

Beyond the borders: exploring the contribution of migration for a more sustainable and inclusive future

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the migration phenomenon in Italy, focusing on its relationship with the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5 (Gender Equality), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and 10 (Reduced Inequalities). The study highlights the significant role social media plays in shaping and disseminating a negative image of migration and migrants, often supported by the current Italian government.

The analysis reveals that alarmism surrounding migration, often fueled by certain politicians and media outlets, creates a climate of fear and xenophobia, leading to increased racism and a diminished understanding of the positive contributions migration can offer. The research emphasizes the potential of migration to contribute to the realization of the SDGs, highlighting how it can empower women, boost economic growth, and reduce inequalities. For example, supporting migrants in developing new skills and creating job opportunities can contribute significantly to economic growth and development.

The research underscores the need for a more nuanced understanding of migration, advocating for a shift in perspective from seeing migrants as a threat to recognizing their potential to enrich societies. It concludes that a more sustainable and inclusive world requires a conscious effort to deconstruct the colonized mindset that often views migration negatively, and instead embraces the potential of migration to foster a more diverse and equitable society. The ultimate success of migration in contributing to the SDGs depends on the willingness of destination countries to create a welcoming environment and actively engage in the deconstruction of existing power structures.

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To my eternal mentor, Daisaku Ikeda.

To Ira and Beta, eternal lights of my heart.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores the multifaceted nature of migration and its crucial role in achieving a more just and sustainable world. The argument begins by acknowledging that migration is not a new phenomenon, but an ongoing process that has shaped human history for centuries. From early humans seeking survival and new opportunities to the complexities of migration in the modern era, movement across borders has always been a part of the human experience.

The thesis delves into the history of migration, tracing its evolution from less regulated movement before the rise of nation-states to the increasingly complex and often restrictive policies of the 20th and 21st centuries. It examines how the concept of "nation-state" and concerns about national security have contributed to the challenges of regulating migration. The thesis also explores how migration has been viewed through a range of lenses, sometimes as a source of economic growth, at other times as a threat to national security, and still other times as a humanitarian crisis.

The discussion then shifts to the importance of international laws and agreements in protecting migrant rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Convention on Migrant Workers, though important milestones, highlight the ongoing challenges of ensuring a fair and just framework for migrants.

The thesis establishes that migration is not a monolithic phenomenon, but rather a complex issue shaped by historical context, national policies, and international agreements. It sets the stage for a nuanced analysis of migration in the context of Italy and the Sustainable Development Goals, which forms the foundation of the subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER 1

ITALIAN MIGRATION LAWS – AN OVERVIEW

Italy's approach to migration has shifted over time, moving from an initial focus on providing assistance in the 1980s to a more regulated system. Key laws like the *Legge Martelli* and the *Legge Turco-Napolitano* aimed to control immigration flows, but recent legislation has taken a stricter approach. The *Decreto Sicurezza Salvini*, passed in 2018, prioritized national security and reduced humanitarian protections for migrants, sparking controversy. The *Decreto Cutro*, passed in 2023, further tightened restrictions, limiting migrant workers entering Italy and reducing social support for migrants. In this chapter we are going to analyze more in detail the latest two laws on migration.

DECRETO SICUREZZA SALVINI (Salvini's safety law decree)

The decreto Sicurezza Salvini came into force on 1st December 2018.

In this decree, Salvini put together the migration regulation with other laws related to the safety of citizens. Inevitably, the first question one could have just read the bizarre title is “how migration and safety are related? Is it the safety of people who arrive in Italy or the safety of Italian citizens?.” In this specific case, the safety is not related to the people who arrive in Italy, but the entire law is written and established to ensure the safety of Italian citizens from criminals.

In the minds of the editors of this law, there was certainly a correlation between migrants and criminals, so the name of this law clearly highlights the position of Salvini government towards migration.

One of the main criteria modified is related to the emission of the residency permit, released not anymore for “humanitarian reasons,” but mainly for “medical care”. This, obviously, reduces the number of people who can apply for residency permits.

Another provision is the article 19th, which established that for cities with more than ten thousand habitants, the police officers can use new electric impulses weapons.

What changed effectively with the introduction of this new law in 2019?

First of all, before the application of this new migration law, Italy could recognize three diverse types of protection:

- a) Refugee's status;
- b) Subsidiary protection – when the refugee's status cannot be recognized but a person risk to serious harm upon return to one's own country;
- c) Humanitarian protection – serious humanitarian motivation.

With Salvini's decree the humanitarian protection was abolished, and, in its place, it established a temporary protection system that could apply for different situations like: a) medical care; b) domestic violence; c) work exploitation; d) natural disasters; e) deeds of particular civil values.

