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Department of Sociology

Bachelor's Thesis

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**Aspects of Social Integration of Unaccompanied
Immigrant Female Minors in Italy:
the case of Nigerian Females**

Bachelor's Thesis

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Year of the defence: 2018

Declaration

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.
2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.
3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes.

In Prague on 11. 5. 2018

Lenka Dvořáčková

References

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Abstract

This thesis researches aspects of (re)socialization and integration of unaccompanied female minor immigrants in Italy. The thesis aims to present an overview of the immigration situation in Italy. The focus is on Nigerian girls as Nigeria is the country of origin of the majority of unaccompanied female minors hosted in reception centres in Italy. There is a discussion on who these minors are and why they migrated. The theoretical background is based on a theory of Social Integration developed by Bosswick and Heckmann who defined Social Integration as being a four-dimensional process, consisting of structural, cultural, interactive and identificational aspects. This is an ethnographic study and was carried out through the mean of participant observation in a reception centre located in Sicily. The analysis of the field notes was done in accordance with the 4-dimensional model proposed by Bosswick and Heckmann.

Abstrakt

Tématem bakalářské práce je (re)socializace a integrace nezletilých migrantek v Itálii. Cílem je zjistit, jak probíhají tyto procesy v zařízení pro nezletilé cizince. Práce je zaměřená na dívky z Nigérie, protože právě tato země původu je nejvíce zastoupena v centrech pro dívky. Práce také stručně zmiňuje imigrační situaci v Itálii. Teoretická východiska, ze kterých text vychází je teorie sociální integrace, která byla rozvinuta Boswickem a Heckmannem. Jejich teorie dělí sociální integraci na 4 kategorie: strukturální, kulturní, interaktivní a identifikační. Sběr dat proběhl v jednom zařízení pro nezletilé cizince, kde bylo provedeno zúčastněné pozorování. Analýza terénního deníku se okazuje na výše zmíněné kategorie sociální integrace.

Keywords

immigration, social integration, reception centre, unaccompanied minor, immigrant, female, Italy, Sicily, Nigeria

Klíčová slova

imigrace, sociální integrace, zařízení pro cizince, nezletilí, cizinci, bez doprovodu, dívky, Itálie, Nigérie

Title

Aspects of Social Integration of Unaccompanied Immigrant Female Minors in Italy: the case of Nigerian Females

Název práce

Aspekty sociální integrace nezletilých migrantek bez doprovodu v Itálii: případ Nigérijských dívek

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Introduction

I was inspired to write about this thesis topic when I studied in Sicily. There, the issue of immigration is very urgent and affects everyday life of the local society. For many immigrants Sicily represents an entry point to Europe and then they continue their journey toward other countries. For others Sicily become a second home. They then need to learn how to interact with the society and the Italian institutions. I wished to investigate this process.

Thanks to professor Consoli I learned about various aspects of immigration and reception of unaccompanied minors in Sicily. I become particularly interested in minor girls as I felt their situation was closer to my personal experience as I also immigrated when I was their age. Thanks to this experience I could empathize with their situation they go through.

The presence of minors in Italy is a much discussed topic among scholars, non-governmental organizations who focused on children rights and human rights. The minors represent vulnerable group of people who are endangered by human trafficking and exploitation. The main priority of non-governmental organizations is the protection of the vulnerable people and helping them to integrate into the Italian society.

Many studies focused on the topic of unaccompanied and separated children, but these mainly apply quantitative approach. In this thesis I wish to analyse the process of (re)socialization and integration of minors in a reception centre.

In the theoretical section is presented an overview on the immigration situation in Italy and in particular Sicily. There is a presentation of the latest statistics.

Then, the issue of unaccompanied and separated minors is presented. There is a discussion on who these minors are and why they migrated, complete statistics on their arrival and presence in the reception centres. The rights of foreign minors in the Italian law is outlined.

In the last section of the theoretical background, the concepts of (re)socialization and integration are examined and there is a presentation of Bosswick and Heckman's theory of social integration.

In the methodology chapter the research questions are stated, there is a description of the methodological approach and of the data analysis. I discuss the limits

of the research and I reflect on the various aspects of the research including ethical matters.

In the last chapter the data collected are analysed. The findings are categorized into the 4 dimensions of the social integration model i.e. structural, cultural, interactive and identificational.

1. Theoretical background

The theoretical background of the research project is introduced in this chapter. Migration and integration are interconnected and influence each other, thus both of the processes will be discussed. At the beginning an overview of migration flows in Italy and the characteristics of the Sicilian territory are presented. Then follows a discussion of problematic issues and statistics related to unaccompanied immigrant minors and separated children (UASC).

In the second half of this chapter the issue of integration is investigated. I define there (re)socialization and integration. Then, I will introduce the theory of integration developed by Bosswick and Heckmann which I use for the data analysis.

There are numerous researches on unaccompanied minors and separated children (UASC). However, the vast majority of these focuses mainly on males. The most influential for my research was the one carried out by Liana M. Daher. She conducted 20 interviews with 16 boys and 4 girls, aiming to find out about the pre-migration situation, migration paths, their experience of life in Italy and aspirations they had for the future (Consoli 2015). Another research titled ‘Children on the Move in Italy and Greece’ was conducted by REACH a non-governmental organization and by UNICEF. In total, 660 minors were interviewed in Sicilian reception facilities aiming to find out similar information as the above research. Nevertheless, only 3% of those interviewed were girls (REACH, UNICEF 2017). There is a lack of research done on female separated minors. Even though, the number of them present in Italy is relatively low, I found it important to focus my research on them.

1.1. *Migration and Statistics*

This is a brief introduction to the issue of immigration in Italy which I feel is necessary for the research topic. The number of immigrants incoming directly influences the approach a host country adopts towards the problem of immigration. This happens not only at stage of policy making and law, but also at the levels of local communities and civil society.

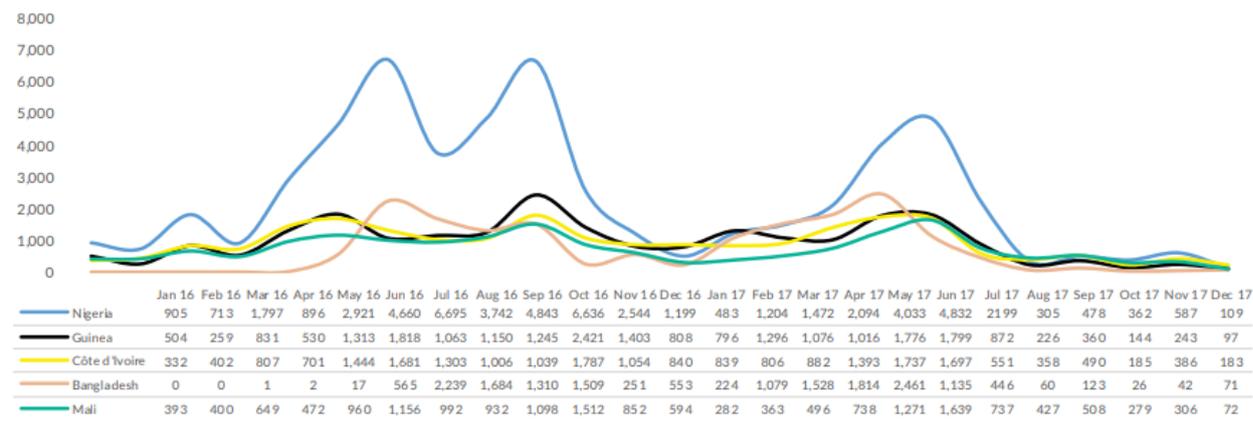
1.1.1 Statistics on immigration – recent immigration to Italy

According to The Italian National Institute for Statistics (2017a), there were 3,714,137 non-EU foreigners with a residence permit in the beginning of 2017 in Italy. Most of these were of Moroccan (454,817), Albanian (441,838), Chinese (318,975), Ukrainian (234,066) or Filipino (162,469) citizenship.

A continuous and increasing flow of immigrants was recorded since the outbreak of the Arab Spring. From 2010 to 2013 around 35,000 migrants arrived to Sicily by sea. A significant increase occurred in 2014 resulting from the military action “Mare Nostrum”. In 2014, 170,000 migrants arrived to the Italian coast (Central Mediterranean Route) of which 92% arrived to Sicily from Libya, but their country of origin was in most of the cases Eritrea, Nigeria, Egypt and Somalia (Consoli 2015: 20). Other statistics from the Ministry of Interior for 2014 states, that the majority of people, who arrived to Italy by sea came from Syria (42,323), Eritrea (34,329), Mali (9,938) and Nigeria (9,000) (IDOS 2016: 120 – 121). In 2015 the number of migrants who arrived by sea dropped to 153,842, but in 2016 it grew again to 181,436 (Ministero dell'Interno 2018). The reason for the increase may also have been due to the closure of the Balkan route in March 2016.

The latest statistics on immigration for 2017 shows a decline of incoming immigrants to 119,396. Most of these originated from Nigeria (15%), Guinea, Ivory Coast and Bangladesh (around 8% each). Nigeria is still the country of origin for the majority of immigrants who arrive by sea to Italy, though the number in 2017 was half of what it was in 2016. The graph 1. below shows a change in the countries of origin in the last two years. During summer months the number usually peaks because of better weather conditions for sea crossings. The significant drop for all nationalities arriving by in summer 2017 will be discussed later (UNHCR 2018).

Most common nationalities of arrivals - January 2016 to December 2017



Graph 1. Most common nationalities of arrivals

Source: UNHCR, <https://data2.unhcr.org/fr/documents/download/61547>

The majority of immigrants reaching Italian shores are males. In 2017 they represented 74%, followed by UASC 13% and women -11%. Almost 5,400 Nigerian women arrived in 2017. That counts for 30% of all Nigerians arriving by sea in that year. In 2016 the proportion of incoming Nigerian females was very much similar (UNHCR 2018). The table 2. below provides further data on nationality and demographics of arrival.

