Happy 18th? Unaccompanied minors and the transition to adulthood.

An Italian case study.

Sarah Walker

Declaration of Authorship

I, Sarah Walker, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed: Date: 12th August 2020

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Abstract

This qualitative study considers the interaction between the Italian migration regime and young male African migrants (age 14-21) who have made the precarious, illegalised journey to Italy, where they are bureaucratically labelled as 'unaccompanied minors'. The thesis focuses in on what happens when these children become legally adult; examining how the idealised concept of 'childhood' has a bordering effect, dividing between (deserving) children and (undeserving) adults. This rigid age binary is reproduced in research and policy on unaccompanied minors, reducing those over eighteen to an invisibilised category. Yet, it is at this moment that the rights they are accorded as children, including the right to stay in the host country, may be lost. This thesis focuses on this lacuna and, in doing so, reveals how these young men position themselves as 'wrestlers', contesting the subject position of the 'vulnerable child'.

Theorizing mobility and illegality in relation to young people through a raced lens, the thesis examines the everyday lived realities of the transition to adulthood for these young men. Adopting a multi-modal ethnographic approach, carried out over a period of eight months fieldwork in an Italian reception centre, between 2017 and 2018, data is drawn from repeat interviews, enhanced by visual methods, with twelve of the young men, plus ethnographic observations. Drawing on Derrida's notion of *hostipitality,* attention is drawn to the temporalized hospitality for the child. I make the case that the specific socio-legal landscape implemented in the 'home' site of these young men, together with the social relations therein, allowed for a form of hospitality that could give time and exceed the threshold of childhood. The thesis deepens knowledge of youth mobility and the temporality of borders, providing important theoretical insights that can nuance understandings of the interaction between young migrants and immigration controls.

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Who knows.

Sujata Bhatt 'The one who goes away', in *The Stinking Rose* (1996)

Investigating the 'what next' for unaccompanied minors

It is 2007. I am working as a research intern in London, assisting in the data collection for the 'Researching Asylum in London' project. This involves conducting interviews with service providers and focus groups with refugees and asylum seekers. One interview sticks in my mind. An interview with a social worker for a London local authority. We are discussing unaccompanied minors;[1] she tells me about their pathway planning and the triple outcomes open to these young people as they become 'adults'. One of these options is to return to their country of origin if their asylum status is not renewed once they are no longer 'children', as the obligation on the UK to host them based on their 'child' status ends. She explains how difficult and traumatic this is: the 'what next?', for these young people, is a deep unknown. I think of this often as I begin working in the refugee sector.

Once unaccompanied minors turn eighteen years old in Europe, the protection granted to them based on their status as children ends. At this point, the provision of care, living conditions and legal options change significantly, and practices differ between EU Member States in the management of this transition phase (FRA, 2012). In contrast, then, to citizen children, instead of acquiring more rights on turning eighteen, unaccompanied minors face a loss of rights and may 'transition into illegality' (Gonzales, 2011). They are at risk of ending up in a social limbo, without status and without the support and accommodation available to them as children (FRA, 2012), as they fall outside the protective 'biographical border' (Mai, 2014) which enables their stay in the host country. As Nick Mai

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[1] See definition and subsequent discussion on terminology below.

(2014) has evidenced, this is a border which marks a divide between protection and deportation. Within this binary logic, the child is presented as a distinctly different category to the adult, as a 'vulnerable' and at-risk subject 'deserving' of protection. Whilst thresholds between children and adults have been challenged in childhood studies (Alanen and Mayall, 2001), when it comes to child migrants, this rigid biographical border is reinforced.

This threshold of uncertainty over the state enforced 'biographical border' perturbs me. The question niggles: 'what next?'. There is such a large discursive focus on unaccompanied minors as objects of pity and charity, receiving hospitality and support as children, and then what? It is this uncertain future and the false morality of the European migration regime that led me to this focus in my thesis. In the end, not to the UK, but to Italy, which, at the time of my research, operated a more protective asylum regime for minors than the UK. Or, at least in theory, as it was not always implemented in practice. As I maintain in what follows, Italy is an interesting and important fieldwork site both because of its geopolitical position as border of Europe, and the complex internal and external racial landscape, as well as a means to examine this greater level of protection and what it might mean. A means to examine what this can tell us sociologically about childhood, transitions, the temporality of immigration controls, and the interaction between young people and the migration regime which is so hostile after their purported protection as 'children'. What more might it tell us about the reality of the concept of hospitality, so often bandied about in discussions around support for child migrants from the liberal protector (EU) state?

This thesis is the result of my investigation into the 'what next?' for former unaccompanied minors. The overarching research question I address is then: What happens *after* the unaccompanied minor who has actually managed to survive the perilous journey across land and sea and made it to Europe, turns eighteen and is legally considered 'adult'? Thus, what happens *after* s/he crosses the protective threshold of childhood? In researching the *what next?* I was guided by the following research questions:

- How does the Italian migration regime shape the relation between young people and their sense of future possibilities, including the production of new configurations of young people's subjectivity?
- How do the laws and structures at play in Italy produce and sustain differing categories of deserving migrants in relation to young people as they transition from 'deserving' child to an

undeserving and potentially 'illegal' adult? How do young people resist or negotiate such imposed categories?

- How are notions of hostipitality played out in this space and time of transition for unaccompanied minors? And what can this tell us about wider configurations of the nation state/ Europe?

To examine this transition, I draw upon the Derridean notion of *hostipitality* (Derrida, 2000). The neologism functions as a useful analytic to unravel the tension between hospitality and hostility that underpins the European migration regime. Hostipitality recognises the inextricability of hospitality and hostility. As Derrida argues 'hospitality' is a word:

> 'of a troubled and troubling origin, a word which carries its own contradiction incorporated into it, a Latin word which allows itself to be parasitized by its opposite, 'hostility', the undesirable guest which it harbors as the self-contradiction in its own body' (2000, p. 3).

Through this analytic, the temporal contradiction of hospitality raised by Derrida comes to light. The obligation of hospitality towards children by virtue of their (dependent, deserving) child status is lost when these 'children' become (independent, undeserving) adults, leading to a loss of support and rights (McLaughlin, 2018). I elaborate upon this concept in Chapter Two.

The central contention of my research, as set out in Chapter Two, is that the 'unaccompanied minor' is a construct deriving from the intersection of the 'sedentarist perspective', whereby people are rooted in their nation state of birth, and movement out is, and can only be, problematic (Malkki, 1995), of Europe's migration policies, and the idealised Western construct of the 'cult of childhood' (Boas, 1990) which underpins the label. The moralised construct of 'childhood' then serves to operate a bordering effect. This rigid age binary is both enforced within European migration regimes and replicated in much migration literature (Sirriyeh, 2010), with some emerging exceptions. As a result, what happens *afterwards* when the child is no longer a child, and thus no longer deserving, is invisibilised.

In addressing this lacuna, I investigate this invisibilised *afterwards.* My research focuses upon young African migrants (all male, aged 14-21) who have made the perilous, illegalised crossing over the Mediterranean Sea to request asylum and are now housed in 'Giallo', a reception centre for (male) unaccompanied minors, in a northern Italian town 'Verde' (both pseudonyms). I interrogate the

interaction between these young men, or 'unaccompanied minors' as they are bureaucratically labelled, and the Italian migration regime to examine the productive nature of borders. Particularly, I use the young men's transition to adulthood, and thus their movement across the juridical and moral border of childhood, and outside the protection and 'care' of the reception system, as a lens to interrogate the racism underpinning the Italian and, more widely, European migration regime. With an ethnographic focus on Giallo, the thesis sheds light on the understudied space of asylum reception in relation to the humanitarian border (Novak, 2019). In line with Novak (2019), I argue that a focus on this space can reveal some of the mechanisms of in/exclusion and in/visibility at work in the migration regime.

I set out how the 'what next?' for former unaccompanied minors, the search for 'the place' where they can stay without wanting to leave (Bhatt, 1995), is interlinked with the moralistic spatio-racial and temporal controls that migrants are subjected to within the European migration regime, and their ability to negotiate or contest such controls. I further interrogate how such a 'place' or 'home' is not necessarily rooted and transcends binaries of im/mobility. Instead, as Hage suggests, I conceptualise this 'home' as the ground that allows for a confident form of mobility. In challenging binary logics (O'Connell Davidson, 2013; Merrill, 2015; De Genova, Garelli and Tazzioli, 2018), I adopt a both/and approach, engaging with the young men as at once *both* vulnerable *and* capable and recognising the multiplicities and complexities of their identities. In focusing on the relational nature of young people and their migrancy, I draw attention to how children's social relations, belongings and relationships to place are fluid, contextual and mobile (Ní Laoire *et al.*, 2010).

I concur with Chiara Galli that examining experiences of unaccompanied minors 'has important theoretical implications that nuance our understanding of how states exercise power on immigrants' (2019b, p. 4). The advance I make is to draw out the complexities of the *interaction* between the (Italian) migration regime and my participants. Here, I build upon the scholarship of the autonomy of migration (Casas-Cortes *et al.*, 2015; New Keywords Collective, 2016; De Genova, 2017) and scholars who call for young migrants to be understood as social navigators (Chase *et al.*, 2019; Lems, Oester and Strasser, 2019) to interrogate how the young men negotiate the socio-legal landscape they are faced with. By autonomy of migration, I mean a person's ability to exercise the right to freedom of movement to flee oppression or find another life elsewhere (Walters, 2004; Casas-Cortes *et al.*, 2015; De Genova, Garelli and Tazzioli, 2018). This notion of rights and justice threads through the thesis, in recognition of the young men's counter narratives, and deep awareness of their own marginalised positionality as postcolonial subjects.

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Further, I argue that attention to this transition moment is a useful analytic lens to examine the racialisation of the migrant, and the transformation from vulnerable (deserving) 'child' to folk devil (undeserving) adult, revealing how the borders of belonging exclude those produced as 'other'. As such, I illuminate the false morality of the temporal hospitality for the child and, in doing so, foreground race in the migration discourse, where it is so often silenced (Lentin, 2008, 2014; Anderson, 2013; Sharma, 2015; De Genova, 2016). This points to how racialised discourses and the normative construction of 'good childhood' intersect in the construction of the 'unaccompanied minor'. Additionally, I maintain this transition moment is also a useful lens to explore Europe and the shifting borders of Europe (Humphris and Walker, 2017). Many scholars have pointed out borders are not only territorial in formation, but also organizational and conceptual; defining the boundaries of belonging between 'us' and 'them' (Anderson, 2013); boundaries which shift and change, as this thesis draws attention to via the lived experiences of my participants.

The Research context

Counteracting ahistorical discourses: The temporality of research

State based understandings of migration are rooted in 'emergency' discourses. As Geddes and Hadj-Abdou (2018) argue, this feeds into the security-driven perspective underpinning European migration governance which seeks to deter migrants from reaching Europe's shores. Building on the work of other critical scholars, the research challenges the 'crisis' narratives of the liberal European state (Campesi, 2015; New Keywords Collective, 2016; Pallister-Wilkins, 2016; Ticktin, 2016a; Allen *et al.*, 2017; Bhambra, 2017b; De Genova, 2017, 2018; Berg and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2018; McMahon and Sigona, 2018; Rigo, 2018; Tošić and Lems, 2019). As Agier suggests, the crisis should instead be understood as a 'crisis of nation-states faced with mobility' (2019, p. 10). The young men in this study provide counter narratives to 'crisis' discourses.

Sara Ahmed has evidenced how through declaring an event a crisis, it is transformed into a 'fetish object that then acquires a life of its own, in other words, that can become the grounds for declarations of war against that which is read as the source of the threat' (2013, p. 77). The European crisis discourse fits within Ahmed's assertion that 'to announce a crisis is to produce the moral and political justification for maintaining 'what is' (taken for granted or granted) in the name of future survival' (2013, p. 77). The thesis problematises the 'crisis' narrative through historicizing migration, thus revealing how the narrative masks policies of deterrence and harm, which negatively impact the future survival for former unaccompanied minors. Importantly, the centring of the crisis

in Europe masks how most migration occurs within and between countries in the Global South, and not towards Europe at all (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2020).

The dominant Eurocentric discourse presents the migration regime as a space of hospitality in which the deserving 'victim' (good) 'child' migrant is protected by the benevolent (liberal European) state and its humanitarian response to the 'crisis' (Vacchiano, 2011; Berg and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2018; Rosen and Crafter, 2018; DeBono, 2019). Such narratives serve to reinforce these states as sources of protection and that any problems stem from outside the state boundaries (Enenajor, 2008; Furia, 2012; Statz, 2016). They further fail to acknowledge the role of immigration controls in producing vulnerability or as the source of the problem itself (Anderson, 2008). My research explicitly grapples with these issues through its focus on a key moment of biographical and social policy transition; a moment at which the binary moralistic logic of the migration regime is most apparent.

Further, this 'crisis' discourse narrates history as one coherent story, within an ordered notion of time and constructed around binary categories, pinpointing the 'crisis' as a period of beginning (Bhambra, 2017b; Danewid, 2017; De Genova, 2018). These binary categories of 'before and after' derive from a dominant colonialist epistemology (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012), and are ahistorical in failing to recognise the much longer historical pathways that led to this particular moment. To depart from ahistorical 'crisis' narratives, I situate the research historically and geographically. To contextualise this reading, I have set out a timeline providing a brief historical overview of the key immigration legislation and socio-political changes in Italy (see Table 1). I refer back to this throughout the thesis to connect with the historical setting of Italy's migration regime. As I shall discuss in a subsequent section, at the time of my research, the legislative framework in Italy, at least in theory, was more 'hospitable' to unaccompanied minors than other European states, and provided for post-eighteen support. Sadly, since the research began, this has been overturned by legislation enacted by the far-right Lega party whilst in power (see Chapters 6, 7 and 8).

The thesis is attentive to this fast-moving legislative landscape when dealing with matters relating to immigration and the study methods used. Nonetheless, I recognise the limitations of the temporal framework of the research and the relatively slow-moving pace of academic research. The socio-legal landscape that my participants occupied during my research has since altered. This in itself is telling – the number of legislative changes in immigration law is dramatically higher than any other area of law, symptomatic of the migrant as scapegoat. As table 1 below shows, for over fifty years immigration legislation barely altered in Italy. Then, from the late 90s, the changes in this area of law

escalated dramatically.

Table 1. Italian immigration and socio-political timeline

Key immigration legislation changes[2]	Socio-political landscape
Italian unification in 1861 1931 – act to deal with immigration as a matter of public security. Regulated by the Public Security Code (*Testo Unico delle Leggi di Pubblica Sicurezza* – TULPS) under Mussolini Since the 1931 act, only one significant immigration legislation – a Ministry of Labour Circular Letter regulating visa requirements in 1963 Notable absence of a legal framework for immigration while still an emigration country (Abbondanza, 2017).	Unification led to the construct of southern Italians as *cafone* (literally 'people of earth/dirt') –by northern Italians, meaning backwards, uncivilised. Thus, from unification the country was racialised by a geopolitical fault line that split it along a Black/white axis (Ginsborg, 2003; Pugliese, 2008; Merrill, 2014a). Since unification, Italy was primarily a country of emigration. Millions of Italians migrated to the Americas and elsewhere in Europe for economic and political reasons. In European imaginaries, Italians have frequently been perceived as of a different shade of whiteness, closer to the Global South (Merrill, 2014a). Smaller numbers also headed to North Africa during the colonial period. In Libya in the 1930s some 13% of the population was made up of Italians (Chambers, 2017). There was also major internal migration from the South of Italy to the wealthier North (Scotto, 2017). In the 1980s things begin to change as immigrants started coming to Italy from the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa, plus, people moving after the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe. In particular, large numbers of people fled from Albania to Italy. This led to a new public debate linking immigration and crime for the first time (Abbondanza, 2017).

[2] This is not a comprehensive list, rather an indicative summary of key immigration legislation. For full legislative breakdown see: https://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/italy/overview-legal-framework
For reception discussion see (Giannetto, Ponzo and Roman, 2019).

1986 Foschi Law – one of the first Italian immigration laws	The first initiatives for the regularization of migratory flows were implemented following the slowdown in Italy's economic boom and the increasing difficulty for foreign citizens to access the labour market (Scotto, 2017).
February 1990 —Law no. 39 or the 'Martelli Law', aimed to stabilize and assimilate migrant populations by establishing quotas for migrants in relation to the nation's need for temporary labour.	Enacted in part as a response to the murder of African refugee Jerry Masslo, and a reaction to union led protests against migrants' unfettered access to the labour market. The Martelli Law in effect made exploitative economic conditions the only recourse for many migrants (Smythe, 2019). Procedural norms and the 'Central Commission' for assessing asylum applications were set out (Weissensteiner, 2019). Frequent use of *amnesties* to legalize the status of migrants living in Italy.
27 November 1990 Italy signs the Schengen Convention Agreement. Implementation of the Schengen agreement started on 26 October 1997	This convention abolished internal border controls, set up a common visa policy, and led to the creation of the Schengen Area. There is a direct correlation between the increase in irregular migrants and the implementation of visa requirements following the Schengen Agreement which curtailed the legal movement of people between North Africa and Europe with seasonal labour status (Ticktin, 2016a; Rigo, 2018).
	1990 Italy signs UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Ratified in 1991
Law 1991/1992 Regulating Italian citizenship	Italy has deeply restrictive citizenship laws. Citizenship is based on the principle of *ius sanguinis*. There is no generational limit for claiming Italian citizenship by descent. Children of immigrants born in the country, however, can only apply for citizenship within one year following their eighteenth birthday, and must prove uninterrupted, legal residence in Italy since birth. Despite numerous attempts to amend this law to grant *ius*

	solis, this has never happened (see Tintori, 2018). Naturalisation requires a minimum of ten years' residence and proof of financial stability, as well as a clean criminal record (with some reductions, e.g. for spouses of Italian citizens). This is not a right but at the discretion of the Italian state.
1998- Turco-Napolitano law Provided for guaranteed healthcare for legal and illegal immigrants, and other positive measures, but also repressive measures including the establishment of CPT centres (*Centri di permanenza temporanea e assistenza*) where foreigners who are unable to provide proof of their identity and legal status are held while awaiting deportation proceedings. Amended various times	CPT centres have been criticised by numerous human rights organisations but have remained a cornerstone of Italy's immigration policy with both centre-left and centre-right governments. This law separated humanitarian issues from immigration policy for the first-time and tried to balance civil-society pressures on integration and refugees with demands for more effective control over illegal immigration (Scotto, 2017). Entry, stay and residence permits for unaccompanied minors are legislated for under Immigration law 286/1998 (as modified by a number of subsequent laws)
October 2000 -National Asylum Plan	Multi-level governance based on a memorandum of understanding signed by the Ministry of Interior, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI – Associazione Nazionale Comuni Italiani).
Bossi-Fini law passed in Italy in 2002 (Law 89/2002) Tightened restrictions on immigrant workers and asylum seekers by mandating the fingerprinting of all	The Bossi-Fini Law, named after Gianfranco Fini (leader of the right wing Alleanza Nazionale party), and Umberto Bossi (leader of the far-right Lega Nord (now Lega)). Overtly xenophobic it was initially promoted by the right-wing government as a 'preventive' measure against crime. (Smythe, 2019).

extracomunitari (foreigners) requesting or renewing a *permesso di soggiorno* ('residency permit'). However, it also institutionalised the National asylum plan which became the national 'System for the Protection of Asylum Seekers and Refugees' or SPRAR (in Italian: '*Sistema di Protezione per Richiedenti Asilo e Rifugia*ti').	The SPRAR system included reception centres and integration support, legal advice, and social assistance services. It was coordinated at the national level but managed by local authorities (ANCI): individual projects and centres are run by local social enterprises and cooperatives, with funds assigned at the level of individual municipalities, who voluntarily participate. Participation has always been low due to xenophobic locals' complaints and costs implications. The SPRAR system aimed to facilitate the integration of migrants, and precedence was given to those who had already obtained some international protection, including humanitarian protection (Semprebon and Pelacani, 2020) With its high standards and multi-agency structure, it was not a cheap system, seemingly designed to deliver best practice to a relatively small number of people (D'Angelo, 2018, p. 5).
At EU level between 1999 and 2005, several legislative measures were adopted as part of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS)	Reception Directive (2003/9/CE) was transposed in Italy with Legislative Decree n. 140 of 30 May 2005, setting out reception governance and identifying the key actors and institutions involved in decision-making and implementation.
2009 Centre right coalition introduces the 'security package' Law 94/2009	Irregular immigration is criminalised. Exceptional measures allegedly to meet 'emergencies' are targeted at refugees, migrants, Roma and direct *refoulements* made to Libya. Aggressive media discourse against migrants and, most worryingly, by political representatives and government officials (Maccanico, 2009).
2011 onwards	Emigration increases again, accelerating after the eurozone economic crisis struck Italy in 2011 (Scotto, 2017).
2013 launch of 'Mare Nostrum' - a military-humanitarian operation in the Mediterranean Sea – targeted at both rescuing migrants and arresting smugglers, while stopping	In October 2013 more than 500 people drowned off the coast of the island of Lampedusa attempting to reach Europe. Mare Nostrum was set up in response to public outcry at these deaths. Many of the rescued migrants were held in detention centres on the island (Musarò, 2016).

the illegal entry of unauthorised migrants.	Disbanded after a year.
2014	Creation of new parallel system of 'extraordinary reception centres' called 'CAS' (Centri di accoglienza straordinaria) to assist in the management of increased arrivals.
2015: Unlegislated hotspots approach	Hotspot approach implemented following the adoption of the European Agenda on Migration (13 May 2015) which introduced the approach 'to swiftly identify, register and fingerprint arriving migrants' (D'Angelo, 2018, p.2219). Systematic fingerprinting of arrivals drastically reduced onwards movements to other EU Member States and the failure on the part of other Member states to accept relocated asylum seekers led to a further increase in asylum seekers hosted in the Italian reception system (Giannetto, Ponzo and Roman, 2019).
Minniti Decree -approved in April 2017.	Legislation enacted by the centre-left Democratic party. aimed to speed up the application process for asylum seekers and to distinguish them from unauthorized immigrants. Marco Minniti became Minister of Interior in December 2016 and sought to increase repatriations and cut down inflows through agreements with countries of origin and transit, notably Libya. Leads to a reduction in arrivals.
7th April 2017 Law no. 47/2017 'Provisions on the protection of foreign unaccompanied minors' – the Zampa Law	The Zampa Law was heralded by children's rights organisations (e.g. UNICEF, Save the Children) as a victory for the rights of unaccompanied minors in Italy and Italy as a 'model for other EU countries' (Lelliott, 2018).
2018 'Decreto-Salvini' -the Decree on Security and Migration issued (Legislative Decree 113/2018) and converted into Law 132/2018 in December. SPRAR is transformed into	Election of new government in May 2018. A coalition between the populist *Five Star* movement and the far-right *Lega* (former Lega Nord (Northern League) political parties. Leader of the *Lega*, Matteo Salvini becomes Interior Minister and issues a Decree-Law which significantly alters the reception system.