The first effect of such a decision is the increased number of people who do not have that kind of protection anymore and that now need to apply to convert that protection in a working residency, waiting in the meantime without any support.

Additionally, Art. 1 of another decree adopted the same year – Decreto Sicurezza Bis – established that the Interior Minister – in this case Matteo Salvini – could induce the closure of ports to boats that host migrants, in respect of international obligations.

These international obligations were not respected by Matteo Salvini, who decided to stop the ship NGO Open Arms, and not let it enter Lampedusa port in 2019, for 21 days with 147 migrants on board.

DECRETO CUTRO

The latest law that has been applied in Italy is the one called “Decreto Cutro,” however I will refer to it as “Decreto Meloni-Piantedosi.”

On 26th of February, 2023, a little craft shipwrecked in the Mediterranean Sea – yet another of numerous tragedies that every year the Mediterranean Sea is facing, in the long and difficult journey from Libya to reach the Italian shores.

Many migrants died before reaching the Italian beaches, in a locality called Cutro, in Calabria.

The Interior Minister Piantedosi and the prime Minister Meloni, decided to withdraw another law on migration, called it “Decreto Cutro.” But this law is so shameful that I refuse to use the name of the place in which hundreds of people were found dead.

Why is this law so shameful?

First of all, this law is made just for workers and for those people who come from other countries in Europe.

In several parts of this decree, it is established that the third countries from where these workers come from should provide training courses and the same third countries should also suggest some workers to send to Italy, clearly in the fields in which Italy requires more labor.

It is obvious that countries who are experiencing socio-economic difficulties, natural disasters or war and violence, cannot provide any of these training courses. The main object of this law is to reduce the entrance of people who need humanitarian or international protection and increase the number of specialized workers in Italy in sectors that need such workers. The law does not consider the actual situation that many countries are experiencing now, increasing the number of people who arrive in an illegal way and that do not have any form of protection.

In article 6, the words “medical, social and psychological assistance, linguistic-cultural mediation, administration of Italian language course and services for the legal orientation and orientation to the territory”, were changed with “medical, social and linguistic-cultural mediation”, so all the other forms of supports have been completely discarded, included the psychological assistance, extremely necessary for people who come from difficult situations.

Moreover, the decree establishes the restriction of the ban on expulsion just in cases in which the wealth conditions came from pathologies that cannot be cured in the country of origin.

The law also limits the entry permission just to situations of great natural disaster and not anymore to cases of contingent and exceptional natural disasters, with the possibility to renew the entry permission just for 6 months that cannot be converted into a work permission.

CASE STUDIES

THE STORY OF E.

The adoption of these laws had a negative impact on the safety and life conditions of migrants in Italy, but it also created an even more demanding situation for those who are currently working in the immigration field.

Francesco, an educator who works in a foster house in Rome, with migrant minors, shared with me many stories of young people struggling even more now, with the stiffening of the migratory system. A few months ago, E. arrived in Rome from Gambia, from where he left after his dad passed away. Eldest brothers he assumed the responsibility of his family, so he left Gambia to move to Mauritania and then to Nigeria and Libya, where he was imprisoned and tortured. When he finally arrived in Italy, at the immigration service at the borders, they made a mistake in spelling his name but since E. could not speak Italian, he talked about this mistake just a few months after all these procedures to get the official documents have been already issued. The educators of the foster family accompanied him to compile all the procedures necessary to the re-issues of the official documents, but the Italian bureaucracy, when it is about migrants, is very inefficient.

The main problem the foster family and E. are facing right now, is based on the obligation he must leave the foster house upon reaching the age of eighteen, in October. If he does not receive the official documents by that day, he cannot benefit from the Italian sanitary system, extremely necessary since he has a health problem. With the latest laws, the only possibility for him to stay in Italy after turning 18 years old, is either having a job contract; having someone who can guarantee that would hire E. after him turning 18 years old; appealing the article 13 which establish that after turning 18, E. could continue staying in the foster family, because of the necessity of health care.

THE STORY OF I.

Ambra, an ethnopsycotherapy who works in an NGO in Rome, particularly with women victim of human trafficking, share with me the story of a woman from Iran, that we would call I.

L. is an architect, who is attending the specialization in architecture in the University of Rome. After her arrival, she immediately applied to request the reconciliation with her husband who is still in Iran. The bureaucracy is so slow, that after a prolonged period of time she haven't received any news yet. L., discovered that there is an illegal way to fasten the approval of these documents, which is to bribe people who work in that office. This also means starting a vicious circle of illegality that can put at risk her residency permit. She is now living an exceedingly demanding situation, trying to fastener the practice to finally meet her husband again and, at the same time, finish the university and start working. Her psychological condition is difficult, because obviously she is suffering a lot for this situation.