Nationality and demographics of arrivals - January to December 2017

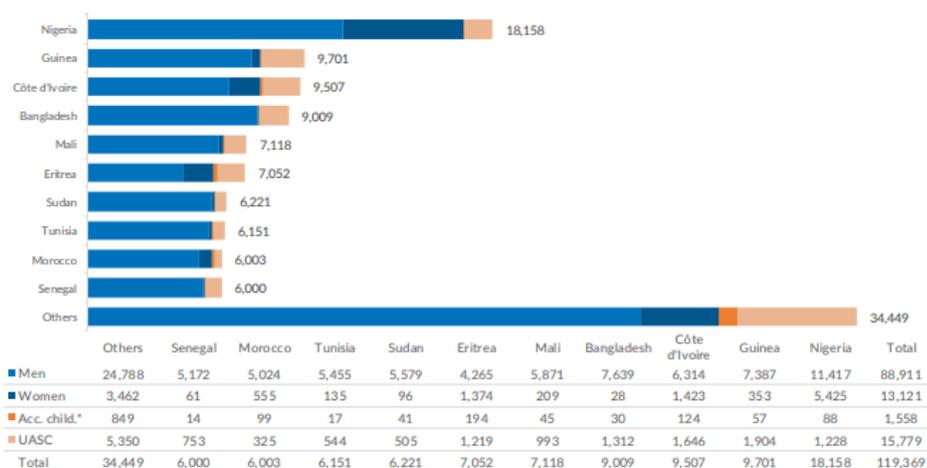


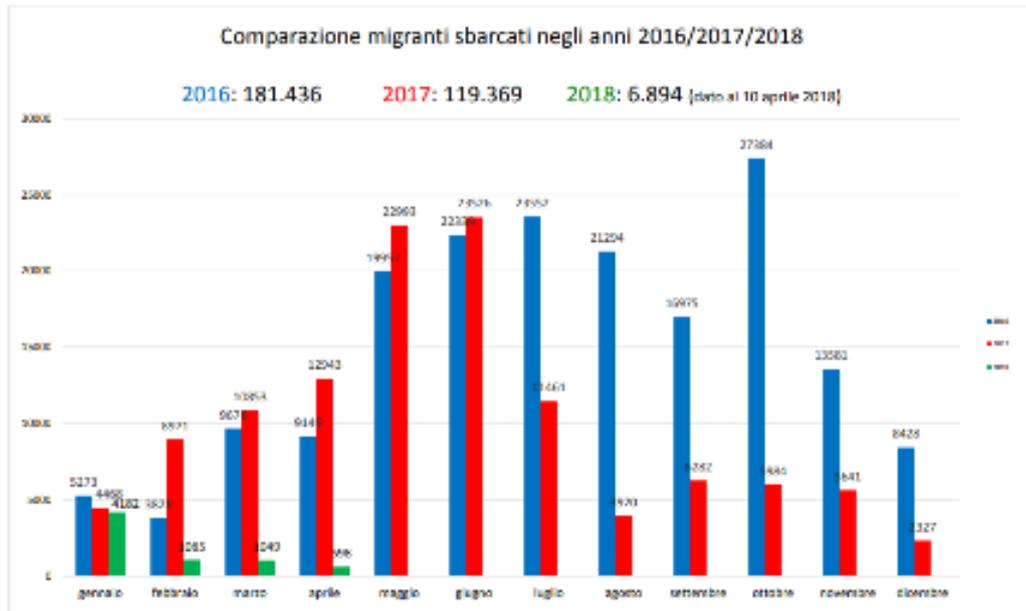
Table 1. Nationality and demographics of arrivals

Source: UNHCR, <https://data2.unhcr.org/fr/documents/download/61547>

1.1.2 Italy – Libya Memorandum of Understanding

The drop in 2017, presented in the graph above, Libya Memorandum of Understanding which was an agreement between Libya and Italy supported by the EU. Italy supported by the EU agreed to finance and cooperate with Libya's military and border control forces to reinforce border security, and to fight illegal immigration and human trafficking. Italy trained Libyan coast guards, and provided both equipment and financial support. The main purpose of this agreement was to limit the number of migrants and refugees by pulling back boats sailing toward Italy. An unstable political situation in Libya as well as some recorded cases of abuse in Libyan detention camps, concerned many people and organizations involved in Human Rights protection and made this agreement highly controversial. Nevertheless, the agreement fulfilled expectations and the number of immigrants coming from Libya significantly dropped (Amnesty International, 2018, UNITED NATIONS SUPPORT MISSION IN LIBYA, 2016).

The graph 2. presented below compares the monthly number of migrants who arrived by sea between 2016 and 10th April 2018. In the half up to July (luglio - July) 2017 a significant drop was recorded. This drop was due to the aforementioned Italian – Libyan agreement. The trend continued to decrease in the beginning of 2018 (Ministero dell'Interno 2018). The “success” of the agreement can be evaluated already but the summer months, when the immigration is always at the highest, will show if the trend is continuous. It is possible that traffickers will find another country from where they will “send” the immigrants towards the coastline of Italy. This statement is supported by the fact that in Tunisia 833 migrants embarked in 2016, while in 2017 the number increased to 5,200 (UNHCR 2018).



Graph 2. Number of migrants who arrived by sea monthly from January 2016 to 10 April 2018

Source: Ministero dell'Interno,

http://www.libertaciviliimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/allegati/cruscotto_statistico_giornaliero_10-04-2018.pdf

1.1.3 Migration flows in Sicily

Italy and especially Sicily have always been routes of transition and migration flows but also places of multiculturalism. Due to its strategic position in the Mediterranean area, it has been conquered, over the centuries by several different rulers coming from different cultural backgrounds. This fact makes Sicily a unique place with a diverse cultural framework. To the present day it maintains its position as a borderline territory with great significance for economic, cultural and political exchange (Sorbello 2015).

Sicily is not only a territory of immigration, but also of emigration. Emigration to the United States and Latin America after the Second World War was followed by migration to the northern part of Italy, especially to industrial cities like Milan-Turin-Genoa (Sorbello 2015: 180). Nonetheless, it needs to be mentioned that significant emigration flows were replaced by those of immigration during recent decades. Bello (2011: 353) argues that there has been a shift from emigration to immigration in the territory in the last thirty years.

An influx of newcomers brings many challenges for the government, regions, municipalities and society. Managing identification of all immigrants, first aid and assistance, protecting vulnerable groups, granting reception to asylum seekers, and deciding upon their status in a united time frame presents one set of challenges. Another set of challenges is that of the integration of immigrants into the host society.

1.2 Unaccompanied Minor Migration on the Move

Unaccompanied minors represent a specific group of migrants. They are characterised by their vulnerability with a high chance of being trafficked and open to other kinds of exploitation. Their presence in Italy and in general in Europe is continuous for several years, however since 2014 the numbers are steadily growing (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018).

In this research *unaccompanied minor* (also referred to as *unaccompanied child*) is understood according to a definition used by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). It is a person “*under the age of 18 who have been separated from both parents and is not being cared for by an adult who, by the law or custom, is responsible to do so*”. The term *separated minor* is more general and includes also minors, who may be accompanied and/or live with extended family members, but might face similar risks as unaccompanied minors (UNHCR 2004). The term unaccompanied minor and separated children will be in shortened into UASC.

The reasons why UASC leave their home countries and come to Europe vary. Some of them want to escape wars, conflicts, natural disasters, violence or problems at home, poverty, discrimination or persecution. Others want to join their families or are seeking a better life. Also, they can become victims of human trafficking and exploitations such as prostitution and forced labour (REACH, UNICEF: 2017).

1.2.1 Legal framework

UASC were found for many years at the crossing point of migration and juvenile law. The Italian law saw them at first as minors but then also as migrants. (Consoli 2015:21-24). All UASC are entitled by Italian law to a provision of numerous services,

rights and protection until they reach the age of 18, for example the right to stay in the country, right to reception and provision of services such as health care and education (Consoli 2015).

The new law ‘Provisions for the protection of foreign unaccompanied minors’ from March 2017 defined unaccompanied minors and children in the legal terms, and guarantees the foreign minors the same protection as Italian minors (Camera dei Deputati 2017). Many changes have been adopted to support the protection of these children. Also, the budget to support municipalities and caregivers was increased. UNICEF and other child rights organization who regularly highlighted poor conditions in the reception structures and violation of human rights contributed to the creation of the new law (UNICEF 2017). Some of the highlights of the law are:

- *“Unaccompanied and separated foreign children will not be subjected to “refoulement” or returns that may cause them harm;*
- *Reduce the time these children spend in first-line reception centres (L.D. from 60 to 30 days);*
- *Promote guardianship for children by using trained volunteers from the regional child and youth agency and promote foster care and host families for children;*
- *Harmonize and improve procedures for age assessment in a child-sensitive manner;*
- *Establish a structured and streamlined national reception system, with minimum standards in all reception facilities;*
- *Roll out extensive use of qualified cultural mediators to communicate and interpret needs of vulnerable adolescents” (UNICEF 2017b).*

Upon disembarkation the identification of vulnerable groups is made. The age is one of the most important characteristics. Young immigrant can claim to be younger to receive protection, services and benefits, or on the contrary, to claim to be older in order not to be placed in a reception structure and easily join the (potentially illegal) labour market. Consoli (2015: 22-23) highlights that the number of UASC, especially girls, would be much higher but due to the fact that they have been trafficked or escaped from the reception structures, they are not included in the statistics. Their possibly undocumented status can be the first step to a vicious circle of working in the sex

industry, being deprived of human rights and exploited by the people under whose “protection” they work. The group I am focused on – underaged girls – is a very vulnerable group at the greatest risk of being trafficked to work in the sex industry (Consoli 2015).

Each unaccompanied minor is entitled by Italian law to have a legal guardian who represents him/her in court. That is especially important while assessing his/her legal status. Each guardian can represent several minors. The official duties are mainly representative and it is up to each guardian whether they want to be in touch with the minor also in their free time. Guardians used to be sought in occupations such as judges, lawyers or mayors, because of their familiarity with the legal system. Nowadays people from different occupations can volunteer and after training can become a guardian (Consoli 2015).

1.2.2 The reception system for immigrant minors in Italy

The reception system in Italy can be divided into three phases. The first, is immediately after disembarkation. Emergency aid is provided and an identification procedure takes place. The police interview all immigrants aiming to identify all UASC and other vulnerable groups such as pregnant women or victims of trafficking. In cases of doubt about the minor’s age, a medical assessment is carried out (Consoli 2015: 62-63). After this procedure, the social services of the municipality accompany the UASC to the first reception centre for minors. A new law titled “Provisions for the protection of foreign unaccompanied minors” states that from March 2017, minors should not stay there longer than 30 days. In this type of reception centre only basic needs are catered for. After that, the minors should be transferred to a secondary reception centre for minors. Here there is a provision of extended social services such as: education, health assistance, psycho-social support and information on free time activities. The minors are obliged to go to school and to attend integration programs which focus on individual needs and provide tools for the minor to begin regaining individual autonomy (REACH, UNICEF 2017: 16).