SIPROIMI: System of Protection for Beneficiaries of Protection and Unaccompanied Minors (*Sistema di protezione per titolari di protezione internazionale e minori stranieri non accompagnati*)	Law 132/2018 is overtly xenophobic and anti-migrant.
	SIPROIMI is now available to adults only after international protection has been granted. Unaccompanied minors have immediate access to SIPROIMI.
	Asylum seekers and those who are not granted status/ minors after turning eighteen will be held in CAS
	These changes received widespread criticism from human rights organisations, and local authorities concerned about the increased precarity and irregularity this will create.

Making connections via the Black Mediterranean

As legal channels into Europe are ever more restricted, making the dangerous crossing over the Mediterranean Sea increasingly becomes the only alternative for those seeking a better life (O'Connell Davidson, 2013; Ticktin, 2016b; De Genova, 2017, 2018; Mercator Dialogue on Asylum and Migration, 2018; Gonzales *et al.*, 2019). Following the creation of the European Union, the legal movement of people between North Africa and Europe with seasonal labour status was curtailed (Ticktin, 2016a; Rigo, 2018). Anthropologist Ruben Andersson refers to the 'illegalization machine' (2014a, 2016), drawing attention to the illogicality of the European border regime, in that it essentially constructs the 'illegality' it purports to be addressing (see also De Genova, 2017), resulting in 'crisis'.

Research shows that border controls have, in many cases, simply rerouted migrants towards alternative, often more dangerous routes (Ticktin, 2016a; De Genova, 2017, 2018; Squire, 2017). According to the UNICEF, since the EU-Turkey deal dramatically reduced the flow of refugees and migrants into Europe through the Eastern Mediterranean, the Central Mediterranean from North Africa to Italy has become the main route for those fleeing war, persecution and desperation, as well as the longest and most dangerous. Italy has thus become a site of the 'spectacle' at the border of the migrant crisis currently affecting Europe. The EU also has spent huge sums on reinforcing 'Fortress Europe': For the period 2014-2020 the EU's budget for migration and border management was €13 billion, the Commission has proposed to almost triple this funding to €34.9 billion for the

next long-term EU budget 2021-2027.[3] Finances which feed the EU's border security industry, including a number of European arms companies (Akkerman, 2019). In spite of which, as Enrica Rigo (2018) has evidenced, people embark on this journey more than once, knowing full well the risks that await.

In reality, the majority of undocumented migrants in Europe are visa overstayers (Friese, 2009). Arrivals by sea are, as Alana Lentin and Gavan Titley contend, spectacles that work as border events in a show of strength and control against unwanted 'flows' of people (2011, p. 133). A replication of the colonialist binaries of 'them/us' which fails to recognise the colonial connections across the sea. A sea which is utilised as a border space. Instead, as Heller and Pezzani note, viewing the world from the sea 'one might be able to perceive the unruly freedom of human mobility, which far from being an anomaly, has been a constant throughout history, and persists in spite of the multifarious practices that try to tame it' (2017, p. 115).

Building on this critique, I utilise the framework of the Black Mediterranean (Di Maio, 2012), to situate my research in historic and geographic specificity, and move away from overly Eurocentric paradigms of analysis (Berg and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2018). The Black Mediterranean is a term coined by Alessandra Di Maio (2012). The term highlights the relationship that has existed for centuries, if not millennia, between Europe and Africa and shaped their reciprocal identities (2012, p. 155). The Black Mediterranean, Di Maio explains: 'focuses on the proximity that exists, and has always existed, between Italy and Africa, separated [...] but also united by the Mediterranean [...] and documented in legends, myths, histories, even in culinary traditions, in visual arts, and religion' (cited in Raeymaekers, 2017, np). More widely, it recognises Europe's colonial history and the way in which the migration 'crisis' is a continuation of 'Europe's violent encounter with the Global South' (Danewid, 2017, p. 1679). The use of the framework is also inspired by the young men, their notions of justice and rights, and their enactment of rights which, due to their postcolonial marginality, are removed from them and not necessarily granted upon reaching the 'host state'.

Viewing the movements of young men in my study through a postcolonial lens, which historicises the connections and power imbalances between Europe/ Italy and Africa, draws attention to how migration becomes the answer to personal difficulties in the Global South. For Ghassan Hage, this is owing to 'dysfunctional colonially produced nation states' who cannot provide sufficient hope for a

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[3] EU Commission Press release, June 2018:
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_18_4106

better future to most of their citizens, who consequentially migrate in search of this hope (2003, p. 17). That migration becomes the answer for the young men in my study is in part embedded in these historical colonial linkages, power imbalances, and consumer culture in which narratives of the 'promised land' being in the more developed, civilised, modern 'North' are constructed. Edward Said's assertion that:

> '[t]he boundary notion of East and West, the varying degrees of projected inferiority and strength, ... the kinds of characteristics ascribed to the Orient: All these testify to a willed imaginative and geographic division made between East and West, and lived through many centuries' (1979: 201)

Is still evident in the geographical imaginaries of the young men and the postcolonial inequalities that constrain them.

This European governmentality, into which Italy is embedded, Panagiotidis and Tsianos write: 'aims to force [migratory movements] into temporal zones of hierarchized mobility in order to produce governable mobile subjects from ungovernable flows' (2007 in Mezzadra and Neilson, 2008 np). Andrijasevic (2010b) reinforces this view, contending that the purpose of camps in southern Europe is not to prevent or block migratory movements but rather to regulate the time and speed of migrations. Paolo Novak (2019) has observed how the tension of care and control within migration regimes has been well examined in relation to detention centres, and yet not reception centres, despite their role in governing flows. This, then, is the European migration regime, of which the Italian reception system, in which Giallo is embedded, forms part.

The Italian reception system

In Italian the word for the reception system derives from *accogliere-* which means to welcome, shelter, receive. Words which convey protection, a space that shelters and harbours, that is, words of hospitality. Whilst those who rescue migrants at sea, and provide initial assistance, do protect and welcome, the spaces in which migrants are then held are often deeply unwelcoming, and unhospitable (Di Maio, 2012; Campesi, 2018b; Colucci, 2018; D'Angelo, 2018; DeBono, 2019). As De Bono contends, 'apart from some scattered good practice examples', there is little opportunity to engage in hospitality practices in Italy (2019, p. 349).

However, whilst not wishing to paint an overly rosy picture, and conscious of the many limitations

involved, I shall set out the argument in this thesis that Giallo can be considered a space of good practice. A space of temporality that is productive and future focused.

Giallo, the reception centre in which my ethnography took place, is located in Verde, a northern Italian city. The region in which the city is located, and Verde in particular, is held to be a place of good practice in terms of the local municipality and welfare services in general.[4] Verde is not a large transit city for onward migration, as, for example, Milan or Rome, but a significant number of unaccompanied minors have either made their own way there, in search of a better support system, or been transferred there via the Italian reception system (REACH and UNICEF, 2017). Giallo is part of the national asylum system (the System for the Protection of Asylum Seekers and Refugees' or SPRAR (in Italian: '*Sistema di Protezione per Richiedenti Asilo e Rifugia*ti') which focuses upon integration measures (see Table 1, above).

Some of the young men in Giallo were transported directly to primary reception centres in Verde upon arrival. Being bussed there within days, hours even, of their arrival in Italy. At the height of the arrivals across the Mediterranean Sea in 2016-17, some people arrived in Verde from the South of Italy still clothed in what they had landed in, enveloped in thermal blankets, without shoes.[5] A state of emergency and escape from the grip of death clothed upon them, as if they are wearing their salvation. Bodies 'washed up' ashore, requiring an 'emergency response'. This mechanism was originally set up as part of *Mare Nostrum* ('Our sea' as the Romans christened it), a military and humanitarian operation set up in 2013 to rescue migrants at sea and feed them into a national dispersal system so that arrivals were not held in the disembarkation points in the South of Italy. This was a controversial operation involving both search and rescue at sea intertwined with bordering through control and containment (see Tazzioli, 2016).

Mare Nostrum was disbanded after a year, replaced by other more explicitly military control operations (Tazzioli, 2016). The term Mare Nostrum derives from the Roman Empire, and was utilised in colonial projects, and by Mussolini in fascist propaganda. Thus, an interesting revival of the term, considering its purportedly humanitarian objective, or perhaps simply a reflection of the humanitarian border (Fassin, 2007; Walters, 2011). This amounts to the reterritorialization of the

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[4] Fieldwork interviews. From my fieldnotes, even an encounter with the owner of a vintage clothes shop in Verde confirms this. On asking what drew me to Verde, he responded to my reply about examining the reception system for minors, with an affirmation that yes, indeed, here was a good place to study such things as Verde 'works well' (March, 2018).
[5] Information given by a local council officer during a seminar at the University of Verde.

Mediterranean Sea as a European border space, as '*Mare Nostrum*' (see Musarò, 2016; Agbamu, 2019). Under the dispersal system, which still continues, migrants are transported from arrival points in the south directly to emergency primary reception centres located elsewhere in Italy. A centre, or 'HUB', as these are called, that effectively functions as an inland port. It is here that finger printing and identity assessment takes place, sometimes in the south before the journey north, but not always. Interestingly, the HUB in Verde was previously a detention centre and repurposed as a reception space. Reflecting on this dual purpose highlights the tensions between care and control and the similarities in reception/ detention centres as part of border control mechanisms (Novak, 2019).

This is the mechanism for managing the migrant boat landings through the 'crisis' response lens (Tazzioli and Garelli, 2018). The border has moved inward, constructed as a response to a 'crisis', an emergency setting in which large numbers of people should be re-directed to different municipalities for their care and containment, sorting/ filtering. These inland ports are physical representations of this. Within the 'crisis' response framework, migration is constituted as an unregulated flow, and Italy as the border of Europe is stuck with managing it. The response is then based upon 'compassion' to support people in an emergency situation rather than on a right to support (Vacchiano, 2011, p. 194). Under this 'humanitarian logic' (Fassin, 2007), the need to provide first aid in 'emergency' settings has become the main justification legitimizing the systematic detention of migrants (Campesi, 2015).

This is the logic of humanitarianism, identified by Didier Fassin, based on a moral economy of the 'politics of life' which 'takes as its object the saving of individuals' but also the selection of which individuals are worthy of being saved, constructing those who must be saved as victims in a depoliticised framing of suffering (2007b, p. 501). Fassin maintains that '[h]umanitarian government can be defined as the administration of human collectivities in the name of a higher moral principle which sees the preservation of life and the elevation of suffering as the highest value of action' (2007a, p. 151). For Fassin, this pertains to 'a broader political and moral logic at work within and outside of state forms. This logic can be called humanitarian reason' (2007, p. 151). A critique of compassion is necessary because it always presupposes a relation of inequality (Fassin, 2007b, 2011). Humanitarian reason reifies notions of victimhood, reducing persons to their biological life, as subjects to be given aid and not their biographical life, whereby they have the means to give meaning to their own existence (Fassin, 2011, p. 254). Thus it is that Agamben's (1998) camp arises in times of crisis, and is then normalized (Mountz, 2011).

This is the system of which Giallo forms a part. The national asylum reception system in Italy consists of many centres run by diverse cooperatives within a very heterogenous system (Giovannetti, 2016; ISMU Foundation, 2019; Semprebon and Pelacani, 2020). Giallo is part of the SPRAR system, a complex time consuming operation, subject to regular monitoring by a central office (D'Angelo, 2018). As a result a parallel system of 'extraordinary reception centres' – or CAS (Centri Accoglienza Straordinaria) was set up, leading to a 'double-track' reception system in Italy (Semprebon and Pelacani, 2020). The required standards for the CAS are much less prescriptive than for the SPRAR, since they are meant to be an interim measure– at least in theory. In practice, most asylum seekers are housed in CAS (D'Angelo, 2018; Novak, 2019), including many unaccompanied minors.

These centres have been subject to much criticism, as Colucci evidences, investigations have revealed their poor management, they are often run by questionable operators, and fail to respect minimum standards of health and safety and care (2018, p. 30). Some elements of corruption were also found, the most infamous being 'Mafia Capitale', an investigation which revealed the pervasive rigging of public tenders in Rome — from reception centres to rubbish collection — which involved politicians from both the right and left. The criminal group siphoned off millions of euros intended to fund public services. The leader of the group is quoted as saying that migrants are 'more profitable than drugs' (Nadeau, 2018 np). This is the 'business' of migration; the 'illegalization industry' (Andersson, 2014a). These are the types of centres the young men in my study, take steps to avoid. In part, as my ethnographic material illustrates, they utilise the subject position of the minor that is imposed upon them on crossing the threshold of Europe. I turn now to the legal aspects of this subject.

Unaccompanied minors and the difference between theory and practice in law

Numbers of young people migrating to Europe alone, without a parent or care giver, have dramatically increased over the past ten years (Giovannetti, 2016). Whilst it is important to remember that child migration is not a new phenomenon (Fass, 2005; Vacchiano, 2014), Nick Mai nonetheless concludes that there has been a 'quantitatively superior and qualitatively different degree of involvement of minors and young adults in independent migration' in recent years (2011 in Furia, 2012, p.2). As a result, it is then argued that these so-called 'unaccompanied minors' have become new protagonists of migration (Jiménez and Vacchiano, 2011 in Giovannetti, 2016, p.9). Their vulnerability has become a resource. Although numbers of people arriving by sea is on the decline, in 2018, a total of 3,536 unaccompanied minors arrived in Italy; over 90% of them were male (ISMU Foundation, 2019). Since 2015, most children arriving are aged 17 (c. 50%), followed by 16-year-olds (c. 25%) (ISMU Foundation, 2019). This, as discussed in Chapter Three, is reflected in my

participants who are all male, and who arrived in Italy aged sixteen or seventeen.

As set out in Table 1 above, in Italy, at the time of my research, under Law 47/2017, the 'Zampa Law', unaccompanied minors were entitled to stay in the reception system until nineteen years of age (legally up to the age of 21 in line with citizen children's rights, however this was severely curtailed by local council budgets and the stringent eligibility criteria).[6] The Zampa Law was heralded by children's rights organisations as a victory for the rights of unaccompanied minors in Italy, and Italy as a 'model for other EU countries', as it equips Italy with an advanced normative framework for the recognition of the rights and protection of unaccompanied minors (ISMU Foundation, 2019). Scholars have further noted how Italy was one of the most advanced EU states in terms of upholding the best interests of the child (Rozzi, 2018; ISMU Foundation, 2019). Joseph Lelliot argues that the law set an example to other countries through its 'protection-focused approach' (2018, p. 79). A claim upheld by children's rights organisations Save the Children and UNICEF at the time of its approval.[7]

In theory, under the Zampa Law, unaccompanied minors are granted additional, longer term support to achieve independence beyond childhood. However, in practice this is dependent upon the financial situation of the municipality (Rozzi, 2018; ISMU Foundation, 2019). The ISMU Foundation more recently notes that two years after its approval, Law 47/2017 still lacks its implementing decrees as well as funding, which severely limits its impact (2019, p. 73). Prior to the Zampa Law, Elena Rozzi points out that it was very difficult for unaccompanied minors to regularise their status in Italy once over the age of eighteen, meaning that they became irregular migrants subject to deportation (2018, p. 247). As a result, many left reception centres and turned to crime to sustain themselves (Rozzi, 2018). Verde was one of the municipalities in which the Zampa was implemented and the young men in Giallo could benefit from post-eighteen support. Figure 1 below sets out the pathway the young men in my research followed from the reception system for minors to the adult reception system, SPRAR Adulti.

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[6] Named after the MP who presented the bill, Sandra Zampa

[7] https://www.savethechildren.it/press/minori-stranieri-non-accompagnati-giornata-storica-i-diritti-approvato-definitivamente-il-ddl

Figure 1. Asylum support pathway for unaccompanied minors as they transition to adulthood in Verde in 2017-18
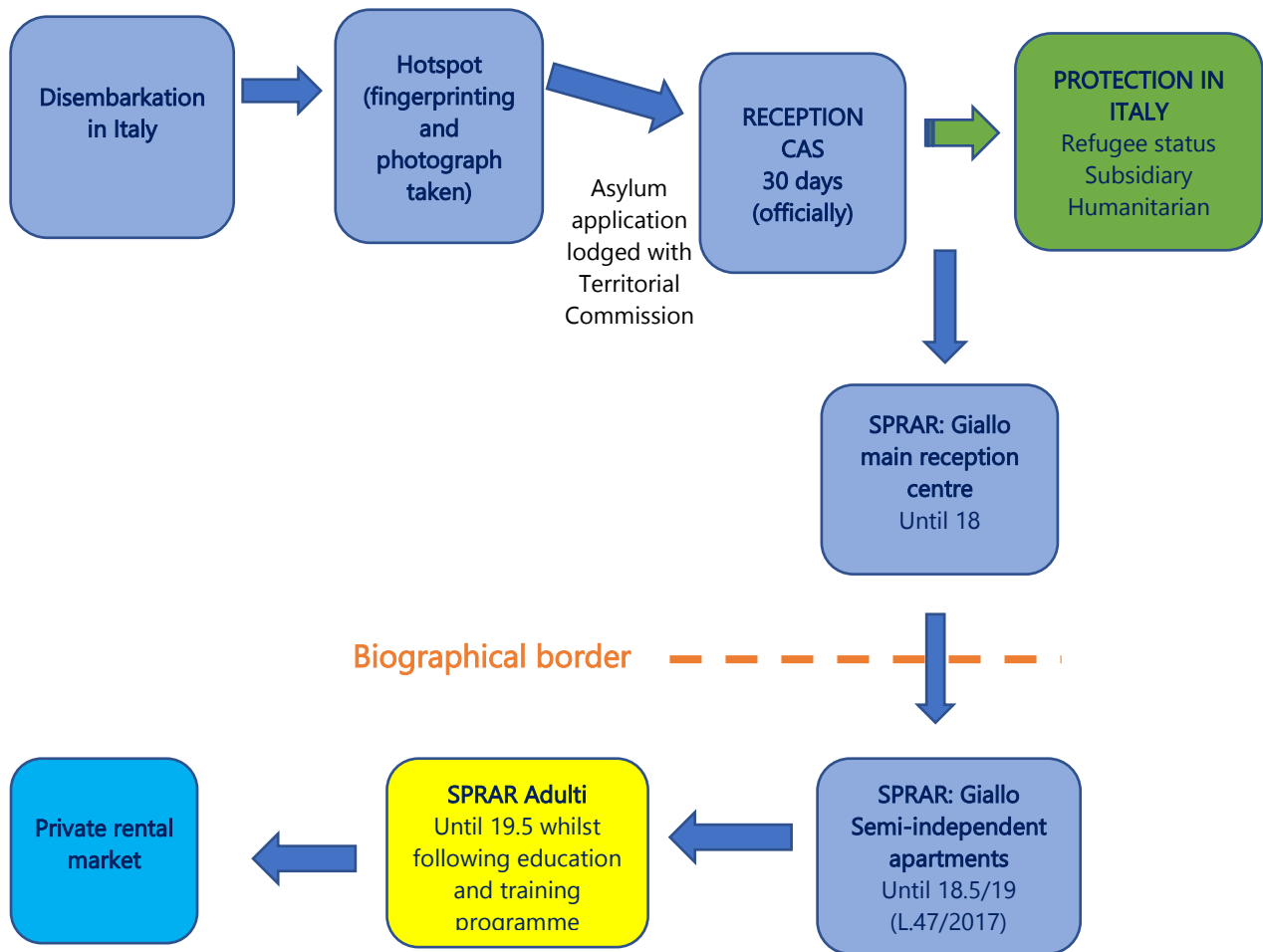
The brief respite (where implemented) provided by the Zampa Law, the result of two years of intense lobbying by children's rights organisations in Italy, in conjunction with SPRAR system, was overturned by the election of a new far-right collation government in 2018, as I discuss below.