In these two cases, these young woman and young man, did not do anything less than behaving and do their utmost to work and sustain themselves and their families in the country they are now, but the slowness of the bureaucratic system in Italy, that got worse after the adoption of the last laws on migration, is pushing people on the edge from a psychological and physical point of view, portraying in this way an image of migrants and migrations that is not real.

THE ROLE OF THE MASS MEDIA IN THE CREATION OF A NEGATIVE IMAGE ABOUT MIGRATION IN ITALY

In assorted studies conducted during the first decade of 1990s, the researchers have demonstrated how the use of language is important and, at the same time, dangerous, in the spread of a collective negative image of the migration phenomenon in Italy.

In most cases the articles that talked about migration were linking the presence of migrants in different Italian cities with the increase of urban decay and petty crimes. (Ter Wal Jessica, 2002). Interesting was the analysis conducted by De Florio and Rocca, who found out that in most of the cases, the articles that talk about migrants have a specific genre, the one called "Cronaca," which main focus are violences, tragedies, crimes, marginalization and so on. (Ibidem, p.246).

Another interesting case was the TV program called "Porta a Porta," conducted by Bruno Vespa, well known Italian journalist, fervent supporter of the right-wing party (in particular of Silvio Berlusconi). The main theme of the discussion was about the "Emergency Crime," the increased number of crimes registered in the past months. Surprisingly, the discussion held during the program was focusing on the increased number of migrants who arrived in Italy at that moment. There is a "normalization" that took over in the mind of people who believed (and still do so), that an increase of crimes is naturally correlated to an increased number of migrants on the territory. (Ibidem, pag. 249)

This phenomenon, together with the continuous spread of news that highlighted the country of origin of the criminal just when it was a migrant, contributed to create the so called “racialization” and “labeling” of people, creating, and spreading prejudices towards a certain group of people, categorizing them into boxes that most of the time have on top of them negative characteristics and negative connotations.

Another interesting element is related to the “Carta dei doveri del giornalista,” literally (Chart of the journalist’s duties), published in 1993.

In this chart different principles of non-discrimination were stated as the importance of non-discriminate based on the skin color, religion, sex (that I would rather call it gender from now on in this research), physical or mental conditions and political opinions. Even if these principles were stated, the journalists were not forced to respect them. Furthermore, there was also an exception in the possibility of inferiorizing a group of people if it was important for the public interest, which does not mean anything and is completely open to different and wide interpretations. (Ibidem, pag. 259).

How is the current situation about newspapers articles when they talk about migrants? And can we notice a different approach in journals that can be defined left-wing from journals that can be defined right-wing supporters?

In the book “Ospitalità mediatica” the author talks about essential elements to understand the impact of mass media on the vision that is portrayed and spread in society.

For example, when we talk about Agenda setting, we mean the power that journals and mass media in general must determine the “hierarchical order of themes in a specific journal.” In this sense, the Agenda Setting determines “what to think about.”

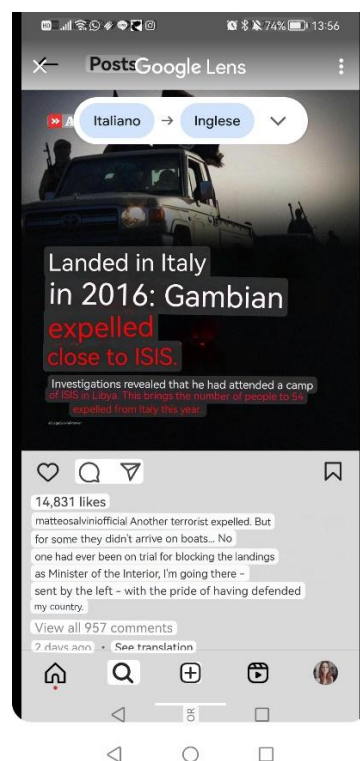
When we talk about Framing, instead, we highlight “how to think about” a specific topic.

That often depends on the position of the journal, also from a political perspective. Based on that, there are three different frames often used: the first one is focused on the security of the country, often followed by right wing journal; the second one more focused on rights of people, that we can put in a middle way between the right wing approach and the left one; the third one is focused mainly on the humanitarian impact and aspect of a specific topic, is mainly followed by left wing journals and mass media.

However, is true that politicians try to avoid open insults towards migrants, in particular Prime Ministers or politicians that have a prominent position.

