RESEARCH ARTICLE

WELFARE POLICIES: THE ISSUE OF IMMIGRATION AND THE ITALIAN MODEL OF INCLUSION

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ABSTRACT

Migration is a prime political issue: it is regulated by local, national and supranational processes; it engages some of the most brilliant thinkers of our time; it sparks numerous public debates and scientific studies (Castles e Miller, 2018; Mantovan, 2007). Some scholars also believe that migrations over the past twenty years has fundamentally contributed to restructure social conflict within contemporary society (Zincone, 2000; Sirkeci and Cohen, 2016; Kriesi *et al.*, 2012). "Assimilationist, multiculturalist and mutual accommodation" approaches have not helped us understand and manage the migration issue better over the decades. Furthermore, over the years European States have never expressed unified policies regarding issues of reception and integration (Freeman, 2004). In Europe the migration narrative expressed by various governments has relied for years on demographic needs rather than a widespread sense of inclusion. In our exploration we analyse the various Italian policies and the contradictions that arise from them, considering migration a completely legitimate expressive form of the human condition, while we find that the mass media narratives often describe migrant irregularity as a condition frequently associated with illegality. The tension between the status of irregularity and regularity poses a challenge for local and national governments to create innovative and effective policies that can fully address the needs, arising from the conflict between the two conditions. We acknowledge from the scientific literature (Zanfrini, 2021; Mostaccio, 2021; Corrado and Perrotta, 2012; Reyneri, 1998) that irregularity is functional to the labour market and the maintenance of productive segments that would otherwise be in crisis such as agriculture, domestic work, elder care, and the food industry and its distribution (Cheliotis, 2017). Current policies, in our opinion, accept clandestinity within complex regulatory frameworks, intertwining entries, stabilizations, work, and family with undeclared illegality. There is a legislative vacuum accompanied by an organisational void, and by friction among government levels in managing migration flows. The territorial dimension, then, serves as a background to this complex scenario, where migrants represent an element capable of shaping and reshaping cities: questioning them, stimulating them, and promoting unusual social scenarios and urban renewal (Sassen, 2009). Our analysis reveals that at least four dimensions are involved in the phenomenon, namely: the education of minors children of immigrants; access to healthcare; access to housing; and, finally, welfare measures. Public policies along these four axes play a decisive role, as do the Funds made available by Europe, reflected in various national welfare measures. Nowadays it is widely recognized that the arrival and the irregular stay of migrants cannot be managed solely through control policies or through the application of disincentives (Ambrosini, 2010). After a careful analysis of the measures implemented by the central government, including the establishment of "detention camps" in Albania, we ask ourselves whether this is the best way to manage migrations which are an integral part of individual conditions and expressions. Is the Italian model capable of meeting migration needs and managing the migration issue?. Can the integration developed by local governments be considered successful in its inclusion goal?. Does "social solidarity" by encouraging a widespread local reception minimize conflict or does it risk exacerbating it? These are some of the questions, we attempt to address in this essay, which soon from its first lines demonstrates a social complexity, that sociology can attempt to elucidate.

INTRODUCTION

From the post-war period to our days over half a million applications for international protection have been submitted in Italy: this trend makes our country an immigration country. Exploring the policy dimension, we note that the debate has often focused on the theme of integration or conversely of exclusion.

The essay aims to analyse the ways in which the integration process occurs and how social policies have addressed the challenge of integration, focusing on issues of social assistance; housing policies; education; health; and job training for foreigners. We questioned whether there is an "Italian model" of hospitality, what is characterized by, and what was the legislative path that led us to the current migration policies. We also examined the measures and tools; the welfare policies

developed by the central government; and the role of the European Union in this complex post-pandemic phase of global crisis and conflict. By studying, indeed, the migration issue and some related manifestations we have tried to reflect on the phenomenon from a social perspective: among other trends, it seemed crucial to mention here the issue of the "politicization of migration" and the analysis of migration through the lens of conflict.