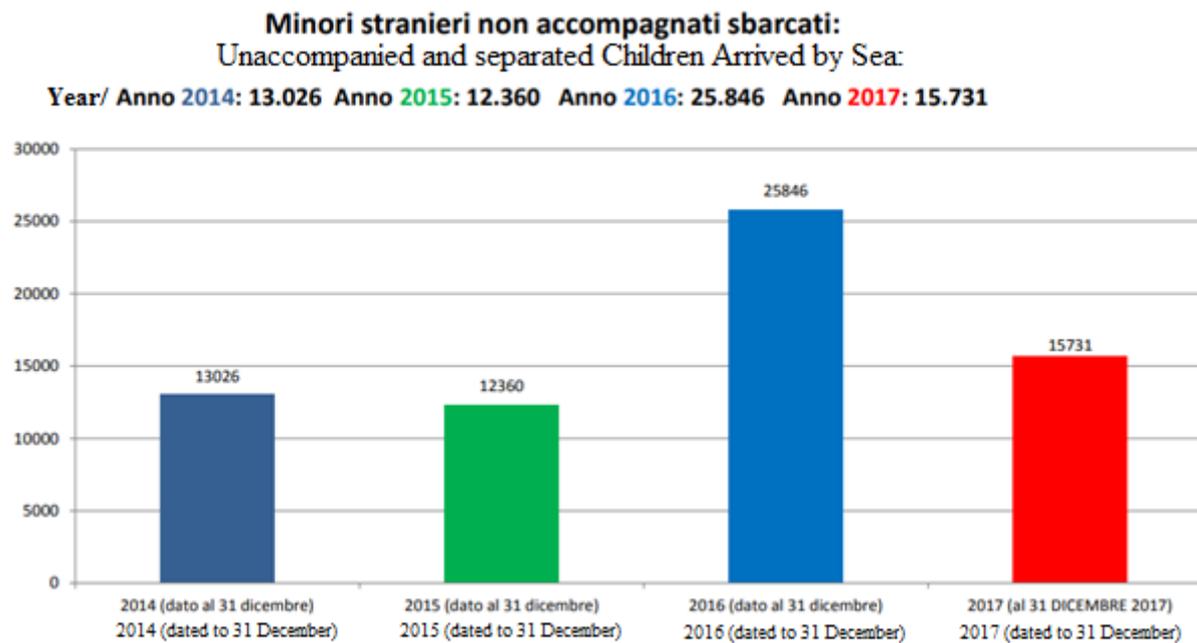
The system of reception centres and facilities for immigrants is more extensive, but for this work the detailed explanation is not relevant.

1.2.3 Statistics on arrival of the UASC

The presence of unaccompanied immigrant minors in Italy can be divided into two stages. The first one is immediately when they arrive in Italy, and the second one is when they stay in the reception structures in Italy. The first stage is rather short term and the numbers of minors is higher than in the second stage. This may be due to the fact that they use Italy as a transit territory and then continue their journey to other countries. Or as UNICEF states, it may be because of them dropping out from the reception centres due to the conditions there and the general lack of clarity around asylum procedures. The drop out in most cases happens a short period after their arrival to the first reception centres (UNICEF 2017c).

In 2014 around 26,000 minors arrived by sea. Out of this number slightly more than 50% were accompanied. In the following year, 2015, almost 16,500 minors arrived, but the proportion of accompanied to unaccompanied changed. Two thirds (around 12,500) were identified as unaccompanied (IDOS 2016: 147). This trend continued in the following years and the UASC represented the vast majority of all minors arriving by sea up to the last statistic data available in February 2018 (UNHCR 2018b).

As the graph below shows, the influx peaked in 2016 when almost 26,000 UASC disembarked in the Italian ports. Since then, the flow is in decline. Last year, in 2017, around 15,700 UASC arrived (UNHCR 2018). The latest statistical information from February 2018 stated that there has been a drop of 60% in the arrival of UASC (UNHCR 2018b). This decrease corresponds to the overall decline of immigrants arriving to Italy, due enlarge part to the aforementioned agreement between Libya and Italy. Nevertheless, the proportion of UASC among sea arrivals is similar in the last two years – in 2016 (14%) and in 2017 (13%) (UNHCR 2018).



Graph 3. Unaccompanied and separated children arrived by sea (Translation L.D.)

Source:

http://www.libertaciviliimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/allegati/cruscotto_statistico_gio_rnaliero_31-12-2017.pdf

Most of the UNSC arriving by sea in 2017 were from Guinea (1,904), The Ivory Coast (1,646), The Gambia (1,417), Bangladesh (1,312), Nigeria (1,228), and Eritrea (1,219) (UNHCR 2018b). Over 90% of all UASC arriving in Italy are males between the ages of 16 to 17 (Consoli 2015: 60). However, exact figures on the gender of UASC arrivals currently do not exist.

1.2.4 Statistics on unaccompanied minors present in the reception centres

Similar to the above, most of the minors hosted in the reception centres are males between 16 and 17 years. According to the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policy between 35% and 44% of all UASC were hosted in reception centres in Sicily in the last four years (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018).

At the end of 2013 6,319 UASC were present in the reception centres. Most of them were from Egypt, Bangladesh and Albania. Girls accounted for 6.8% (393 cases) of all UASC (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali 2015).

In 2014, a significant increase was recorded – 10,536 UASC were welcomed in Italian reception centres. As in the previous year, most came from Egypt, Eritrea, Gambia and Somalia. There were 575 (5.5%) females hosted that year (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali 2015).

In the following year, 2015, the number of minors hosted in the reception centres increased slightly. There were 11,921 UASC hosted, and as in the previous years the highest represented were minors from Egypt, and then from Albania, Eritrea and Gambia. A slight decrease was recorded in the female representation – 550 (4.7%) females. The majority of these girls were originally from Eritrea (28%), Nigeria (23.8%) and Albania (14.4%) (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali 2016).

In 2016, when the influx of minors arriving in Italy peaked, there were 17,373 UASC accommodated in the reception centres. The countries of origin in most cases were Egypt, Gambia and Albania. In total 1,165 (6.7%) were girls. In that year the Nigerian girls represented almost half (48.8%) of all the girls present in the reception centres, followed by girls coming from Eritrea (19.3%) and Albania (8.6%) (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali 2017).

The highest number of minors recorded in the Italian reception centres in recent years was at the end of 2017. At that time in total, 18,303 UASC were hosted there and the most came originally from Gambia, Egypt and Guinea. Also the number of girls increased and there were 1,247 (6.8%) female minors. Most of the girls were from Nigeria (40.2%), Eritrea (18.7%), Somalia (7.9%) and Ivory Coast (7.9%) (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali 2018).

It is not unusual that minors placed in the reception structures drop out. Many of them escape from the first reception centres just a few weeks after their arrival (Consoli 2015: 67-68). According to the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in 2013 2,142 UASC escaped from the reception centres. In 2014, 3,707 minors dropped out from the centres that year. In 2015 6,135 escaped. Most of them were originally from Eritrea, Somalia and Egypt. In 2016, when the immigration of minors to Italy was at its peak, 6,561 dropped out. Their country of origin was in most cases Egypt, Eritrea and

Somalia. In the following year, 2017, 5,828 escaped. Most of them were originally from Somalia, Eritrea, Egypt. Minors from these three countries represented the majority of drop outs from the reception centres in the last three years. (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018). The above statistics refer to both males and females combined. Separate statistics for females only were unavailable.

1.3 Resocialization and Integration

Having briefly summarised the situation of separated minors and that of migration flows in Italy, the issue of integration will be examined. Firstly, I will define socialization, resocialization and integration, because all three are key processes influencing the lives of minor immigrants in reception centres. Following this, I will introduce the theory of Integration developed by Bosswick and Heckmann which classifies integration into 4 types – structural, cultural, interactive and identificational integration (Heckmann, Schnapper 2003 in Bosswick, Heckmann 2006: 3). Finally, there is a discussion over Goffman’s concept of total institution and its presence in the care homes.

1.3.1 Resocialization as part of integration

The process of socialization is generally related to learning socially acceptable and desirable behaviour during childhood and it continues throughout the whole life on a smaller scale (Giddens 2013: 334, 1071, Watson 2007: 224-227). When a person migrates to a new country he or she needs to learn social rules and norms of the new society. This process is defined as resocialization. It has many similarities with socialization and involves similar principles and problems. Nevertheless, the universal social principles like verbal communication has been already adopted during socialization (Watson 2007: 224). In this thesis I understand the above mentioned processes as they were just defined.

Frequently I found it difficult to distinguish between resocialization and integration while carrying out the research. I viewed these processes as overlapping most of the time. I considered resocialization as bed making, cleaning duties which in general conformed to the rules and daily schedule of the community. Learning a new

language and the distribution of monthly pocket money, I perceived as partly resocialization but also as integration. I categorized schooling and working activities as part of integration processes.

I solved this ambivalence by approaching resocialization as an initial part of the integration process. Additionally, I perceived resocialization as a precondition of integration. I viewed the care home as a representation of Italian society on a smaller scale where two cultures negotiated their position. Therefore, during the analysis of the data collected, I used the concept of integration, which is defined in the following part.

1.3.2 Definition and theory of integration

According to Bosswick and Heckmann (2006) integration may be viewed from two different perspectives. First term refers either to “stable, cooperative relations within a clearly defined social system” (Bosswick, Heckmann 2006: 2). Second refers to a process in which newcomers are being introduced and incorporated into a system and its institutions (ibid).

The meaning of the term integration has been changing overtime and new theories and models are being developed till nowadays. Australian scholar Ronald Taft in early 1970’s had defined integration as a result of partial absorption of the immigrants into the new community. By the term assimilation he understood a process of approximation of the immigrants and host society, while both of the groups undergo changes (Watson 2007: 227-228). The differences in understanding the terms also point out to the different contexts concerning various continents. European authors usually use integration, while American scholars, especially in the previous century, tended to use the word assimilation. According to them it described the immigrants’ total incorporation and adaptation into the homogenous host society. Failure of this model resulted in a description of the American society as a “melting pot”, where newcomers culturally and socially contribute to the host society and, therefore, new society is created (Brettell and Hollifield 2000: 77-91).

Bosswick and Heckmann talk about social integration as an incorporation of immigrants into the host society. The process is two-sided and each group is learning to cooperate and respect the other. The main aspects of social integration include

acceptance, access to core institutions, and inclusion to social and cultural systems. The social integration can be categorized into four types: structural, cultural, interactive and identificational integration (Heckmann, Schnapper 2003 in Bosswick, Heckmann 2006: 3). In this thesis I understand integration as Bosswick and Heckman defined it. The four categories will be further described and will be employed in the analysis of the data collected during the research.

1.3.2.1 *Structural integration*

Access to the core institutions is essential for structural integration. The immigrant needs to have access to resources and opportunities in the society. The main institutions are the labour market, education, housing, full political citizenship and welfare institutions particularly that of health care (Bosswick, Heckmann 2006: 9-10).

Access to the labour market and to education can be one some of the main reasons why the newcomer decided to migrate. These two are key elements in the incorporation of immigrants into a society. Also, access to housing and health care provision are important as they are a basic need for every member of a society. Nevertheless, without naturalization and the immigrants' opinion expressed during election, we cannot talk about full structural integration (ibid).

For young immigrant schooling and education is particularly important. These could prove helpful in overcoming integration difficulties and, thus, avoid potential segregation. Learning a new language and following a school curriculum is difficult and especially for immigrants from countries where there is lack of education support and where families are characterized by low social and cultural capital (ibid: 13).

The support of social policy in the integration process is essential. Well managed housing and education policies can foster inclusion. On the contrary, the failure of these policies will be likely to amplify discrimination and segregation (ibid).

In Italy some of the limitations are lack of consistent financial support to institutions working with immigrants (Consoli 2015: 121). Another problematic issue is lack of employment opportunities. If the unemployment rate for the native citizens is high, the integration into labour market and acceptance by the host society can face greater difficulties.