An example is Matteo Salvini, who several times talks about migrants and migration in a negative light, but never saying that he is against it or using insults towards migrants.

In the following pictures, just few examples on how Matteo Salvini use Instagram posts to justify, in a very hide way, is position against migration, supporting it using a securitarian lens.



In this specific case, Salvini was talking about one migrant arrived in Italy a few years ago and now expelled from Italy because close to a terroristic group. In the description of the picture, he highlights the fact that many people keep sustaining that these terrorists do not arrive with boats in Italy.

In this simple image, we can easily understand how he used an indirect way to sustain his position against migration, towards people who arrive in Italy with boats. Even if his language is not loaded with insults, his position is truly clear and it inevitably affects the perception of the reality of many people, of those who do not really inform themselves about the reality of migration.

In the same book I mentioned above, the authors talk also about research that highlights the difference between a perceive migration and a real migration. This study proves that politicians and civilians who support the right-wing parties, are more prone to perceive a higher percentage of migrants than the actual one, spreading in this way the belief of a supposed “invasion” of

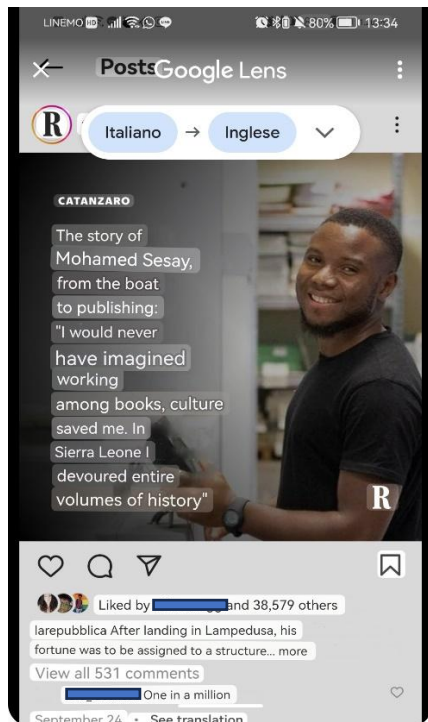
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migrants in Italy, when the actual number are incredibly lower than the perception these people have.

Another example is exemplified in this other post Salvini published on his Instagram profile a few days ago:

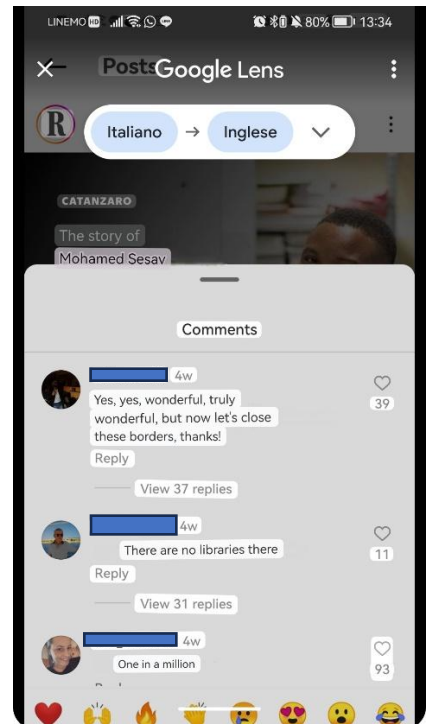


Also in this case, he wants to point out that another illegal migrant arrived in Italy in 2011, was the actual terrorist in Bruxelles. In the description of the post, he also highlights the fact that for his previous action as Interior Minister – when he blocked an NGO boat led by the German activist Carola Rackete – he was convicted of detention of migrants, risking 15 years of prison for his actions “to protect Italy”. Again, as in the previous post, he underlines that “terrorists don’t arrive on boats,” as proof of his position against migration, in particular illegal migration, without understanding or questioning which are the main cause of illegal migration.