Migration and "symbolic territories: Migration is a prime political issue: it is regulated by local, national, and supranational processes; it engages some of the most brilliant thinkers of our time; and it sparks numerous public debates and scientific studies that offer insights for reflection (Castles and Miller, 2018; Mantovan, 2007; Levitt and Jaworsky, 2007; Donato *et al*., 2006; Ambrosini, 2005). Over the years the world of associations and the third sector have mobilized forces and energies to actively participate in the "regulatory problem" of managing immigrants, while political parties and spontaneous movements have not wasted the chance to propose formulas or predictions regarding immigrants and "migration waves."

Adherence to certain universalist ideologies; the drive to protect the most vulnerable; the traditional religious values of a nation; as well as forms of integration are dimensions that have increasingly pushed the debate toward the politicization of migration over the decades. Some scholars believe that migration in the last twenty years has significantly restructured social conflict within contemporary society (Zincone, 2000; Sirkeci and Cohen, 2016; Kriesi *et al*., 2012). Political parties and party systems, through their structural properties and dynamics (Grande, 2008), have shown strength in defining identities and cultural affiliations in Europe (Kriesi *et al*., 2008, pp. 288-292): thus immigration has prompted the construction of a divide between right-wing and left-wing parties. We associate sovereign action with the right: populism of origins with the left. One should question whether this divide has influenced inclusion processes and their dynamics.

We can assert that the dimension of security quite well describes the demarcation between integration and exclusion; thus decorum, public order, and urban space management become symbolic themes of the conflict between natives and foreigners, as well as between different political factions (Legros and Vitale, 2011; Caponio and Borkert, 2010). While symbolic territories of urban security are constructed on one side, actions for integration and attempts to build inclusive communities develop on the other. The framework of community response to the immediate needs of those in distress has exerted a strong attraction for many sectors of society, and, in some cases, the urban dimension has benefited from these initiatives, minimizing the level of conflict between migrants and natives. This "social cleavage" (Rokkan, 1970) has been articulated within the social dynamics of political processes and public arenas, and alongside local administrations it has been able to "civilize" the conflict, directing tensions within the developments of electoral mechanisms, or in more extreme cases towards civil dissent.
The modest objective, we develop here, coincides with providing an account of the various theoretical positions regarding the relationship between conflict, migration and policy in relation to the urban dimension.

Integration and inequality: Theoretical approaches and trends

In this essay we believe it is important, without delving into the debate regarding the various meanings of "integration"; "incorporation" and "inclusion" (Ferrari, 2020), to clarify the meaning of "integration", referring to a definition that is still widely accepted by scholars in the field. By "integration", we mean those "processes that enhance the opportunities of immigrants and their children to be socially accepted through participation in the most important institutions such as the educational system or the political representation system; the labour market; and the housing and rental markets. Full integration implies equal opportunities compared to members of the majority native group and also being recognized as a legitimate part of the national community" (Alba and Foner, 2015, p. 5). This definition, therefore, emphasizes the reduction of inequalities, countering phenomena of economic disparity, and social status. We will outline, briefly, the different theoretical approaches. *Assimilationist* approaches have centred the responsibility for migration on foreigners: according to this approach, it is the immigrants who must integrate into the customs and traditions of the "host" community (Gozzo, 2017; Bonifazi and Bacci, 2014; Park, 1950).

According to the *multiculturalist* approach it is the host community, that must strive to be more inclusive, tolerant, supportive, and capable of encouraging processes of recognition and appreciation of differences (Bonifazi, 2017).
There is also a third way of *mutual accommodation*, which is also supported by the European Union. This approach conceives integration as a two-way process: immigrants must make the effort to understand that they are in a country different from their own and, therefore, must assimilate the language and respect the laws of the host country. Conversely, natives and local institutions, as well as community organizations, must strive to accept those with different customs and practices, as they represent a social wealth (Ambrosini, 2006). Gary Freeman (2004) highlighted how at the European level the States have never expressed unified and coherent policies regarding issues of reception and integration. In Europe the migration narrative bases the integration process more on a community willingness driven by strong demographic and labor needs, than on acceptance and inclusion. The integration of foreigners depends on factors that often lie beyond the voluntary policies aimed at migrants (Hampshire, 2013).

