his own personal experience of life, without an ethnorelativistic and intercultural competence (Bennet, 1998).

⁷⁰ Sì. C'è purtroppo a volte vengono fuori anche le battute... c'è... sono battutacce hai capito? Che loro magari non colgono perché non hanno ancora la lingua che cogliamo noi... o vediamo le... che ne so? Faccio domanda in una nota catena alimentare dove abbiamo già avuto un sacco di ragazzi in tirocinio, stage, presento il ragazzo bravissimo, doppia lingua, bla bla bla bla bla sì sì sì sì, porto il curriculum "Ah ma è nero... non perché siano razzisti noi, ma sa le persone anziane... che vengono fanno molta fatica, eccetera eccetera...", è discriminazione per il colore della pelle. [...] Di contro, gli dico: "Ah ne ho un altro, serbo, ruba tutto quello che c'è da rubare, però va bene prendo quello". Tu capisci è proprio una questione di pelle. (17 Educatrice, Comunità educativa, Bologna).

⁷¹ Sì di solito e lo raccontano. Spesso succede nei ambienti di lavoro. [...] Eh ... dalle eh a casa tua la neve non hai mai vista, cosa puoi capire qua che noi dobbiamo lavorare con la neve, guarda di che colore sei, mah tutte magari stupidaggine, pero non belli al eh che ne so (18 Educatrice, Comunità educativa, Bologna).

10.3 Conclusions

In the chapter I choose to focus on the places of discrimination rather than the discriminative event or the discriminative actors because I choose to carefully analyze the interviews, trying to capture a more or less explicit message, which it has been repeatedly highlighted from the educators and coordinators that we interviewed. These professionals seem to ask for a more complex vision of the phenomenon, which could go over the single event or person, in order to catch the interrelation between the context and all the implicit dynamics that undergoes the discriminatory episode. It is also important to specify that there was another context in which the respondents have exploited during the interviews as, for example, school, football field, the city streets and even the community context. I choose to highlight these contexts because there was an high prevalence of narrated racism experiences, except for the community context for which I think it could be important to dedicate a specific and separate consideration because of the very complex relations which occur in this place during the coexistence of unaccompanied foreign children. Joes Feagin, a US' sociologist and expert of racial and gender questions, coined the terms *systemic racism* as a concept and, I will add, as an antiracist methodology. To analyse racism, we need a systemic vision to try to keep together both its nature, social, anthropological and psychosocial nature in an interdisciplinary way. Of course, this could help the comprehension of such a complex phenomenon, but I think it could also be the way in which trying to intervene in an effective and educative antiracist way. If we are educative and affectively responsible adults, we have to make choices to fight against racism. This is a far from easy objective but even the great difficulty should not prevent us from the attempt (Taguieff, 1997, p. 110).

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Chapter 11

Unaccompanied Girls and Their Silences: a Qualitative Research

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11.1 Premise

Nassim Taleb, philosopher and economist, defined unpredictable events as Black swans looming over the present, conceived as a predictable projection of the future on our past. Isolation is among the Black swan traits: it's impossible to enter the realm of our own expectations, since nothing in our past can foresee its occurrence. The Black swan has a massive impact on our lives, as well as on the modifications to all environments following its appearance. Last but not least, the existence of a Black swan pushes us to a logical reconsideration in order to justify its occurrence, reviewing past events to make it explainable, predictable, therefore acceptable (Taleb, 2008, p. 11). In short, isolation, impact and explanation make up the triad that gives meaning to a rare event that bursts into everyday life with its extra-ordinary nature.

The Black swan both decreases and increases the amount of time we spend reflecting on our existence, through micro and macro observations which apply the logical-mathematical laws of fractality: it is a powerful tool that examines the little notes as well as the big theories behind a phenomenon.

This consideration served as the very beginning of our investigation into the world of unaccompanied teenage girls, into the world of foreign unaccompanied minors who, in turn, are part of the *maxi case* of immigration. The lack of numerical data concerning their presence and the absence of a scientific literature on the matter are factors that turn these circumstances into a Black swan, worthy of being discovered and examined in order to sustain both care and formative processes.

It means, in the immigration framework, developing equanimity, and therefore the ability to be impartial, recognising diversity within the event and understanding that reality can be read from multiple points of view, can have multiple subjects and different interpretations. It means, in short, to break the silences *on* and *of* unaccompanied female minors.

11.2 Unaccompanied Female Minors: Between Context and Legislation

The development of new theories in the researching field, and the opening of new thematic fields related to contemporary history events, brought the pedagogical and social discourse towards unexplored argumentations, proving that cross-cultural research is indeed inevitable. In Western societies, immigration as an issue is at the core of very passionate debates which have managed to crystallize the main tensions about immigrants' arrivals, dividing the native population between, on one hand, inclusion and a recognized Otherness and, on the other, refusal as well as an identitarian retreat from the Other.

The immigration process of children and teenagers who arrive in Italy, leaving places of suffering, violence, famine and poverty, is to be considered as a structural phenomenon, which has been happening in Italy for almost three decades (Silva & Campani, 2004). Far from the social crisis, minors represent an overlooked consequence of a broader global dimension that asks to be observed, interpreted and understood in its complexity (Biagioli, 2017).

The new regulatory framework outlined by the L.47/2017, newfound experience on a professional and organisational level, increased knowledge about immigration processes, awareness of the political and cultural impact caused by the presence of so many foreign minors, the willingness of sponsoring socially inclusive paths – these are the fundamental tenets of a research which, over the past ten years, has been consistently and progressively called into action to further examine the matter of immigration, redefining the fields of study and action: its starting point is the awareness of the reality of these human flows, in Italy as well as on the other side of the Alps.

Meaning that what we are looking at is a different kind of pedagogy: a *militant* pedagogy that reaches beyond mere theoretical thinking to take an active and effective stand on the socio-educational issues which define the peculiarity of a given socio-historical context (Baldacci, 2015).

Over time the target of this investigation has been enhanced thanks to several international papers which support theories on risks and resilience practices (Carlson, Cacciatore & Klimek, 2012), on the crucial role played by religion in these unaccompanied minors' life plan (Raghallaigh & Gilligan, 2010), on concepts such as care and belonging (De Graeve, 2017), on the process of applying for political asylum (Hedlund, 2016), on expressive arts as both individual and group therapy (Meyer DeMott, Jakobsen, Wenzel-Larsen & Heir, 2017). In addition, in recent years, socio-pedagogical (Agostinetto, 2017; Pizzi, 2016) and biographical-narrative studies (Biagioli, 2015a) have also been published. These observations center around the risks of social marginalisation and exclusion which unaccompanied minors are vulnerable to, and the lack of input towards a more structured work organisation – with clear tasks and functions – for people working in the world of unaccompanied minors.