Testo tradotto

→ Invia alla home di Traduttore T Seleziona

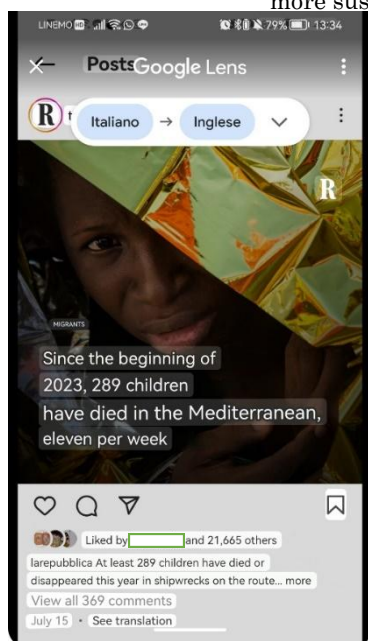


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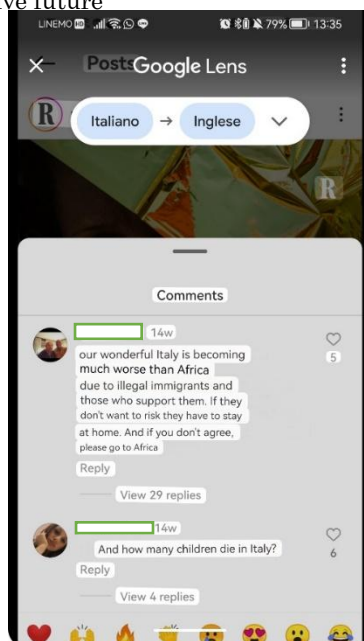
In this other post, we can notice how, even in front of good news for a young people who was able to transform his life, the message that many people decided to share is a negative and harmful one, that keep highlight the necessity and desire to “close the borders”. So, the position assumed by people is either of open opposition towards migrants, or of discredit when the news point to highlight the positive impact and contribution of some migrants in our country.

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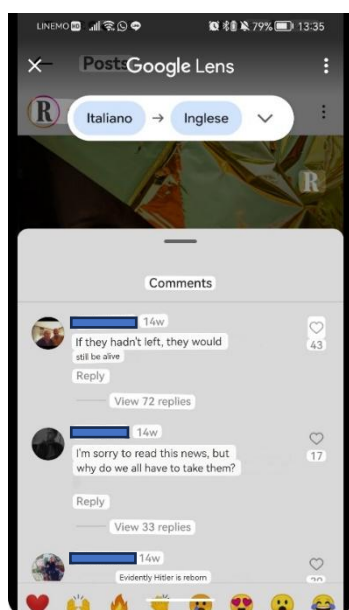
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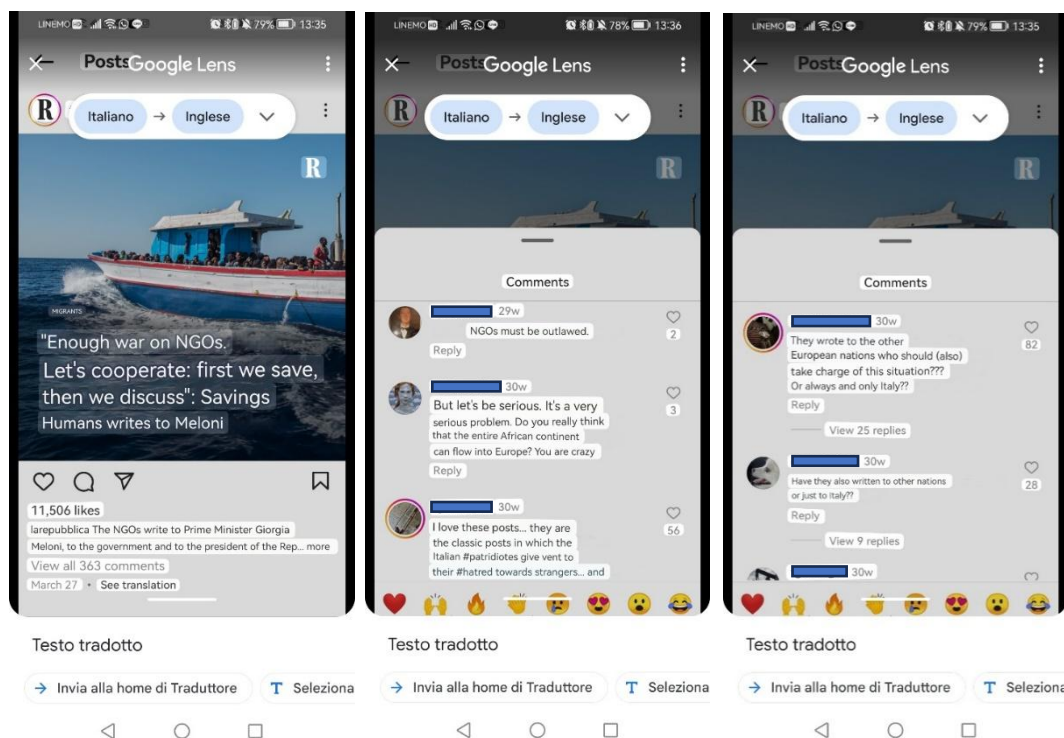
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This is another example of the hate that can easily be spread online. During the pandemic years, experts notice how many people became even more aggressive towards minorities, using them as a scapegoat for their frustration and fears. (Musrò, Parmiggiani, 2022).