The new government and the Decreto Salvini – disparities between research and fieldwork temporalities

At the end of May 2018 a new government, a coalition between the populist Five Star movement and the right-wing Lega (former Lega Nord (Northern League)) political parties, was elected. The

election gave increased power and media coverage to the leader of the Lega, Matteo Salvini.[8] Then Interior Minister, and thus responsible for immigration, Salvini used Italy's 'emergency ruling' legislation to issue a Decree-Law (the so-called 'Decreto Salvini'). This came into force on October 5th and was then converted, with amendments, into Law no. 132 of 1 December 2018. Migration is a structural issue, not an emergency, but, in being governed this way, allows for 'emergency' response and security 'decrees', such as the Decreto Salvini. The decree is thus an 'emergency' 'security package'. Contrary to the premise of the Decree to enhance public safety and security, legal scholar Cecilia Corsi argues that its provisions 'will create greater precariousness and therefore more irregularity, marginality and, finally, insecurity' (2019, p. 5).

Under this new rule the SPRAR system, was dramatically reduced, and accessible only for minors and adults granted refugee status. Asylum seekers are now to be accommodated in larger emergency centres with little or no access to training and support. Additionally, the Decreto Salvini abolished the status of 'humanitarian protection' [*motivi umanitari*]. This status was widely granted to protect unaccompanied minors who did not meet the conditions for refugee status (ISMU Foundation, 2019), and indeed was the status awarded to the majority of young men in Giallo. This is replaced with a new form of 'special protection' [*protezione speciale*], in which protection is granted for one year only for those who can prove themselves to be sufficiently 'vulnerable'; thus, applicable to 'minors'. In this shift, there is a stark representation of the contention of this thesis, that age is a rigid practice and functions as border mechanism, the effects of which are inextricably entangled with race.

Further changes imposed by the Decreto-Salvini in relation to citizenship include the new addition of an Italian language requirement and extending the already lengthy processing times from two to four years from submission of request (Corsi, 2019). Without *ius solis*, children born in Italy to parents without Italian citizenship are not Italian citizens. Corsi also argues that the introduction of the revocation of Italian nationality from those who are not citizens by birth, following conviction for certain offences, constitutes a 'violation of the principle of equality', as it creates 'a different *status civitatis* for those who have acquired Italian citizenship as opposed to those who are citizens by birth' (2019, p. 4). The legislative landscape in which my research was embedded changed significantly during my fieldwork, revealing some of the complications of the disparities in

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[8] Salvini remained in power until he brought down his own government, via a vote of no confidence, and lost power in September 2019, as the M5 movement entered into a coalition with the centre-left Democratic Party (PD). At the time of writing, still in government, but probably not for much longer owing to the volatile Italian political landscape.

temporalities between research and the field.

Problematising terminology and binary categories

Terminology has political consequences. This has been particularly evident in recent media and civil society debates as to whether to use the term 'refugee' or 'migrant' in the European 'crisis'. Roger Zetter pointed out in 1991 that labelling imposes an institutionalised identity, in which individual identity is replaced by stereotyped identity, evidencing the bureaucratic power of the label (1991). As Ruppert also notes, it is important to recognise the inventive capacities of the category: 'part of everyday practices through which we identify and classify ourselves and others, but which may also be part of state based practices of classification' (2012, p. 36). This then represents statistical knowledge and power (Ruppert, 2012). Thus, we need to make transparent the ontological politics of the practices of categorization (Law and Urry, 2004). It is particularly vital to consider our role as researchers in producing certain kinds of 'knowledge' and our contribution to meaning making in the world (Anderson, 2017, 2019). Indeed, as Sinha and Back remind us, it is 'worth re-examining the ways in which the frameworks for understanding migration and in which the *figure of the migrant* is produced in debate have become part of the problem itself' (2014, p. 475 emphasis in original). In this vein, I have set out below some of the more politicised terms used in this thesis and how I have chosen to use them.

As I will discuss in Chapter Two, the category of the 'unaccompanied minor' refers to a particular subject in law, but also represents the western construct of the child as a vulnerable, passive victim. In this thesis, I predominantly refer to my participants as 'young men', as the majority were aged sixteen and over. However, as the label has legal and normative consequences, I have chosen to use this term where it represents such constructs. UNHCR and UNICEF consider **unaccompanied children** to be any person under the age of eighteen who is outside his or her country of origin or habitual residence and who has been separated from both parents and other relatives and who is not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for doing so (2014, p. 22). This is the term that is officially used by European institutions and governments (Furia, 2012).[9] The terminology of 'unaccompanied' or 'separated' child, as is also used, necessarily produces the notion of a subject set adrift from its anchor, of something missing, and thus the need for reattachment.

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[9] Italy differentiates between two categories of unaccompanied minors: those who have claimed asylum, and those who have not. Thus differently to other EU countries, Italy has had a large number of unaccompanied minors who have not claimed asylum as they nonetheless have the right to stay in Italy on the basis of their status as children, without claiming asylum (residence permit for 'minore eta') (Petti, 2004).

I have chosen to use the term **migrant** to refer to people who move across state borders. I seek to adopt it as a neutral term, not denoting any false binary between forced/ voluntary movements, but rather recognizing the spectrum of immigration statuses, and that these can shift and change (Ngai, 2005). There is no internationally accepted legal definition of a migrant, and the term is interpreted in different ways. Thus, whilst I agree wholeheartedly with De Genova, Garelli and Tazzioli, who argue that: 'every act of migration, to some extent […] may be apprehensible as a quest for refuge' (2018, p. 242), as the label 'refugee' is a specific legal category encompassing a set of rights and protections that other statuses do not entail, for the purposes of this thesis, I have chosen not to use this term, save where legally relevant. I maintain the need to engage in both/and ways of thinking to greater understand the complexities at work in people's mobilities and the structural constraints to which they are subject that limit their room for manoeuvre (O'Connell Davidson, 2013).

I refer to the **migration regime or border regime**, following Tsianos and Karakayali as a 'space of negotiating practices' which 'makes it possible to understand regulations of migration as condensations of social actions instead of taking regulations for granted in their stated aims' (2010, pp. 375–6). Such understanding recognises the agency of the precariously mobile.

Chiara Brambilla has drawn attention to the 'deep instability and variability of the 'traditional' geopolitical **borders** solely as sites of exclusion, conveyed by the use of metaphors such as 'Fortress Europe'' (2014, p. 222). This fails to represent the way in which the border is 'a parameter that enables the channelling of flows and provides coordinates within which flows can be joined or segmented, connected or disconnected', thus, challenging the rigidity of the distinction between inclusion and exclusion (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2012 p. 59-60). Instead, the border is understood a social institution and migration as a social force influencing and co-producing the border itself (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2012). Van Houtum (2002) agrees that borders should be understood primarily as social phenomena. Borders are then better understood as ongoing and never complete b/ordering processes, the result of dynamic and more or less successful attempts at 'ordering' relations between places and people (Van Houtum, 2002). Yuval Davis, Wemyss and Cassidy, term this 'everyday bordering' or 'the everyday construction of borders through ideology, cultural mediation, discourses, political institutions, attitudes and everyday forms of transnationalism' (2018, p. 3).

Race is acknowledged to be a social construct, without a firm basis in biological difference. As Alana Lentin writes of 'race', it is 'not of interest for what it is but for what it does' (2015, p. 1404). In the

young men's lives, race does a lot. As subsequent chapters illustrate, race and **racialization** were significant issues for the young men in my study. I am using the term 'racialization' here, as defined by Omi and Winant, to 'signify the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice or group. Racialization is an ideological process, an historically specific one' (1986, p. 64). Racialization can be understood as a racial logic that delineates group boundaries (for discussion see Gonzalez-Sobrino and Goss, 2019; Hochman, 2019). It is not a static process, but rather 'involves change and ongoing practices that attach racial meanings to people' and is thus 'born out of social dominance and power' (Gonzalez-Sobrino and Goss, 2019, pp. 506–507).

Thesis overview

Many of Giallo's staff and social workers used the analogy of the children's board game *Snakes and Ladders* in reference to the life of a child migrant in Italy. As in *Snakes and Ladders*, life on the margins is precarious and open to slippage at any time. I draw upon this analogy in my thesis to understand the young men's attempts to create a life for themselves in Verde and examine how the system replicates this board game. The concept threads through the succeeding chapters, which build upon and develop the themes outlined below, placing attention on the neglected space of the *afterwards* for former unaccompanied minors.

Each ethnographic chapter is introduced by a vignette composed of various fragments of one of the young men's narratives. I utilise this as a twofold device. First, to set out the key focus of the chapter and frame it in the young men's words. Second, as a methodological device to provide greater representation of the young men, rather than through disembodied excerpts of interviews. The ethnographic chapters do not follow a fully chronological order as they symbolise the nonlinearity of migrant trajectories and narratives. Nonetheless, a temporal arc which stretches from the first empirical chapter, set in Giallo, to crossing the threshold of childhood in the final empirical chapter, is intended to capture the young men's experiences of, and journeys through, this key moment of biographical and social policy transition.

The ethnographic chapters commence with Chapter Four, which focuses on the home site, Giallo, where I first meet the young men, and their experiences in this space. The subsequent chapter focuses on their reasonings for autonomously moving to Verde and why they consider Giallo to be 'the place', meaning a reception centre in which they feel they can enact their migrancy aspirations. Chapter Six examines the lived reality of the 'biographical border' (Mai, 2014) as the young men

transition to adulthood. Attention is drawn to the gendered dimension of their experiences and how, for them, the construct of adulthood is indivisible from notions of masculinity.

Chapter Seven represents a temporal rupture. It focuses on the legislative changes to immigration law brought in by the new government and the material and emotional impact of this on the young men, revealing its destabilising force. It draws attention to how the transition experienced by the young men is specific to time and place. In this way, it both reflects the fast changing socio-legal landscape and addresses the ongoingness of colonial legacies and racisms, subordinations and exclusions. The ongoingness of these difficulties re-emerge in Chapter Eight and its visibilisation of the space of the 'what next?' for these young men. In this final ethnographic chapter, I commence with a return to the temporal space of the 'new start', as narrated by the young men in relation to their migrancy aspirations in Italy. This is to contrast their aspirations and narrations of 'new starts' and 'better futures' with some of the realities they then encounter in the space of the *afterwards,* beyond childhood. Finally, I conclude by explaining how I addressed the research questions through the thesis and setting out my contribution to scholarship.

Conclusion

In introducing the research problematic, this chapter has outlined the central contention of the thesis: that, due to the intersection of 'sedentarist' (Malkki, 1992) migration policies and idealised moral constructs of childhood, unaccompanied minors have been 'invisibilised' by their in-betweenness as neither child nor adult. Through a consideration of the interaction between migration regimes and unaccompanied minors, I set out the importance of theorizing mobility and illegality in relation to young people through an analysis of race and racism. I argue that this approach is particularly critical for sociological understandings of childhood, migration and belonging. Through focusing on an 'invisibilised', heterogenous group of young people, the research draws attention to the 'sociology of absences' (Santos, 2016), and will contribute to reframing sociological understandings of youth mobility.

Chapter 2. Beyond the binary logic of migration governance: Migrant youth and bordering within the Black Mediterranean

Introduction

An inherent contradiction within European migration policy is that on the one hand it has become almost a truth universally acknowledged that child migrants, particularly those who migrated alone, are vulnerable and in need of protection, and that it is in their best interests to eventually return 'home', to their rightful place in the national order of things (Malkki, 1992). Yet, on the other, this logic is disturbed by the dilemma that such children, falling outside the bounds of idealised childhoods, are simultaneously viewed as 'delinquents as 'pseudo-children' [and] more threatening than adults' (Bhabha, 2004a, p. 241). What Aitken (2001) refers to as the 'unchildlike child'. Thus, unaccompanied minors are viewed through a bifurcated lens which is, as this thesis contends, premised upon the intersection of 'sedentarist' (Malkki, 1992) migration policies and Western idealised concepts of childhood, leading to fixed categories of age as a border control mechanism. As a result, owing to this rigid binary between childhood and adulthood, unaccompanied minors who turn eighteen are hidden from migration narratives and their particular experiences of the rupture from their moment of belonging whilst children, are invisibilised.

This chapter sets out the central contention of this thesis, that such a lacuna derives from an artificially imposed developmental binary between the essentialised categories of child and adult. A binary distinction emblematic of rational liberalism, which creates a rigid, false border between the two. Whilst relational aspects of age have been recognised for many years in childhood studies, they have been neglected in the binary logic of migration governance, thereby invisibilising migrant youth when newly adult. This thesis examines why. I put the case that this transition is a useful analytic lens through which to examine the racialisation of the migrant, and the transformation from vulnerable (deserving) 'child' to folk devil (undeserving) adult – how the borders of belonging exclude those produced as 'other'.

Here, I respond also to Back and Puwar's call for sociology to avoid the ''trap of the now' and be attentive to the larger scale and longer historical time frame' (2012, p. 8). Drawing on childhood and migration literature from a historical perspective, the chapter then historicizes the label of the unaccompanied minor, to locate how the conceptual dichotomy at its heart is premised upon western idealised concepts of the child as innocent, dependent and vulnerable. It sets out how such conceptualisation emerges from particular understandings of both children and migration, stemming

from colonial and capitalist histories, steeped within a heteronormative framework. Child migration is not new. As, indeed, Fass (2005) reminds us, children were very much part of labour migration during the colonial era.

I present the normative and discursive shift in child and youth migration, from the expendable child labourers of the colonial moment to the 'victims' in need of protection of today, under the label of the unaccompanied minor, and how that vulnerability increasingly functions as a resource within European migration regimes. The chapter opens the door to further explore notions of 'home' as a means of border control (Walters, 2004). Drawing on Derrida's (2000) notion of *hostipitality*, I examine how this creates hierarchies of mobilities and belonging (Back, Sinha and Bryan, 2012) within the 'home' state. I will thus explore both the legislative and normative frameworks that shape the discursive construction of mobile children and young people, with a view to problematise notions of the 'deserving' child and the undeserving adult. I further explore the morality and racism underpinning the governance of mobility. This chapter then sets the theoretical underpinning for my research and how I position myself within the literature. The literature was sourced using the *ProQuest* database, as well as Google Scholar.

The chapter begins by first setting out the racialised histories behind the 'unaccompanied minor' and the liberal (EU) protective state. I situate this argument within the theoretical framework of the Black Mediterranean (Di Maio, 2012). Following which, the chapter examines the way the subject of the 'unaccompanied minor' is shaped by a particular combination of historically produced sets of ideas. It evidences how these ideas are based upon a methodological and epistemological nationalism, predicated on 'the assumption that the nation/state/society is the natural social and political form of the modern world' (Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002, p.302). In doing so, I outline how and why 'age has become a sorting device by which we allocate sympathy and parcel out favor' (Fass, 2005, p.939) and thus, consequentially, why it is that young migrants turning eighteen are still excluded via this device.

I then set out my conceptual basis. How the label 'unaccompanied minor' is constructed within the European migration regime as a particular 'problem' (Bacchi, 2009), as well as its relation to deservingness. Here I provide a brief genealogy of the 'unaccompanied minor' label to shed light on the implicit epistemic notions underpinning it. In problematising the notion of 'childhood' as a bounded and safe space, I bring in the gender dimension of my research, which focuses solely on young men. As discussed, over 90% of unaccompanied minors in Italy are male. Drawing and

expanding upon Allsopp's examination of migrant masculinities, I evidence the problematic nature of the regime which enforces a 'binary portrait of masculinity' (2017, p. 170). I am attentive here to the productive nature of the border of childhood, and how this intersects with race and the temporality of migration controls.

I problematise the temporal contradiction that, for Derrida, is inherent in the notion of hospitality, via the transition of these 'children' into adulthood, when the host state is no longer held to be hospitable to them. The subsequent section identifies the false morality this constructs in the dominant European migration regime, where children are granted hospitality and, hence, the right to stay, based on their status as children. I elaborate upon the way in which 'home' is utilised as a means of border control (Walters, 2004) in the next section. This leads into a discussion of the processes of othering that render some strangers stranger than others (Ahmed, 2000), and the ongoing (post)colonial connections that are absent in the 'crisis' discourse of the European migration regime. I then outline the lacuna of the focus on young migrants turning eighteen in policy and academia at the time the research began.

Interestingly, during the course of my research, which commenced in 2013 with my PhD proposal, the literature (grey and academic) landscape has also shifted; there is now more focus on young migrants after the age of eighteen. At the time I began my research, however, this group of young migrants had received very little attention, being, as I argue 'invisibilised' in research and policy. A research report by Elaine Chase and Jennifer Allsopp (2013) was one of the first to draw academic attention to the lack of focus at European level on young migrants after they turned eighteen and were 'adults' in the eyes of the law. This invisibilised threshold, which intersects the borders of childhood, welfare and migration is, I believe, of significant sociological interest. Finally, I conclude by summing up how the thesis will contribute to a greater sociological understanding of child and youth mobility through a raced lens.

Racialisation and the (post)colonial connections across the Mediterranean

The Algerian sociologist Abdelmalek Sayad makes the affirmation that the immigrant disturbs the order of the nation; s/he is a displaced and at-fault presence (2004, p. 283). As he observes, the migrant has committed the 'original sin' of immigration – they are already guilty simply because of their presence in another land (Sayad 2004, p. 283). Yet, as discussed above, the concept of the migrant is inherently racialised and as such, as other scholars argue, we can go further to ask: ' who is the migrant?' (El Tayeb, 1999; El-Tayeb, 2011; Anderson, 2013, 2019; Tudor, 2017; Anderson and

Blinder, 2019). Gibson reminds us that 'not all strangers are strange in the same way', and thus the figure of the stranger requires delineation (2003, p. 368). She follows Sara Ahmed's call to account for 'the political processes whereby some others are designated as *stranger than other others'* (2000, p. 6 emphasis in original). Indeed, the question of who is the 'stranger' or produced as 'other', is also implicitly connected with hospitality (Dikeç, 2002), which brings us back to race and processes of racialisation. As Bridget Anderson contends, who is separated from and who retains their migrancy, is often bound up with nationally specific ways of encoding and remaking of race (Anderson, 2019). In focusing on young migrants as they become adults, this thesis reveals issues of temporality and mobility at the intersections of racialisation and childhood.

Recently, scholars have argued that discourses on migration, minorities, ethnicity and integration have, in fact, often served to silence debates on race (Lentin, 2014), thus perpetuating ignorance of the racialised and historically particular construction of the migrant in Western nation-states (Sharma, 2015). Yet, as David Goldberg argues:

> '[b]orders are constituted through race, the biopolitical technology par excellence, fashioning the foreigner, the stranger, the not-belonging. Europe has long negotiated the lines marking off those who belong, whose being constitutes Europeanness, whose genesis can be traced in some extended sense to Europe, temporally and spatially. Longing is cut off from belonging' (2006, p. 358).

De Genova (2016) argues that 'European'-ness itself is (re-)articulated precisely as a racial formation of postcolonial whiteness, something inherent in Fatima El Tayeb's work (1999), where she evidences how Black Europeans are, as a result, constructed as non-Europeans (2011). The term itself becoming a misnomer. This is reflected in the fiction of Italian writers of colour, such as Italo-Somalian writer Igiaba Scego (see for example 2020).

As the narratives of the young men in this study reveal, such processes of othering are still at work in the raced landscape of Italy today. Curcio and Mellino argue that 'racism has fractured the Italian national space right from the birth of the modern nation in 1861 and, consequently, the terrain has been prepared for the contemporary racialization of international migration' (2010 np) (see also Dal Lago, 2010). A racism which also involved the internal divisions between North and South Italy, and constructions of whiteness which dehistoricise Italy's past (Pugliese, 2008; Giuliani and Lombardi-Diop, 2013). Relations of othering, as Sara Ahmed (2013) has so potently shown, work through

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emotions. She draws upon Black and critical race scholarship, which contests the model of race as a bodily attribute (Fanon, 1967; Said, 1979; hooks, 1989), to examine discourses of racialisation in terms of othering. Ahmed's work evidences how othering takes place through the attribution of feelings to others, or by transforming others into objects of feeling (2013). Racism, in fact, was an issue that arose deductively through the research; something that was of great pertinence to the young men, to an extent I (as a white British woman) had not anticipated.

Scholars adopting the Black Mediterranean framework recognise and foreground this history (Di Maio, 2012; Raeymaekers, 2014; Woods and Saucier, 2015; Danewid, 2017; Giglioli, Tiberio and Hawthorne, 2017; Giuliani, 2017; Hawthorne, 2017; Proglio, 2018; Smythe, 2018, 2019). The term is inspired by what Paul Gilroy (1993) called the 'Black Atlantic' that shapes post-colonial connections between Europe and Africa. The relationship between the two concepts is well clarified by Di Maio, who argues that just as the deportation and enslavement of Gilroy's Black Atlantic were linked to capitalism, colonialism and the western idea of progress, so present-day migration is related to European geopolitical interests and focuses on the sea as a site of human rights violation and the obscuring of violence (Di Maio, 2012, p. 153). Di Maio draws out this notion evocatively in her colouring of the sea: 'Black is the colour of the Mediterranean Sea when Africa and Europe meet in her waters' (2012, p. 145, my translation). As Ida Danewid explains, the lens of the Black Mediterranean 'place[s] the contemporary migrant crisis in the context of Europe's constitutive history of empire, colonial conquest, and transatlantic slavery' (2017, p. 1679).