According to the holistic approach offered by the UN's Declaration of the Rights of the Child, the minor is a subject with rights rather than an object of care, supporting the belief that in order to champion sustainable development we must invest in the new generations. This newfound awareness supports the higher interest of children and teenagers, through non-discrimination, the right to life, development, equal opportunities and participation (Macinai, 2007). Human sciences are essentially intertwined with the guiding principle of the minor's

well-being, in a combination of knowledge and research methodologies which, first and foremost, should redefine the minor's bio-legal essence. It follows that the legislative approach is a starting point for a clear and incisive reading of a progressively relevant phenomenon. It is crucial we strive for deeply pedagogical studies which must engage every single field of human sciences, since – when it comes to socialisation, integration and premature adulthood – teenagers exhibit multiple issues.

Restricting the scope of the research to unaccompanied female minors adds further complexity to our perspective: there are no Italian or international studies on the matter, which is why it is impossible to build theoretical alliances, to introduce comparative processes and to widen the researcher's horizon. We must raise a new kind of epistemological sensitivity, rooted in the possible development of a scientific discourse which should contemplate, at the same time, pedagogical theories about childhood and cross-cultural and gender perspectives, in order to step in with effective educational strategies.

The daily statistical survey offered by Italy's Ministry of the Interior, on February 16, 2018, has registered a remarkable decrease in arrivals compared to the same time range back in 2017: 621 minors, a number which must be combined with untraceable minors, teenagers who have been admitted as adults and separated children whom, during the journey, have been abandoned by either a parent, relative or legal guardian (Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, 2016).

Minors, and especially unaccompanied foreign minors, are recognised as a group vulnerable to consistent violence and abuse, "as a matter of fact, they are part of the migratory flows towards Europe and Italy and, once they come in contact with traffickers (who plan journeys and routes), they are easily lured into exploitation networks" (Save the Children, 2016, p. 5).

The numbers of Nigerian minors and young women transferred to Italy to be exploited have shown a steady increase; between January and June 2016, 3529 Nigerian women have reached Italy by sea. The 2016 data confirms the increasing trend concerning Nigerian women's arrivals, which has registered a staggering 300% increase between 2014 and 2015 (Save the Children, 2017).

The Italian state has already provided itself with regulatory instruments which guarantee protection and assistance to the victims: the 228/2003 law, art. 13, has established a special assistance program for victims of crimes linked to human trafficking, as required by criminal law (artt. 600 and 601); whereas art. 18 D. Lgs 286/98 has introduced social protection. With the D.L. 18 agosto 2015, n. 142, art. 17, c. 1, Italy welcomes and protects people affected by specific needs: in particular, reception measures take into account the specific circumstances of vulnerable people, such as unaccompanied minors.

These regulations allow the victim to escape violent situations and to legally remain in Italy thanks to a residency permit, justified by reasons of social protection; moreover, the victims are not compelled to press charges against exploiters and traffickers. However, the Italian police does not make much use of this instrument, since it is almost exclusively applied to sexual exploitation cases and, even then, it is frequently subjected to multiple restricting interpretations from the police itself, which keeps asking the victims to press charges against their exploiters (Save the Children, 2017).

The most recent legislative reference on the matter of foreign minors is art. 17 of the Zampa law, which supplies victims of human trafficking with a specific assistance program, which

should provide appropriate reception measures and psycho-social, health and legal support, establishing long term solutions, even long after they come of age.

Despite its quantitative relevance, the reality of unaccompanied teenagers takes on a massive and profound significance in the broader context of immigration, by simply examining the importance of the migratory process – in circumstances of extreme disadvantage – for these young people trying to reach the European coasts while bearing the consequences of long-distance affection (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2012) and automatically acquiring breadwinner status for the nuclear and extended family. “These are neither categories, nor exceptional cases, but rather a paradigmatic facet of contemporary reality” (Agostinetti, 2017, p. 439): this forces us to face crucial pedagogical challenges in order to activate reception, support and social inclusion measures to better respond to these people’s actual needs. In this scenario, female migration does not represent a new phenomenon; as a matter of fact, it’s an “historical and extraordinary phenomenon which belongs to our time. Over the course of history, the female figure has always represented sedentism, someone who stays and waits for who has left to return” (Biagioli, 2003, p. 85).

It’s a reality which human sciences have consistently stressed. “Being an immigrant woman means being doubly stigmatized, both for your gender and your ethnicity” (Ulivieri, 2017, p. 9): immigrant women experience the disorientation brought on by an unknown country, different social structures, a different organisation of times and places far from family, social, ethical and religious traditions. However, if we move our focus onto younger people, the female journey is destined to be condemned to marginalisation, social deviance and minimal opportunities for self-affirmation and life plan fulfillment.

The presence and arrivals of unaccompanied female minors, who exhibit different traits and provenances compared to their male peers, have been steady, albeit quantitatively limited: in 2017, the overall amount of unaccompanied female minors present on Italian soil was of 1291 individuals, with a 50% of seventeen year-olds and a 43% coming from Nigeria and the Horn of Africa countries (Ministry of the Interior, 2017). According to the data, it’s clear we are dealing with limited numbers, which are not even close to the massive numbers of immigration; and yet, behind the statistical indifference there are young girls no one cares about, at risk individuals in the *mare magnum* of immigration. The IOM (2017) appraises that nearly 80% of young Nigerian girls are potential victims of human and sexual trafficking and among the most at risk individuals.

11.3 The Female Migrant Identity Through Life Stories: Theories, Methodology and Tools

Emigrating means creating a cultural and emotional separation from the native background, from the relational system we are born in, the place where we have built our first identity. For this very reason emigrating is a displacement that determines a redefinition of family, cultural, social, religious and educational models. A greater vulnerability is typical of female journeys, not just for the emigrating woman herself, but also because of the repercussions on her reproductive choices (Iori, 2015). It entails a fracture of the subject’s interactional system within the native background, which in turn produces systems of double absence (Sayad, 2002) and collapses of the self. This further results in a double exclusion: the tragedy resides in the

Otherness being refused and rejected, in their world and their imagination being expropriated (Pinto Minerva, 2017).

Francesca Marone (2017) describes the theory, developed by Rosi Braidotti, which defines nomadism as the ontological essence of the female subject: “Nomadism, in addition to being a physical experience, it becomes a mental attitude, a critical consciousness (awareness) that is escaping to compositions of thought and socially coded behavior, that opens new horizons of the meanings: go, relocate in another story” (p. 41).

Knowledge through stories and stories as means of knowledge are the qualitative researcher’s axioms; for them, narration is the representation of a given event – or events – they only have secondhand (and never firsthand) experience of. Such experience can be exclusively accessed through the narrative discourse.

A life story isn’t just like any other discourse, but rather a “narrative discourse which is committed to tell a story that is both real and – as opposed to written autobiographies – improvised while in conversation with a researcher who has steered the focus of the interview towards specific experiences related to their subject matter” (Bertaux, 1998, p. 81).