Irregularity, informal integration, and exclusion: In our overview we have referenced the migrant condition in contrast to the condition expressed by natives in national territories, with specific attention to the Italian territory; we have considered migration as an expressive and entirely legitimate form of being human, but we have not addressed a crucial issue that distinguishes between natives and migrants: namely the condition of irregularity. We cannot avoid, when discussing policies, to address the "issue of irregularity": media narratives and legal frameworks often refer to irregularity, correlating it with a condition of illegality. Irregularity in contemporary western societies shows various statuses and implications that, on one hand affect the lives of individuals; on the other hand, impact local and national political choices. "Irregular migration" shows different types of irregularities: we can observe legal entries with irregular stays; seemingly regular entries but with false documents, thus irregular; regular entries but irregular behaviours.

The tension between "regular" and "irregular" poses significant governance challenges and multiple complexities in designing effective policies that can fully address the needs, arising from the tension between these two conditions.

Analysing the different policy models, which we will discuss in the following pages, among legislative attempts to regulate the phenomenon, active associationism, expressions of solidarity, and volunteerism we have observed the emergence of conflicting imperatives, which in our view lead to compromises in policy definition and the emergence of a complex, multipolar and multilevel governance process. The governance process is complex due to its dynamic nature and its responsiveness to social changes; "multipolar" in the sense that it involves various actors, such as, employers, citizen groups, migrant associations, academics, industry experts and the media. It is also "multilevel" because multiple levels come into play in the management or regularization of the phenomenon; various dimensions of the migration discourse; different disciplines studying migration trends. Furthermore, the phenomenon manifests across multiple contexts: the familial context of the origin family, of the host family of the unaccompanied minor, of the community of origin and host, of the educational qualification in the country of origin, and those recognized and utilized in the host country; of the social status before and after migration; the employment context; and the social sphere, where individual identity is constructed and rights are exercised.

Irregular immigration is a "multifaceted" phenomenon that has drawn media and political attention since the early 2000s in many European countries (De Haas *et al.*, 2016). While attempts to analyse migration trends have multiplied, unfortunately the geography of distress has not changed at all over the decades. Restrictive policies toward "irregulars" and irregular work over the years have sharpened the vulnerabilities (Vickstrom, 2014; De Genova, 2002). We have come to know from the scientific literature (Zanfrini, 2021; Mostaccio, 2021; Corrado and Perrotta, 2012; Reyneri, 1998) that irregularity is functional to the labor market and the maintenance of productive segments that would otherwise be in crisis such as agriculture; domestic work; elder care and the food industry and its distribution (Cheliotis, 2017). Current policies invigorate the phenomenon of de facto inclusion, in which migrants are not fully included legally or in terms of healthcare but are integrated into daily life through the search for work, housing and the creation of social relationships, that allow them to live a status of "regularity" within irregularity.
It seems that current policies accept clandestinity within complex regulatory frameworks, intertwining entries, stabilization, work and family with undeclared illegalities. "Informal" work plays an essential role in this intersection, because it pushes migrants to the margins, making them often invisible (Ferrari, 2020).