Using this framework then sheds light on how Europe has rewritten and hidden such connections from its history. As Camilla Hawthorne reminds us, Robin D. G. Kelley writes in his introduction to Cedric Robinson's Black Marxism (2000), the purging of the Black Mediterranean from European history was part of the construction of Europe as a 'discrete, racially pure entity' (in Hawthorne, 2017, p. 164). These lost connections between the sea crossings of today and those of the past, which shape the (post)-colonial connections between Europe and north Africa, are noted by other scholars (Friese, 2009; De Genova, 2016; Bhambra, 2017b). Such discourses are hidden in the 'crisis' narrative of the European migration regime, and indeed in Italy's own reconstruction of national identity and territorial reclaiming of the Mediterranean Sea (Van Houtum, 2010).

I adopt the lens of the Black Mediterranean in this thesis, as influenced by scholars working on the concept, but predominantly inspired by the young men themselves. In their conscious placing of themselves as postcolonial subjects, they acknowledge these ongoing connections, and actively

resist subjugation. Further, drawing attention to these practices reveals the fallacy of the 'protective' state in the ongoing processes of subordination and exclusion faced by the young men in my study, particularly as they transition to adulthood. In interrogating the subject of the unaccompanied minor, the connections between colonialism and the racisms of the past which continue into the present, are brought to the fore. In this way, I also set out the raced landscape in which the young men are embedded, both as minors and beyond.

Whilst undoubtedly some children and young people are in need of support, and many have been subjected to very difficult traumas, both prior to and during their journey/s, framing them in such a way serves to maintain their constitution as a vulnerable victim supported by the liberal state, ignoring the complexities of their situation. The terminology imposes a fixed and bounded identity to the unaccompanied minor, which ignores relational differences and the intersectionality of their identities (Ni Laoire, 2000; Cheney and Sinervo, 2019). An intersectional approach reveals the way different social and cultural categories – like race, age, class, gender, and sexuality – overlap and interact within social relations and processes to legitimise specific social hierarchies and inequalities (Crenshaw, 1989).

This approach is often missing in discourses around child migrants predominantly focusing on vulnerabilities, which serve to de-gender and de-race the children and young people in question. Further, the productive effects of the border and interactions between young people as migratory subjects, and the migration regime itself, are also hidden. This thesis explicitly grapples with these issues through its focus on the transition moment; a moment at which the morality of the migration regime based on binary logic is most apparent. The way the subject of the unaccompanied minor is steeped in particular understandings of both children and migration, stemming from colonial and capitalist histories, is clarified in the next section.

The savage/ innocent duality

Until the eighteenth century in Europe children were depicted as 'savages', in need of strict control. It was only in the mid-18th century that the modern concept of childhood as an age of innocence started to gain prominence. Indeed, Phillipe Aries in 1962 claimed that '[i]n medieval society the idea of childhood did not exist' (in Stephens, 1995, p. 5). Whilst this view is essentially a Western construct and makes too bold a claim, it is widely agreed, nonetheless, that a historically rooted particular form of (Western) modern childhood emerged during this period, which was closely

related to colonial practices (Stephens, 1995; Boyden, 2003; Hendrick, 2003; James and Prout, 2003). Child development and colonial practises shared important parallels; both the child and the colonized were constructed as pre-cursors of the enlightened European man (namely, vulnerable, passive and irrational 'becomings') (Nieuwenhuys, 2013, p. 5).

This change to childhood as a bounded time and space of innocence was a result of wider social changes taking place in Europe, namely the development of the modern state and onset of capitalism and liberal thinking. This was exported globally, as Western constructs of childhood and the family as the ideal household form were spread through colonialism. Under the 'domestic ideal' of the mid-19th century, the family came to be seen as the best place for the child (Hendrick, 2003). The family unit was an antithesis to the chaos and immorality of industrial capitalism, while changes in the child labour laws, combined with welfare reforms, led to the consolidation of the notion of childhood as a place of vulnerability and children as in need of protection (Hendrick, 2003).

These changes in child labour laws and industrialization resulted in children becoming relatively economically worthless but priceless emotionally (Zelizer, 1981; Scheper-Hughes, 1989 in Stephens, 1995, p.14). Previously, children were part of the work force and there was little emotional attachment to them, owing in part to high infant mortality rates (Zelizer, 1981). At this point, following developments by reformers that derived from Rousseau's influential novel 'Emile' (1762), and deriving from a religious need for moralising and the control of children (Hendrick, 2003; James and Prout, 2003), the idea of childhood as a 'natural' space of innocence, with the child as a vessel for learning, gained in prominence. Education and labour legislation changes became part of the provision for 'normal' childhoods, based on the premise that labour is wrong for children (Zelizer, 1981; Boyden, 2003). The shift in the child as labourer to the child as victim in need of protection is as Fass notes:

> 'the product of Western history and of the development of humanistic sentiments during the last two hundred years. Today, these victims are no longer […] merely a subset of poor people whose poverty makes them vulnerable or desperate. Instead we respond to them as children in a special way and see their exploitation or abuse as unacceptable' (2005, p.939).

The export of modern European domestic life produced new sorts of colonial labourers and imperial subjects (Fass, 2005; Boyden, 2003). Feminist analysis suggests this led to the emergence of idealised motherhood and childhood within a bounded, domestic space (Sokoloff, 1981 in Zelizer,

1985:9). Scholars (Boyden, 2003; Qvortrup, 1986 in Stephens, 1995, p.6) suggest that the hardening of the dichotomy between adult and child was related to hierarchical relations between differing sections of social life constructed through capitalism and the development of the nation state. Hendrick concludes that this should be understood as a critical turning point in the history of age relations, as the concept of childhood shifted to a space of innocence, and the family became the best place for the protection of the vulnerable child (2003, p.43). Within this heteronormative framework it is assumed, in Western societies, that children have a natural need for stability and security, which can be provided by the domestic and familial environment. As a result, ideal modern childhoods are associated with residential fixity and domestication (Boyden, 2003; Fass, 2005; Ní Laoire *et al.*, 2010; White *et al.*, 2011; Gardner, 2012).

Again, as I will illustrate via the counter narratives of the young men in this study, this is a false construction of childhood which is not applicable to many children the world over. The young men in my study had been working as 'minors' and, for them, migrancy is seen as the answer to their problems. Mobility is viewed as the means for them to achieve their 'ordinary wish to succeed in the world' (Kohli, 2006). Youth migration is socially embedded in many African societies and not necessarily about entering adulthood, but rather, is often more about impressing peers with material goods and an extension of youth (Ungruhe, 2010). There is nothing inevitable about childhood; there are as many childhoods as there are families and cultures (Nandy, 1984). This more nuanced and complex understanding is missing from the migration regime with problematic consequences.

Hannah Arendt (2017 [1951]) famously argued that the refugee is a product of modernity and statelessness, a consequence of the modern nation-state. Similarly, I argue that the category of the unaccompanied minor is constructed through the development of the nation state. The political and legal structure of the nation-state is based upon the rights of man and citizen, thereby excluding non- citizens such as persons/individuals legally or socially constructed as vulnerable or dependent. Thus, those such as racialised others, women, slaves, and children were not legally recognized as having a right to their own person, but subject to a differentiated inclusion, through dependency on husbands, fathers, etc. (Anderson, 2013). These processes of rejecting the personhood of certain peoples arose from European colonial projects, leading to what Gail Lewis refers to as the 'violent epistemological recoding of humanity'(2017, p. 8). This legacy accentuates the dependency notion of the child, who is not quite a full citizen, and can be seen in anti-Black racism in which Black peoples were constructed as child races (Rollo, 2018).

The construct of the child as ignorant and in need of educating via (Western) knowledge has been an integral part of the relationship between colonizer and colonized (Nandy, 1984). Indeed, Valentin and Meinert (2009) reveal how the civilization of the children of the 'savages' in the colonial world was seen as a crucial issue, and was an inherent part of colonization projects in the 19th century. As Rollo (2018) observes, the child/rational being binary is then a central feature of racialization, referring to how Blackness has been identified with childhood, and childhood is historically identified as the archetypal site of naturalized violence, ineptitude and servitude.

The idea of civilizing the 'savages' has continued in the post-colonial era, leading to an export of internationally defined standards for a 'good childhood' (Valentin and Meinert, 2009). Such a civilizing mission is reflected in reception policies in Europe today, the EU border providing a protective line against states of origin perceived as the 'problem' (Enenajor, 2008). A further reflection of the patronization and infantilization of states in the Global South embedded through colonial practices and thus constructed as somehow 'savage' in themselves (Valentin and Meinert, 2009). This leads to the construct of child migration as a 'problem', as I outline below.

The 'problem' of child migration

People have always moved, and human movement is only contingently constituted as 'suspect ' (Anderson, 2013). Indeed, the 17th and 18th century saw a 'multitude of mobilities across borders' (Yeoh, 2003, p. 373) as a result of Empire building, slavery and colonialism. Large numbers of people, including children (Fass, 2005), moved across the globe as borders shifted and changed. Today's migration flows often follow the trade and social pathways established during that period. Yet it is only today, as Bridget Anderson (2013) contends, that 'migration' signifies *problematic* mobility implying the need for control. Rather than mobility, the figure of the migrant relates more to race, gender, class and nationality. It is a construct that is inherently racialized, deriving from migration regimes, themselves based upon historical colonial frames of reference and cultural norms (Silverstein, 2005; Back, Sinha and Bryan, 2012; Anderson, 2013), as discussed above.

The subjects produced reflect these histories and the stratification of the freedom to move (Bauman, 1998). As O'Connell Davidson and Farrow point out, the concept of the 'child migrant' is determined by 'reference to a set of cultural norms, moral values and political concerns. Thus, the child of the British expatriate in Hong Kong who is sent to boarding school in the UK is not normally described as a 'child migrant' but the child of a West African family who is sent to live with relatives

in Britain where s/he will receive schooling is' (2007, p. 19). Thus, hierarchies of mobility and belonging are produced by migration regimes (Back, Sinha and Bryan, 2012).

Even though child migration is not new, according to Accorinti (2015), it was only from the 1980s that the phenomenon of children migrating alone to Europe began to be systematically described. It was during this period that child migration came to be viewed as a social 'problem' requiring a solution, leading to developments in legislation on immigration and child reception procedures (Petti, 2004; Accorinti, 2016). As Carol Bacchi's (2009) work has revealed, the productive effect of the 'problem' constitutes the child migrant as a particular subject normatively and legislatively, and as such leads to particular policy responses. The problem in this context emerged in part due to increasing numbers of children and young people migrating to Europe, but also relatedly to the ratification by almost all EU countries of the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). This resulted in a changed landscape, as states became bound to uphold a set of legal rights and entitlements for children.

Under the CRC a child is defined as 'every human being below the age of eighteen years, unless, under the law applicable to that child, the majority is attained earlier' (Article 1, CRC). Whilst the CRC does present children as 'subjects or agents capable of exercising for themselves certain fundamental powers' (Archard 2003 in O'Connell Davidson, 2005, p. 60), it gives rights to children 'only and in so far as they are children', and thus enshrines and universalises a particular understanding of children and childhood (Archard 2003 in O'Connell Davidson, 2005, p. 60). It is this particular construct of childhood that the CRC has helped to spread globally (Boyden, 2003; James and Prout, 2003; O'Connell Davidson, 2005). The construct of childhood upheld within the CRC, Qvortrup argues, thus views age as a 'permanent social category', as opposed to fluid and relational (1996 in Buss, 2013, p. 285). The age of eighteen is also a Western construct as a marker of adulthood (Stephens, 1995; O'Connell Davidson, 2005).

As such, critics argue that the CRC perpetuates and imposes a Western liberal idea of childhood in which children are seen to be immature, irrational, dependent asocial beings: 'adults-in-waiting' (Boyden, 2003; Chin, 2003; James and Prout, 2003; White *et al.*, 2011; Buss, 2013), and then 'deemed incapable of determining their own lives and values without outside intervention' (Pupavac, 2001, p. 101). With the ratification and spread of the CRC, it is this normative and legal definition that came to underpin the institutional label for young migrants migrating alone to Europe. As Fass argues, following the promotion of Western superiority via colonialism, the

'Western commitment to child protection often incubates a similar sense of superiority which lays a claim to virtue in the vision of a proper childhood' (2005, p.938). Abu-Lughod (2008) refers to this as 'rescue rhetoric'.

Just as the refugee as a specific social category did not exist before World War II, so I argue that the same logic can be applied to the unaccompanied minor pre-the mid-nineties, related as it is to the ratification of the CRC. The term 'unaccompanied minor' as a legal term was created in 1997 (Council of Europe, 97/C221/03), a result, Mercedes Jiménez -Alvarez argues, 'of the intermingling of the contemporary zeal for child protection and for border control' (2016, p. 3), and following on from the particular construct of the 'problem' of child migrants. The legislation draws on the CRC, and as such this frames the understandings of child migration and reception procedures across Europe. The terminology of 'unaccompanied' necessarily produces the notion of a subject set adrift from its anchor, of something missing, and thus the need for reattachment. The child subject produced by the European migration regime is thus conceptualised as inherently incomplete and dependent on an adult (Thronson, 2002 in Mai 2014, p.189; Enenajor, 2008; Rosen and Newberry, 2018), which does not reflect the realities of many children across the globe.

This concept is also based on a reified notion of the family as a safe space, which fails to acknowledge the problematic nature of some family relationships. Indeed, fixed temporal notions of childhood as a safe time of innocence and happiness are called in to question by studies of queer childhoods and feminist analysis (Probyn, 1996; Fortier, 2001). Critical race scholars further point out the ahistorical nature of protected childhood, as Rollo argues 'in no era has childhood proven to be a genuine site of security or safety' for Black youth (2018, p. 310). Yet the helplessness through which the de-racialised, de-gendered subject of the hapless unaccompanied minor is constructed, implies a need for others to protect them and hence speak for them, silencing their own individual narratives (Malkki, 1996; Ticktin, 2016b). In drawing out the narratives of the young men in my study, I aim to counteract such silencing forces and am attentive to race and gender dimensions.

Children's deservingness is a construct of their vulnerability. Child migrants are then often conceptualised within a vulnerability framework (O'Connell Davidson and Farrow, 2007; Furia, 2012; O'Higgins, 2012; McLaughlin, 2018), in which they are depicted as passive objects, deprived of agency (O'Connell Davidson and Farrow, 2007; White *et al.*, 2011; Chase and Allsopp, 2013) something also reinforced by the literature. McLaughlin (2018), Crafter and Rosen (2018) and Ticktin (2016), have shown how the construct of the essentialised category of the child as 'innocent' and

vulnerable, and thus deserving of care, necessarily creates its essentialised 'other', the non-vulnerable 'adult' who is then no longer deserving of care. This then becomes problematic as the 'child' transitions to adulthood, as it is their status as 'children' that accords them the vulnerability deserving of protection (Mai, 2011, 2014; Chauvin and Garcés-Mascareñas, 2014; Vacchiano, 2014; Jiménez-Alvarez, 2015; Jiménez Alvarez, 2016; Statz, 2016). Children, by virtue of their 'child' status, whilst they may not be full citizens, are accorded the right to stay and to non-deportability whilst they remain a child (i.e. under eighteen).[10] Non-deportability, as Bhabha has pointed out, is the most important characteristic of citizenship, and the key difference between citizens and non-citizens (2004b).

Indeed, whilst many of their problems stem from previous trauma, this is also exacerbated by their insecure immigration status (Hek, Hughes and Ozman, 2012; Chase, 2013). This is hidden in the dominant narratives of child protection and immigration law at force in the US and Europe, which serve to reinforce these states as sources of protection, and that any problems stem from outside state boundaries (Enenajor, 2008; Furia, 2012; Statz, 2016), revealing how the discursive practices in migration control rely on and perpetuate hierarchies of age, nation, gender and culture. Heteronormative constructs of family and gender are then reinforced. They further fail to acknowledge the role of immigration controls in producing vulnerability (Anderson, 2008). This thesis explicitly focuses in on the vulnerabilities caused *to* the young men in Giallo by the legislative regime and normative construct of good childhood underpinning the subject of the 'minor', as discussed here, particularly as it relates to young migrants turning eighteen. Borders thus not only draw territorial delimitations, but also boundaries of difference between individuals, in other words, boundaries of status (Rigo, 2005). The intersections of age and race intersect in the (Black) bodies of the migrant 'minor'.

The ways in which young migrant masculinities are fluid, complex and an enmeshment of different social structures, deriving from past and present experiences, as well as economic forces, has been evidenced by scholars such as Allsopp (2017), and Hertz (2018). Yet, there is still limited literature within migration scholarship on migrant masculinities, particularly in relation to racialised discourses (Allsopp, 2017; Suerbaum, 2018; Turner, 2019). Indeed, whilst queer studies has problematised migrant masculinities, as Luibhéid observes: most scholarship is 'organized around the premise that migrants are heterosexuals' (2008, p. 169 and see also Hertz, 2018). This derives from overarching frames of heteronormativity, which refers to the institutions, practices, and norms within society

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[10] Legally. Although there have been instances of EU states forcibly returning minors.

that maintain heterosexuality, gender binaries, and power differentials (Ward and Schneider 2009 in Asencio, 2011, p. 337). The dominant subject position of child and youth migrants as vulnerabilised, inherently de-gendered beings in need of an adult, maintains the power of adults over children. As the next section elaborates, children are therefore 'placed' both temporally in childhood as a rigid category and spatially in terms of their positions in families, communities, and the wider society. Both tend to be closely controlled by adults (Gardner, 2012).

Spatio-temporal control

The centrality of time to understandings of childhood, as James and Prout argue, derives from the time of childhood (the periodization of the life course as a social construction of the aging process) and time in childhood (the ways in which time is used effectively to produce, control and order the everyday lives of children) (2003, p. 216-17). As James and Prout point out, rather than a relational understanding of age, 'concepts of age are the main scaffolding around which western conceptions of childhood are built and it is through concepts of age that the daily life experiences of children are produced and controlled' (2003, p.222). This 'rigid age hierarchy', Ennew argues, has become a controlling device (1986 in James and Prout, 2003, p.224).

The rigid temporal element enhances the situatedness of the concept of childhood and the rigid binary between child and adult. In everyday life, age is used as a dividing line to legally exclude children from all kinds of 'adult' spaces. This can be seen in the working practices of Giallo and is something the young men struggle with. It is therefore useful to explore the power relations which delineate who has control over time itself (Hendrick, 2003). As this thesis contends, time is a particularly important tool of control in relation to unaccompanied minors; their time is controlled both as 'minors' and thus by the time of childhood, and as migrants, and thus by the spatiotemporal controls of the camp settings.

Historically, the protective space for children within the family also aligns with concerns about the 'darker side of children's nature', based on moralistic ideas and the perceived need to control the vagrant child, to counteract the vice of idleness (Boyden, 2003, p.187). These contrasting subjectifications of the 'innocent child' and the 'deviant child' grew in prominence in the 19th century, leading to an increasing pathologization of deviance outside of the controlled spaces and places of idealised childhood. The re-evaluation of childhood during this period also derived from a

'moral socialization', related in part to social order (Dingwall et al., 1984 in Hendrick, 2003, p.50). Idle or beggar children were feared as a threat to moral order, and were to be kept off the streets, both for their own good but also, mainly, for the good of the community (Stephens, 1995; Boyden, 2003).

Child migrants, in particular, embody this dual notion of a subject at risk and as posing a risk (Stephens, 1995; Bhabha, 2004b; Petti, 2004; O'Connell Davidson, 2011), in that they are both 'innocent' children in need of protection and 'immigrant', the folk devil of today's society, embodying a threat. The reification of the innocent, pure child is called into question by the migrant child, in terms of the colonial racializing legacies discussed above. It is reflected in the contradiction between responses in the West to the death of the Syrian child Aylan Kurdi, and the ongoing questioning of whether migrant children seeking to come to Europe really *are* children, both chronologically and discursively (Chin, 2003; Crawley, 2007; Kvittingen, 2010; Rosen and Crafter, 2018; Lems, Oester and Strasser, 2019).[11] A situation strengthened by the mechanism of age assessment.

Age assessment is a controversial process by which the state determines whether or not a migrant is a child, on the basis of a series of tests that vary from country to country (Kvittingen, 2010). It is a complex process and has received much criticism for being based upon a 'culture of disbelief', in which the physical appearance and demeanour of the child is the basis for initial assessment, even though this has proven to be a flawed method of deciding age (Crawley, 2007; Vacchiano, 2014). This creates a temporal border which may then be artificially imposed by the state. In this sense, we can see how 'temporal borders' (Rigo, 2007) reconfigure, strengthen, and attenuate spatial borders (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2008).