The theme of female identity and its construction in a new background moves closer to the meditative outcomes of a philosophical, sociological and psychological category – that of identity – which is also present in anthropological and pedagogical discourse.

According to Bruner, narrative identities are constructed within the cultural paradigm, meaning that “we are virtually from the start expressions of the culture that nurtures us. But culture itself is a dialectic, replete with alternative narratives about what the self is or might be. And the stories we tell to create ourselves reflect that dialectic” (2002, p. 87). In a certain sense, the act of writing seems to confirm Bruner’s idea that narration is both a synthetic and synesthetic moment of finding our place in our cultural frame of reference (Demetrio, 1996). Back in the 20th century, the Seventies have paved the way for a newfound interest towards biographical sources, building a theoretical and methodological framework around them in order to move beyond the idea that a tale is nothing more than an oral exposition, and to glimpse the ethnosociological (Bertaux, 1976) and pedagogical (Demetrio 1996; 2003; 2008) meanings behind the act of writing and self-narrative (Biagioli, 2016)

The endless possibilities of self-narrative are the reason behind this qualitative research, which aims to investigate *if* and *how* these young girls’ social identity undergoes a restructuring from the moment they arrive, keeping in mind the long, perilous, solitary and stressful voyage that has brought them from the Libyan coasts to the island of Lampedusa, or the Italian regions of Apulia and Calabria. We intend to present the migratory experience, the female experience and life plan, from the female educators as well as a few young girls’ points of view, in order to reconsider the educational practices from pedagogical and feminist perspectives. These practices should aim for the inclusion of unaccompanied female minors in the social environment they live in.

We have tried to pursue three different purposes: firstly, take stock of the unaccompanied female minors phenomenon; secondly, collecting life stories from girls who have decided to answer the interviewer’s questions; and lastly, we have identified the pedagogical meanings of their stories in relation to similar studies about immigrant women who have also been victims of human trafficking.

Throughout the research we encountered multiple difficulties: there are no pre-existent connections with the host communities; obtaining the facility coordinator's approval, and the girls' cooperation and willingness to be interviewed, has not proved an easy task. The promise of anonymity has managed to reassure all interviewed women.

The autobiographical approach is not a random methodological choice: self-narrative is a personal effort aimed at building and rebuilding one's own existence; "sure enough, in the autobiographical narrative the subject stretches themselves to grasp at their own self and their own life events" (Barbieri, 2015, p. 124). To collect these girls' life stories we pursued two different paths: the first, by interviewing the female educators who take care of them and, only later, by asking an informal meeting with the minors at the host facility.

Throughout the field research, we have implemented snowball or chain referral sampling, a technique vastly used in qualitative research in sociology, which allows the study sample to progressively grow thanks to the existing subjects' acquaintances, who have the same traits deemed interesting by the research guidelines. This flexible technique is particularly appropriate in cases such as ours, where the research deals with very delicate, worrying or rather personal issues: it's crucial for the researcher to have the necessary connections with the authorised personnel, in order to identify potential study subjects (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981, p. 141).

Over time, the sample has grown, going from one to two interviews with the host community coordinators and educators and with nine Nigerian girls, six of whom have subsequently decided to turn down the interview (a decision relayed by their educator, via text message). The identified girls, all from Nigeria, are in delicate psychophysical conditions, which make them more shy and quieter than their peers: they are used to being controlled by other people who answer for them or they are reluctant to be interviewed (IOM, 2017). In one case, a girl had performed a voodoo ritual back in Libya which convinced her she could not break her promise. To guarantee anonymity, we are only going to disclose the fact that the research took place in a Southern Italy province.

Our instrument of choice is the free interview, which in later phases (reading and studying) requires the contribution of hermeneutics, as "a perspective favouring endless meanings, an unlimited productivity of interpretations" (Montesperelli, 1998, p. 29). Therefore, the interviewer also becomes an "interpreter of meta-theoretical attitudes, such as the interest towards understanding, attention, keeping an open mind, self-denial, humility, *pietas* in the face of another blossoming *humanitas* and so on" (*ibidem*, pp. 29-30).

The interview has been conducted in English to ensure the girls with a bigger chance to express themselves without the potential obstacle of a limited understanding of the Italian language.

The resulting considerations have been subsequently divided into thematic sections, such as family memories, voyage memories, traumas, life plan.

11.4 Considerations on the Interviews Pedagogical Meanings

In this social study, it proved necessary to introduce an "hermeneutical sensitivity" in order to define the limits of the historical significance of the interpretation, the relationship with

prejudices, the debt to language (especially everyday language), the impossibility of immediacy, misunderstanding, the Other and the self's integral Otherness (Ricoeur, 1990; 2012). Hence, it is not about extracting every single meaning from a life story, but only the ones deemed relevant to the study in question; these meanings acquire the status of *indicators* (Bertaux, 1998, p. 82). We have identified five indicators which, reading the interviews from a pedagogical perspective, present us with interesting nuances:

11.4.1 Voices of Hospitality: Facilities and Aid Workers Feeling Unprepared

The status of the unaccompanied foreign minor who realises they are different from the self they have left in their home country, shows the delicate and problematic context the host communities educators (both male and female) find themselves working in. In addition to the issues experienced by young boys, as depicted by Giovannetti (2008) and Agostinetto (2017), there are also gender-related issues as well as difficulties caused by human trafficking. Over time, these new educational necessities have changed the pedagogical landscape: facilities which once had to organise spaces, times and working patterns “mostly aimed at hosting minors outside the family and/or a criminal background, had to re-build functional and flexible models of intervention” (Bracalenti & Saglietti, 2011, p. 12).

In her interview, the coordinator of a facility for disadvantaged minors has talked about the initial unease they experienced when the city social worker informed them that a young Nigerian girl was about to join them:

*“I represent a shelter house for minors coming from Italian families with social or economic issues. Two years ago we applied to become part of Sprar (Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees) to welcome girls aged 13 to 17 years old. When they told us the girl was coming from Calabria and that she had spent some time in an initial reception community, I’ll be honest, at the beginning it was hard, the unknown is scary. Our shelter has a different kind of guests: they’re all Italian, aged 10 to 15 years old, and when ***** first arrived they were all suspicious... you know, the cultural gap, the fear of dirtiness...”*

In a situation as delicate as a minor's transfer, it's necessary to consider the specificity they bring with them; they are three times alienated: as a foreign person (bringer of a different culture), a teenager (generational isolation) and unaccompanied minor (alienation from their family background). When it comes to foreign girls we are also talking about gender-related isolation: in Italy, there aren't many facilities exclusively dedicated to receiving young girls, since their numbers are limited to slightly more than a thousand arrivals per year. Moreover, the chance to keep the educational project going way beyond their coming of age, as a result, decreases the number of available spots in such specialised facilities.