The last post I would like to share here is related to the prolonged battle against the NGO's activities in the Mediterranean Sea, seen as an action against the freedom of the Italian government to decide over the life and the safety of migrants. The main thing that seems to be a pattern in the many comments we can find on Instagram or Facebook, is the perception of “an invasion”; “Do you really think that the entire African continent can flow into Europe?”; “Have they also written to other nations or just Italy?” and so on.

One of my interviewees, Patrizia, who works in the immigration field from more than 20 years, noticed that the presence of the actual government is just giving people the opportunity to share freely their honest sentiments towards migrants, without any problems. The presence of a government and of a politician that sustain certain type of behavior and positionality towards migration, can just incentive the freedom of people to express their frustration and anger.

But what Patrizia suggested, also, is significant. All the migrants who arrive in Italy, come with the intention to create the foundation for a better life and future for themselves and their family.

But when, under the inefficiency of a system that constantly tries to hinder their rights to do so, they are forced to find new ways. A concrete example of this inefficiency is the case of all those migrants who send request for International Protection, but in the meantime the responsible office emits a piece of paper on which is appointed until which date people have the right to stay on the territory. From the moment of the emission of this document, until the moment in which people receive the definitive answer about the request of International Protection, they cannot do anything like finding a job, benefit from the public sanitary system and have no rights except the one not to be expelled. The amount of time the office requires to give a definite answer can vary based on several factors, but in most cases, it takes a long time, leaving these people living like ghosts without any rights.

If a biased journalist would draft an article about this situation, probably one of the comments of the title itself would be something like: “migrants rest while Italians support them by working and paying taxes”. The image that is shared of this story is a completely different one from the actual truth behind this image I just wanted to show you.

As Patrizia suggested, we need to change the culture that still see migrants as duty bearers rather than rights bearers.

Moreover, what we see through this news is what the government want us to see but may us always have the critical thinking to really understand who and what is behind that story.

CHAPTER 2

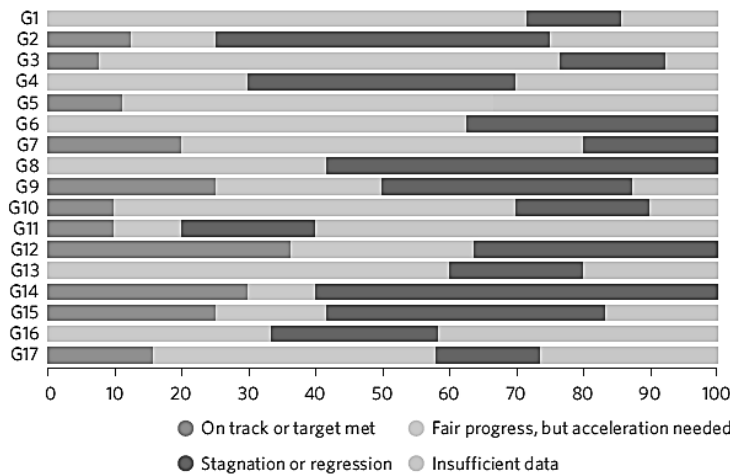
This chapter describes the shift from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The MDGs, adopted in 2000, were a significant step forward in international cooperation, focusing on eight key development goals. The SDGs, adopted in 2015, represent a broader and more ambitious framework for global development, with 17 goals and 169 targets. Importantly, the SDGs recognize migration as a key factor in achieving sustainable development and addressing inequalities. They emphasize a more inclusive approach, recognizing migration as a driver of economic growth, social justice, and a force for change.

Even though migration is one of the main points of the Agenda, not all its goals are directly related to it. We can divide such goals in two categories:

- Direct impact: goals that openly talk about the link between development and migration.
- Cross-cutting: when the topic of the goal may affect or be affected by migration. (Migration and the Agenda 2030, p. 21).

In this chapter I focus on three SDGs, analyzing the interconnection between migration and the realization of these goals, considering both the impact of migration in the achievement of these goals and how migration has been affected by the topic taken into consideration in the goal:

- Goal number 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
- Goal number 8: Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.
- Goal number 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries.



Progress assessment for the 17 Goals based on assessed targets, 2023 or latest data (percentage). (Ibidem, pag. 8).

From this table, we can see in which direction our world is going, and it is noticeably clear that for most goals, there has been a slow progress compared to the stagnation or regression and a fair progress, even though the acceleration is needed.

If we look to the Goal number 5, is visible how much progress is required to reach gender equality by 2030. Always from the report, it is estimated that it will takes approximately three hundred years to reach this goal completely.