Interestingly, in comparison to the UK where age assessment is a significant problem for young migrants, who are often detained on the basis of being considered 'adult' (Crawley, 2007; Kvittingen, 2010; Walker, 2010), this did not emerge in my research as a particular issue. Staff in Giallo advised that the police in Verde had been instructed to accept the age the child declared themselves to be. Thus, whilst age assessment did occur, it was not a significant issue for my participants. Additionally, in direct contrast to the UK, there was a complete lack of mention of child protection issues both

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[11] See for example headlines in the popular and national press in the UK:
http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/10/17/from-the-calais-jungle-to-croydon-migrant-children-arrive-in-bri/ or http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3849646/Mature-years-fears-real-age-child-migrants-arriving-Calais.html

within Giallo, and in discussions with other professionals working with unaccompanied minors. Instead, the primary concern raised related to the possible problems an individual pretending to be a child might suffer, and how this would impact upon their identity and impede their daily life.[12]

Whilst there is now a widely held consensus among academics that the boundaries of 'childhood' are socially constructed (see Alanen, 2014 for discussion), and thresholds between children and adults have been challenged (Alanen and Mayall, 2001), this understanding is largely absent from the policies and practices of border controls and child migration (Chin, 2003; Ní Laoire *et al.*, 2010; Mai, 2011, 2014; Vacchiano, 2014; Jiménez-Alvarez, 2015). In the 'national order of things' (Malkki, 1995), idealized childhoods are set in fixed and bounded spaces, such that child mobility and migration is frequently associated with deviance and danger (Ni Laoire et al., 2010). These are children 'out of bounds' as Chin (2003) terms them. Both outside the boundaries of what is considered a *normal* childhood within this normative framework (Chin, 2003), and 'out of place' spatially (Walters, 2004; Ashutosh and Mountz, 2011) under the 'sedentarist' (Malkki, 1992) perspective that underpins migration policy. Sedentarist thinking, Malkki has argued, 'actively territorialises identity' and 'enables a vision of territorial displacement as pathological' (1992, p. 31). Thus, those who are outside the natural place of the nation state are conceived as both nationless and homeless.

The conflicting morality underpinning child migrants leads to the construct of children as victims or villains, a concept which still underpins migration policy in Europe today (Ayotte, 2000; Petti, 2004; Anderson, 2008; Furia, 2012). There is thus a tension between control and support (Hek et al., 2012; Furia, 2012; Jimenez-Alvarez, 2016). How this tension plays out within the reception centre (Giallo) is explored in Chapters Four and Six. The child migrant disturbs this sedentarist framework: as a migrant s/he is an uninvited (unwanted) guest, and yet, by virtue of their 'homeless' child status, must be protected within the 'home' of the host state in line with the liberal state's vision of itself as protectorate. The next section interrogates what this can tell us about the false morality of the European migration regime and its purported hospitality.

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[12] Various fieldwork interviews. Having worked in the refugee sector in the UK, this was quite surprising to me. In the UK child protection issues are of paramount importance and the need for children to be kept safe from 'adults' pretending to be children a common discursive practice; a case of 'care' being used as control (see Crawley, (2007) for discussion). This was not the case in my experience in Italy.

Temporally limited hospitality for the 'deserving' child

I examine the reverberations between hospitality and hostility that the young men encounter as they transition to adulthood, via the Derridean (2000) neologism of 'hostipitality'. Within this framework, the concept of hospitality is shown to be like 'the gift', full of internal contradictions and imbued with moral underpinnings (Hall, 2010). As Hall notes, 'the welcome of hospitality is permeated with risk: the host has the power to exclude and the guest has the power to invade' (2010, p. 893). This tension is encapsulated in Derrida's *hostipitality*.

Indeed, Darling maintains that hospitality is problematic in that the 'language of hospitality may become a political tool to suggest values of cosmopolitanism while simultaneously enforcing the right to exclude those seen as unworthy of welcome' (2014, p. 163). The perception, fuelled by politicians and media alike, that those that use 'illegal means' of arrival are in some ways bogus reinforces the perception of such people as uninvited deviants and criminals. The 'uninvited' (Harding, 2000) are thus further excluded through this process of 'othering'. The false morality of the EU and its 'hospitable' stance is undone by the deaths at sea, and the devastating failure to 'host' refugees amongst the different member states. These are the exclusionary and racialised practices of hospitality scholars drawing on Derrida critique (Rosello, 2001; Gibson, 2003; Friese, 2009; Rozakou, 2012; Darling, 2014; Germann Molz and Gibson, 2016; Agier, 2019; DeBono, 2019).

The anthropologist Julian Pitt-Rivers acknowledged in 1977 both the ambivalence of hospitality and the universal validity of the logic of the law of hospitality (2012). Pitt-Rivers (2012) identified the inherent contradiction at its heart, as philosophically taken up by Derrida, whereby the guest, being an outsider, necessarily implies a potential threat to society/ societal order. As such, Pitt-Rivers maintains, the law of hospitality can be understood as 'the problem of how to deal with strangers' (2012, p. 501). The welcome of the stranger is also central to Kant's notion of 'universal hospitality', as developed in *Perpetual Peace,* where Kant sets out that hospitality is the 'right of a stranger not to be treated with hostility when he arrives on someone else's territory'; however this is not a right of residence, but rather of visitation, and hence a temporary right (Kant, 1991, pp. 105–106).

In critiquing the Kantian version of hospitality, Derrida maintains that there is an inherent 'temporal contradiction' of hospitality 'such that the experience cannot last'; it is performed only 'in the imminence of what is 'about to happen' and can only last an instant' (2000, p. 8). This temporal contradiction raised by Derrida comes to light at the child/adult threshold. As McLaughlin points out, if deservingness is contingent upon children's innocence and thus the condition upon which

hospitality is granted, when the boundary of adulthood draws near, young people accordingly face a loss of hospitality, and thus of support and rights (2018, p. 1762). It is useful, then, to further explore whether the morality of the gift of hospitality may involve a moral obligation to the host, which children by virtue of their (dependent, deserving) child status can meet, yet when they become (independent, undeserving) adults the obligation may be breached. It is held that this construct serves to reduce the onus on the host to be 'hospitable' to the non-child, thus leading to a potential protection support gap for young migrants as they turn eighteen.

And yet, whilst acknowledging and agreeing with this inherent critique of hospitality and the false morality of Europe's response to undocumented people seeking refuge, I align myself with those scholars who have argued that hospitality has the potential to go beyond this. Hospitality, it is held, may transcend its threshold if we challenge the guest/host binary (Dikeç, 2002; Dikeç, Clark and Barnett, 2009; Friese, 2009; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2016; Germann Molz and Gibson, 2016; Berg and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2018; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Qasmiyeh, 2018). Berg and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh argue that there is a need to unpack the categories of host and guest and move 'to the messiness of everyday life and its potential for care, generosity, and recognition in encounters' (2018, p. 1). In questioning the taxonomy of host/guest relations through a feminist ethics of care, they argue we can provide space for greater encounters of hospitality and understandings of the practice and modes of resistance. Thus, for Berg and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 'thinking about hospitality and hostility as embodied and enacted practices grounded in particular spatio-temporal contexts' can move us beyond fatalistic notions of hostipitality (2018, p. 3).

Dikeç (2002) refers to 'spaces of hospitality' in which we can learn from each other and to engage with each other, transcending the binaries of host/ guest and recognise how these too shift and change. Similarly, Friese refers to the spatiality of hospitality for it to come into being and subsist – where it opens a space and forms of exchange that allow for encounter, yet does not extinguish the obligations that must be noticed and noted (2004, p. 74). All these scholars present the argument for hospitality as space, for rethinking guest/ host relations and moving to openings towards the stranger; to conceive of host/guest relations as mutually constitutive (Dikeç, 2002). Reciprocity is essential for hospitality to go beyond its threshold, for without it, equality is excluded which then 'burdens the Other with an unredeemable debt [and] leaves him in an insoluble asymmetrical bond' (Friese, 2004, pp. 72-73).

Dikeç, Clark and Barnett argue that it is 'the idea of a 'visitation' rather than an 'invitation'—that

constitutes hospitality as a temporization: not just an event that takes place *in* time, but one that actually generates or *gives* time' (2009, p. 11). Thus it is that, as Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2016) argues, hostility and rejection are not inevitable. Ala Sirriyeh uses hospitality as a lens for the 'like-family' relations that develop between foster carer/ unaccompanied minors in her research as part of a spectrum of relationships which emerge (2013). She draws on Dikeç, Clark and Barnett's observation that hospitality 'proceeds from that *vertiginous moment* when one feels *bound to the other* – the moment that makes possible the ever risky tipping together of unfamiliar lives' (2009, p. 6, emphasis in original). Sirriyeh found that these relationships often began with 'tipping together' moments and yet such relationships, being dynamic, were for her 'able to move beyond hospitality to the intimacy of like-family interactions' (2013, p. 13). Such relationships can create a form of support that can transcend the temporal contradiction of hospitality. It is thus a form of hospitality which can give time (cf. Dikeç, Clark and Barnett, 2009; Friese, 2009).

Thus, hospitality does not necessarily need to be considered as 'an instant' (Derrida, 2000), but may endure. Ghassan Hage argues that 'what we are talking about when it comes to discussing hospitality towards asylum seekers [...] [is] *the availability, the circulation and the exchange of hope'* (2003, p. 9, emphasis in original). Hope that, as Hage, drawing on Ernest Bloch, observes 'means that people are essentially determined 'by the future''(2003, p. 10).[13] Through the subsequent chapters, I present how the spatio-temporal context of Giallo, and the relationships created therein, is such that the young men may imagine a future and hold on to hope.

Home as a productive mechanism of control within the migration regime

Within the sedentarist perspective (Malkki, 1992) underpinning the migration regime, migrants are constructed as 'out of place' and thus not at 'home' (Sayad, 2004). Operating within the framework of humanitarian biopolitical incentives which facilitate matter to be in its rightful place ('home') (Malkki 1992; Walters, 2004), for unaccompanied minors, this involves inserting them into a 'naturalized' familial sphere of responsibility, such as a reception centre (Giallo). As I illustrate in this thesis, when unpacked, the narrative of European state as 'hospitable' protector of the 'vulnerable' child is problematic and contradictory.

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[13] I here acknowledge the negative elements of the use of hope as discussed by Hage, such as in the neo-liberal fantasy hope (2003, 11-21), but am referring to how hope is how people construct meaningful futures for themselves (Bloch, 1995 in Hage, 2003, 15).

The concept of home is central to national discourses of hospitality, as Germann Molz and Gibson stress, in which the state is framed as 'home' open to (certain) foreigners 'leading to the power dynamics constructed as between host (nation) and guest' (2016, p. 10). Laacher points out how residence is associated with 'the *national territory*' because both 'residence and territory, are synonyms with *home* and *security*' (1998 in Dikeç, 2002, p. 231). For Kant, hospitality is bound up with the nation state and as such 'bound to the authority of the state, the control of residence and its duration' (Friese, 2004, p. 72). In state-centric portrayals of migration, the central question then becomes 'who is the stranger?' A question increasingly bound up with the immigrant, as I explain below.

Derrida's concept of hostipitality constructs the host as sovereign master of 'home', with the power to impose conditions on the guest (Derrida, 2000; Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000). Immigration controls can be understood as a form of such conditions, given that they are about the control of order, and a selective mechanism to control who may or may not be granted entry to the state. Walters (2004) describes these mechanisms of exclusion as *domopolitics* (i.e. governing the state like a home). The concept refers 'to the government of the state (but, crucially, other political spaces as well) as a home' (Walters, 2004, p. 241). Domopolitics implies:

> 'a reconfiguring of the relations between citizenship, state, and territory. At its heart is a fateful conjunction of home, land, and security. It rationalizes a series of security measures in the name of a particular conception of home … it has powerful affinities with family, intimacy, place … the home as our place, where we belong naturally, and where, by definition, others do not' (Walters, 2004, p. 241).

Images of home, a natural order of states and people, of us and them, are mobilised in such a way as to suppress and deny the subjectivities of migrant mobilities (Walters, 2004, p. 256). Home is conceived as a place of fixity, in opposition to movement and openness (Hage, 2003, p. 28). The intersections of 'home' as childhood space and 'home' as one's rightful place in the nation state, reinforces notions of childhood's fixity and feature powerfully in the normative construction of the migrant child. Thus, notions of 'home' regulate our understandings of belonging and identities (Crenshaw, 1991; Ahmed *et al.*, 2003; Yuval-Davis, 2011) and the way in which the state is governed (Walters, 2004). My research reveals how domopolitics plays out within the workings of Giallo and the reception system more widely.

On the basis of dominant 'crisis' narratives, one might assume nowadays that national border controls are a natural and eternal feature of political life. Instead, as Walters points out, contrary to assumptions about the permanence of borders, in nineteenth century Europe, borders between nations were seemingly quite minimal (2004, p.250). Feldman identifies that it was from the end of the 18th century that 'the problem of the stranger increasingly became identified with the problem of the immigrant' as attention moved to national borders (2003 in Weber and Bowling, 2008, p. 359). As Chauvin and Garcés-Mascareñas argue 'the growing salience of nation-state boundaries throughout the 20th century led to the more effective exclusion of those who were not supposed to be in a country according to immigration law. Papers became increasingly important' (2014, p. 423). Cross-border migration came to appear as an anomaly, 'a problematic exception to the rule of people staying where they 'belong', that is, to 'their' nation-state' (Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002, p. 311), what Malkki refers to as the 'national order' of things (1995).

Concepts of (un)deservingness and (non)belonging in relation to welfare are then deeply rooted in European history and societies (Anderson, 2013). Developments in poor laws, and laws on vagrancy, in medieval Europe came to distinguish between 'sturdy beggars' capable of work and 'impotent beggars', unable to work due to age or infirmity, the 'genuine' poor. This then resulted in the tradition of treating the deserving and undeserving poor differently (Geremek, 1991; van Oorschot, 2000). A distinction still found today. Additionally, deservingness was often attributed only to those poor who belong to 'us' (Messé et al, 1986 in van Oorschot, 2000, p.35). Belonging was premised upon proximity of kinship or territorialised (village, church, town) (van Oorschot, 2000). However, now that borders have expanded, the national takes the bounded space of belonging and thus today entitlement to welfare support is perceived as for those belonging to the nation (Chauvin and Garcés-Mascareñas, 2014).

It is this methodological and epistemological nationalism (Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002) which underpins the subject of the migrant child. Migrant children are at once both the 'product' of and a 'threat' to the nation-state system (Chin, 2003; Doná and Veale, 2011). As product, they are deserving victims in need of protection while, as threat, they are criminalised as undeserving of those rights belonging to citizens, regarded as 'irregular', and therefore as a burden on the system and a threat to the integrity of Europe's borders (Petti, 2004; Doná and Veale, 2011; Furia, 2012; Jiménez-Alvarez, 2015). Access to support is thus underpinned by normative understandings of deservingness and belonging, furthering the construct of the vulnerable child.

Borders both define sovereignty but also help produce and delineate the boundaries of belonging of the political community (Mills, 1996). The moral and ethical spheres in which we operate are framed by diversified borders (Mills, 1996). The frame of deservingness constructs the borders of the 'child', providing it with protection from an adult / the state and provides a temporary 'home' for the child to belong within the temporal and spatial borders accorded it. This biographical border is central to both welfare and immigration. Immigration controls are generally assumed to be the answer to the problem, as opposed to the source of the problem itself (Anderson, 2008), yet, as this chapter reveals, the border has a productive nature (Casas Cortes et al., 2015). The next section reaffirms the bordering effect of the normative concept of good childhood.

Invisibilised transitions

The 'biographical border' (Mai, 2014) between child and adulthood, discussed in the Introduction, is mirrored in migration research, which is generally divided into research with adults and research with children under the age of eighteen (Sirriyeh, 2010). Indeed, within migration literature, whilst there is a significant body of research on *child* migrants, with some emerging exceptions (Sirriyeh, 2008, 2010; Pavesi and Caneppele, 2011; Chase and Allsopp, 2013; Allsopp, Chase and Mitchell, 2014; Rossi, 2017; Allsopp and Chase, 2019), there is a notable absence of literature on the experiences of these young migrants when they turn eighteen, and in Europe are legally considered adults (Council of Europe, 2011; Chase and Allsopp, 2013; Chase, 2019). Further, literature on how this transition is resisted or navigated by the young people themselves remains limited, despite the fundamental importance this moment can have for these young people (for some exceptions see Chase, 2019; Lems, Oester and Strasser, 2019; Meloni, 2019).

Similarly, from a policy perspective, there is no specific legal regime or safeguard for unaccompanied minors who have just turned eighteen (ISMU Foundation, 2019). Thus, for many of these young people, in the majority of EU Member States the transition to adulthood entails a 'transition into illegality' (Gonzales 2011) and they are at risk of ending up in limbo, without status (FRA, 2012). Interestingly, this cut off point is often referenced in the literature on unaccompanied children as a moment of particular difficulty due to the transition to both adulthood and potential irregularity (Council of Europe, 2011; Furia, 2012; Accorinti, 2015). But the reference stops there. The 'what next?' for unaccompanied minors, once they are no longer legally 'minors', is left unexplored. Recent research by the ISMU Foundation (2019), commissioned by UNHCR, UNICEF and IOM, focuses on the transition to adulthood of unaccompanied minors in Italy, and finds many problems and difficulties

for these young people; evidently it is now becoming sufficiently a 'problem' (Bacchi, 2009) for these institutions to research into it.

Having worked with unaccompanied minors myself as a researcher and support worker, I am very aware of the hidden nature of this moment in policy and research. The rupture that this produces and the possibility of being returned is one of the main anxieties of these young people as they turn eighteen in the UK context (Chase, Knight and Statham, 2008; Walker, 2010, 2011; Sigona and Hughes, 2012). As discussed in the Introduction, this was one of the driving motivations for my research focus. The ontological insecurity produced by this temporal control can have extremely detrimental social and psychological consequences for young people, particularly in relation to their future aspirations (Sigona and Hughes, 2012; Chase and Allsopp, 2013). The concept of ontological security according to Anthony Giddens, refers to a 'person's fundamental sense of safety in the world and includes a basic trust of other people. Obtaining such trust becomes necessary for a person to maintain a sense of psychological well-being and avoid existential anxiety' (2013, pp. 38–39). In this thesis, I present the argument that this transitional moment is of particular importance for understanding the migrancy of these young people and establishing how they find ways to manage ontological insecurity and threat as they become 'adults'.

The rigid border of age, imposes a vision of the 'minor' as inept and incapable, which fails to recognise that, as McIlwaine and Datta note, in discussing youth transitions in the global North and the South, 'the transition from childhood to adulthood is partial, inconsistent and contradictory' (2004, p. 485). The rigidity of the border then fails to acknowledge the contextual and relational approach to youth transitions (Alanen, 2001; Punch, 2002). This research focuses on this transitional moment within a particular geographic space in which Italy's more protective legal framework was implemented, providing a bridge across the threshold of adulthood. As the subsequent chapters reveal, the young men in this study are aware that the border of adulthood is a legal-temporal moment that they need to prepare for in advance, whilst still 'minors'. Humphris and Sigona (2019b) stress that the 'invisibility' of some young migrants as categorised by the state, such as unaccompanied minors, reveals some of the workings of the state and the labelling processes which serve to exclude. In implementing a rigid age binary, and providing protection solely to the 'vulnerable child', former unaccompanied children are then removed from sight bureaucratically, and for some geographically via forced and voluntary removal, once they turn adult at eighteen (Humphris and Sigona, 2019b). In this thesis, in visibilising the interactions between the (Italian) migration regime and the young men in my study through this transition moment, I shed light on

how they contest or negotiate the subject positions open to them, within the moralistic frame of a 'good childhood', to include themselves.

As I show in the subsequent chapters, the young men in my study sought visibility purposefully. They wished to be documented and visible to the state – in more than the hypervisibilised bodily attributes of their 'Blackness' as racialised young men. As the ethnographic chapters illustrate, these young men provide a counter-narrative to hegemonic discourses of migration and childhood, challenging the norms inherent in both and revealing the problematic nature of the rigid age binary. They are at once *both* vulnerable *and* capable, both 'beings and becomings' (Uprichard, 2008; Ansell *et al.*, 2014). Through challenging binary classifications, as Heather Merrill, drawing on the work of Allan Pred (1995), suggests, we can 'articulate new kinds of both/and' political spatialities' (2015, p. 80). In this way, space can be created for multiple perspectives which can overcome static 'boundary drawing ontological categories' (Pred 1995 in Merrill, 2015, p. 78), which reproduce 'social and spatial inequalities enabled by such imaginative geographies as binarist logics of self and other, him and her, civilized and primitive, here and there, White and Black' (Merrill, 2015, p. 78). The racial logics and legacies of colonialism that are still imposed today. In contesting binary logics, the multiplicities and complexities of these young men's identities and way in which they are racialised can then come to the fore. A complexity that is lost in hegemonic practices relating to child migrants.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued for an analysis that goes beyond binary logics and have instead evidenced the need to adopt a both/and approach to provide a more in-depth and complex portrayal of child and youth migrants. In overcoming rigid age binaries and focusing on the relational nature of young people and their migrancy, I have drawn attention to the ways in which children's social relations, belongings and relationships to place, are fluid, contextual and mobile (Ni Laoire et al., 2010). As such, the research advances scholarship in this area to present a counter narrative to the hegemonic discourses of migration and childhood which underpin the label 'unaccompanied minor', and to move away from Eurocentric means of constituting the world in material and discursive terms (Yeoh, 2003). This intersectional approach (Crenshaw, 1989) can more effectively capture the complexities and relationality of child migration.

I have put forward an argument for an exploration of young migrants that draws on existing literature, but, in focusing in on the transition to adulthood, reveals how childhood within the context of child

migration remains a construct based upon a Western idealised notion of 'home' as the best place for children, underpinned with residential fixity and stability. This is further embedded by the methodological nationalism underpinning immigration controls. As this chapter has outlined, vulnerability can be produced by the border, by notions of 'home' as a governing practice. The intersection of sedentarist migration policies and idealised concepts of childhood serves to depoliticise and remove agency from the migrant child, and lead to fixed categories of age as a controlling mechanism. This is particularly problematic as the 'child' migrant turns eighteen and becomes 'adult' in the eyes of the law. Through historicising the concept of the unaccompanied minor and how the label came to be, the implicit epistemic notions underpinning it are revealed.