Professional dilemmas and representations of both users and their needs are pushing for a review of protocols, educational practices and models which are to be applied in such shelter houses for minors. Services and professional figures needed in the process of welcoming young girls must also be taken into account.

From another educator's account, it's clear – from volunteers being involved, to the lack of support when it came to develop an Individualised Educational Project (PEI) – that, at the moment of the girl's arrival, the aid workers' team was ill-prepared:

“At the beginning it was very difficult since only one of our volunteers spoke English, he managed to ask her a few questions and talk to her.

She didn't want to go out and she always stayed inside. Later on, our girls began to include her in their group of friends, but she was embarrassed. Now she speaks and she's happy to go out.

I've taken an interest in her because I didn't want her to waste any time; I've talked to the principal of the middle school right outside our building and she gave me this guideline from the CPIA (Provincial Center for Adult Education).

It's not easy to combine two different projects: on one hand those who have endured a certain kind of violence, and on the other children and girls who have endured a different kind of trauma. But you should know that she doesn't talk about that. I don't know if she's blocked it out as if nothing ever happened. She doesn't talk about it with our girls.

As a facility, we aim to support her, that's why we have a counsellor who looks after our girls at the ASL (local health authority) clinic. During a summer project, our girls met with our counsellor, both individually and as a group. I told the counsellor to try, at least during group therapy, to get her to talk about teenage issues, love issues. I'm afraid it's going to be difficult, though, the girl had a very traumatic experience”.

More than once, the educator talks about feeling abandoned and helpless in a facility which had never welcomed any immigrants, and she stresses the initial difficulties in implementing new language, educational and psychological protocols for the benefit of the foreign girl. It was exclusively thanks to the host community's willingness that it was possible to develop a PEI based on that experience alone, by using the support network surrounding the minor.

What is also clear, from the same interview, is an attempt to cross the boundaries between two different worlds, the world of “our girls” and the world of “the girl”. Displaced in unknown surroundings, the girl's social marginalisation is also the language isolation of those who do not identify her as a standard guest.

11.4.2 Comparing Voices: Life Stories

Speed, flexibility and empathy – the Holy Trinity of a good interview. However, the experienced interviewer should also take into account a potential emotional involvement, the interviewee's evasiveness when it comes to answering the questions, the consequences that such tale could have or how it could potentially influence the interview, as well as a greater or smaller control on the interviewee's truthfulness.

In at least one case, the story told by the girl was completely different from the one recounted by the coordinator. Here are two excerpts:

“Very slowly, she started to tell us about how her parents were dead, how she lived with an aunt who wanted her to marry an elderly person. She violently beat her for days until the girl escaped. She has a sister and a brother, but she doesn’t know where they are, so she escaped. She travelled from Nigeria, to Niger, to Libya, where she remained for six months. When we asked her: “How did you manage to get to Italy, where did you find the money?”, she told us that she asked some men for a 3000 euro loan. And when we asked her “How did you think you were going to repay them?”, she said: “Working”. She insists on this idea, but it’s very clear and undeniable what she went through.

*I was 16 when I start my travel... I forget some parts... it was winter time. It was really hot. I decide to go in Italy because there’s no work in Nigeria and I cannot go to school, just primary school. All of my family died, I’ve just auntie and uncle there. I was 12 when my mother died, I’ve a brother and a sister but I don’t know where they are. I’ve decided to leave because of the school. I don’t remember city I passed away, just remember I reached in Niger and many countries and I don’t remember their names. My journey was successful, I’ve payed just one time fifteen thousand euro. I don’t know anything about other girls. There are persons in Nigeria who give you money and you give them back when you start working. I didn’t go in jail in Nigeria. I remember cruelty of people but mostly girls have described violence when I reach in *****. No one was violent with me in Libya”.*

Despite the fact that the two interviews appear to be very dissimilar, if not completely opposite, “every statement deserves the researcher’s attention” (Montesperelli, 1998, p. 133) and all answers should be considered “truthful” (Manning, 1967, p. 302).

In this particular case, the interview hadn’t been planned and the teenager girl didn’t get a chance to know me personally, even if the coordinator presented me as “a friend you can trust”. Both linguistic (forgetting parts of the story, making strategic pauses to avoid answering, talking quickly and quietly...) and paralinguistic aspects (head bent, rigid posture, hesitations and silences) confirm the girl’s anxiety which, in such an asymmetrical situation, was made worse by the presence of a tape recorder. For these reasons, she frequently left her sentences incomplete (Kanizsa, 2013).

11.4.3 Resilience, Identity and Empowerment

The collected interviews have pushed us to take into account the locus of control, the mental attitude with which we face situations brought on by external factors we cannot control (Vaccarelli, 2016, p. 38). When it comes to the migratory experience, the cultural shock (Biagioli, 2015b) produces a long lasting stress; the factors and variables through which this stress manifests itself – without generalising – underline different responses to these life events. Therefore, young girls tend towards isolation and a preference for enclosed and familiar spaces, whereas young boys are more likely to come together in a group and become acquainted with the new surroundings.

A girl we interviewed said:

“Now I’m confused, I don’t remember the past and I don’t know how my future will be [...] I’m empty, I don’t feel anything to change my mind [...] I’m confused and I just believe in God, everytime of my life”.

Talking about his confused identity, Morin (2004) wrote: “[...] in a certain sense, I felt like my identity was diseased, feeling like I was in an empty space between jews and non-jews; but more often I just felt discomfort, an insufficiency and a lack of respect towards both groups. Only after a long time, I found my truth in what seemed like a state of weakness” (p. 109). The disease Morin talks about in his autobiography is quite similar to the confusion experienced by a young girl disoriented between past and present, far from a peaceful upbringing and from the kind of plans her peers are pursuing.

In the subject, personality dimensions – both cognitive and motivational – and factors of empowerment are dormant. The subject, “taking control over their life and over those dimensions they can determine – even coming from a self-perceived alienated condition, powerlessness, control loss – activates and reaches a point of self-confidence” (Tolomelli, 2015, p. 31). In order to help immigrant women on their identity-building path, it’s important we recognise and nurture female peculiarities, seeing them as resources they can count on to “re-enter the world: to become more and more aware and independent citizens” (Iori, 2015, p. 13).