1.3.2.2 Cultural integration

“Immigrants can only claim rights and assume positions in their new society if they acquire the core competencies of that culture and society. In this respect, refers to an individual’s cognitive, behavioural and attitudinal change: this is termed cultural integration (or acculturation)” (Bosswick and Heckmann 2016: 10).

The first and probably main aspect of cultural integration is knowledge of the host language. It is the first pre-condition for integration on different levels. Since immigrants do not have to give up their original culture, challenges and difficulties may occur. If the biculturalism and the bilingualism are not fully master this can lead to partial or unsuccessful integration and stagnation of social mobility of the immigrants (ibid). Among other aspects that are important are inclusion through sport activities and religious practices (ibid: 15).

1.3.2.3 Interactive integration

During interactive integration immigrants make social bonds with the host society – friendships, partnerships, marriages and memberships, and overall participate in the civil society. Their social network, including people of the host society, is widened.

In the initial period of integration immigrants can integrate into ethnic colony. This can be viewed as positive because previous immigrants share their experience and support the newcomers. However, strong bonding to ethnic colony can be problematic later. Individuals can be constrained from the integration into the host society. (Bosswick, Heckmann 2006: 10, 15).

1.3.2.4 Identificational integration

The identificational integration is successful when the immigrant individually identifies as part of the host society. Achieving the feeling of belonging can take a long period of time. Participation in the society and acceptance by the majority is crucial. The identification integration is not necessary for living in a host society. Special attention must be given to “segmented assimilation” or “segmented integration”. The

individual may integrate into a marginalized subculture because of having similar socioeconomic status, values or language (Portes and Zou in Bosswick and Heckmann 2006: 11). If an immigrant does not integrate in this way and at the same time the links to the home country have been cut, the immigrant can suffer marginalization, because there is no feeling of belong to either of the two societies. Because of this, social segregation from the host society and culture occurs (Bosswick and Heckmann 2006: 11).

These types of integration can be viewed from the different perspectives of each stakeholder. Integration is a multi-sided process which happens in different levels. Porter states three main ones: “the level of government policy, the level of civil society and public opinion, and the level of the immigrant community” (Brettell and Hallifield 2000: 83).

The integration of an individual who does not want to be integrated is not possible. Also it is not possible to fully integrate into a closed society. Even though policy makers at national level are influential, the biggest work is done in regional and local level, where individual public and civic actors foster integration (Bosswick and Heckmann 2006: 11-16).

1.3.3 The reception centre – in between “total institution” and safe place

The unaccompanied minors spend several months being responsible for themselves during the journey to Europe. However, then they are placed in reception structures. Their life becomes more settled than before. Consoli warns of possible “infantilization” in the reception centres (Consoli 2015: 118). A dependency can develop as they begin to rely on the institutional care. This inspired me to reflect on the concept of total institutions.

“A basic social arrangement in modern society is that we tend to sleep, play and work in different places, in each case with a different set of coparticipants, under a different authority, and without an overall rational plan. The central feature of total

institutions can be described as a breakdown of the kinds of barriers ordinarily separating these three spheres of life” (Goffman 1991: 17).

Even though I am reluctant to describe a reception centre for unaccompanied minors as a “total institution” as Goffman defined it, I found that some characteristics of a total institution were present. For example, in the reception centre where I carried out my research, there were daily activities with the same group of people according to a schedule. There were limited possibilities for free time activities and limited contact with the society outside of the structure. However, the girls spend part of their time outside of the centre when they attended school.

From another point of view the reception centre represented a safe place for minors. Here they were not deprived of their basic needs and when needed the psychological support was provided to them. In the secondary reception centres socialization and initial integration takes place.

The reception centre possesses characteristics of a total institution. These had positive and negative aspects. The balance between protection and freedom was negotiated. Even though family care, would be probably more suitable for the integration process, the reception structures represent entry point for the minors into the Italian society. The reception centres play a key role and the Italian government need to support integration programs and individual integration plans.

2. Methodology

In this section the research questions are introduced with an explanation of the approach and methods used for the data collection and analysis. There is a discussion of the limits of the approaches used and that of the overall research. There is an account of how I contacted the reception structure where the data were collected. Finally, there is a discussion over the ethics of social research and reflection on the research from my perspective.

2.1 *Research questions*

The thesis investigates the process of socialization and integration of separated female migrant minors into a structure of migrant organization in Italy. The research aims to answer the following questions:

- How does the process of (re)socialization and integration in a reception centre look like?
- Is the integration possible in a reception facility/centre for immigrants? To what extent?
- What difficulties do minor migrants face during their (re)socialization/integration into the Italian society and culture?

2.2 *Methodology of data collection and analysis*

The aim of this work is to follow the process of the integration and (re)socialization which takes place in a reception centre, where female unaccompanied minors are placed, after being caught by the Italian costal police or other organisations dealing with an illegal migration via the Mediterranean Sea. I have decided to use a qualitative approach to follow the process described above. It allows me to study the integration process in a reception centre from a closer perspective with detailed information on individuals and to observe many interactions taking place there. The aim of my research was to gain a deep insight which quantitative approach would not have permitted for (Silverman 2000).

Since I wanted to observe and capture everyday behaviour, social and cultural relationships in a reception structure for separated minors, I decided to conduct an

ethnographic study by means of participant observation. As Spradley define it I wanted “(1) to engage in activities appropriate to the situation and (2) to observe the activities, people and physical aspects of the situation” (Spradley 1980: 54). I recorded the data from my observation into a field diary. This method is fitting for researching the topic I have chosen (Stockelova, Abu Ghosh 2013: 7-31).

In addition, I planned to conduct in-depth interviews with the Nigerian minor girls. I wanted to focus on push and pull factors which forced them to migrate and also to capture their experience of the journey. Nevertheless, when I arrived at the reception centre I understood that I did not want to make the girls undergo recorded interviews, because of the sensitivity of the topic and also because of their attitude toward recorded information about themselves (the experience of being a victim of traffickers). At the begging I was unsure whether I want to study migration or rather integration. Later, I chose integration because I was able to observe it by myself and get better understanding about the process. Due to my limited resources the topic would prove more pragmatic and achievable.

To analyse my field notes I used coding and thematic categories. “Codes are tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study” (Miles, Huberman 1994: 56). This method helped me to understand the most frequent and important themes and topics which I recorded in the field. I was able to categorise data, reorganise them and rethink their meaning. “...Dissect them meaningfully while keeping the relations between the parts intact...” (Miles, Huberman 1994: 56-57).

I classified the codes and themes into four types of integration used by Bosswick and Heckmann. These types comprised: structural integration, cultural integration, interactive integration and identificational integration (Heckmann, Schnapper 2003 in Bosswick, Heckmann 2006: 3). Further, I described aspects and developed categories for each of the types.

A disadvantage of this approach and of the methods used could be that my biases could shape and/ or influence the data collection and analysis. The data collection is selective process and “get it all” is only an unattainable wish (Miles, Huberman 1994: 55-56). As Ryan and Bernard state:

“In writing field notes, researcher acts as a kind of theme filter, choosing (often subconsciously) what data are important to record and what data are not. In this sense, producing field notes is a process of identifying themes. This inherent filtering process

poses a particular set of problems for analyzing field notes. When applying techniques that use informant-by-variable matrices, researchers need to remember that patterns discovered in such data may come from informants as well as from investigators' recording biases (Ryan and Bernard 2003: 100)."

Coding the field notes was helpful with organizing the data and seeing the most important issues. However, this approach has its limits. Silverman warns that focusing on the set codes can potentially "deflect attention away from uncategorized activities" (Silverman 2000: 147). I tried to analyse the field notes beyond the categories set and consider every interaction occurring in the centre.

I preserved anonymity of all the participants in the research and used pseudonyms. I also did not state the municipality and district of the reception centre where the research was conducted. I will further describe the issue of anonymity in the subchapter "Ethics".

2.3 *Limits of my research*

Apart from methodological and analytical limits I wanted to discuss the limits of my whole research. Culture differences, research time period, my experience with the field work and my social and cultural background influenced the observation significantly.

"Ethnography offers all of us the chance to step outside our narrow cultural backgrounds, to set aside our socially inherited ethnocentrism, if only for a brief period, and to apprehend the world from the viewpoint of other human beings who live by different meaning systems" (Spradley 1980: viii).

This specific study presents how particular Nigerian females were helped to socialize and integrate into a culture that was foreign to them - the Italian culture. A difficulty which occurred in this specific study was the fact that me as a researcher came from a culture outside the two cultures mentioned above. Even though I spent almost one year in Sicily and I was closely connected to the Italian culture, I had never considered myself a part of it. This made the process of interpreting actions and behaviour a challenging one.

I must emphasise that my stay in the field was rather short. I spent two weeks in a reception centre– days as well as nights. I am aware of the disadvantages of such a short stay, but it was not within my capacity to stay longer. Furthermore, it was my first

experience carrying out a field research. Stockelova and Abu Ghosh stated that ethnography is learned through practise. The eye of the ethnographer is trained during numerous field experiences and the “ethnographic habit” is developed thanks to training of physical, mental and emotional sensitiveness (Stockelova, Abu Ghosh 2013: 8-10).

How the people I was observing perceived me and how that influenced the research? Being a young foreign white skin university student who was doing research for a thesis, affected how the actors behaved toward me and the way they perceived my otherness influenced every moment of my stay there and brought many ups and downs during the process of gathering data. For example, I perceived my age as being an advantage. There was only a small difference between me and the Nigerian girls, when it comes to age. I believe this helped me to connect better with them and interpret their actions.

I felt that the fact I was carrying out a research project which would record information about the people involved may have influenced their behaviour. This phenomenon is defined as the “Hawthorne effect”. The subject of a social investigation may change his/her behaviour due to the perception that he/she is being observed (Wickström and Bendix 2000). This could be the case and thus they may have adjusted their behaviour in order to make good impression and presented themselves in front of me in way they would like to be officially portrayed.

2.4 Contact with the institute and features of the reception structure

I got to know the director of the institute in May 2017 at a street festival in Sicily. The event was organized by a religious institution, but overall it was a cultural rather than a religious event. It was open to everybody and there was a main stage and several stands where NGOs and other organizations could present themselves. It happened that I got interested in the stand where the institute (part of it was a reception structure for the unaccompanied immigrant minors) was presented and I had a chance to talk with the director. At the time, I was already interested in unaccompanied minors, especially girls. I asked the director about the possibility of staying in the reception centre and carrying out a research for my university studies. She agreed, gave me her number and told me to get in touch when I would need to come.

I contacted her in November 2017. She remembered me and we agreed that I would come during December 2017 for two weeks. I stayed in the structure from 6th till 22nd December 2017. I had to send her a paper from my university stating that I would be there to carry out research for my thesis.