In telling the genealogy of the unaccompanied minor, this chapter highlights how the construct of the unaccompanied minor label as it is now, is built upon the sacralisation and construct of childhood as it was understood then, within a colonial framework. A framework which still threads through Europe's migration regimes today. By failing to take a more relational approach to age, and an intersectional lens to identity, research and policy on unaccompanied minors can serve to reproduce the cherished category of the 'child', and reduce the subject of the young person aged over eighteen to an invisibilised category.

In examining in/visibility, I am conscious that invisibility may be used as a survival/resistance strategy and am mindful of this in my approach; becoming visible is not necessarily a positive outcome (see also Humphris and Sigona, 2019). Identifying a population as such can stigmatise and risk reducing complex social processes to matters of identity. The politics of visibility are complex and also nationally particular, depending upon the particular historical trajectory of the state and nation building constructs, as well as the conflicting wants and desires of the population concerned (Anderson, Walker and Shutes, 2016).[14] The young men in my study actively chose visibility, as I set out across the chapters that follow.

In re-centring the focus on this group of young people in discourses on migration, my research enhances theories of childhood, belonging and migration in more nuanced and complex ways. The

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[14] For example, some working in the field of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) rights advocate that visibility in datasets is essential for normalising such relationships and establishing their presence in society. LGBT people and families have for generations been invisible in studies of families, and inclusion in datasets, it is held, visibilises these families and provides greater understanding of different family set ups (Russell and Muraco, 2013 in Anderson, Walker and Shutes, 2016, p. 51). It is my contention that visibilising young people aged 18+ is an important consideration for policy and theoretical advancements.

ethnographic material that unfolds in the following chapters unpacks the discursive processes of childhood and migration and examines their effects on the lived realities and future possibilities of these young men.

Chapter 3. Multi-modal ethnography and research as 'hospitable space'

Introduction

'[Research] is at its core an activity of hope' (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012, p. 203)

Linda Tuhiwai Smith notes in her introduction to the second edition of her book Decolonising Methodologies that 'perhaps the most quoted sentence in the book is: 'The word itself, 'research' is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary'' (2012, p. xi). Indeed, as Ian Parker reminds us, the history of ethnography is 'a history of colonialism, of observation, interference and control' (2004, p. 37). Instead, I wish to adopt the above quote from Tuhiwai Smith's book to pinpoint the social justice approach underpinning this research, whilst noting that this is indeed a 'messy' business (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012). I also take from what Yasmin Gunaratnam refers to as 'empirical humility', aiming for my research to be less extractive, less of a dirty word; and to engage critically with my participants and their practices of world making (2020).

This Chapter foregrounds my aim to build this 'hopeful' methodology, by which I mean a methodology that can allow for the gathering of 'thick narratives', which are more nuanced and complex (Kohli, 2006). A methodology that seeks to avoid reproducing racialized categories in the research process (Gunaratnam, 2003). This was the hope at the centre of my research. In the subsequent sections, I discuss the successes and limitations of my efforts, bearing in mind my privileged positionality of 'whiteness' (Frankenberg, 2000), citizenship status and researcher power. By foregrounding these struggles, attention is then drawn to means to overcome them methodologically, contributing to these debates in methodological literatures (Twine, 2000; Gunaratnam, 2007; Tuhiwai Smith, 2012).

In such a politically charged space as the field of migration studies, it is particularly vital to consider our role as researchers in producing certain kinds of 'knowledge' and our contribution to meaning making in the world (Anderson, 2017, 2019). As Khosravi, drawing on Said (1989) and De Genova (2002), argues '[r]epresentation and terminology are part of a methodology yet also constitute an epistemological problem with ethical and political implications' (2009, p. 96). My research seeks to be mindful of the politics of representation, and this Chapter outlines the methods I adopted to capture this and to provide space for a more complex figure of child and youth migrants to emerge.

This Chapter describes the methods used and how they relate to my research epistemologies. I

commence with a discussion of the scoping study and the methodological importance of this. I explain how the opportunity to gain input from a few of the young men prior to my fieldwork was invaluable in developing my research design. I set out the three main themes that emerged from the scoping study focus group: **storytelling**, **visibility** and **temporality** and then discuss the fieldwork site, the 'home' of the young men. My ethnographic focus on this space sheds light on the way in which the idealised concept of 'childhood' has a bordering effect on the young men. This is followed by a discussion of the notion of 'storytelling' as it relates to young migrants and the problem of 'enforced narratives' (Steedman, 2002), particularly prevalent in the migration regimes.

I present how ethnographic study of the 'home' site of the young men allowed for observations and understandings of the ways in which they replicated the language of the host, performing the role of the 'good child' in order to receive the best level of hospitality (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000; Derrida, 2005). I argue multi-modal 'inventive' methods (Dicks, Soyinka and Coffey, 2006; Back, 2012; Lury and Wakeford, 2012; Dattatreyan and Shankar, 2016; Dattatreyan and Marrero-Guillamón, 2019; Varvantakis and Nolas, 2019) can provide multiple entry points to narratives, disrupting such performances and allowing space for different narratives to emerge. Finally, I discuss the co-production of an art show of the young men's artwork as a means of creating shared understandings of dis/similarities and to disseminate the research to a wider audience. I conclude by assessing the successes and limitations of the methods adopted and the possibility of creating a hospitable space for research.

Starting out: scoping the field

I first visited Verde in April 2017 to carry out a scoping study, in line with Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) proposed framework, as a mapping exercise for my fieldwork. In addition to a comprehensive literature review, consultation with key actors in the field is suggested as useful for mapping out research (Arksey and O'Malley, 2005). The scoping study was not intended as an exploration of all the methods to be deployed in the fieldwork owing to time constraints, rather a toe-dipping exercise to test the waters of the field and to finetune the research design. It was also a means to explore the messy business of negotiating access to research participants prior to actual fieldwork. As Bengry-Howell and Griffin (2012) note, gaining access can be a difficult process, fraught with disappointment and mismatched expectations.

In my case, however, access was surprisingly easy. I utilised existing contacts made through my own

networks or serendipitous conference encounters, and snowball techniques (Bryman, 2015) to gain a more heterogeneous sample. Through this method, as part of the scoping study methodology (Arksey and O'Malley, 2005), I held informal conversations with five key actors (none of whom worked in Giallo) about the topic of the transition to adulthood. All interviews were conducted in Italian. Most importantly, I cold-called Giuseppe, the Director of Giallo, after reading an online newspaper article in which he warned of the problems facing unaccompanied minors in Italy as they reached eighteen years old - the very topic I wished to research.

Giuseppe agreed for me to interview him, and subsequently also agreed, once local authority consent was received, for me to conduct a focus group with some of the young men housed in Giallo. Additionally, Giuseppe agreed I could conduct longer term ethnographic work in Giallo the following year, in 2018, as part of my fieldwork in return for me volunteering at the centre. As I spoke English, I could help with interpretation. The understanding being that this was a form of exchange: in return for my (free) labour, I could gain access to Giallo and its residents.[15] We also agreed that all participants and locations would be given pseudonyms so as not to identify the centre, its staff or residents.

Informal conversations with key actors in the scoping study confirmed that many young people are not followed up after they turn eighteen years old. Once they have 'come of age', and are outside the moral boundary of childhood, many essentially disappear or are 'invisiblised', as Chapter Two set out. This gap or 'absence' is the key focus of this research. In seeking to encompass the transitional period, and the 'what next?' of young people, these informal interviews confirmed that it would be necessary for me to follow them on their journey beyond the 'biographical border'. Several professionals I spoke to in the scoping study noted that this transition moment could be difficult, 'traumatic', even, for unaccompanied minors. However, they also noted that since the Zampa Law (see Introduction) this had been alleviated, at least in Verde where the law was implemented. The methods adopted then needed to be flexible and responsive to the young men and construct an inclusive space in which traumatic moments are not reinforced; to research sensitively (Lee, 1993; Düvell, Triandafyllidou and Vollmer, 2010; Hugman, Pittaway and Bartolomei, 2011). And so it began. Verde became the place. As is so often the way, a combination of convenience, serendipity and utility.

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[15] I have over five years' experience working with young migrants in the UK, although I doubt my offer of support would have been refused anyway as Giuseppe was very honest about the benefits of a 'free pair of hands' in the resource-strained setting.

The focus group

In line with Vaughn *et al.* (1996), I utilised the focus group as a means for discussing my research topic with the young men to gain their input. As others have found, the focus group setting can enable participants to have greater control over the themes discussed than in the interview setting (Madriz, 1997; Wilkinson, 1998; Kamberelis and Dimitriadis, 2011; Gunaratnam, 2013), as well as provide a medium through which to elicit their views on particular topics (Brannen and Nilsen, 2002; Sirriyeh, 2008; Bagnoli, 2009; Bagnoli and Clark, 2010; O'Higgins, 2012). The aim was to build their views and knowledge into the research design. It was also appropriate as a timely method within a one-month period. Krueger defines focus groups as 'a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, nonthreatening environment' (1994, p. 88). Whilst this may be an overly sterile description of a group method that can involve a variety of power dynamics, difficulties and conflicts, the notion of a 'safe space' was something I wished to engender when I first met the young men.

I hoped that a focus group would create a greater level of comfort than a one to one interview, with someone they had never met. Five young men were selected by the staff and the focus group took place in one of Giallo's classrooms. Demographics shift and change owing to complex migratory patterns deriving from border controls, smugglers routes, conflicts, and social networks (Giovannetti, 2016). At the time of my research, many young people were from West Africa or Albania. In my focus group two of the young men were Albanian and 16 years old and three were from West Africa and 17 years old: two Nigerians and one Gambian. I was introduced by the keyworker to the young men and then left alone in the room. In setting up the focus group space, I presented myself as an inexpert researcher wishing to learn from their experiences of the reception system in Italy.

I am bilingual in Italian and English and facilitated the focus group in both languages. I asked the young men to speak in whichever language they felt most comfortable with. The Albanians spoke in Italian and the Africans mainly in English. All could understand at least to a degree the other language but felt more comfortable speaking in the language they chose to speak in. The African young men's command of English was very good; the Albanian young men's Italian was a little more stilted, although possibly they were just more reticent about speaking... perhaps a combination of the two. The focus group was, therefore, also a useful mechanism to explore notions of 'researching multilingually' and foreground matters relating to translation, interpretation and language skills in

the research process (Gibb and Danero Iglesias, 2017).[16] This came out more during fieldwork proper, as I will elaborate on in a subsequent section.

The focus group functioned as an excellent medium for gauging some initial views from the young men in a collective manner. Indeed, it was the very interactive nature of the focus group that allowed for particular themes to emerge as collectively important (Smithson, 2000, 2008). Following Smithson, I consider 'collective voice' to mean a group process of collaboratively constructing a joint perspective, or argument, which emerges very much as a collective procedure which leads to consensus, rather than as any individual's view (Smithson and Diaz 1996 in Smithson, 2000, p. 109). In this context, the collective voice may represent individuals' already held opinions, or it may just as much be an active product of the group interactions (Smithson, 2000, p. 109). I believe the group dynamics and interactions allowed space for experiences to emerge in a way that individually would have been difficult at this initial stage of the research. In building upon the themes that emerged collectively through the focus group when I returned for fieldwork the following year, I was able to pick up on these themes and interrogate them individually during one to one encounters. I was able to elicit elements of the young men's experiences that I would not have been aware of otherwise. I discuss below the main themes that emerged: storytelling, visibility, and multiple temporalities.

Focus group theme: luck and the art of storytelling

'when you go to the [Territorial Asylum] Commission and give them your story, then later they can give you the document. But not for everyone. […] It's luck. […] Because if you are in a very difficult situation and you have a better story, I think you can get document for positive, but if the story is not so good, can get the negative'
Charles, Nigerian, seventeen (May 2017, focus group)

As emerged from Charles' explanation during the focus group, and was confirmed by the other Africans present, the young men believed their right to stay in Italy was determined by their 'story' or 'luck'. The story is then everything. You are defined by your story and how 'good' it is, within the constructs of the migration regime for it to be considered 'positive', as Emmanuel, an eighteen-year old Nigerian, put it during the focus group. One need only think of the 9th century fictional storyteller Scheherazade of *One Thousand and One Nights*, who saves herself from execution by storytelling to

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[16] I have taken this term from the project of the same name: http://researching-multilingually-at-borders.com/

understand the value placed on storytelling across history. As indicated by Charles above, storytelling within the migration regime has significant political implications.

Scholars such as Charles Watters and Didier Fassin have drawn attention to the political nature of the stories available for migrants to tell in the migration regime. They argue that in the immigration system, encounters with state professionals offer, 'the undocumented foreigner or asylum seeker certain prescribed parameters of legitimacy that influence the contours of the story and are in turn constitutive in the formation of social identities' (Watters and Fassin, 2001, p. 23). Indeed, many unaccompanied minors are advised on the 'right' stories to tell by family members or agents to access asylum/ residence (Ayotte, 2000; Anderson, 2001; Kohli, 2006; Hopkins and Hill, 2008; Crawley, 2012). Particularly, as Kohli, drawing on White's (1997) concept of 'thick stories', has shown, 'thick stories' (the stories of an ordinary wish to succeed in the world)' are 'presented to the receiving authorities as 'thin stories' (the extraordinary stories of a particular sort of suffering) in order to obtain citizenship' (2006, p. 711).

The focus group confirmed that the methods adopted needed to attempt to disrupt the presentation of 'thin' stories and the pressure on young people to tell certain kinds of stories (Anderson, 2001; Kholi, 2006). I needed, then, to create a space which could try to prevent a replica of the conditions of surveillance to which these young men will have been subjected via the migration regime, to avoid reproducing what Derrida refers to as 'trick questions' (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000, p. 31) which constrict what answers are given. Further, in researching with young men who are marginalised by their position in the postcolonial landscape, the reality of research as 'giving voice' needs to be interrogated. Scholars such as hooks (1989, 1990) and Spivak (1988) maintain that academic telling is always and can only ever be a colonist reflection of power and mobility, which silences the voice of the subaltern, or transforms it to the language of the academic/coloniser. For hooks, voices of the subaltern remain in the shadows; the positionality of the researcher necessarily being that there is 'no need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself' (1989, p. 22). This is how research becomes a 'dirty word' (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012).

To contest this, I draw upon feminist epistemology which recognises the power imbalances in such encounters and the way in which they may lead to what Carolyn Steedman (2002) has identified as enforced narratives, which are prescribed by the contours of legitimacy (Watters and Fassin, 2001). Skeggs argues against leaving stories to go untold, maintaining instead that 'it is surely a matter of

how we do the research' (2013, p. 130). Abu-Lughod, building on feminist perspectives of the situatedness of all knowledge (Haraway, 1988), and thus the problematic nature of the role of the researcher in 'shaping the words of people we live with', proposes that 'one way to alleviate some of the difficulties of this process of constructing a narrative is by making explicit how one has worked' (Abu-Lughod, 2008, p. 18). As she states, feminist approaches have taught us that positionality 'must be made explicit and explored' (Abu-Lughod, 2008, p. 6). Therefore, I have not always removed myself entirely from the text and do not pretend that certain discussions were not directed specifically by me.

If we as researchers engage in an understanding of the economic, political and institutional context in which narratives are produced (Byrne, 2003), and utilise methods that disrupt the binary relationship between researcher/ researched, I concur with Skeggs that space for a different kind of telling can emerge. I agree with Les Back (2007) that it is also the task of sociology to hear those who are not listened to and give a voice to alternative narratives, to challenge the claims put on events past and present, so as to find 'new ways of telling about society' (Becker, 2007). If there are no counter narratives to the hegemonic Eurocentric story how can this be challenged? Indeed, throughout the research, the young men expressed a desire for visibility, to present their own stories. Visibility, as also discussed in Chapter Two, is then a key concern in my research. However, I am attentive to what is being visibilised and the potential ethical pitfalls of such processes within the highly politicised space of migration (Düvell, Triandafyllidou and Vollmer, 2010; Chase *et al.*, 2019). I turn now to this theme as it emerged in the focus group.

Focus group theme: Visibility

'I can't be relaxed when my document is not solved. So, for me, it does not favour me. It is very difficult. […] I mean, I am in Italy and Italy doesn't even know whether I am here or not!'
Lalo, seventeen, Gambian

This was the exclamation from Lalo during the focus group. In contrast to Lalo, the others in the focus group had received their documents, so did not reciprocate his view. Their calmness counteracting his distress, and revealing the importance of the document both practically and emotionally. Susan Coutin (2000), in her work with Salvadoran immigrants in the U.S., refers to 'spaces of nonexistence' – the contradiction between undocumented migrants' physical and social presence and the legal negation of their presence. Such people are then un-documented. Not written in the state – absent. The notion is strikingly echoed in the words of Lalo. This notion of

being absent, unwritten or invisibilised is a central theme underpinning this research project. The methods I adopted in this research project then sought to give space to the young men to 'make visible' their own multiple experiences and unravel the importance and meaning of the 'document'.

Focus group theme: Temporality

Issues of spatio-temporal control and how they negotiated or resisted their subject positions, for example, the sense of being a 'prisoner of the present' (Sennett, 1998), were very apparent in young men's discussions in the focus group. The African young men had purposefully left reception centres in the South of Italy, described as '*a hell*', to travel north for '*a better life*' and to access post-eighteen support. Time was a central theme threading through their discourses. The time of waiting for the document, the lack of time, the turning of eighteen as a marker in time, the limbo/ wasted time of the reception centres in the South of Italy, the unknown time of the future, were all forms of temporality experienced simultaneously by the young men. The methods adopted thus needed to both capture the temporal continuities – the waiting, the 'nontime' (Bourdieu, 2000) – as well as the temporal ruptures, the 'coming of age', within the lives of the young men.

Taking on board my findings from the scoping study, the young men's shared knowledge, and my contacts, I built these into my research design and then returned to Giallo a year later. These themes shaped not just the research design but also the structure of this thesis. The ethnographic chapters commence in Chapter Four with an examination of Giallo as the home space of the young men and end in Chapter Eight with a focus on the *afterwards* for the young men once outside this home space. The chapters in between reflect the multiple temporalities of the young men. Whilst essentially chronological in form, the thesis structure is not then fully linear. This is purposefully so, in keeping with the research epistemology and the notion of multiple entry points to narratives.

Giallo: the care and custody duality of the 'home' space

I returned to Giallo a year later to place ethnographic attention on this 'home' space as a means of capturing the spatio-temporal control enacted therein. As the focus of the research was the transition out of the protective space of childhood, and hence Giallo, it was important for me to be based within this space and to select participants hosted there to examine the multiple temporalities of their lives. I could further study the tensions between care and control as embedded within Giallo as part of the reception system and how the young men negotiated such tensions. Notions of care and custody were also woven into my own work as someone both of and not of the centre, in the

duality of my role as researcher/volunteer. To avoid being overly implicated as part of the 'control' factor of Giallo/ the regime, I did not take fieldnotes directly in the field. Writing notes whilst in the chaotic space of Giallo would have been difficult and created suspicions about me engaging in 'surveillance'. Instead, I took notes as soon as possible after a shift or encounter with the young men.

As other critical ethnographers have shown (Coutin, 2000; Khosravi, 2009; Hall, 2010; Gonzales and Vargas, 2016), ethnography can be a useful means to explore the lived realities of state power and ways and means marginalised groups negotiate or resist their subject positions. As I discuss in Chapter Four, the young men are cognizant the performance of 'good childhood' places them in good stead for receiving support and assistance within the regime. Through emplacement in Giallo I was able to observe the juvenilizing, yet caring discourse which emerged in the staff's constitution of the young men as 'minors' and how they in return utilised or contested this subject position.

Replicating the language of the host

Jacques Derrida contends, '[i]t's the familial despot, the father, the spouse, and the boss, the master of the house who lays down the laws of hospitality' (2000, p. 149). The young men, as uninvited guests then must request hospitality 'in a language which by definition is not [their] own' (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000). Ethnographic focus on Giallo enabled some of this to be captured. As Tayo, a seventeen-year old Nigerian, evidences below, repeat conversations over time can create space for a break in the canonical narratives (Bruner, 1997) that often emerge.

'one thing I am thankful for the life I am living here in Italy because back there in Libya it was hell, you know. It was hell. I say that because we see somebody today and maybe tomorrow, he is dead. […] maybe you say that tomorrow I am going to the church or I will go to the market, in Libya we don't say that because anything can happen in Libya. You just see somebody today and tomorrow he can just be gone.'

Gratitude and the role of the 'thankful migrant' underpin Tayo's story; this role is often required of migrants in receipt of aid within the hierarchical relationship that is created between those who give and those who receive (Ticktin, 2016a). Tayo's story also recounts the temporal uncertainty and hell of Libya where 'anything can happen' and contrasts it to being in Italy, constructed as a place of peace and certainty. And yet, these narratives can change, reflecting the shifting subject positions of

the young men, many of whom had worked in Libya and enjoyed the freedom this gave them. In the same conversation where Tayo describes Libya as a 'hell', he also tells me that Libya was 'cool' because he had access to guns and money. He was working, '*living a good life',* had his own apartment and was looking after himself. '*It was hell, but it was cool',* he tells me.