The dichotomies of legality/illegality and regularity/irregularity risk confining migrants to the illicit and to erase the rights of foreigners. Irregular migrants end up being "legally non-existent" (Coutin, 2005): their legal existence or formal integration can, in our view, be traced back to the tension between different systemic levels of governance. Unfortunately the tension between the two levels partially hinders the full achievement of the goal of inclusion. There is a legislative void accompanied by an organizational gap, and a friction between governance levels in managing migration flows, which does not assist either migrants or natives in implementing concrete integration policies. Control and repression, often evoked by certain political parties as resolutive policies for the migration issue, are hindered, as Van Der Leun (2006) points out, not only by legal constraints but also by technical limitations and internal community factors. In fact, in multicultural societies, beyond the various origins of these limitations, it is complex to decide who is considered "foreign": it is a highly subjective operation that cannot be uniformly controlled (Jobard and Lévy, 2011). We could assert that inclusion and exclusion shape the integration of migrants in Western democracies, while central governments regulate policies along the rigid binary of "citizen-non-citizen" (Lafleur and Stanek, 2017). If it is true that the tension between governability and sovereignty (Foucault, *Lectures of March 22 and April 5*, 1978) creates conditions of disordered citizenship and behaviours, that alternate between periods of legality and periods of illegality, we must assert that policies should counteract disorder and social exclusion. To be effective policies would, then, in our opinion, need a multidimensional approach.

The tendency towards a universalistic approach in migration management: The complexity of the phenomenon analysed so far and the nature of the multidimensional issue involve migrants who suffer from a double exclusion. In fact those who enter illegally or find themselves in an irregular situation do not enjoy the rights, typically granted to other foreign citizens. They can access education if they are minors, they can claim the right to housing or healthcare but they cannot protect themselves regarding the right to work or claim broader forms of social protection, and so, they're left in a rights-less limbo (Arendt, 1951).

In recent decades the Council of Europe has emphasized indeed the fact that irregular migrants can enter the sphere of protection provided by recognized national organizations, which support and encourage an approach to the migration issue, that prioritizes humanitarian rights over strict adherence to national laws. The phenomenon, analysed so far, shows complexity and multidimensionality (Lafleur, 2015), as already mentioned. There is a strong tension between the universalist orientation of international law and the hierarchical approach of national legislation (Benvenisti & Harel, 2017; Kawar, 2015). The universalistic dimension and its overlap with the national dimension in recognizing rights for foreigners appears central to the debate on territorial governance policies and the management of the migration trend.

The territorial dimension of the migration phenomenon: Cities are complex systems in which we find inspirations, trends, and collective conflicts. Migrants represent a component capable of shaping and reshaping cities: by questioning them; they stimulate forces for social inclusion or exclusion; they promote new social scenarios and processes of urban renewal (Sassen, 2009; Avallone, 2000). We know how much the pandemic has highlighted critical issues and vulnerabilities. As noted in the Report from the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies (MLPS, *The Presence of Migrants in Metropolitan Cities*, 2020), immigrant foreigners have paid a very high price during the pandemic, and the role of local governments has been crucial: it is well-known, in fact, how Regions and Municipalities have facilitated various integration processes in urban areas.

The vitality, the dynamism, and the plurality of social actors in cities have created a complex and constantly evolving social geography of territories. Municipalities have become strategic players in the PNRR (National Recovery and Resilience Plan) which are able to operate to minimize inequalities; and combat poverty and social exclusion. In 2020, there were 3.615.826 foreign citizens residing regularly in our country, the majority coming from Asia (31%), Africa (30%), and Europe (28%); particularly from the latter continent migrants came from Morocco and Albania. A significant portion of the presences concentrated in the northern regions, with a higher concentration in the cities of Milan and Brescia, followed by Rome, Turin, Florence, and Naples. Data on poverty, as well as the ones on employment, highlight a state of crisis and an increase in poverty rates particularly among foreign citizens. Larger families are the most exposed to hardship: families with dependent minors show poverty levels of 37% compared to 15% of Italian families. The condition of women, then, further reveals economic distress with a reduction in the employment rate that is double that of men. It is within this scenery that effective welfare policies need to be redesigned to combat inequalities, and both relative and absolute poverty. In this regard in 2020 during and after the initial waves of the pandemic extraordinary measures were introduced through the decrees "Rilancio," "Decree Agosto," and "Decree Ristori", to address hardship and social exclusion but, despite the efforts of the central government, the geography of poverty and social exclusion has not changed.