The relationship between the goal number 5 and migration is visible when we understand the deep impact that migration can have on women and young girls. “For example, women and girls account for 71 per cent of all trafficked victims detected globally, and females represent 96 per cent of victims trafficked for sexual exploitation”. (Migration and the Agenda 2030, pag. 40).

When we talk about migration, we cannot not take into consideration two main points:

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1. How migration affects women and young girls.
2. How the discriminatory and patriarchal system force women and girls to migrate.

As for the first point, the percentage of women and young girls affected psychologically and physically for the several sexual abuses practices they have been forced to experience as well as a remarkably high rates of underpaid work and exploitation. What is highlighted is also the fact that most of the time, women and young girls who are migrating, are doing so to support their family in need. (Women and International Migration, pag. 27). For this reason, they arrive not having skills or not knowing the language of the country of destination, ending up being exploited by people who just want to use them for their own benefits.

It is extremely necessary recognize and underline the gender-based violence that these people experience, and act on each level of governance to ensure the protection of their rights and safety. From one of the interviews, I conducted, emerged that many women who come to my country, arrived after passing through several traumas as sexual and psychological violences.

At the time of their arrival, their intention is to start working as soon as possible to send remittances to their family. A psychological support in these cases is absolutely necessary, as well as difficult when the culture oftentimes is so different that many of these women do not believe in the necessity of being supported by a therapist, but also because most of the time the type of therapy proposed is based exclusively on a euro-centric approach.

Furthermore, based on the conditions in the country of origins, women can be more or less free to move and so to participate in the international migration movement. At the same time, often happens that many women who decide or are forced to migrate, lack of social connections with people in the country of destination that could provide resources and information, which put them living on an even higher level of risk for their safety and well-being. (Ibidem, p. 28).

Oftentimes, the gender relationship within the family of these women, also determine who can migrate and who cannot. The totality of these decisions, and opportunity for women to go to another country and find new opportunities of empowerment, are completely tied to the gender expectations present in society and in the family of origins. (World Survey 2004 Women and International Migration, pag. 16).

It is also true that migration represents an element of new possibilities for these women and young girls, to enhance empowerment and self-sufficiency. This is also the main link with the second point I abovementioned: how the discriminatory and patriarchal system force women and girls to migrate.

In the country of destination, based on the present laws and gender-based conventions and expectations from the society, women can find a pristine environment where they can become more independent, self-reliant and empower themselves while acquiring new skills. If, successively, they would decide to come back to their countries of origins, could carry with them new perspective and a new culture. (Ibidem, pag. 18).

If migration can partly contribute to the independence of women, most of the time the positive impact of migration on their lives, is tied to the actual conditions of the country of destination.

In a world where in the majority of country the impact of the patriarchal system is still so strong, it is first of all necessary continue to address the necessity to implement an education on every level, and concrete policies, to dismantle this way of thinking that keep sustaining gender-based violence, discrimination, trafficking and, in general, less access to resources to women than to men. Taking the example of Italy, if women who are born in Italy face the glass ceiling, women who are not Italians and already face other discriminations and difficulties, have even more obstacles to face and overcome.

Goal number 8: decent work and economic growth. As the special Report of 2023 on SDGs shows, the Covid-19 pandemic had a strong impact on the global economy, especially on the one of those countries that were already living in conditions of extreme poverty. One of the sectors that was struck the most by the Covid-19 was tourism. As usual we witness, who was impacted the most were women and informal workers. (The Sustainable Development Goals Report Special edition, pagg. 27-29).

The goal number 8 is strongly linked to migration for many reasons. The first is the third point of the goal number 8:

- 8.3: Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity, and innovation, and encourage formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises including through access to financial services

In this part is stressed the role of informal economy in worsening the condition of many workers around the world. The term “informal economy” comprehends a multitude of employments, but in general we can say that this term refers to all those jobs that cannot be inscribed inside the usual categories of jobs. For this reason, most of the time, people who work in this field, face several challenges and injustices. Migrants that leave their countries, often end up being exploited, because no rule is followed about the necessity to register them or regulate them.

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In this way, the goal number 8 is strictly linked to migration for the necessity to apply laws and regulations that can support and protect the rights of these workers. Seeing migration as a tool for development, means give migrants the opportunity to apply their skills and develop them, in a work environment that protects their fundamental rights. Also in this case, the stress is the necessity to work on distinct levels to apply and develop policies that can guarantee migrants the protection of their rights and freedom from exploitation.

https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/dw4sd/theme-by-sdg-targets/WCMS_556964/lang-en/index.htm).