Another time. Tayo is in the kitchen in Giallo with Faisl, a sixteen-year old Egyptian. They are alone save for myself and Carmen, a 21 year old female Erasmus student from Spain, doing a placement in Giallo. Both are boasting about owning a gun in Libya, whilst washing up the huge saucepans from lunch. Carmen is deeply distressed. They do not fit her perceived image of the vulnerable migrant child, the subject as it is constructed by the Italian/European migration regime. Everyone has guns in Libya; it is just how life there is, Tayo and Faisl affirm, to Carmen's horror. Clearly relishing in their tales of bravado and gun-carrying; in shocking Carmen. A show of masculinity and power. This is in stark contrast with the 'good grateful child' that is expressed in Tayo's previous narrative. A role he often performs within the centre, although he complains regularly to me about it. As these examples evidence, observations and repeat conversations are methodologically important in spatio-temporal terms to allow for multiple and contrasting perspectives to emerge, providing for more complex portrayals of young migrants.

This illustration shows how the young men position themselves and negotiate between context provided identities and individual narratives of resistance (Smith 1993 in Bagnoli, 2009, p. 326). A gendered performance of masculinity for the benefit of Carmen, a young woman closer to their age who is volunteering to 'take care of' them in Giallo. The performance functions as a means of mitigating their own subordination and dependency on/within the Italian reception system, as represented by Carmen and myself. A temporary subversion of the normal social hierarchies (Bakhtin, 1981). These glimpses reflect some of the complexities of masculinities within the migration regime and how the methods adopted allow for their capture.

Ethnography is understood as offering interpretative slices, glimpses into others' lives, not as portraying the totality (Denzin, 1997, p. 247), as such I chose to combine this with other 'inventive' live methods (Back and Puwar, 2012; Lury and Wakeford, 2012) in a multi-modal ethnographic approach (Dicks, Soyinka and Coffey, 2006; Dattatreyan and Shankar, 2016; Varvantakis and Nolas, 2019). As I argue in the below, this approach enables each of the different elements to lead us into the world of the participant in different, broadly complementary ways, without claiming to exhaust the meaning of the world (Ingold, 2000 in Latham, 2003, p. 127).

Interviews with 'key actors': the dialogical space of the interview and its limitations

Whilst the focus of this thesis is the young men themselves, during fieldwork I also carried out further interviews with key actors working or involved in the reception system, including the staff in Giallo, so as to examine the productive nature of the border (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2008). The interview is understood as dialectic between researcher and researched, a space in which meaning is co-constructed and a site of interpretive practice (Byrne, 2003; Parker, 2004). Interviews were semi-structed and context driven, I sought interviewees' perspectives on hospitality as a concept and within the reception system, the subject of the 'minor', and transitions to eighteen. These interviews are used for context only and as such they have not been fully analysed. This was a decision I made in order to place deeper focus on the young men themselves.

As other studies have shown, the study of the everyday may make visible the invisible and enable us to study what may not be conscious, or previously narrated and what is done, rather than said (Duneier, 1999; Silva and Bennett, 2004). Observations of interactions with staff and other (mainly medical or legal) professionals when I accompanied young men to their appointments revealed some of the constructions at play. Particularly, this highlighted the difference between what is said or done in this context, and what is said in the interview setting. I shall use Marinella, the legal advisor for the young men, by way of example.

During an informal conversation with Marinella one day in Giallo, I ask her what happens to the young men once they leave the reception system. '*They'll most likely end up picking tomatoes in the South of Italy*', is her immediate, rueful, response to my question. However, when I ask her the same question again, but this time in a formal interview setting, her answer is quite different and wholly positive. As I discuss in Chapter Eight, the narrative she gives within the interview space is a form of canonical narrative and contrasts significantly with her response when speaking informally to me, revealing the relational, dialogical nature of human interaction (Denzin, 1997). These contrasting narratives reveal the performativity of the interview, and thus some of the limitations of this method, which, as I set out here, can be counteracted by multi-modal ethnographic approaches.

Interviewing the young men

Temporality is central to the research design, as emerged in the focus group. Additionally, as Khosravi notes from his own experience of being an undocumented migrant, migrant accounts change over time due to issues of trust and security (2009, p. 97). As such, I follow his contention

that isolated, one-off interviews are insufficient. Instead, I conducted repeat interviews to build up trust and as a temporal method to capture the transition from the reception centre to adulthood. In seeking to encompass the 'what next?' of the young men I needed to follow them beyond the 'biographical border'. Whilst I endeavoured to do follow-on interviews in person, owing to the uncertainties of their movements, as well as their commitments to internships or employment, I also utilised the mobile messaging application WhatsApp to maintain contact once they had left Giallo. This is a technique used by other scholars, such as Luke de Noronha (2016), who maintained contact with his participants via WhatsApp following their deportation from Britain to Jamaica. Prior to discussing the interview process, I first discuss the issue of consent and what this can tell us about the subject of the 'minor' in Italy.

The consent process: the minor as incapable subject

Permission for the young men to participate in my research had to be granted from the local council and their guardian, as the *in situ* parent, as minors are not considered legally responsible adults.[17] In relation to children, the UK context acknowledges minors' ability to consent for themselves. As ESRC (now UKRI) guidelines state, 'it should not be assumed that agreement cannot be sought from children because of their age'.[18] However, in the Italian research context, both practitioners and Italian academics I spoke to seemed bemused that consent would be requested from these young people, in addition to the legal guardian, as '*they are minors*?!'

Centring on which subjects are considered capable of consent is revealing of the contested nature of childhoods in different settings. For example, Sam Okyere's (2018) experiences of research with child workers in Ghana evidences the inappropriateness of different constructs of childhood and self- authority. His initial approach to gain the consent of the parents of 'minors' for their children to participate in his research project, as required by the British university ethics requirements, generated alienation. The 'minors' in question were working and taking care of themselves, leaving their parents amused, bewildered, and often offended at his requests, perceived to be insulting to the youth in question (Okyere, 2018).

In the Italian context, the overly paternalistic approach towards minors is evidenced in the consent

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[17] In this case, the guardian is the mayor of Verde, and thus has mainly a symbolic role (for info see ISMU Foundation, 2019)

[18] See https://esrc.ukri.org/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-ethics/frequently-raised-topics/research-with-children-and-young-people/

process. Through my ethnography and sitting in on some interviews between the young men and their legal advisor, I could observe how the language of the state is imposed upon them. It was a subject imposed upon them as they crossed the border of Italy and became (unaccompanied) 'minors'. These young men have been responsible for themselves for many years, have crossed land and sea, and, yet, upon crossing the border of Europe become 'minors' within the regime, no longer considered capable of consenting to participate in a research project. In line with my research ethics, I nonetheless requested consent from the young men verbally after explaining the research process to them as clearly as possible (Morrow and Richards, 1996).[19]

Disrupting narratives: to interview or not to interview?

Surveillance

Whilst the limitations of the interview, a technique that has been criticized for limiting the sociological imagination of the researcher (Back, 2010; Silverman, 2011) are recognized, I maintain that it can nonetheless convey aspects of the social world when used in combination with other methods so as to avoid falling into an 'intrusive empiricism' (Back, 2007). In identifying the 'bad interview', Emma Jackson (2015), discussing her experiences in researching with young homeless people, draws attention to the limitations of the interview, particularly when working with people subject to immigration or state (police) control. For these young people, the interview may be representative of state power, surveillance and then reinforce the need to tell the 'right' story, or 'thin' stories as Kohli (2006) refers to them. Bearing in mind these warnings, drawing on my own experience of working with young migrants in London (Walker, 2010, 2011), and the need to avoid replicating the culture of disbelief within the migration regime, I sought to make interviews with the young men less 'interview-like' and more of an open conversation.

Firstly, I asked the young men to suggest a location for the interview, recognising that the meaning of location can function in different ways for different people, and is produced and reproduced within contested social relations (Herzog, 2005). Indeed, the interview location is both a physical 'space' and a 'place' where power dynamics and social relations, identities and meanings unfold in multiple ways (Gagnon, Jacob and McCabe, 2015). Most of the young men chose the park. As this excerpt below with Edrisa shows, the photo functions as a revealing method to understand more

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[19] In fact, Lalo – who was a focus group participant, chose not to continue participating in the research when I returned in 2018.

about his lived experience in Verde. He shared ten photos with me; photos which, as we sat in the park to discuss them, opened our dialogue and meant he could participate in shaping the interview.

Figure 2. Edrisa and the park

Edrisa tells me he wanted to show me this picture, not just because he likes the park, but also:
'*because I am paying attention to the people, to the different situation, to the park and to the people, because I am not from here. By then I am seeing something else, something different…*
S*: so, what are you seeing?*
E*: the difference in the stability between Europe and my country, Gambia. Because there is a big difference, you know, between Gambia and Europe. Between Africa in general. So, it is just amazing.*'

This encounter allowed me as researcher, as Gabriel Dattatreyan argues, to 'see place differently from the perspective of people who socially create the spaces they inhabit' (2018). As Edrisa discusses this photo with me, we are sitting in the very same park. What I see is not what Edrisa sees, and it is through the photo that glimpses of the other's perspective can emerge and open space for different dialogues.

Capturing multiple temporalities

From the start, I advised the young men that I was not interested in knowing why they had come to Italy. In part, this decision was to avoid falling into the trap of becoming a 'judge' (Foucault, 1995) of deservingness myself. Having worked with refugees in the UK and seen the impact of the ever-worsening threshold of suffering required to obtain asylum, I did not wish young men to feel this pressure upon them. I wanted to move away from the 'thin' stories (Kohli, 2006) that are held in their files that I read on my first few days as a volunteer in Giallo. To move away from these stories that are ranked and quantified in terms of their suffering in order to qualify for asylum (Galli, 2019a).

This is not to discount the intersectionality of their experiences and the ways in which class and race impacted upon their experiences, as well as the trauma they experienced prior to and upon reaching Italy. Indeed, oftentimes young men brought this up of their own accord, replicating the way in which the journey remained a lived and embodied trauma in their lives. A reminder, then, together with my previous experience of researching with asylum seeking young people (Walker, 2011) of how the aim to 'do no harm' (Hopkins, 2008; Hugman, Pittaway and Bartolomei, 2011) is a relational, ongoing practice that needs to be constantly monitored throughout the research process. Save for when visual methods opened and directed the conversation, interviews were semi-structed and commenced with an open-ended request from me:

'Please can you tell me a little bit about your life in the reception system in Italy….'

The longer-term nature of the research from the return to the fieldwork site a year later and seven months' immersion in Giallo, as well as repeated interviews, enabled me to capture more of the complexities of the young men's experiences, and their emotional states over a longer arc of time as well as to build rapport. These encounters enabled me to provide more than a one-off snapshot, but rather a series of glimpses into the young men's life world. This is sociologically important for greater understanding of their sense of belonging and security as they transition to adulthood. This is also important methodologically, both as a temporal means to capture the experiences and effects of biographical transitions among my participants, and because when threat is political, sustained contact has been shown to help participants disclose difficult emotional experiences and opinions (Lee, 1993; Khosravi, 2009).

There was a notable difference in interviews with the young men I had spent more time with in Giallo and those I saw less frequently. In the case of Charles, I met him only once for an interview

after the focus group, our conversations were then over WhatsApp and his narratives followed a more canonical pathway, until the final interview when he became more open. Suuntu, I also met one to one only for an interview. He answered my questions with one word and then turned the interview onto me, asking about my family, relationships and why I had no children ('*who will look after you when you are old?!*' his alarmed response), in an attempt to reverse the power dynamics (see also Chase *et al.*, 2019). Hence, there is little of him in this thesis, as he gave little away. The difference in these dynamics highlights the difference that time can make to research relationships. Over diverse encounters with the other young men in my volunteer role, I had shared much about myself. There was less need then for them to 'interview' me, as they had some knowledge of who I was and were more willing to share their thoughts with me.

Researching multi-lingually

As the focus group evidenced, I practised a form of 'translanguaging', moving back and forth between different languages in both fieldnotes and ethnographic work (Gibb and Danero Iglesias, 2017). Something the young men also did between English and Italian, depending on their linguistic capability. Most were polyglots, speaking at least one, if not more, African languages, which I did not speak. Whilst most interviews were conducted in English, their conversation was often peppered with Italian words, particularly in relation to the reception system. These words were not in their vocabulary prior to arriving in Italy and hence replicate the language of the host. As the below extract shows, Edrisa uses the Italian term for a reception centre as it is a new term to enter his linguistic repertoire:

'*in the comunità there are so many* casinos *going on, we have so many different thinking. But as you stay with people the more you understand each other. Because it takes time to know people*.'

And later:
'*It is not easy living in comunità, for us we are living in good comunità [Giallo], as I can tell you because I have seen the worst of them. […] It was really corrupt, […] over there they are three men that control all these comunitàs….*'

Yet he also anglicises the Italian, by adding an 's' at the end to pluralise the word. These centres were described by all young men as chaotic; fights were common. Edrisa uses the Italian word '*casinos*' which encompasses a variety of meanings: chaos, fights, trouble. Here, adopting a word which captures more than a single English word could, revealing his linguistic dexterity, now he has

accessed lessons. Multilingualism can be understood as a reflection of displacements and journeys as well as diverse interactions of colonialism and class (S. Hall, 2012). A reminder that language is both circumstance and ability (Blommaert and Rampton, 2012 in S. Hall, 2012, p.2). As I address below, it is through additional, non-verbal means that I sought to capture some of these dynamics.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o argued some time ago:

> 'language carries, and culture carries, […] the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in our world […] Language is thus inseparable from ourselves as a community of human beings with a specific form and character, a specific history, a specific relationship to the world' (1986, p. 16).

While we may concur with Thiong'o that language frames our specific relationship to the world, often choices around how language is used to portray people in research is hidden (Temple, 2005). Language difference and processes of translation, interpretation and representation are a fundamental part of academic knowledge production (Parker, 2004; Temple, 2005). Reflecting the young men's multilingualism is difficult, and their language was inevitably flattened by my interpretations; the researcher as 'interpreter' (Bauman, 1987) more so than ever. Methodologically, I have tried to capture this through including the young men's dialogue verbatim. As Antonia Dawes' (2014) contends, there is a need for a greater use of language as a sociological tool for understanding wider material inequalities and struggles over power.

As the focus group revealed, for the West African young men: '*Italian is not a popular language!*' an assertion by Emmanuel received with much laughter and consensus. They have no previous connection to Italy or its language. Italy's colonial ties were in the horn of Africa. It is merely now that Italian is of value to them and has become part of their story. In contrast, the Albanians spoke better Italian and poor English, reflecting the colonial and historical ties between the two countries (Albahari, 2006).

Additionally, greater linguistic capability is of relevance in terms of access to social support, as well as my research project. Indeed, those who participated in this research were the more able and engaged young men. Whilst I could observe all Giallo's residents, I was unable to include some of the more troubled young men directly in the research, nor would it have been fair to them. Malik, a young Gambian man, for example, hardly spoke. To anyone, the other young men confirmed when I

asked them. His ghostly figure moved silently around Giallo and it was difficult to engage with him. Staff had already written him off as uncooperative - '*Malik! What can you do with him?!*' - and dedicated their overly stretched time to those who were more participative.[20] I asked him once, when we were waiting for the lift together, what he was doing with this time. He told me in slightly broken English he wanted to study, but that he was doing nothing. He was over eighteen and would soon leave for the adult reception centre, with no job, poor Italian, and limited skills. As a result, those who had greater difficulties became somewhat excluded from this research, rendering it a portrait of those who are able to 'play the game'. This has implications for research in which only the more able are included. As a Ph.D. project, access to interpreters was not possible, and this in itself carries its own implications (see Edwards, 1998). Whilst the visual methods were an attempt at greater inclusivity, these gaps in the service, and in the research, require more time and resources to resolve.

Visual elements and multiple entry points

As evidenced by the example of Edrisa and the park above, interviews were accompanied by visual methods in the form of photos or art as a means to destabilise linear constructed narratives. Drawing on the work of Bagnoli (2004, 2009; Bagnoli and Clark, 2010), who found that young people preferred more creative methods of participating in research rather than solely 'having a chat', it is held that this enables the research to be more relevant to young people. Visual methods have also been found to be beneficial when working with participants who may be discussing sensitive topics, understood as those deemed by the participants themselves to be emotionally difficult to discuss (Lee, 1993; Hugman, Pittaway and Bartolomei, 2011; Chase *et al.*, 2019). In this way, I sought to try and create space for the complexities of the young men, hidden by the 'minor' subject position imposed upon them, to emerge.

Inspired by his art hanging up in the language classroom at Giallo, I meet Amadou at his home – the semi-independent apartment he shared with four fellow Gambians managed by Giallo on the outskirts of the city. He has invited me to look through his drawings. Drawings he has done both spontaneously and with Maria, the language teacher, during her classes. He invites me into the lounge where his drawings are laid out on the table; there are many. He has always drawn, he tells me, even back in Gambia. It helps him reflect and express things, particularly some of the difficult things he has been through. He begins to 'walk' me through his drawings, explaining what each

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[20] Fieldwork notes, June 2018

represents. In this way, I am given glimpses into his life world, and his drawings structure the flow and focus of our conversation, putting him in control of the conversation. In this way, his art reverses the direction of the interview, he chooses which drawings he wishes to share; there are some he does not wish to tell me about, and he flicks quickly over them. One of the first he shares (figure 3, below), he tells me, represents an element of himself: a strongman, a wrestler.

Figure 3. The wrestler, by Amadou

The tall buildings represent Europe, and arrival. The small fairy-like figure, hope, faith and religion. This excerpt reveals some of the themes that emerged and how Amadou chooses to explain his drawing to me:

A*: 'the wrestler they just represent strong people, so they're just like this …*
S: so that's how you feel, like a wrestler, a strong person?
A: Yeah: A strong person with my staff and a lion a flying beside […] you can see here it is like a protector. I feel protected you know, culture and people and faith. And this is the city behind me […]
S: so, if someone said to you, the word 'adventurer', is that how you feel?
A: yeah! I feel like an adventurer – I don't feel like an immigrant, um no.
S: you don't feel like a 'back-way boy' [a term he used earlier to refer to people seeking to access Europe irregularly]?
A: No, I feel like somebody who is living his life who has the right to see the world. So…. Let's say, the*

wrestler just represents dignity and power, and respect. Because yeah, that's what wrestlers do. You have your respect, you have your dignity, and you believe in your power.'

This is the notion of the 'wrestler', a strong man. Here, Amadou expresses quite gendered notions of masculinity, and a focus on dignity and respect. An active subject who has control of his own power and is standing proud and strong. He has arrived in Europe (the buildings), and this arrival grants him back his strength and dignity. Something that the term 'back-way boy' or other such derogatory terminology relating to 'illegal' migrants removes from him. Indeed, the 'wrestler' reveals the subject of a young man engaging in mobility to improve his life chances, with the 'right to see the world', just as many of his peers do. Save that those with the right citizenship status can access legal channels. Channels which are not open to Amadou. Ironically, this representation also mirrors the way in which colonialists portrayed themselves as masculine adventurers (Carver, 2019). Amadou here portrays himself as a strong political subject with rights, not a victim seeking salvation.

As he moves on to his next image, a painting of a boy lying on his side in the desert between Mali and Algeria in the desert (figure 4, below), he draws attention to the fallacy of the binary categorizations into which the 'vulnerable' child is placed, revealing the multiplicities, the 'both/and' of his identity. In this image, he explains the embodied ongoing trauma of the journey – which he still feels, even now, as a pain in his side:

'I remember I sleep on the stones, so one of these stones was stick there and I sleep on it with the pain, because I am used to pain. So […] always after this night I start feeling that pain on my ribs…'

Figure 4. The wounded boy, by Amadou

Young men such as Amadou are then both wrestler and wounded boy: *both* vulnerable *and* capable, both 'beings and becomings' (Uprichard, 2008; Ansell *et al.*, 2014). As identified in Chapter Two, in challenging binary classifications, we can 'articulate new kinds of 'both/and' political spatialities' (Pred 1995, in Merrill, 2015, p. 80). These are represented in Amadou's drawings. Amadou's example reveals the way in which different kinds of knowledge can be evoked and '…visual techniques, [can serve] both as paths into the life-world of individuals and as ways of exploring individual practices of world making' (Latham, 2003, p.120). In this way, the conversation does not follow a linear pathway – pre-designed by myself, as researcher, but allows for elements of Amadou's life to emerge as a kind of collage of memories, providing a more complex portrayal of his lived experiences.

Art workshop to art show

Figure 5. Art workshop advertisement
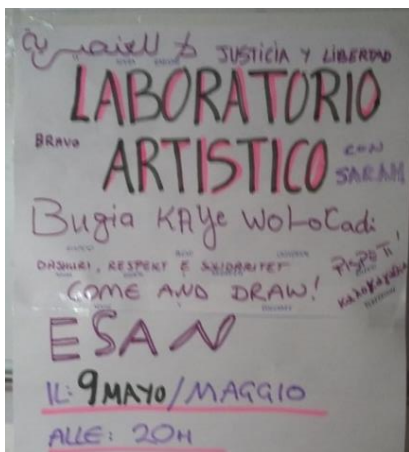
It is May when I hold the art workshop. I wanted to use art in my research, as discussed above and many of the young men enjoy drawing for their own purposes or do so as part of the language and culture classes ran by Maria. I advertise the art workshop in Giallo as an evening activity (figure 5, above) and explain it is part of my research and I would like to see what they can draw, with no right or wrong, and have a conversation about their experiences as 'minors' in Italy. I include this excerpt from my fieldnotes:

The workshop was due to start at 8pm. But after a chaotic start (dinner was supposed to be at 7.30pm but as the food was not ready, we ate late), we eventually commence sometime after 8pm, I collect the Fanta and crisps and take the materials downstairs with Giorgia, a psychology student on a placement, who helps me set up the room.
The Albanians have gone outside to play football.