The four central themes in the "migration issue": Considering what exposed above we distinguish two approaches in managing of the migration phenomenon: a first approach that we can define as "immigration policy", which identifies the State as having exclusive competence in designing and regulating areas of intervention, regulating the access to the country for non-European citizens; a second approach that we label "policy for immigrants," which focuses more on the social aspects of the migration phenomenon and aims to develop measures pointing at the inclusion of migrants.

Apart from the organizational divisions of the complex reception system, we identify at least four issues, that impact the reception system and the actual integration of foreigners:

- The education of children of immigrants;
- The access to assistance and healthcare;
- The access to housing;
- And, finally, welfare measures that respect individual rights and the offer of fairer working conditions.

These four themes often recur in the literature, relating to the governance system for the poorest (Petrillo, 2018; Bascherini and Ciervo, 2012; Barberis, 2010). Education is a crucial topic (Kogan, 2016) because it concerns the future of generations: the possibility of access to schools without distinction between natives and migrants. Healthcare is another critical area and we know how during the pandemic emergency not all immigrants were able to access care and vaccines (Coletta, 2021; Buoncompagni, 2020), and how pandemic has also had a significant impact on the lifestyles of foreigners in Italy (Ferrari, 2022). The other central theme is access to housing, to accommodation: without a home, it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to find a job, exercise citizenship rights and plan for the future.

Last but not least, is the issue of fair welfare and recognized minimum wages for migrants, with the aim of discouraging exploitation and social exclusion. Ensuring an integrated approach to these four issues, namely: health; education; housing; and welfare, along with coordinating targeted integration measures, would guarantee better employment opportunities for migrants and social services that are more tailored to their needs.

The role of local and regional authorities in relation to migration: evolution of public policies: From the post-war period to our days approximately half a million applications for international protection have been submitted in Italy, thus, making Italy a "host" country. Italy embraced welcoming policies as early as 1954 with the *Geneva Convention*, which included a "geographical reservation" (Law 722/1954): this meant adhering to a partial integration program, dedicated exclusively to those, seeking refugee status but only if they were geographically from Europe, hence the idea of acceptance with a territorial "reserve".

The right to asylum in Italy is a matter of state competence, as it is the State that enacts the laws governing the asylum and reception system. Regions and Local Authorities, on the other hand, implement policies on the ground. This dualism between State and Regions has developed since the beginning: we can, indeed, find it in both the "Foschi law" (Law 943/1986) and the "Martelli law" (Law 39/1990), which encourages Regions to collaborate with Municipalities. However, it is with the "Turco-Napolitano law" (Law 48/1998) that the landscape of reception is enriched by the involvement of the associative world and the third sector. The situation completely changes with the "Bossi-Fini law" (Law 189/2002) which introduces restrictions on the personal freedoms of asylum seekers, initially providing for their "detention" in Identification Centres (CID), and later directing them towards the protection structures set up and managed by the State, namely the SPRAR. Thus, the entire management of the asylum application phenomenon in Italy experiences both slowdowns and accelerations, undergoing profound transformations, and as of today it can be considered far from complete.

The Italian model for the inclusion of foreigners: tools and measures: With the *Amsterdam Treaty* (1999), the intention to eradicate poverty and social exclusion in all its forms is formally affirmed for the first time. In 2000 with the Lisbon Strategy, it was established in Europe a system for monitoring and measuring poverty based on a series of indicators and parameters. The ambitious goal is to reduce poverty by 25%, lifting around 20 million Europeans out of economic vulnerability.

The main four measures in Italy, aimed at promoting inclusion are

The EFS (European Social Fund): Established in 1957 with the *Treaty of Rome*: it is the oldest of all the funds and has adapted over the years to the various Agendas of the European Union, and to the different goals aimed at building a fairer Europe. This fund aims at fighting labour exploitation and school dropout rates; it pursues the integration and a healthy aging of the population; and it contributes to achieving a better quality of life. The ESF is the main tool used by Italy to support labour policies.

In April 2020 an additional measure was introduced to the ESF: the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), which aims to protect human capital; developing a qualified and resilient workforce, ready for a green and digital transition.