11.4.4 Body

Morin’s “empty space” becomes full visibility in Goffman’s (2003) theory: he claims that a person’s specific personality traits become obvious expression of diversity outside the native group. Two different souls coexist in the doubly symbolic status of the foreign subject, so much so that, on one hand, “they can benefit from two nationalities, two homelands, two cultures” (Bourdieu, 2002, p. 6), and on the other, they are “*atopos*, without a place, displaced, unclassifiable” (*ibidem*, p. 7). For this very reason, the issue of the body becomes much deeper and more meaningful, touching themes such as visibility/invisibility, inclusion/exclusion, inside/outside, increasing induced racisms in the native group:

“When she first arrived she looked terrible, with such ugly shaved hair... she comes from a difficult experience in Libya and I don’t know if she wants to talk about it. She wasn’t a 17 years old girl, her eyes told the life story of an older person. After the first shower and over the first twenty-four hours, some of our (Italian) girls were less wary, but there were still other prejudices and they didn’t want to be near her, they didn’t want her touching the bread, and she was not allowed to touch their stuff. The most reluctant girls gave in after a week. She was very private and she didn’t open up at all. When I reached here, I can feel prejudices of the people against me, so I didn’t want to go out, can’t walk and stay with friends because I prefer cry on the bed. I didn’t want problem with anybody. First prejudices of girls here were because of my skin and I think coz I didn’t have documents”.

Being trapped in trauma, loss of self, a reorganisation of perceptions: these are just a few aspects of the unbearable heaviness of memory (Van Der Kolk, 2014). Neurological and psychological sciences made some very important discoveries on blocked memories, especially after traumatic experiences such as the Vietnam war and the Holocaust, and they have managed to develop suitable diagnosis and treatments so that the subject can heal and re-take control over their self.

“Scary, just alone. I prefer to stay alone and pray on the barge. During the travel I feel... (The girl can’t seem to be able to speak, she keeps touching her throat as if trying to untie the knot that prevents her from speaking, her heart beats fast)”⁷².

“When it comes to women and girls, violence and exploitation become predominantly related to sexuality, power and humiliation over the body” (Lorenzini, 2017, p. 269). Memories become physical, they take over thoughts but also skin and internal organs. Revisiting the past becomes impossible: violated, tormented, tortured and lost bodies become empty containers, raided at their very core by an “inner Hiroshima, with its pain, its horror and its mystery” (Morin, 2003, p. 18).

“In my experience I remember boys were sleeping with you and bet you in Libya. I know just what happened to me, I don’t know about others. They rape you like they don’t believe in anything in anyone”.

11.4.5 Silences

Among the nine girls identified for our research, only three of them have accepted to participate in the research; the remaining six girls – guests of a protected facility in Tuscany – have refused to take part in the meeting. At first, we had decided not to mention them and make do with the other three girls’ life stories. Nevertheless, their refusal is an answer in itself: their silence is maybe the strongest form of non-verbal communication, the more meaningful one for the interviewer (Demetrio, 2014). Silence and especially meta-communicative silences that strive towards the possibility of recognising and processing experiences, have acquired new meanings in light of potential therapies; a culture of silence, an ecology of silence, respect for places, people, for the pleasure of re-learning to listen; internalization of silence as a pedagogical promise of discovery and therapy of the self, so that “it’s impossible to ignore the fact that our relationship with silence changes, and drastically at that, over the course of our existence” (Demetrio, 2014, p. 92).

In order to appreciate the value of silence we have to first understand its crucial communicative value: “Just like the other person’s words aren’t necessarily language, silence is naturally the other person’s incompleteness and possibility” (Fiorentino, 2003, p. 12), our

⁷² Interviewer’s note, written down during the interview.

subconscious cognitive space, since it “represents, especially and once again, a fundamental theoretical entity: among all other human manifestations, silence remains the one that best conveys, in the purest of manners, the thick and compact structure – rumourless and wordless – of our subconscious” (Volli, 1992, p. 112). The non-communicative language void helps us to determine differences and to resignify meanings.

The pre-expressive silence, which allows to complete the process following one’s pace, time and expectations, needs pedagogical support and active patience in order to open up the endless imaginative possibilities, to become an emotional lifeline throughout the process of discovery and exploration, planning and invention, question and answer (Fiorentino, 2003).

11.5 Conclusions

We have no research impacts to report: this is just a presentation of the very first results of a work in progress, whose purpose is revealing a Black swan in the submerged world of migrant childhoods.

Bringing to light unaccompanied female minors’ identities and life stories must be a new effort of the pedagogical sciences, which must develop efficient responses, protecting each person’s peculiarities – not their marginality – in a multicultural perspective, and striving to place side by side theoretical discoveries and effective cross-cultural dialogue practices, embracing and confronting ideas (Ulivieri, 2016), thus extracting such ideas from the abyss they are surrounded by.

In order to find our bearings, collect and organise information, we must start by understanding the actual context. By doing so, intervention and re-observation of reality become possible, on the basis of ethical and respectful values aimed at an effective and welcoming educational planning, projected into the future in order to develop new “dimensions, such as freedom, responsibility, rectification of injustices and inequities, the inclusion of diversities through dialogue. These diversities, if fostered, can help defining each person’s sense of dignity in different social contexts” (Alessandrini, 2012, pp. 597-598).

While we are aware that the flow of female minors will be statistically irrelevant compared to that of male minors, we want to further underline the idea that working teams, organisation of spaces as well as activities within the host communities, care and protection specialists must provide the same attention, the same safe spaces (to both listen and intervene), the same support and assistance in educational practices, in order to receive each new guest with the confidence of a routine experience rather than an emergency one.

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Chapter 12

Art as an intervention strategy with unaccompanied migrant minors

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12.1 Introduction and the problem

Unaccompanied migrant minors (UMM) are not an emergency phenomenon any more, hither the necessity to deal with the interventions with a shrewd and farsighted vision⁷³.

Before the 47/2017 law, Dispositions regarding protection measures for UMMs, (known as ZAMPA law), minors were identified in hotspots, unsuitable facilities for minors, and sometimes, given the limited amount of spaces in the Psasr⁷⁴ (Protections system for asylum seekers and refugees), they ended up in special reception centres (Src⁷⁵), which did not guarantee adequate reception standards. With the introduction of the 47 law, instead, a structured reception system for UMMs was defined, which made protection tools, guaranteed by the order, stronger and, at the same time, assured a greater homogeneity in the application of laws all over the national territory. Reception is thus divided into two phases. First reception, during which the minors are identified⁷⁶, taken into care and are given first aid (its maximum time of stay has been reduced from 60 to 30 days) and the subsequent move into the second reception system, in centres that adhere to the Psipum (Protection system for owners of international protection and unaccompanied minors, as the D.L. n. 113/2018 states) System, which offer an integrated reception system, planned on the minor's needs.

The minors' times of stay in first reception facilities are often longer than what the law establishes, because of lack of space in second reception facilities.

It's no coincidence that one of the most crucial themes in the first reception stage is that of removal.

⁷³ According to data from the Ministry for Work and Social Policies, at the time of writing, the UMMs present in Italy were 18.303, 93.2% of them males, of which 94% between the ages of 15 and 17. In October 2019 the number has gone down to 6.566, 93.9% males and 6.1% females. The real data, though, then, like now, is probably higher, as many minors get involved in criminal activities, prostitution or end up in political refugees statistics.