This structure was founded by religious denomination and it serves many people coming from different social and cultural backgrounds. The part for Nigerian minor girls was opened few years ago in a response to an enormous influx of immigrants from Africa. It is categorized as a secondary reception centre (Centro di seconda accoglienza).

2.5 Ethics

During my research I followed the Ethical Codex (CASA 2015a) and the Ethical Directive (CASA 2015b) of the Czech Association for Social Anthropology.

The director of the reception centre knew about the topic of my research and that it would be used for my final thesis. I send her information about my research signed by the Head of the Department of Sociology from my faculty. I assured her that the names and reception structure would be anonymous. I also asked the director to sign the information agreement regarding the research.

The employees and the girls with whom I was in a direct contact knew about my thesis research from the first day I was in the structure. I was not particularly specific about the topic, because at that time I was still formulating my research interests and only later during the participant observation could I focus on the particular aspects of my research.

In fact, it was the director who gave me a permission to conduct a research. The Nigerian girls and the other people in the structure were not party to the decision. If they had objected to my presence they had a choice not to talk to me and I fully respected that.

However, I also found many challenges from the legal point of view. Some of my research partners were underage and I was well aware that, as they were a vulnerable group, that their protection was of the highest importance. According to the Italian legal system each separated minor has a guardian, who represents him or her legally in front of the Italian court. Unfortunately, it was not possible for me to contact

each guardian and get their approval. Therefore, the permission of the director of the structure was the only agreement I had.

For the protection of the people I was observing I preserved their anonymity and used pseudonyms. I did not state the name of the city where the reception structure was located and I did not share the full version of my field notes.

2.6 *My own reflection*

The whole experience of being present in the field while doing my research was enriching, exciting and challenging. It was the first time I carried out an ethnographic study and this lasted two weeks. I got many new ideas and started to think about relations between people, things and issues connected with migration and integration. I became more aware of my identity, status and appearance, and I became aware of my own boundaries. I realized that being in a foreign culture (I was a Czech student in Italy) and trying to study and live with people from a third culture (Nigerian minors) was something which I needed to think about a lot and reflect on many issues.

Realizing this, I discovered there were many advantages and disadvantages regarding my research and it depended upon which perspective I was looking at it from. Some aspects were advantageous as well as disadvantageous at the same time.

Some of the biggest disadvantages were cultural and language barriers. I stayed in Sicily from September 2016 till August 2017 as an Erasmus student. I think the year helped me to get to know Italian or rather Sicilian culture, its people and the Italian language. Nevertheless, I realized that I would never be able to see and understand things as natives do. This was a great disadvantage when I wanted to communicate or understand some interaction which my cultural (as well as personal) background did not allow me to comprehend.

On the other hand, I gained greater understanding in a practical way of how it was to be a foreigner in the Italian society. I became more aware of how girls can feel when cultural differences occur. For instance, when it comes to eating habits. In Italy eating pasta every day is a common thing, while in Nigeria and Czech Republic it is not.

An advantage of being outside the two cultures was that I noticed things that a person from within either of the two cultures might not have noticed or not have considered as important. I had fresh or maybe rather new look that could question things and reflect on every interaction between the various people in the structure. Since I did

not completely understand the Italian and Pidgin English language I was not always focused on what people say, but rather how they say it. Their voice tone, gestures and mimics.

When I came back to my hometown, after a year in Sicily, my view had been altered. I was able to look at things here with a fresh look, too. Before my Erasmus stay and the research I thought about the place where I live in a totally different way. I began to view relationships between natives and foreigners from a new perspective.

A question which makes me think again is: If it is better that a researcher studies his/her own culture but spends some time away, comes back and see things from a wider perspective? Or, if it is better, when a researcher comes from different culture?

Throughout the entire observation I was insecure regarding my own actions and very often I felt like an outsider. Somehow, I felt a division of “us and them” in the structure. Nigerian girls on one side and everybody else on the other. I was someone in between who did not belong to either of those groups. I felt it, for example, in a situation, when I had to choose where I was going to sit for lunch or dinner. Sometimes the circumstances brought me to eat with other employees and I felt that the girls might have been jealous because of that.

I never wanted to make someone feel uncomfortable or to make some “faux-pas”. My main concern was how should I behave toward the girls. Should I try to be their friend, help them with whatever they needed, make an “alliance” with them or would it be better to be more neutral, act like a ghost and silently observe? For example, when there was a fight because the girls did not clean the kitchen I was not sure what to do. Should I stay in my room and just listen to what was happening or should I have gone to the kitchen, witness the argument and potentially influence the whole situation? Should I have advised them to clean the kitchen the following time and help them to do it or should I have been silent and wait for another argument?

After I had spent a week in the reception centre I got a responsibility to take phones from girls and lock the common room where the TV was around 10 p.m. This situation widened discrepancy and my role in the structure was more set and labelled. Now I was categorized as employee (caregiver) rather than outsider and possible neutral person. Because this few conflicts arose and I would say my relationship with the girls changed. I felt like I was standing between two groups and I did not want to disappoint anyone. Telling on girls that they had kept their phones during night would make me an

“enemy” but lying to the employees would be wrong example, as well. I felt I had lost my neutrality which I probably never had.

It was not easy and I know I was not a perfect ethnographer. I was a beginner who was learning and exploring new techniques and methods. I was very nervous about the whole situation of me trying to be a scientist, having responsibility toward all the people involved, and to research the items/ topics which were of interest to me. I felt that I was not prepared for being an ethnographer and that I could not correctly observe people around me. Then I thought again what does “correct observation” mean? My doubts and fears have partly disappeared thanks to the book *Ethnography* (in original *Ethnografie*) from Tereza Stockelova and Yasar Abu Ghosh. They refer to several authors like the father of Ethnography – Malinowski, Mayers or Cerwonka and Malkki (Stockelova, Abu Ghosh 2013: 8-10) and state that ethnographers need to be trained. Researchers need to learn how to see things and that will happen only due to experiences in the field. They also talk about the relationship between the ethnographer and the observed. The interactions between all the people who lived or worked in the structure were very important for my observation and also for me personally. Somehow, I “had to” live there for two weeks and if some conflicts were to arise it would be very difficult and challenging to manage it on one hand and on the other hand to reflect on these. I wrote about various aspects of relationships and reflected on these in the field notes. Nevertheless, this process seems never ending and even now all the experiences are still bubbling and maturing inside of me and I still consider many things anew.

At the end of my reflection I wish to consider two aspects of time. Firstly, I need to say that two weeks in the field was not enough. I was aware of it and I know what problems this caused. For example, after a longer period of time it would have been possible to establish a greater and deeper trust with the girls. Also, the activities girls and the whole community do may vary according to season of the year and, thus, I could explore different perspectives, interactions and meanings. Though, the time was short I established some relationship with the girls, employees and other actors in the centre. I was very happy that I had the opportunity to be in the field and I am grateful that people shared two weeks of their life with me.

Secondly, I would like to talk about time management. It was very hard for me to be fully attentive all the time. Additionally, it was difficult to both notice and remember what I considered important. But the most challenging thing was to find time to write down my findings. I did not like to write my field notes when the girls were

around and make them feel like as if they were being observed, but on the other hand when they were doing some activity I wanted to be with them and observe what was happening. I never managed these two things to work out in the way I wanted them to. Sometimes I wrote my notes in the evening when I was tired, other times I wrote them before breakfast when most of the girls were sleeping and sometimes when they were in the “laboratorio” (workshop).

Despite the time limitations and limited resources, I found this experience enriching, not only in my academic life, but also personally. I have developed my intercultural skills and learned how complex the issue of migration and integration is.

3. Data Analysis

The aim of my thesis was to find out how the processes of (re)socialization and integration took place in a reception centre. I conducted an ethnographic study and in this chapter, I analyse my field notes and discuss issues and limits associated with both of these processes. As I mentioned above, I categorise my findings into four types of integration described by Bosswick and Heckmann (2006) – structural, cultural, interactive and identificational.

Firstly, I analyse structural integration. I discuss the problems of an integration program examining the following aspects: work and money issues; documentation; schooling. Then, in the cultural integration category, I introduce social and community rules, skills, habits and language which girls have to learn. Then, there is a discussion of problems which arise in interactive integration between the host society and the girls. Finally, I discuss how the girls keep their Nigerian culture and identity.

In appendix 1 there is a brief biography of the individuals whom I observed both separately and during group interactions.

3.1 *Structural Integration*

3.1.1 Integration program vs. work and money

During my stay in the centre, the topic of work and money was discussed a lot. One of the main reasons why girls in this structure came to Italy was to have a “better

life”. The girls’ idea of better life was different to that of the caregivers and authorities in the reception centre.

After the arrival in Italy girls expected to get a job quickly and send remittances to their families (Consoli 2015:68). However, all unaccompanied minors are placed in a reception centres until they reach 18. The big motivation to be economically active is constrained to receiving a small financial support from the government. This often gave the girls the feeling of being “trapped” in the care home and not being able to fulfil their purpose of coming (ibid: 119).

They had to stay in the reception structure and follow the daily routines. The program is not completely the same in each structure so we cannot talk about systematic (re)socialization or integration. In the reception centre where I stayed the girls went to “laboratorio” (workshop) every day from 9:30 till 12:30 as part of integration program. Some of them did hand crafts, others baked biscuits or made pasta. Thanks to this they acquired working habits and learned useful skills. For each working day they got 3 euros (referred to it as “pocket money”) and this is where their dissatisfactions arose. The citation from my field diary presented below shows their misunderstanding between work and integration program.

When supervisor was recording the girls’ attendance, girls wondered why she also didn’t included me as being present (presence means that they can get money for that working day). Supervisor said that I am “Maestra” (teacher) and I do not want money. Girls asked me if I do not want money. I told them that I cannot get money (11.12.2017, field diary).

From the citation we can see that they classified the handcraft activities as “work”. Several of them told me that they should get more money for those three hours they work every day. But from the perspective of the reception centre it was part of the integrational program. The activities were not profit-making and thus we cannot talk about exploitation.

They received their “salary” (pocket money) once a month and they could spend it on things they wanted. They bought cosmetics and beauty products, clothes, sweets and some sent remittances to their families in Nigeria. With that money they should also pay for their documentation (payment for issuing a residence permit) and hygiene products as soap. For some of them the amount of money was insufficient and that led to misunderstanding and conflicts. By distributing the pocked money monthly, the

centre wanted to teach them budgeting and thinking about the necessary things first and be able to plan finances.

Problems with budgeting arose when Andrea promised to send money for Christmas to her parents, but later she found out she also needed to pay for her documentations. The promise she gave to her parents seemed to be very important for her. The following citation from the field diary is from the day when she found out she had to pay for the documentation.

(...) I saw Andrea sitting outside so I asked if I can join. (...) Then we had a small talk and I also asked why she is angry. At first, she was silent but then she told me the reason. It is because she promised to her parents she will send them her money she saved for Christmas – it is 50 euros. But today some caregiver told her that she has to pay for her documents 50 euros. So at the end she doesn't have anything left to send her parents. She was really sad because she already promised them the money and they did not told her that she will have to pay for the documents this month (13.12.2017, field diary).