Moreover, I believe that support migrants in developing their skills and create new jobs opportunities both in their country of origins and in the country of destination, can represents a great advancement in the fight to realize a greener economy and what Latouche called “the happy degrowth.” Supporting people to create new jobs, using the resources they have – also natural resources – is a wonderful opportunity to boost the growth of the economy of the country, while giving them the chance to start and build a better life.

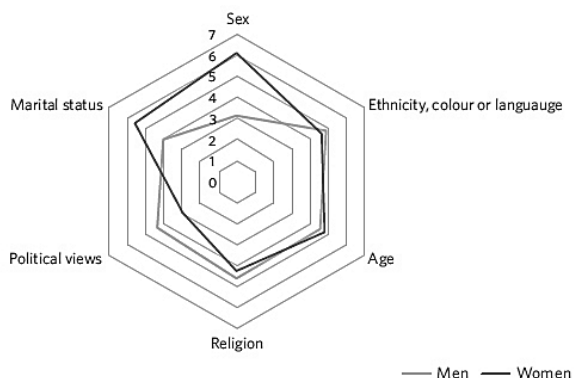
Goal number 10: Reduced inequalities.

This is one of the main goals of the Agenda 2030 of the United Nations that has, as one of main element, migration.

In the seventh point of the goal ten we read: “facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies”. (The Agenda 2030 of the United Nations).

In this point is openly explained the relationship between migration and the realization of the goal number 10 which aims to reduce inequalities.

In the Sustainable Development Goals Special edition of 2023, I highlighted how, in 2022, the world experienced the highest number of refugees ever documented (34.6 million people) and, unfortunately, nearly 7,000 deaths recorded globally. (The Sustainable Development Goals Report Special edition, pag. 32).



In this graphic, we can see the incidence of discrimination based on different elements. The most common one is based on ethnicity, colour or language, affecting both women and men almost in the same way. (Ibidem, pag. 33). However, if we take a closer look to the line “women”, we notice that they are discriminated also on the base of their gender and marital status, which help us understand better the correlation with the goal number 5 and the many difficulties women have to face when they decide or are forced to migrate.

The goal underlines the necessity to work on different level to eradicate discrimination. This is also the only way in which migration can start to be seen as a tool to sustain the realization of the SDGs other than a fantastic opportunity for people to start building a different life in another country.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION:

I started this thesis with a question in mind: “How can migration contribute to the realization of the SDGs and foster a culture of global citizenship?.” I wanted to focus on it and create a thesis that could be used as a manual for skeptical, trying to show them how migration is a positive phenomenon for every society, instead of something we should try to stop. It is good for migrants, as the data I collected showed, and it is good for the country of destination in terms of sharing new skills, and cultures and increasing diversity, which is one of the main elements to create a better and more sustainable society for everyone. During my research, though, I realized I started losing the main point of this analysis: a humanistic approach. I was so focused on trying to demonstrate and answer my research questions, that I almost forgot about the principal subjects of this analysis: migrants, their stories, and their lives. As Francesco said, what is often continued to be perpetrated in the school system is precisely the different treatment guaranteed to migrant students compared to Italians. It is as if you cannot expect more from them so that minimum

commitment and accomplishment are seen as anything incredible. This attitude – which is often not carried out by teachers with a negative purpose– perpetuates the stereotype that migrants, once they arrive in Italy, must necessarily carry out a specific job, without having the possibility of choosing their path, such as attending university and make a dream come true. To do that, we need to deconstruct the culture of power we have been socialized for our entire life. With this, I mean the culture that keeps looking at migrants more as duty bearers than people with rights: first of all, the right to live a fulfilled and happy life. Based on this humanistic approach, we can start acting in every field and level, from the individual one to the international one, to create the condition in which these aspirations can be realized. The main finding of this research is to come to realize how deep the colonized mindset we keep perpetrating even when the purpose is the realization of a more sustainable and inclusive world. If we do not start with the deconstruction of this mindset, migration will keep being seen as a threat more than a resource, and migrants will continue to be treated as less deserving of dignity than our compatriots. Lastly, whether migration will be a good contribution to the realization of the SDGs and the fostering of a culture of global citizenship, depends on us and how much are we willing to deconstruct the system of power and privileges we are immersed in. I propose starting to ask tough questions to ourselves and being committed to expanding our lives while seeking answers. For this reason, I will conclude my research with a reflective question: “What is the difference between inclusion and belonging, and how can I act in my daily life to the extent in which I can affirm to belong to a global community?” I am sure if we are willing to ask and answer this question, we will understand more clearly what kind of concrete actions we can do and regain the power of changing the narratives, other people created for us.

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