⁷⁴ In Italian SPRAR.

⁷⁵ In Italian CAS.

⁷⁶ In Italian SIPROIMI.

Social workers declare that UMMs usually run away so as to be welcomed in other parts of the country. Others choose non-reception because they depend upon criminal circuits.

This problem questions the services regarding the adequacy:

- of interventions to protect and safeguard youths;
- of the reception facilities;
- of the activation or non activation of suitable services and interventions to deal with this first period of time.

Even though lately there are first reception facilities that set off literacy paths, in this phase a real educational proposal is not foregone. The extension of stay in these facilities can cause anger and depression in some youths. What this work will try to demonstrate is that both could be embanked through the use of participative activities and artistic languages. These instruments, in fact, foster decompression opportunities and enhance experiences and knowledge, allowing the youths' expectations and moods, linked to the journey and their own migration project, to emerge.

12.2 Description of the service and the context

The context is that of some second reception facilities and day care centres for minors where, thanks to a strong networking with different institutional and non-institutional subjects present in the area⁷⁷, high-level artistic activities take place. Even though the experiences we will be referring to do not take place in first reception, which is the most critical part of the process, the hope is to succeed in employing them also and especially in these contexts.

12.3 Intervention strategies

This paper will analyse some virtuous experiences that used participatory activities and expressive languages with UMMs; these experiences achieved good results in lowering the conflict levels inside facilities and fostering an identity construction process in people who would have risked splitting their individual experiences in the different spaces and times of migration. The peculiarity of the artistic language is using different channels to express what we have difficulty translating into words and this contributes to avoiding that unexpressed suffering put a break on socialization and cause the reiteration of pain in daily life⁷⁸.

Following a 2008 inquiry regarding the reception conditions for minors arriving by sea, Save the Children had observed that bringing participative activities forth in the reception facilities had drastically reduced conflict and riots, both among the youths and between youths and

⁷⁷ Among the experiences that will be referred to, Rignano Garganico's *Radio Ghetto* is an exception, but it was included because nevertheless significant.

⁷⁸ From an enquiry conducted by LENA (an association of journalists from all major European newspapers) it emerges that never like in recent years have there been more cases of tortured, abused or battered youths. They are younger and more vulnerable compared to the past and many of them, even male, have been sexually abused.

operators, in addition to this, a relevant decrease in the number of youths removed from facilities was also detected.

Specifically, the moments dedicated to listening to needs and fears had proven extremely positive.

Because of such results, the Ministry of the Interior had asked Save the Children to put in place a handbook for the reception of UMMs in centres, indicating it be modelled in the different facilities.

According to this association's experience, reception must follow some phases, to which specific activities correspond.

During the initial stages, it's recommendable to propose activities that aim at socialization, acquiring rules to follow in the facility and collecting knowledge about Italy and Europe.

In the middle stages, the target of the activities should be making the youths participate in the management of some aspects of life in the facility, prompting them to share key words concerning the integration path and allowing them to express their expectation for the future.

In the final stages risk and protection factors could be made public and analysed.

Method-wise, we suggest giving the role of "tutor" for the newly-arrived to the youths who've been in the centre the longest, following a linguistic criteria when forming groups, as it simplifies communication making everything faster and more fluid and using a clear work chart and simple ways to get the youths involved.

As well as suggesting hands on indications, this approach has the big plus of putting the youths at the centre of the interventions, respecting their desire to participate and their point of view regarding things that involve them.

In some cases it is very useful to create an outside listening channel for the youths present in the centre, so as to summon the public's and institutions' attention to their situation. Examples of this are two radio experiences: *Radio Ghetto and Radio Web Asante*

The Radio Ghetto experience, which is now finished, started up in Rignano Garganico, a slum in the Foggia province, which was evacuated in March 2017. Even though in this case the context is not that of a reception centre for UMMs, it is nevertheless worth a mention, because it springs from the initiative of young migrants from all over the African continent, who, choosing to set foot in a radio, found the way to simultaneously answer to communication, entertainment and recreational needs.

Once they had finish their hard work in the fields, the young day-labourers found multi-shaped space in which to socialize, share their aspirations, have fun and broadcast music, as well as their own multilingual and multicultural stories.

But *Radio Ghetto* especially carried out a functional service in the field, offering advice and hospitality to those who had just arrived, giving information about Italian laws and representing a place where to discuss the problems regarding their own migration process and the labour exploitation imposed by the illegal recruitment system.

Moreover, thanks to the collaboration with various African stations, there was a news programme in French to inform their countries of origin, on the other side of the Mediterranean, about the Italian situation and in particular about that of the slum.

Radio Web Asante is an initiative of the Asante, Palermo, reception centre for UMMs, which was born thanks to the youths' enthusiastic participation in a programme of the Calabrese Radio Barrio⁷⁹.

Considering the positive results, the centre workers thought about bringing the web-radio Asante to life; it would get as many youths as possible involved on rotation. This experience, which has now been active for a few years, is giving great results, representing a means of expression for the youths, who become speakers, choose music and talk about different topics.

When technology is unavailable, the youths can make themselves be heard outside of the centres, through writing of a letter/appeal, which narrates experiences, desires and difficulties; this kind of activity can prove to be a valid tool in moments in which the facilities have high emergency conditions and there is the risk of media and institutions not paying any attention. On an operative level, it's possible to involve many youths and the production time is short. The content must be expressed in a simple manner, using drawings and graphic illustrations on big charts, proving that it is an activity accessible for youths with highly heterogeneous levels, both on a cognitive/linguistic level and on a relational one.

Other activities, whose objective is to involve through games, movement and peer education⁸⁰, where possible, are also useful.

Italian language school for foreigners ItaStra (Palermo)

Some years ago in Summer, Itastra opened its doors to a group of UMMs who were frequenting Italian L2 courses with some Chinese students from the Chongqing University, with which they were twinned.

Initially the organizers were quite sceptical as they thought that the Chinese students' experiences and those of the UMMs would have had little in common. But, when it came to it, not only did the minors show a great desire to tell their brave, intimate and gory stories, the Chinese students and professor enjoyed hearing them and were also keen on telling their own.

From then on, the University has started to build paths that keep the various learners' profiles together, working only on listening and speaking, as well as specific Italian L2 courses for UMMs. A second level master in "*Theory, planning and teaching Italian as a second and foreign language*" has thus been created, to experiment how the encounter between languages and migrant stories and reception operators occurs. Some of the course's workshops are: "*Sounds in movement. Phonetics through theatre*"; "*The linguistic autobiography as an instrument for didactic learning*"; "*Learning with the body: Total Physical Response*".

The process of UMMs moving closer to the Italian language was also aided by a series of interviews and a Theatre and narration workshop which subsequently flowed into two initiatives connected to the visual form: the film *Butterfly Trip* by Yousif Latif Jaralla and the photographic exhibition *A-tratti* by Antonio Gervasi⁸¹.