This situation demonstrated the commitment to send remittances to her family. This financial support may justify (probably for her and for her parents as well), why she left Nigeria and came to Europe. She had a conflict of interest and she did not get a chance to solve the situation in the way she wanted. From that we can see that the feeling of “being trapped” occurred. It referred to insufficient ability to financially sustain life in Italy and also the capability to fulfil expectations and maintain trust of her family.

Tiffany who stayed in another structure before told me about the differences of money distribution. In the previous reception centre, they received 11 euros each Friday and did not have to work. She preferred it that way, even though here she could get more money in this reception centre. Also, Renata told me about her experience in another structure. There they got 50 euros per month, but they did not work. In this reception centre they got around 62 euros, but they had to work and she commented that “*working for that little money is not good*” (10.12.2017, field diary).

When I talked to the girls where they see their future some of them did not plan to stay in Italy. From the citations of field notes presented below, it can be understood that the reason was mainly financial.

She (Tiffany) said that there is no money in Italy. Maybe there was before in 2004, 2005. It is because here is no work. When I asked her what kind of job she would like to do she was thinking for quite a while and then answered an office work. I asked if she had a job back in Nigeria and she said she was a hairdresser for men. But there is poverty and starvation, so she wanted to go away (8.12.2017, field diary).

The next citation of the field notes is from another conversation with Tiffany, when she talked about the country she would like to go. The citation after that was from a talk with another minor Renata on the same topic.

I asked what she thought about Europe before she came, and she said that Europe has a lot of money. She wants to have better future for herself and her family. She talked about times when they had nothing to eat in Nigeria. She said again that there is no money in Italy and she wants to go to Germany. She said that there is money. Some people she knows get hundreds of euros from 'Germany' because they have a child. She also said that she thinks a lot and then she is tired (11.12.2017, field diary).

She (Renata) doesn't want to stay in Italy. She said that there is no money. She wants to go somewhere in Europe – France, Spain, Germany (10.12.2017, field diary).

Both, Tiffany and Renata, talked about the fact there is *no money in Italy*, but in Germany or other European countries there was money. But what did it mean that “there is no money in Italy”? I tried to find out if they referred to social benefits or to salaries, but I did not manage it. Both talked non-clearly about the statement as if they were not sure to what they really refer to.

Their desire to move somewhere else can be problematic when we talk about the integration. Their own openness and willingness to integrate is questionable in this situation. They can have lower motivation to learn the language or to accept the norms and values of the Italian society and it further delay the whole integration process.

Overall the issue of work and money was one of the most discussed topics in the reception centre. Girls' expectation of earning money immediately after the arrival in Europe is very problematic and leads to disappointment. Social and economic reality in Italy, especially in Sicily (high unemployment rate, low financial support from government etc.), can represent a great obstacle with integration process. This can result in negative attitude towards the Italian society and its institutions.

I found many positives in the reception centre's approach toward the girls' integration. They taught them some basic working habits and skills (be on time at

“laboratorio”, otherwise you will not get money for the day), give them their “salary”/ pocket money once per month as is the case outside of the structure. Also girls had to pay for necessities such as documentation and hygiene products from their own money. But the fact they get so little money it is a problem to them. From the point of view of the reception centre it is understandable because they cannot afford to pay them more.

3.1.2 Documentation

Documentation i.e. the residence permit is very important to the girls and as such it is much discussed topic in the reception centre. Ursula, a social worker, said that it was the first thing they ask for when they arrive. This was confirmed to me by one of the minors Tiffany, who told me that it was the most important thing for her. I also heard girls talking about it among each other in “laboratorio” or during meals.

The time for issuing documentation can take months and even years due to bureaucratic delays. It is not unusual that the process of completing their legal status is finished after they reach the age of majority (Consoli 2015: 120-121; REACH, UNICEF 2017: 4).

For most of them the documentation is a priority, because they perceive it as an assurance of their stay in Europe. It is necessary for finding a job when they reach 18. Waiting for the decision of the commission who is evaluating all the requests is long and tiring. The time of uncertainty and long waiting can have negative impact on their willingness to integrate. “The delay in the practise of issuing residence permits is among the principal causes of rebellion and escape of the children from the care homes” (Consoli 2015: 115).

Ursula, a social worker, took care of the legal procedures relating to the issue of documentation. During my stay Andrea was about to get a residence permit. She asked me to accompany her to a post office where she had to pay an issue fee. It was the first time at the Italian post office for both of us and we did not know how the procedure works. We asked another customer for help and she showed us everything we needed and helped us to fill the form. We would not have managed without her.

In order to pay a fee for a residence permit she had to go to the post office and in order to complete the transaction she had to learn the procedure and to do this it was necessary to interact with the institution. While so doing she become familiar with the procedure and she was begging to integrate into the structures of the host society.

3.1.3 The importance of the school

Girls went to school every day around 3:30 p.m. and came back around 7 p.m. On Thursdays there was no school. Unfortunately, I could not go to school with them due to security issues and therefore I cannot comment on this topic in depth.

When I talked with them about school, they always said it was fine and they liked it. When I asked them more detailed questions (what they do there, who are their classmates) they did not want to elaborate. However, they made no complains about it.

In the school they were divided into two groups. One of them focused only on learning the Italian language, while the other one followed the curriculum of the Italian education system. Minors from different reception centres also attended this school.

The fact that schooling was in the afternoon brought many challenges. One problem was that their education was separate from the native Italians as they attended the school at different times. This meant that there was no integration process with the Italian students. Due to different language abilities and different curriculums it made practical sense to arrange the school in this way.

I interpreted their attitude toward school mostly as lukewarm. Clara was the only one who left for school on time. The others usually took more time and left later. I perceived that they did not have big ambition to study more than what was necessary. Maybe the fact that the school was in the afternoon affected their attitude. I never saw them doing homework or prepare for class. They went to school on their own and it was a 10-minute walk.

They did not go to school much during these two weeks as it was the pre-Christmas period and there were several bank-holidays. This limited the time I had to observe this aspect.

To briefly summarise the structural integration, I want to highlight some key points. In most cases the girls came to Italy to work, earn money and send remittances to their families in Nigeria. Their minor age and irregularity represented a big obstacle in fulfilling their expectations. The reception centre initiated integration programs and girls worked in the morning. However, the financial allowance they received was (according to them) relatively low. Getting the documents as soon as possible was their

main priority. A prolonged waiting time can have negative influences on their attitude toward the reception centre and overall on the host society. If they get the documentation they are more willing to integrate. They did not have a chance to socialize and integrate in school with Italian students, because they attended school separately from the Italians.

3.2 Cultural Integration

The interactions between Italian and Nigerian cultures brings many challenges. Thus, the development of mutual tolerance is essential.

Ima and Kate were two people who played key roles in the cultural integration process. One of them Ima, originally from Nigeria, but living in Italy for more than 20 years, was a cultural mediator. She represented a person who was solving conflicts when cultural misunderstanding occurred. Sometimes the girls called her “mama” and I also perceived her role as a mother.

Kate, an educator, on the other hand seemed to play a role of an older sister. She spoke with girls in Italian language and it looked like they accepted her as an authority and a friend at the same time. Both were very important figures for the girls.

3.2.1 Bed making and alimentation

When I talked to Kate and later with Ima they both told me that the bed making is one of the things they have to teach the girls. Ima talked about the differences between Italy and Nigeria. There they do not have beds, so they are not used to making them after they wake up. Ima also talked about other differences such as where the eating takes place and the manner of eating. Girls are taught to eat only at a table in a dining hall and to use forks and knives. I saw them following these social rules most of the time. When no authority was present they tended to use their hands more often.

Usually for breakfast they had pastry or bread and milk. For lunch Italian meals were prepared. Girls cooked dinner for themselves. Each week two of them were on duty and had to cook and wash the dishes after lunch and dinner and clean the common areas (a living room with a small kitchen and a hall) in their section. The meals for dinner were closer to the ones they were used to in Nigeria. Together with Kate they had created a weekly menu which consisted of rice and fish, potato fries, eggs, bazin

(Libyan dish) and pizza. These dishes were modified to suit their tastes. Most of them did not like cheese so they ate pizza without cheese and Andrea ate potato fries with sugar. She said that in Africa they have sweet potatoes and she is used to it and does not like salty ones.

In the evening when rice was served, some of them were using hands instead of forks and knives. When one older Italian employee saw it, she distanced herself from this behaviour. Other times I heard her commenting on the girls' approach to cleaning. The girls noticed these comments and it seemed like they did not have a good relationship with her.

The reception centre imposed a no-wasting policy as regard alimentation. Even though the girls were aware of the policy they not always obeyed to it. Because of this several conflicts arose between the caregivers and the girls. Another situation arose when new girls – Zara and Dakota joined the centre. It was obvious from the first sight they were not used to this non-wasting policy and they threw away food quite often. The carers tolerated it probably because they wanted to let them become acclimatized.

I had a personal problem when I saw them wasting food. It was hard for me to understand the contrast between poverty and starvation in Nigeria as they spoke about it, and then to see them throwing food away.

3.2.2 Cleaning

Cleaning was one of the things girls had to do in the care home. If they did not comply with this rule, this created tensions and conflicts. As I mentioned before, every week two girls were on duty for cooking, washing dishes and cleaning common areas (a hall, a living room and a small kitchen) in their part of the building. One Monday I woke up and heard the argument between the caregivers and the girls. The girls on duty did not clean the kitchen and common areas. The caregivers pointed out to them that they did not do their cleaning duties. The girls interpreted this as if they had been accused of being dirty. Everybody got involved and this conflict lasted the whole day. I could see that girls were upset and angry because of it. In the evening Kate discussed the issue of cleaning with them in a calmer manner. They sat on the beds in the girls' room and talked. I perceived this discussion as a very important for educating them, but also for letting them express their opinion and analyse the whole situation. The citation from the field diary presented below describe this discussion.

Then Regina said that no one say something nice to them if they clean their room or do something good but if something is not clean everybody says that they are dirty. Kate said that she is telling them that they are good when they do something good. “Tutti sbagliamo.” – “All of us make mistakes. No one is perfect only the God. But for example, if the kitchen is dirty for 5 days it is not just one mistake.” Then there was silence. (11.12.2017, field diary)

It seemed like a discussion where everyone was equal. Kate was close to them personally and I perceived that they did not see her as an authority figure. She managed to clearly communicate the rules of the structure. Having a communication in a respectful manner they were more likely to carry out their cleaning duties and thus becoming more (re)socialized and integrated.

Helping the girls with the cleaning duties was one of the ways that I got closer to them. Especially to Andrea. I did not know about the duties in the beginning, so I was always washing dishes with her. She was grateful that I was helping her and I was grateful I got a chance to talk with her in a natural setting. Later, when I found out about the duties I continued helping them. I felt an obligation to act as a role model for them.