The ESF+ and the ESF are the main EU instruments dedicated to investing in people. In response to the pandemic crisis the ESF mobilized approximately €1.4 billion, thus supporting social services; maintaining employment; reducing working hours where necessary; protecting vulnerable individuals; and funding "extra" wages for healthcare staff, engaged in combating the pandemic. For the period 2021-2027, €101 billion has been allocated to combat poverty and social inequality, thus, attempting social inclusion processes, based on one of the pillars of the Union, namely the right to social integration of individuals.

The AIMF (Asylum, Integration and Immigration Fund) is the measure dedicated exclusively to the social inclusion of migrants. The Fund was established in 2014 (EU Regulation No. 516/2014) with the aim of promoting the integrated management of migration flows (asylum; integration and, where necessary, return).

The AMIF is structured around a program that each State develops, called the national program (NP), which defines the strategic and operational objectives to be achieved with the financial resources, that the European Union cyclically allocates among the member States. The NP is defined through a "policy dialogue," which is a consultation process between the European Commission and the State, to which the financial resources for migrants are allocated.

The AMIF pursues a multisectoral approach, because it is capable of integrating policies and services, that fall under different areas of the state system; a multilevel approach, as it involves various institutional actors: from the central government to Municipalities, including Regions. We also note a multistakeholder dimension, as it involves public actors as well as associations, third sector, the volunteer world, and private entities in an active and participatory manner. The Fund, inspired by a universalist approach of the *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,* aims its actions at managing migration flows and strengthening the European asylum system. Over 80% of the funding is given at the European level and it is distributed to the various territories of the Union States on a dual basis: a fixed sum related to the actual number of refugees or asylum seekers; the number of registered asylum applications; the number of resettled migrants; and a variable sum depending on the projects to be financed, presented by each State according to specific priority actions established by the European Union.

The ERDF (European Regional Development Fund): aims to help combat social inequality among the different regions of the European geographical macro-area. Its legal origin can be traced back to Articles 174 and 178 of the *Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)*. Although it is not exclusively aimed at individuals in vulnerable and socially excluded situations, the fund also supports sustainable urban development as one of its main goals, addressing environmental, climatic and demographic challenges which present social issues: thus, it touches to some extent on areas related to social distress; foreign integration and poverty. In the programming period 2021-2027, €200.36 billion has been

allocated to the ERDF, and the least developed regional areas or those with significant social challenges will be allowed to benefit from up to 85% of the costs of the projects, co-financing the remaining portion.

To promote social cohesion, the harmonious development of the European Union, and reduce the socioeconomic gap between different Regions, the European Commission has developed another tool that fosters inclusion, with a specific focus on agricultural and rural areas: the **EAFRD (European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development)**. Unlike the other funds, this one concentrates its economic capital on inclusion in rural areas. What emerges, from reviewing EU documents and statements is a universalistic approach, as previously highlighted.

Is the European fortress really opening up?: More than twenty years have passed since the entry into force of the *Amsterdam Treaty (1999)*, which granted the European Union legislative powers in the field of immigration. Shortly after that date, the possibility of building a "European fortress" (Geddes, 2000) was already on the horizon. In European political discussions, the discourse on combating illegal immigration was heavily centred on the pillar of insecurity. This ideological stance was based on the ambition to ensure fairer and better-managed inclusion processes alongside greater security for individuals.

We can assert that the migration policies of that time were aimed at social integration, focusing their efforts on border control and law enforcement, aimed at reinforcing hierarchical and sovereign impulses. Today it is widely recognized that the arrival and irregular stay of migrants cannot be governed solely through control policies or disincentives (Ambrosini, 2010). The policies adopted revealed several critical points, including housing and social placement within an "environment unfriendly to inclusion": clearly these policies aimed to discourage remaining on national territories (Van Der Leun, 2006). The European Commission (2014), according to this logic of "contrasting irregularity," has reiterated on several occasions that preventing and reducing irregular migration is an essential part of a well-organized and managed system. Overall, an analysis of migration policies reveals that the approach of recent decades has focused more on control, removals, strengthening territorial borders, and imposing administrative and criminal penalties on irregular migrants, rather than on integration processes that adequately consider the causes of migration flows and the basic rights of migrants (Merlino and Parkin, 2011). We can, therefore, affirm that Europe and Italy in recent decades have primarily excluded migrants, especially those in an irregular situation, which as we have seen, is often temporary.