More recently, within the FAMI project, Itastra has organized some multilingual workshops entitled *Of land, of Sea, of Encounters* during which the narration of stories in Italian and in the

⁷⁹ The participation took place within a collaboration with Intersos.

⁸⁰ Peer education is a very positive strategy to involve the younger youths.

⁸¹ The success of these experiences is mainly due to good networking, which involved the university, the Nomads and Immigrant Office and the reception communities.

participants' mother tongues and their transformation of images, want to foster the integration between worlds and different figurative traditions.

Youth day centre Matemù (Rome)

Matemù is a Youth Community Centre which births from a CIES project, an ngo that promotes the values of solidarity and cooperation.

The Esquiline area, where the centre is located, is a strongly multi-ethnic neighbourhood, and even though the centre addresses its activities mainly to adolescents and young people, Matemù is a space where both associations and individual citizens can find a point of reference to work with and for youths, promoting activities which elude competitiveness and answer to needs of expressivity. It offers free music, singing, dance and rap courses with professional teachers. And it is also possible to do studio rehearsals and recordings and perform there.

In some phases, like that of the North African emergency, some reception centres welcomed a very high number of youths, notwithstanding the law. To deal with the difficulties deriving from this, the association has had to put activities attaining more to social inclusion alongside the recreational ones.

Civico Zero (Rome)

This is a program founded by Save the Children Italy, addressed at youths ages 12 to 18 and particularly, but not exclusively, to UMMs in a condition of social vulnerability and marginality, in danger of abuse, exploitation and at risk of deviant behaviour.

It promotes assistance and counselling activities with the intention of supplying youths with orientation and multi-level protection: psychosocial, educational, legal, medical, of cultural mediation and social animation.

The Civico Zero day centre is near stazione Termini, in the San Lorenzo neighbourhood, and proposes recreational activities and video, photography, drawing and music workshops, because those who work in the centre believe in the motivational power of art and beauty and in the energy that the youths can find within themselves.

Aided by those who work in the centre and by cultural mediators for translations, the young refugees who frequent the Civico Zero have been creating a pamphlet-newspaper, *Griot* (the Storyteller), since 2009. In it they tell their life stories, their travels and their hopes⁸². Thanks to the availability of Yves Legal, a French artist and puppet master by profession, the youths are also accompanied in the discovery of the city and its museums. Particularly, for the last few Years Civico Zero has set up a prestigious collaboration with the Educational Department of MAXXI, which has started off a structured and consistent frequentation at the weekends: the educational objective is to take inspiration from the art work to create a connection with the youth's personal stories, offering them the opportunity to tell their experience, starting with the journey from their county of origin all the way to their expectations for a new life.

The fact that the youths' stories can intertwine with the themes taken on by the works of art was demonstrated during the inauguration of Pieter Hugo's exhibition. The South African

⁸² The African Griot are the community's memory and sing stories and songs regarding war and traditions.

photographer's work was about a technological material landfill near Accra, in Ghana, where children work to extract precious metals from computers and televisions. The photographer referred that on returning to that place after years, he had discovered that some of the children had died due to the contact with dangerous substances present in those materials. One of the youths from Civico Zero was moved to tears looking at the photos because, as the cultural mediator present explained, had worked in a similar landfill in Patras, Greece, before arriving to Italy.

Another occasion in which the youths actively participated was the exhibition dedicated to Alighiero Boetti, an artist who has had a very tight relationship with the communities living between Afghanistan and Pakistan. During this event the youths read out the Farsi captions on the tapestry and carpets on display, so as to allow the public to hear the sound of this language.

Thanks to these first encouraging contacts with works of art, some youths have succeeded in emerging as artists. An example is Morteza Khaleghi, a young Afghan, passionate about videos, who frequented Civico Zero some years ago and who edited images filmed by some compatriots with their mobile phones during their migration journey, making them into the short film *Kabul's dust*, which won him a special prize and a video camera. Subsequently becoming a real director, Morteza has successfully voiced experiences and emotions through a video camera, possibly helping youths who have lived similar experiences to recognize and express their own. Artistic languages, in fact, not only allow he or she who conceives the work to follow out an awareness process, which helps them to overcome traumas and unpleasant experiences, but they can also help those who avail of them, in the same way.

Street art at the Caritas Centre for UMMs (Rome)

The Street art workshop was birthed from the desire of the centre's guests to give colours and a wall custody of their emotions and their thoughts.

The life experiences of migrant minors from Egypt, Sudan and Bangladesh met in the exploration of the theme of the journey, within an experience led by Alice Pasquini, a street artist known worldwide.

The journey was interpreted as a journey from reality, as a "flight", putting aside real journeys via sea or land, which could have been a source of suffering for the young migrants.

Theatrical neighbourhoods (Bologna)

Theatrical neighbourhoods is part of an important project by Cantieri Meticci, a cultural association born in 2005 which works on mixing arts and people, using the language of theatre and visual arts, creating shows based on installations and experiments that provide for audience participation.

Cantieri Meticci's last important project is *Theatrical Neighbourhoods*, which put neighbourhood theatrical workshops into place⁸³. The workshops are open to people of all ages, social and cultural extractions and their objective is the acquisition of the basic tools of

⁸³ The Theatrical Neighbourhoods project, sponsored by the academy for Fine Arts and the University of Bologna, Sprar, Asp City of Bologna and the Bologna City Council, Naval Neighbourhoods, Saint Donatus-Saint Vitale and Saint Stephen has activated numerous activities in different neighbourhoods of the city.

acting and scriptwriting while having fun and sharing⁸⁴. The ultimate objective is building true “Neighbourhood Companies” within a few years, allowing people and places to reconnect and rediscovering the now “mixed” meaning of citizen, all in the conviction that artistic growth is always accompanied by the incessant question regarding the existing liaison between group theatrical practice, the relationship with a given area and the problems of the society in which one lives.

12.4 The peculiarity of educational acts

Notwithstanding these and other positive experiences, we still cannot fully understand the enormous potential expressive workshops have. If they manage to move their interest from the content to the people, and if they appreciate all kinds of intelligence, they can offer surprising consequences concerning integration and education.

Given that in expressive workshops words and sentences are learned through active work, they gain a stronger meaning, and linguistic or reading and writing abilities are enhanced. But these are not the only abilities appreciated, thus these workshops allow everyone to participate.

For example, theatre is able to communicate in a clear manner through movement and facial expressions even when one is unable to do so verbally. It also helps to go beyond the memory of traumatic events, because the scenic simulation filters emotions⁸⁵.

The plot is the ideal place where contrasting emotions can be put into play, finding an even ground between ourselves and others, and connecting different contexts.