3.2.3 Italian language and culture

The main language in the reception centre was Italian. However, the girls spoke among themselves in their own language. Ursula (a social worker) and Kate (an educator) could speak English a bit, but they communicated with the girls mostly in Italian. Ima (a cultural mediator) was the only one who was using two languages often - Italian and Pidgin English to communicate with the girls.

The girls were learning the Italian language at school, but they communicated in Italian in the centre as well. Regina and Clara helped in the kitchen with other people in the centre. When I was in the kitchen I saw that they worked separately. They did different tasks with different groups of people. They needed to communicate in Italian probably more than the other four girls, who did handcrafts in a group. I perceived that using the Italian language often was an influential aspect for their further integration.

When Clara had free time, she usually watched cartoons. She was the only one who watched TV every day. She watched several shows in the morning and in the evening. All of these were in Italian. This was an easy way for me to approach her. I sat

and watched the shows with her. After a few days, I felt that this activity which we were doing together was something which allowed her to talk with me more easily. I perceived that her language abilities were better than that of the other girls. It was surprising for me to realize that watching TV was a helpful tool of integration.

One evening, when I was in my room I heard laughing coming from the living room where the TV was. I went to see what was happening and I saw girls watching TV. The show was not complicated. The citation from the field diary presented below describes the situation.

I went to watch TV. There were some humorous scenes without words. I found it as a very nice to communicate with foreigners and teach them about the Italian culture. Clara, Olivia, Andrea and I were watching TV. In one scene a woman was doing a pregnancy test (the one where two lines appear if there is a pregnancy). Clara asked what it was and Andrea explained it to her. (18.12.2017, field notes)

Even though the show was without words nevertheless, I considered it as useful. It seemed a great tool how to educate the girls about some social situations, which occur in Italian society. Though the girls were not directed actors in what they were watching, I thought it may help them in a future when they would be interacting with the host society.

When two new girls arrived, I heard them talking about TV shows with the other girls from the centre. The following citation from the field notes shows their familiarity with Italian TV shows.

In the afternoon Dakota and Zara asked the girls if they watch some Italian tv series/ movies. The girls responded that they just Nigerian ones, which surprised Dakota and Zara. (14.12.2017, field diary)

Dakota and Zara spent around 4-5 months in another reception centre, where Clara (the girl who watched cartoons) also had spent some time. It is possible that all the people in that reception centre were watching Italian TV. As I said before, I started to think about the TV from a different perspective. Watching Italian TV shows would help the girls to interact with the whole society more easily. Thereby their Italian language skill would be better and also they would have a subject matter to talk about.

The reception centre's Christmas party took place on the last evening of my stay. Everyone gathered for a theatre show which the caregivers prepared with the children. Later on we went to the dining hall to play bingo, we had dinner together and waited for

Santa Claus. The dining hall was overcrowded and there was chaos. A misunderstanding occurred. In the following citation from my field notes this situation is presented.

There was a small incident. When one (Italian) caregiver wanted pass through the crowd, she did a movement with her hand. Olivia interpreted this movement with her hand to mean that something stinks. Olivia got offended and they argued because of it. Olivia reacted impulsively and was very angry. The caregiver said she was crazy, she just wanted to pass but Olivia wouldn't listen to her. (21.12.2017, field diary)

This incident was a result of differences in cultural understanding and interpretation. Italian gestures are very complex and knowledge of their meanings can be very difficult.

3.3 Interactive Integration

In the reception centre where I carried out my observation, the Nigerian girls could not leave the structure whenever they wanted to. They did not interact with people outside of the centre and at school. I did not see them interacting with the host society. Thus, I was unable to analyse this aspect of integration in the depth I would have liked to. Even so I found some situations to which I want to refer.

Minor girls could leave the reception centre only with an adult accompanying them. An exception was made when they went to school. Kate told me that they are in touch with the teacher and if something happened for example and some of them did not appear at school, the teacher would contact Kate immediately. As I already said I could not go to school with girls and see their interactions there. However once, when we went for a Christmas concert to a nearby church I noticed that bar tenders in a coffee stand near the centre greeted the girls.

The two 18 years old girls were going out on Saturday afternoons. They left after lunch and had to be back for dinner. When I asked Kate, if they could go out more often she said that they could, but that they have only free time between lunch and school and that it is not enough. I did not get to know the exact rules and ways, so I cannot say if the centre limits their time outside of the centre.

The rest of the social interactions happened inside the structure with the other caregivers, supervisors and members of the centre. Inside the reception centre there was a big porch with a playground. Sometimes in their free time after lunch or during the weekend, the girls went to play football or volleyball with the others or just stayed in

that area listening to music or playing with (someone else's) phone. All the interactions I have seen were rather brief. It seemed that they did not have deep friendships with the others from the centre.

The interactive integration such as making friendships and relationships with the host society and participating in the civil society will be developed especially when the girls leave the reception centre. I think that the relationships between the minor immigrants and host society could be initiated while they are still in the reception centre. In this way the transition period after leaving the centre would be easier for them. It could be initiated in a school, where the Nigerian girls would participate in a few hours of schooling together with some Italian classmates. Also, that they would have some free time activities outside of the reception centre. However, both proposals are not possible due to the lack of resources.

3.4 *Identificational Integration*

The identificational integration that Bosswick and Heckmann described was not present in the reception centre. I felt that some actors in the centre viewed the girls as foreigners and also the girls distanced themselves from the others.

In the following part, I would like to highlight how the girls maintained their original Nigerian identity.

3.4.1 Nigerian identity and culture

I stayed in that part of reception centre where only Nigerian girls were accommodated (in the centre there was also one girl from the Ivory Coast). At first, they were in two rooms (3 girls in each), but when another two girls joined the centre, there were two rooms with 3 girls and one with 2 girls. During most of the daily activities they were together. They could be alone and do what they want to only when they had free time after lunch and dinner. The fact that the girls were in the same situation, coming from the same country and culture was helpful but it also probably slowed down the process of integration.

They talked among each other in their own language (Pidgin English), which I could not understand clearly. It was great obstacle when I wanted to communicate with them. I could understand some parts, but I could never understand the whole

conversations. I observed that their language represented the key aspect for maintaining their Nigerian identity. It maintained their bond and excluded everybody who did not understand them. They joked, expressed their feelings, argued, discussed or commented upon things and no one else (except Ima) could understand them.

Regina and Andrea were already 18 and therefore they could use a cell phone. They were playing with it most of the time and very often on the phone they watched Nigerian shows on youtube. The type of show varied – some were humorous, criminal or religious. Their affection for Nigerian shows was a connection to their culture. The situations and behaviour of the actors in the shows was probably much more familiar for them than in the Italian shows. The fact of having a phone was very important for them. They always wondered where my phone was and why I was not using it more often. Thanks to the phones they could communicate with their friends and family easily. On the other hand, I perceived their use of phones as not being a help for their (re)socialization and integration into the Italian society.

Moreover, phones presented another set of challenges concerned with the girls' security and many people discussed this with the girls. For example, when a priest came to talk with the girls about God and other religious matters, he explained to the girls why they could not have phones and how it was for their protection. The same thing happened, when I accompanied Olivia to an ethnical psychologist. He talked about protecting her from harm, which other people could cause her through the use of the phone.

Modern communication technologies are very good devices for being in touch with their families and friends. With internet connection there is a virtual presence and we can be in contact with people who are not present in the same place as us. WhatsApp and Facebook allowed them to present themselves as they wanted to and to communicate with family and friends, but it could also have been a potential threat. Traffickers who brought them here could contact them and track them down. In this reception structure, only girls over 18 were allowed to use a phone. Younger girls who came from other structure claimed they had been allowed to use their phones there.

Dance and waist jewellery made from breads were a clear expression of Nigerian culture. During my stay it happened twice that all girls except one girl gathered in room in the evening and started to dance. They put some Nigerian songs on and started to shake their hips and butts. It was the first time that I saw someone dance in this manner. They recorded dancing on their phones. It seemed very important for them. They filmed

each other and had fun in this way. I do not know what they did with the videos afterwards.

They were all believers of the Catholic religion and seemed to have a personal relationship with God. Sometimes I noticed that Clara prayed before meals. Some other girls talked about God as a main actor in their lives and justified all actions as if they were God's will. *He created them, helped them during the journey, will help them to get documentation and also he sees everything (unfairness) what was happening.* Even though the reception centre was one of many run by the nuns, I did not notice any special relationship between the girls and the nuns.

I want to emphasize, that the girls were aware of their origins. That they were from the same culture and felt they should help each other. During an argument about who should wash the dishes Tiffany used an expression "African family". I think this expression highlight their sense of identity and togetherness.

3.5 Payment for the journey

Apart from the integration process, I find it important to mention how the girls payed for the journey. The Nigerian girls I was observing came to Italy with a debt, a debt they owe to traffickers who brought them to Italy. Before they left Nigeria, they made a promise sealed by a voodoo ritual to work for the people who made their journey possible. According to caregivers some part of their body (hair in intimate parts etc.) is cut and burned during this ritual.

At first the girls thought they would do some cleaning job, work in a restaurant or find other decent work in Italy. Only after the arrival to Libya do most of them found out what kind of job waits for them in Europe. It is prostitution. They are expected to sell their bodies until they can repay the debt to a "madam" – a person who financed the journey. The amounts for the horrible journey vary – from 25.000 Euros up to 40.000 Euros. They discussed this topic with each other, so I could understand only some parts. Most of them did not want to talk about it with me. Except Tiffany:

From this point it was harder to understand her, so I do not know if I understood everything correctly. I asked about her journey and how much she had to pay for it. (...) At first, she talked about it indirectly. She talked about 1,000 Euros and then about 25,000 Euros. But then she said that she did not pay anything. Some lady payed for the

travel for the exchange that she would work for her. (...) She asked if I know what “madame” in French means. Later she started to talk about prostitution. (8.12.2017, field diary)

When I talked with her she would not tell me everything immediately about the payment of the journey. Maybe it was hard for her to talk about it because there was something more behind the agreement between her and the madam. The amounts for the journey are enormous and if the girl would join the madam she would be exploited for many years. However, the financial cost for the immigration is lowered to a minimum. Therefore the migration would be possible also for the girls from poor families, which would not be able to migrate without financial help of someone else.

All the operators were trying to explain to the girls that they do not owe anything and that neither the traffickers nor madam have the right to ask them to work as prostitutes. To the contrary, some families of the girls acted because the traffickers promised them money if they persuade the girls to join them. In the structure there was one girl who had a problematic relationship with her mother. The mother was trying to convince her to join the madam even though she knew what kind of job her daughter would have to do. The pressure and threats from the families are big obstacles in protection of the minors. The temptation to get out of the centre, be able to “earn” money and help their family in this way is sometimes stronger than their will to stay and live in the care home.

Conclusion

The recent, enormous influx of newcomers brings many challenges for the Italian government and society. Managing identification of all immigrants, first aid and assistance, protecting vulnerable groups, granting reception to asylum seekers, and deciding upon their status in a united time frame presents one set of challenges. Another set of challenges is that of the integration of immigrants into the host society.