The growth and development of intersections between immigration and criminal law, which then leads to the criminalization of migrants (Koulish, 2016) and evokes practices of territorial control, have responded to the social need of a European Union, gradually developing around a single European market necessitating control measures that are not only economic but also social through the governance and management of its citizens. After this phase the European Union, and every Member State - including Italy - has shown a timid countertrend. More recently European leaders have set another goal, to implement at least 20 principles and rights in the social field including: healthcare for all; early childhood

education; protection from poverty; the right to shelter and assistance for the homeless; and the right to access primary services. Further progress can be seen in the programmatic intentions of the European Agenda 2030. With 17 goals European leaders aim to pursue, in addition to the aforementioned objectives of the previous Agenda, the fight against inequality and respect for human rights with particular attention to migrants. Beyond the data we possess and the actual critical issues that have emerged in various EU States, particularly in Italy, a continuous destination for migration, we observe that the "universalistic dimension" is the predominant one in addressing policy issues. There is also a tendency to emphasize the dimension of peace, especially in the contemporary context of the russian-ukrainian war, that the European Union and NATO are facing. The dimension of peace is, indeed, a prerequisite without which it is impossible to achieve any of the objectives set by the Union.

CONCLUSION

Italy has been experiencing continuous migration flows for several decades due to its geographical position; it fulfils the role of "first door to Europe" and attracts hundreds of thousands of foreigners each year. However, while the attraction exerted by our country is clearly evident, the issue of the right to asylum is less well-defined: whether in its legislative sense it has clear boundaries, in its social sense it reveals critical issues and tensions. The debate on migrations, which has unfolded over recent decades, has been almost entirely structured around the two poles of integration and exclusion, alternating between inclusive and exclusive trends. The Italian model, that emerges from our exploration, shows three key insights: the first approach that we could define as "immigration policy," emphasizes the central role of the State in identifying legislative measures suitable for ensuring social order, and assuring a functional integration that meets the needs of the State receiving immigrants. Under this orientation labour policies and demographic policies play a predominant role. The second approach, which we define, instead, as "policy for immigrants" focuses more on mechanisms aimed at inclusion, such as the European Social Fund or the FAMI Fund, which dedicate concrete measures for the social integration of migrants. In our opinion, a strong tendency toward "social solidarity" has emerged in recent years, stimulating numerous and varied integration initiatives, encouraging widespread acceptance across Italy, also thanks to the role played by associations and the third sector.

The issue of immigration and migration flows is complex matter, revealing through a robust body of scientific literature its multipolarity and multidimensionality: as it can involve many different spheres of political and civil society. It is equally multidimensional in its engagement with different discourse levels, diverse social strata in which the phenomenon manifests, heterogeneous communities, different levels of education, and numerous contexts in which individual identities find space and are constructed. This complexity makes migration a particularly challenging subject not only for policymakers, scholars, and academics but also for the migrants themselves, who must navigate continuously evolving social policies. The complexity of the phenomenon is evident even from these few considerations, not to mention that this structural heterogeneity is compounded by the process of "double exclusion" of migrants, who are at

times classified as "regular" or "irregular." It is in this context that in Italy, alongside the three highlighted approaches, we believe a "formal authorization" (Ambrosini, 2016) and a "symbolic" authorization of migrants develops. The formal one appeals to legislation and its origin can be clearly traced to legal regulation. The symbolic one, in our view, is granted by the community, which welcomes the migrants and helps them overcome the obstacles, imposed by formal authorization. The dimension of conflict emerges with full force (Kriesi *et al.*, 2012) and restructures, in our opinion, contemporary society giving it a new form.

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