Among the most used theatrical methods with young people is autobiographical theatre. It turns out to be very useful because, through the shared narrative of personal stories, it allows us to question ourselves about the past, to reflect upon our present condition and to express our future projects. Playback theatre, which redeems the unofficial stories of those who suffer and are not heard, is also a method used with success.

Both Alice Pasquini’s street art project and the theatre workshops we’ve talked about, present themselves as tools to recapture reality and fantasize about virtual, but possible, worlds.

From the musical point of view, the multitude of percussion (and other instruments) workshops highlight how music helps comprehension beyond words, finding its meanings elsewhere: in the conduction of harmonies and melodies, in the dynamics, in the timbre quality and in that of silences.

In cinema workshops, images in motion and soundtracks support the identification process, making participating in the story more engaging and emotional.

There is something that allows human beings to come into contact with each other very profoundly when they watch others move, act and play. This capacity has been scientifically

⁸⁴ The workshops are frequented by many young refugees/asylum seekers, who are guests in different reception facilities.

⁸⁵ Jacob Levi Moreno, inventor of psychodrama, puts actions at the centre of the learning process: each action leaves a trace, so as not to lose itself, so as to be recognized, and creates conditions that allow self-expression and self-confirmation, encouraging imagination and spontaneity.

explained through mirror neurons that are able to activate themselves both when we do an action and when we see someone else do it.

Vittorio Gallese claims that the artistic object – which is never an object in itself, but the focal point of an intersubjective relationship – *moves*, as it evokes sensorimotor and affective resonances in those who put themselves in relation with it.

Moreover, studies about neurosensory functioning have demonstrated the importance of the involvement of all sensory channels in the communication-signification dynamics. When education becomes bi-sensory (audio-visual) or multi-sensory (manipulation-exploration of objects), the learning experience is more complete and effective⁸⁶.

Some experiments highlight how combining theatrical techniques and visual arts amplifies the awareness process offered by each one.

Cinema, theatre, music and movement can have a broader educational consequence that involves the development of communication and the ability to build relationships with others within a “social mediation” method in which the vertical teacher-student interaction is substituted by the horizontal student-student one.

Last but not least, the pleasure of doing and the resulting gratification/confirmation of our aesthetic sense in the contemplation of our work, make artistic activity particularly attractive.

Authors like Melanie Klein, Sandor Ferenczi, Donald Winnicott and Carl Gustav Jung believe that playing and imagination are roads to access areas of our psyche, which are inexpressible with words.

And example of this is ludic pedagogy, a method born in Uruguay during the dictatorship, which discovers in playing an exceptional vehicle for promoting participation and political definition in opposition to the dehumanization and the terror of the military regime. Playing to know, knowing to transform, creating the conditions for making what is imposed as impossible, possible. This methodology is successfully used with migrants, both minors and adults, because it reveals itself as very effective in allowing to experiment with ways of being and doing.

12.5 Innovative and transferability elements in terms of social impact

All the aforementioned experiences need professionalism, but do not have high costs and were able to, through art and the active involvement of minors, find points of contact that nurtured relationships based on reciprocal trust.

Up to now the priority of this kind of routes has been recognized only by associations, but given the results, it would be desirable for them to be embraced also by institutions.

Being able to review the migration project with the minors themselves is the first step to moving the focus from what is always their first objective, earning money to send home, towards a path that allows them to acquire educational, linguistic and professional abilities, indispensable for a successful integration.

⁸⁶Ekwall and Shaker have observed that people only remember 10% of what they read, 20% of what they hear, 30% of what they see, 50% of what they see and hear, 70% of what they say and 90% of what they say and do.

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Appendix. The photo contest "Infanzie movimentate"

Cover photo caption: *Wounded and medicated migrant child over an ambulance of the Italian Red Cross. Porto Empedocle harbor, Sicily, Italy. May 2016 [first classified by the technical jury].*

The cover photo is by Nuccio Zicari. It is part of HUMANITY WITHOUT BORDERS, a three years reportage from 2015 to 2018 in which the photographer documented the landings of migrants from the Mediterranean on the coasts of Sicily.

Biography

Nuccio Zicari was born in Agrigento, 1985. His continuous research on the human being led him first to obtain a Medical Degree and then graduate from the John Kaverdash International Academy of Photography in Milan. His main interest is the documentary, anthropological, social and humanitarian aspect of photography, both in the telling of intimate stories and in long-term projects of collective interest. In 2017 his work HUMANITY WITHOUT BORDERS, the result of three years of reportage on immigration in the Mediterranean, is included in the Italian Collection of the Voglino Prize, a platform that celebrates every year the most important photographic stories of Italian authors. He is currently working on an experimental project of photographic and multimedia documentation of the ongoing social-health crisis from coronavirus called C-DIARY, making use of the Instagram social network. His works have been exhibited in Italy and abroad and published in national and international magazines.

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Collana Educare

Volumi pubblicati

1. *Casale: la città della riscossa contro l'amianto*, a cura di Giorgio Matricardi, 2017 (ISBN versione eBook: 978-88-97752-82-0)
2. Agnese Larconetti e Anna Peluffo, *Il sogno di un bambino - Pietro e Seme*, 2019 (ISBN versione eBook: 978-88-94943-52-8)
3. Anita Maugeri, *Bambini in manicomio: agli albori dell'integrazione scolastica*, 2020 (ISBN versione a stampa: 978-88-3618-006-6; ISBN versione eBook: 978-88-3618-007-3)
4. *Faculty Development in Italia. Valorizzazione delle competenze didattiche dei docenti universitari*, a cura di Antonella Lotti e Paola Alessia Lampugnani, 2020 (ISBN versione a stampa: 978-88-3618-023-3; ISBN versione eBook: 978-88-3618-024-0)
5. *Childhoods on the move. Twelve researches on unaccompanied minors in Italy*, Andrea Traverso (Ed.), 2020 (ISBN versione eBook: 978-88-3618-048-6)

Andrea Traverso is Associate Professor of Experimental Pedagogy at the Department of Educational Sciences of the University of Genoa where he teaches “Educational Design” and “Methodology of Educational Research”.

This book is a collective work that collects some of the research papers (in translated and expanded form) that have already been presented in the Italian version (Traverso, 2018).

In Italy, UMs (Unaccompanied Minors), despite a drop in landings and arrivals, remain an urgent social and educational thought because that thought is about a fragile part of the population that lives in towns and cities alongside us.

These childhoods are in motion, because we imagine tears and jolts (the painful and violent migration they had to undergo); leaps and shoves (which have shoved these children away from their homes), chases and escapes (from something or someone); because to be accepted they need educational movement based on creativity, on expressiveness, and on emotion.

ISBN: 978-88-3618-048-6



The cover of this volume is embellished with photography by Nuccio Zicari which in 2018 won the photo contest *Infanzie Movimentate*, linked to the seminar of the same name (Genoa, 5 April 2018).1526.