Particular problematics are presented by integration of the UNSC. They represent a vulnerable group of people who are endangered by human trafficking and exploitation. The Italian government is protecting them and thanks to a recent law they get the same benefits as the Italian separated minors.

When the UNSC get into a reception structure their (re)socialization and initial phase of integration can begin. Even though the reception centre possesses characteristics of a total institution. These had positive and negative aspects. The balance between protection and freedom was negotiated. Even though family care would probably be more suitable for the integration process, the reception structures represent an entry point for the minors into Italian society. The reception centres play a key role and the Italian government needs to support integration programs and individual integration plans.

The key role for the Nigerian girls in the reception centre represented the social worker, cultural mediator and educator. All of them were important for them because they supported their (re)socialization and integration. They taught them how to make a bed, what behaviour is acceptable in the Italian society and in general spend time with them.

However, in most cases the girls came to Italy to work, earn money and send remittances to their families in Nigeria. Their minor age and irregularity represented a big obstacle to fulfilling their expectations. The reception centre initiated integration programs and girls worked in the morning. Nevertheless, the financial allowance they received was (according to them) relatively low. Getting the documents as soon as possible was their main priority. Documents were important for them, because they could start to search for work and become economically active. Sending remittances home would justify, why she left Nigeria and came to Europe.

One of the main obstacle for their integration was that they did not interact with the host society enough. They did not have a chance to socialize and integrate in school

with Italian students, because they attended school separately from the Italians. I think that the relationships between the immigrant minors and host society could be initiated while they are still in the reception centre. This is where I see the negative aspects of the reception centre. However, to change this situation there would need to be further financial resources which the reception structure cannot afford.

To conclude, I would like to emphasize that the (re)socialization in the reception centre is possible, but integration is more problematic. The girls had limited contact with the host society. They do not attend school with the Italian students. Furthermore, they cannot work due to the minor's age or lack of documentations. These present the biggest challenges for their social integration.

Summary

The thesis studied the process of (re)socialization and integration in a reception structure for unaccompanied immigrant minors in Italy. The focus was on Nigerian girls. It presented an overview on the immigration situation in Italy. The concept of social integration proposed by Bosswick and Heckmann was presented and used for the data analysis. The data were collected by a participant observation. Even though the observation lasted only two weeks, many interesting facts were found out. The process of (re)socialization and integration in the reception centre is focused on teaching the girls socially accepted behaviour and norms. Thanks to workshops they learned useful skills and working habits. The difficulties which minors had to face during (re)socialization and integration are language differences and cultural differences such as alimentation. Also prolonged waiting time for the documentation and insufficient amount of pocket money represented a big obstacle for them. Their own expectations of life in “rich Europe” may lead to disappointment and negatively influenced their perception of the Italian society and their will to become part of it. I found that some characteristics of a total institution were present, such as daily routines with the same group of people. The centre provided the girls (re)socialization and presented a good entry point for the life in the Italian society. However, the research found out that there was a lack of contact with the host society and its institutions. Therefore, the reception structure was able to provide the integration into the Italian society only in a limited way.

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Bachelor's Thesis Summary

In my bachelor thesis I will focus on minor migrants in Italy, and especially on female migrants. I will work with the definition undertaken by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHRC) which defines a separated minor as “under the age of 18 and who is separated from both parents and is not being cared for by an adult who, by the law or custom, is responsible to do so.”

The problems related to this issue do not include only taking care of basic needs such as the accommodation and food of an underage foreigner, but also the process of social integration. This includes integration in schools and communities, professional training, linguistic-cultural mediation and also free-time activities. All this support the minor should receive from care homes, guardians, local communities, NGOs and other actors involved in these processes.

In the present migration crisis situation the percentage of separated children is progressively increasing and it is becoming more and more an issue which needs to be viewed and handled very carefully. The main flow of separated children in recent years is mainly composed of males in the age of between 16 to 18 years old (Consoli 2015: 22, 65). However, the percentage of females has increased from 5,4% in 2011 to 7,3% in 2014 (Consoli 2015: 60). Migration is generally more dangerous for girls because they are more vulnerable and face a higher chance of being trafficked and working in the sex industry (Consoli 2015: 22).

After arriving in Italy the minors are placed into the first reception structure and stay there up to 90 days. Following this they are transferred to the second reception structures where deeper integration take place. It is in these structures that my interviews will be carried out.

The reason why I have chosen to focus on girls is because I want to try to understand the reason and circumstances behind (their?) decision to leave the country of origin. I would like to record all three stages – before leaving home country, the journey and after arriving to Italy during the integrational process. I want to ask questions such as: Is their migration rather connected with economic reasons or the unstable situation

in her country? What other push or pull factors made her leave? Did she have to face some difficulties before arriving to Italy? Who financed her journey? I also want to focus on perceptions of Europe before and after arriving. Did her expectations meet the reality? What troubles did she have to face after the arrival? In what activities is she involved in this moment? How does she evaluate the integration process? What are her priorities? And eventually I would like to know what her future plans are.

The thesis will be based on qualitative researched methods. I would like to do in-depth interviews with minors who are placed in centres for minor immigrants – care homes. During my Erasmus in Sicily and also due to an internship in an Italian language courses for immigrants organised by the SPRAR program I received valuable experience and contacts on centres for minors.

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List of Graphs

Graph 1. Most common nationalities of arrivals

Graph 2. Number of migrants who arrived by sea monthly from January 2016 to 10 April 2018

Graph 3. Unaccompanied and separated children arrived by sea (Translation L.D.)

Table 1. Nationality and demographics of arrivals

List of Appendices

Appendix no. 1: Research partners

Appendices

Research partners

Andrea - 18 years old

She is in Italy less than a year. She spent 4-5 months in Libya. She has very bad memories of her stay there. She is the youngest of 7 siblings. Her sister has been in Europe for several years. She married, had a child and got divorced. At first, she was in Spain and now she is in Germany. At first she worked as a cleaning woman in a hospital and now she works in a bar. They don't talk so much. Andrea told me that her sister sends money home only sometimes. She is often in contact with a brother of hers who arrived in Italy after her and who was placed in a reception centre in northern Italy.

Her father is a farmer. Because of poor health her mother is not working but sometimes helps her husband. She misses her parents and she watches often Nigerian series or movies on youtube. She met her boyfriend in Italy and he is originally from Nigeria as well. Her ex-boyfriend is in Libya waiting to get to Italy. She can officially have a phone and she is in possession of two phones – the second one she always borrows to someone.

Renata - 17 years old

She was devastated by the treatment in Libya and in general by the terrible journey. When she sailed toward Italy she was taken two times to a detention centre in Libya. When she sailed for the third time, rescue ship took them to Italy. She is in Italy less than a year. She arrived in Augusta and at first she stayed in another centre. She likes it more here.

She said it was her decision to come. She began the journey with other 5 friends. They got separated and now she knows only about other 2. She loves her country and thinks it's beautiful, only the politicians make it bad.

She wants to become a nurse, but she does not know if it would be possible.

Regina - 18 years old

She is in the reception centre more than a year. Her position in the reception centre among the girls is a leader. She helps in a bakery/kitchen in the centre. Most of the time she didn't eat lunches and dinners when I carried out the observation. From time to time she went to a porch to do some exercises. Most of the time I interacted with her she was

doing something on a phone or called with someone (probably her boyfriend). She is the only one who has a lock and sometimes she locks her closet.

Clara - 17 years old

She is in Italy already one year and two months. Before she left Nigeria, she was living with her aunt, who was a cook in a school cafeteria. She said that from that time, she keeps habit of waking up early in a morning.

She waited in Libya 5 months for a vessel. At first, she was in a different reception structure. She likes it more here.

She is working in a bakery/kitchen of the reception centre and she is making biscuits and other things. Her guardian is very active. She came for her and went with her out when during the two weeks I spent in the reception centre. She also took her for Christmas and New Year's Eve to her home.

Sometimes I saw her praying before meals and I have noticed she is a bit excluded from the group. She watched Italian cartoon in TV very often and her level of Italian language was very good.

Olivia - 17 years old

I interacted with her mainly by mimics and gestures. Her level of English and Italian language was poor and we could not communicate that much. She had strong temperament and got upset easily. Once we were in a conflict situation. She didn't want to let me to lock the common room where TV was. Other girls solved this argument and made her leave the room. I had a chance to go with her to an etnical psychologist.

In the last day we become friends and she gifted me a waist necklace. She told me she wants to become a dancer and said that she knows someone who is having this job in Germany. She was the only one who didn't talk badly about Libya. She stayed there just a short time and they were treating her nicely. During my stay she sent some money to her family.

Tiffany - 17 years old

She arrived in Italy in June 2017. She arrived in the reception centre just a day before me. At first, she was in another centre where she wasn't happy. She was supposed to be in this centre just for few weeks until she turns 18. Later she should go another centre for adults. She had an urge to talk about her previous life and the journey a lot. She

spoke mostly in Nigerian, but she could speak also Italian and English. She was dominant in conversations.

She told me that her mother is selling clothes and she has a brother and sister. Father left them when she was a child. All of them are in Nigeria. She came to Europe because she wants to have a better life. She emphasized a lot that in Italy there is no money and she wants to get to Germany where there is money. She complains a lot about many things. During my stay I had spent more time with her because she did not go to school (she was new in the centre and the transition process wasn't finished).

Zara 16 - years old

She arrived in Italy in August 2017. She arrived from another centre in the second half of my stay in the centre. At first, she was quiet but later she got comfortable. She immediately started to communicate with Regina and become dominant. Her level of English was very good and she didn't speak Italian so much. She told me she doesn't know how to read because her family didn't have money for the education. She was upset about the rule that minors cannot have phones. We had problematic relationship and I never got to know her that well.

Dakota - 17 years old

She arrived in Italy in June 2017. She also arrived with Tina from another structure in the second half of my stay. Mostly she was following Tina. I asked which structure she likes more and she told me that she needs time to compare. It was hard to understand her when she was speaking and I never got to know her well.

Ursula – Social Worker

Ursula had been working in the structure for few years. She always came in the morning around 8 and woke up the girls. She was taking care of paper work and did not stay with the girls as much as Ima and Kate. She was responsible for the issues connected with the legal procedures and medical issues (documentations, appointments for medical check ups etc).

Ima – Cultural Mediator

Ima had been employed in the centre for many (10+) years. She was born in Nigeria but she had been living in Italy for more than 20 years. She came in morning around 8 to 9

and left around 3 to 4 in the afternoon. She had various duties in the structure. She was taking care of laundry and distributing lunches. She was also communicating with the Nigerian girls, talked with them in their language or in Italian. She spoke perfectly Italian and the girls call her “mama”.

Kate – Educator

Kate had been working in the centre less than a year. She usually came to the care home around lunch time and stayed until 8:30 in the evening. She was communicating with a school, which the girls attended in the afternoon. She helped the girls to cook dinner and over all she spent time with them. I perceived her role like an older sister.