At this point, with just myself and Giorgia in an empty room, ready and waiting, with arts materials and the refreshments, I am seriously doubting that anyone will come. Nonetheless, I persevere, in hope. All the while wondering if this is an example of those methods that seem like a good idea on paper but are then revealed inappropriate once in the real-life setting.

Saaki and Ekku have come to Giallo but are upset as they have problems with the gas in their apartment. Nonetheless, they eventually come downstairs to the workshop a few minutes after me and Giorgia.

Amadou arrives. Then Innocent, and shortly after Kwasi.

I call to the Albanians though the window where I can see them kicking the ball around on the football pitch outside. They reply they'll come in 5 mins. I don't believe them, so I begin.

I start with a self-portrait by BoThai, an undocumented Thai activist based in the US who I met via his work at a conference I co-organised on racism and migration at Goldsmiths in October 2017.[21] I read out two of his poems in English. I explain he is an artist activist and that his work participated in a conference I helped organise as his art can travel, whilst he cannot. The young men like it and seem impressed. This is the starting point for them to engage in the activity. They begin.

Then the Albanians come in, talking loudly in Albanian and laughing and joking. They help themselves to Fanta and crisps as they noisily sit down at the other table. I explain what we are doing and show them the Italian version of BoThai's poem. They don't seem very interested.

I ask everyone to draw a self-portrait, or a portrait of someone like them – a young person who migrated to Italy for a better future, as I put it - and that we will discuss what they have drawn afterwards as a group. A variety of images are produced. As my research focuses only on the African experience, I will not discuss the Albanians' art here; suffice to say it was very different to the Africans, although racism, interestingly, did feature.[22] Racism was evidently very present in the everyday lives of these young men. The Albanians all leave early, leaving the African young men who are keen to engage in debate.

The discussion that emerges construes the themes of importance in my thesis, in addition to the transition to eighteen, which is not brought up in this discussion. Omar draws two sharks, exemplifying the ongoing lived experience of the journey embodied in the young men. Ekku draws the dining room in Giallo, a representation of the complexity and tensions within the reception

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[21] BoThai's website: https://bothai.bigcartel.com/; GJSS Special Edition *A Conversation Connecting Racism and Migration: International and Interdisciplinary Perspectives* http://gjss.org/15/01

[22] The historical particularly of the Italian race landscape is based on colonialism in Ethiopia and Albania through which these racialized populations became the main colonial other (Curcio and Mellino, 2010).

system, (Chapter 4). Saaki draws a bird, drawing attention to notions of flight and the past that is not passed (Chapter 5). Amadou draws a gated space entitled 'the need of every man are open for few', reflecting notions of justice, rights, and racism (Chapter 7); a theme which threads through all the young men's narratives, particularly his. Innocent draws a young man wearing a Gucci branded jacket entitled 'God's Plan', drawing out both the materialist desires and the importance of religion in the everyday lives and sense-making practices of these young men (Chapter 7).

Whilst the images in the workshop were in response to my request, the fact that it was so open and framed initially by the activist art of BoThai in part contributed, I believe, to a wider variety of responses. Whilst the presentation of the trope of the 'survivor' or masculine adventurer was still strong, the art produced also opened up space for discussion to provide multiple perspectives on more complex lives. Including some of the young men's artwork here in this thesis is also a means for the art to speak for itself, to find ways of creating space for greater visibility. This was also the aim of the public art show.

The art show: Creating a space for 'shared understandings'

Inspired by the art work of Amadou and the other young men, and Maria, as well as feminist sociologist Yasmin Gunaratnam (2007), who calls for art to be a part of research as a means of expression and telling stories in a way that can reach larger audiences, I asked the young men if they would be happy to exhibit their work to the public: Yes, very, was the response. So, we worked with Maria on the co-production of a public art exhibition to showcase different portraits of the young men. The show was an attempt to combat dominant portrayals of child/ young migrants which oscillate along a spectrum of 'innocent child' to threatening 'folk devil'. A means of creating visual entry points to some of their experiences. Through this encounter, Yasmin Gunaratnam suggests, the ambiguity of meaning in art can create a vulnerability in the viewer and the artist that is both productive and connective and as such 'convey complex and incoherent notions of difference and otherness' (2007, p. 271), leading to further understandings.

The space for the exhibition was a local cultural centre based in a public library. We collected up the drawings and hung them on string with clothes pegs around the space. The staff of the centre responded with surprised pleasure at the variety of artwork on show. They were not expecting such rich expression, or such politics, they tell me. This moment already rupturing some fixed notions of 'unaccompanied minors'. The opening night was full, a mixture of the public, university students and

academics, social workers and staff from Giallo. There was much admiration and curiosity in the art, it inspired many questions. Young men respond. A connective and productive moment (Walker, 2019b).

Through these entry points, through the exhibition, glimpses of differing perspectives are given. Perspectives in which the vulnerable subject position imposed by the 'unaccompanied minor' label is contested; revealed as far more complex, playful, political, and critical than the label suggests. The young men are pleased to be revealing fragments of themselves, making visible some of their complexities and politicised identities. Pleased, also, that a different, positive story is told about, and by, them. In the exhibition, I witness how some vulnerabilities in both viewer (including myself) and artist are exposed, as Gunaratnam (2007) posits.

Conclusion

In this Chapter, I have set out how the methodological 'live sociology' (Back, 2007) approach I adopted situates the research in its historical and geopolitical specificity. This is important to counter ahistorical approaches to migration bound in Eurocentric 'crisis' narratives in line with the research epistemology. Additionally, as I have argued here, and as emerges as the thesis unfolds, the multi-modal approach adopted gave space for the gathering of more nuanced and complex 'thick narratives' (Kohli, 2006). This functioned as a means to capture both multiple temporalities and perspectives to provide a more complex portrayal of child and youth migrants. Through the both/and identities that emerged, the methods avoided replicating the pathologizing victim/ villain discursive regime or reproducing racialized categories in the research process (Gunaratnam, 2003).

The combination of methods allowed for some of the limitations of each to be counteracted by the others. The performativity of the interview space, for example, was counteracted by multi modal ethnographic approaches. Observations could feed into interviews and allow for the doing and saying of social life (Back, 2007) and the contradictions and harmonies at play within. The use of the scoping study focus group was invaluable for incorporating the young men's perspectives in the research design. The focus group gave the young men greater control over the themes discussed, something which is more difficult to gain in an interview setting. However, in incorporating the themes that emerged from the focus group in the interviews themselves, that space was then also partially informed by the participants. Further, the use of visual methods created space for multiple entry points to narratives and enabled more complex portrayals based on multiple perspectives to emerge, as the example of Amadou above reveals. Visual methods did not work for all, but in some

of the 'failures' other information was gleaned about priorities and sense making practices that would have remained hidden via solely discursive practices.

Additionally, the scoping study extended the temporal arc in which I was involved with Giallo and enabled diverse perspectives to be captured. Engaging in repeat interviews and sustained contact allowed for more difficult and emotional topics to emerge. This also enabled the capturing of biographical transitions, and the way in which migrant accounts may change over time and are rooted in the situatedness of their social situation (see for example Amadou in Chapters 7 and 8). This 'slow[er]' research was also part of the 'empirical humility' (Gunaratnam, 2020) I sought to embed in the research process. Through this, and in drawing attention to the young men's multilingualism and meaning making practices, I sought to give them greater voice. This remains limited by my interpretations as a researcher, but in critically engaging with the issue, processes of representation can at least be interrogated within the methodological approach.

I recognise the limitations of the research done and who and why the research connects with. As identified above, there are limitations in participation and inclusivity in enabling those less linguistically and emotionally capable to participate. Observation could overcome some of this, nonetheless, the research process meant that a certain kind of subject is involved, a certain kind of tale is told and those who may be more vulnerable, and who may tell us more about the failures of social structures, remain hidden. I am very conscious that the young men's desire for their stories to be told, as well expressed by Adama: so that '*people will listen to it and learn a bit from it [..] and know how the life goes on'* is difficult to uphold in the slow moving and often exclusive research and publication landscape. The art exhibition was in part a means to challenge this, to give space for different perspectives to be public. I also wrote a blog piece, which I shared with the young men to disseminate my research findings outside of academia (Walker, 2019a).

In conclusion, the thesis is premised on the aspiration of research as hope (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012). The hope being that more heterogenous and anti-colonial forms of representation may emerge, in which the multi-modal methods adopted are more receptive to multiple temporalities and perspectives of the participants (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012). The aim being to create a more 'hospitable space' within the research process itself. As this Chapter has argued, these methods can create space for insight into the invisibilised subject of the unaccompanied minor as they become 'adult' and how they resist or negotiate the negation of their presence, opening up opportunities for them to tell their stories in novel ways.

Chapter 4. Domopolitics and 'home' as a hospitable space for the 'unchildlike child'

Justice*: 'They make you be a rightful person' 'They make you a future'*

When I first meet Justice, a young Nigerian, he is seventeen and living in Giallo's main accommodation centre. He is fed up at being in such a controlled yet chaotic space; his face often furrowed with frustration. When we meet again, several weeks later, outside Giallo, he is now eighteen and has moved out of the centre to one of Giallo's semi-independent apartments. He is much happier there, it is calmer and there is more privacy, he tells me, as we go to sit in the nearby park under a tree, away from the beating heat of the sun.

Initially, he tells me, he found the rules in Giallo difficult to accept:

'When I am bambino [child] I cannot do things a lot. Even if I want to do it, my lawyer or any appointment they used to follow me - all of them the workers! They used to escort me there. I don't know why. They don't want me to get lost! They are not the one to escort me from Africa to this place! I come alone! I don't know why they used to follow me everywhere - everywhere! [laughs].'

'They always control somebody. Do this do this! You have to sleep! Because I was small […] I was having 17 years when I was in Giallo, so maybe because in Italy you have rules. Bambinos [children] have rules, adults have rules.. […] when I was 17 any time I wanted to do anything, like go outside, they used to tell me 'No, you are a bambino you cannot do it! Come inside!' When I become 18, I say I want to do it, they say you are 18 you can go anywhere you like because you are now an adult.'

And yet, he also refers to the rules as a sign of order, of peace. The life in Italy is:
'is good more than Africa. In Africa, maybe by now we are not spending one hour here, and we would hear one or two gun shots […] Boom, boom. So, it is very different. It is a calm place. They don't fight. They have rules. In Africa we don't have rules. But we have, but people living there they don't respect the rules. But in Italy they do […] it is peace; [sighs] a good place. It is not a place like where I am from, Nigeria. Where there is war. Many wars…'

After this conflictual start, he tells me he eventually found Giallo to be a place where:
'[t]hey straight futures for people. They make you be a man, they make you be a rightful person and not be the wrong way […] they straight the life for you. They make you do good things. They make

you a future, they start your life for you. It is very good.'

He goes on to tell me that he does not think he would be where he is now, doing a catering apprenticeship, without the help and support he got from Giallo. Instead, he says he thinks he *'would still be dragging my life. I would not be up to this stage. Maybe I would still be in the street, dragging and fighting to be a great person.'* Italy, he tells me, is *'a place where I start my life. A place where I have helpers. They are the ones that brought me up, so I can never disappoint them.'*

However, he cautions that *'in Giallo, if you are somebody that have sense, then you have to ask them […] If you don't ask them, they will look like maybe you are somebody that doesn't want to do anything. So you have to ask them and they give you'.* In this way, he says he accessed the apprenticeship in catering.

The next time I see him, some weeks later, he is smiling and happy. He has obtained a summer job in a hotel on the island of Ischia, by the Amalfi coast. A position Giallo helped him obtain. He can now earn some money and gain experience needed for future positions. He is in a good place, he tells me.

Introduction

This chapter starts at Giallo, the reception centre, because it is from this centre that the research flows, it is at the centre where I first meet the young men, and on the centre that I focus my ethnographic gaze as a volunteer/ researcher. Giallo is but one reception centre, out of many across Italy, in all its own particularities within the very heterogenous Italian asylum reception system (Giovannetti, 2016). The particularities of Giallo, as a space embedded within the wider regional structure particular to Verde is set out in the Introduction. Ethnographic focus on Giallo, drawing on Derrida's notion of *hostipitality*, as discussed in Chapter Two, provides space to interrogate the way in which the moralistic norms of 'good childhood' have a bordering effect, constructing hierarchies of belonging for young male migrants normalised as 'unchildlike children' (Aitkin, 2001). The tensions embedded within the framework of hostipitality, which evidences the troubling common origin between *hostis* as host and *hostis* as enemy, and thus between hospitality and hostility (Derrida, 2002, p.14), are explored through the space and place of Giallo. In examining the social relations of this 'camp' space (Ramadan, 2013; Sigona, 2015), I set out my argument that within Giallo a form of hospitality that can endure is constructed.

The Chapter explores how the young men navigate the ambiguities and tensions of Giallo as a space of care and control (Agier, 2011; Ticktin, 2016a). Justice expresses his initial frustrations at the control he is subject to as a *bambino*, using the Italian term for a very small child, reflecting the infantilization he feels subject to within the reception centre. However, this is then reconciled with the fact that in Giallo *'they make you a future'*; a future that is intimately linked with masculinity: *'They make you be a man'*. The interlinking of masculinity and notions of autonomy and adulthood is fully discussed in Chapter Six. In this Chapter, I focus upon how Giallo is a space in which Justice felt he could enact his migrancy aspirations with the aid of '*helpers*', who enable him to move forward in time and space. He can then move from the subject of the 'bambino' to become an independent being. This is a conclusion he arrived at after some weeks of being in Giallo, initially frustrated and resisting the rules.

In accessing the support he was looking for, the rules are then construed as order and *peace*, in opposition to the narrated chaos and war of his past in Africa. He here constructs the present and the future as an 'elsewhere', a re-territorialization in a new temporal space, different to the past. The support Justice accesses in Giallo enabled him to obtain a catering apprenticeship, that then led on to a paid summer placement and, he hopes, more future work. However, he cautions that '*if you have sense'*, you need to ask for this support, it is not a given, as Justice recognises. There is a requirement on the young men to engage in particular forms of behaviour in order to be recognised as subjects deserving of support. Partly, as I shall argue, owing to moralistic concepts of 'good childhood' which underpin the migration regime, but partly also due to the limited support that is available in a resource poor setting.

The Chapter commences with a description of Giallo based upon my perspective as a volunteer there. I contrast this with the young men's descriptions of Giallo, using Ekku's drawing from the art workshop as an entry point, noting how these can shift and change. As Chapter Two set out, migrants are constructed as 'out of place' and not at 'home' (Sayad, 2004) within the sedentarist perspective (Malkki, 1992). Under this framework, unaccompanied minors are then placed in 'naturalized' familial settings, such as Giallo. Through the lived experiences of these young men in Giallo, I examine how the domestic space of 'home' is utilised to define and reproduce the state (Humphris, 2016). This is followed by a discussion of the young men's understandings of the reception system, and how some of the language used replicates that of the regime, or the 'host'.

I foreground how the young men actively perform the subject position of the 'good child' produced by the regime. I illustrate how they engage in tactics (de Certeau, 1984) to negotiate the moral

thresholds of the reception system; seeking to put ladders in place whilst they are 'children' and therefore entitled to this support. In Giallo, children have 'rules' which restrict their movement and subject them to control (by adults). Children in societies of the Global North are considered dependent on adults – therefore care by adults constitutes a 'good childhood' (Thronson, 2008; Rosen and Newberry, 2018). As Justice wryly notes, once he turns eighteen and is thus an adult, he is told he can *'go anywhere he likes'*, revealing the rigid binary of age. The Chapter then sets out the argument that Giallo reinscribes the dominant concept of childhood, a space in which the child must actively engage as much as possible with the rules. Yet in 'playing the game' the young men may be rewarded with support that can act as a ladder to assist them construct a 'better future' as adults, leading to a form of hospitality which can give time and endure (Dikeç, Clark and Barnett, 2009; Friese, 2009) over the threshold of childhood.

I explore the family-like bonds that are developed in Giallo, and draw attention to the notion of surveillance as part of therapeutic practice; of being 'watched over' as a form of care (McIntosh *et al.*, 2010). Finally, the conclusion draws out the tensions embedded in the regime as evident in Giallo. I set out the argument that evolves over subsequent chapters that, with some limitations, owing to the policies and practices implemented, and social relations built therein, Giallo can be considered a 'space of resistance' (Isin and Rygiel, 2007) or a hospitable space, as I call it. In Giallo, care and control intertwine, providing room for manoeuvre for young men who play the game to '*make [their] future'*, to climb the ladders and avoid the snakes. I shall now introduce the space of Giallo.

Differing perspectives on Giallo

Giallo is a large reception centre for male unaccompanied minors on the outskirts of Verde. It is a short bus journey to Giallo, and, with the bus passes they are given granting them free travel, many of the young men often spend their leisure time in the parks and squares of Verde. The large five-storey building that houses Giallo looks very institutional, like a school or hospital complex. I discover each floor has a different focus – each assisting what might be referred to as a different marginalised population of the city. The top floor being a half-way house for people exiting prison. The fourth floor for people with drug and alcohol problems, and Giallo occupies the third floor. The second-floor hosts family play sessions, diverse courses for the voluntary sector. The ground floor has the classrooms and event space. The building is set in grounds bordered by pine trees, to one side a car park and the other a football pitch, upon which there are usually several young men playing a game. Beyond this, there is a small park. The building is owned by the large Cooperative

which funds the services.[23]

According to its website, the mission of Giallo is to work with disadvantaged youth and adolescents, both Italians and non-Italians. Initially set up for Italian youth who had been cautioned or as an alternative to a prison sentence, the centre has since also taken on the role of housing unaccompanied minors. It provides reception facilities and vocational courses such as metalwork, engineering, carpentry. The classes are also open to non-residents. This, then, is the temporary home of the young men upon whom my research focuses.

Figure 6. Urban infrastructure in Verde

Figure 6 above shows some of the images of urban infrastructure I pass on the way to Giallo from the bus stop.[24] The shopping trolley is both part of the surroundings, as I pass many outside the supermarket on the way, but more significantly because it always reminds me of Giallo. Shopping trolleys are used in Giallo to transport the grocery shopping and rubbish, both inside and outside the building. Often, there are one or two shopping trolleys in the long corridor that runs through Giallo,

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[23] For discussion of the Italian reception system see Campesi (2018b).
[24] There are no photos of the inside of Giallo as I did not feel it appropriate to be taking photos of the young men's home space. I also wanted to avoid implicating myself in a surveillance regime and causing hostility or mistrust about my being in the centre (see Chapter 3).

sometimes loaded up with big Black rubbish bags spilling out over the top. A sight which, for me, always conveyed a feeling of dereliction and signified a *lack of care*.

Giallo operated in the wider framework of the SPRAR system (see Introduction), which faced increasing cuts. The centre was operating on an 'emergency' basis, Marinella, the legal advisor told me, meaning there is little planning ahead and the temporalities of support remain fluid and limited. Marinella often reflects on the problematic results of such an underpinning discourse which, as other scholars have noted, can lead to a form of support that is overly premised on 'compassion' to assist those in need with basic provisions rather than based on a right to support (Vacchiano, 2011, p. 194). Hospitality may then be construed as a kindness or benevolence, rather than as a right (Friese, 2009; Ticktin, 2016b) reflecting the inherent power dynamics embedded within hospitality.

Giallo hosts 28 young men at any one time in this space, with additional young men being housed in the four semi-independent apartments run by Giallo for those who have reached sufficient independence to warrant transferral (see figure 1). Staff on each shift usually consisted of a manager and between two and four members of staff, plus some volunteers. The overnight shift was always a single male worker, an adult needing to be present 24 hours. As a result of funding cuts, as staff who had been working there a long time regularly told me, expressing regret, the ratio between staff and the young men had been reduced. It was, they told me, now much harder to do their job effectively, and to provide the necessary support to the young men, particularly those with higher support needs. The risk being that those who failed to engage would be overlooked, as care could not be given to all.

For Giuseppe, the Director, family is a key space which can provide support and shelter: '*the reception system should be a kind of family, but today it is less so owing to lack of funds and higher numbers of minors, so staff have less time to give*.'[25] Here we can see the implementation of the 'domestic ideal' of the mid-19th century via which the family came to be seen as the best place for the child, as identified in Chapter Two. Over the years, with increasing numbers of minors arriving and declining resources, Giallo had had to reduce support provided. Indeed, the photos of smiling young men and staff on day trips to the beach, as well as the art on the wall, reflected this notion: All were faded with time, curling at the edges, expressing a feeling of better times gone by.

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[25] Fieldwork interview May 2018

For me, the threadbare linen, the ancient looking towels, the lack of soft furnishings, the small TV in the corner of the dining room with a few plastic chairs in front of it, the few (odd) books scattered about the bookshelves (including one on 1950s domestic tips for housewives), as well as the table football, which constantly has to be repaired with gaffer tape, but which is the site of regular animated matches, made me feel the place was deteriorating. Further, as discussed above, it sometimes disturbed me to see the shopping trolleys inside Giallo, which evoked feelings of a lack of care. Yet, none of the young men ever referred to this. When I asked them to describe Giallo to me, nobody mentioned the aesthetics, or the structure, except to say that sharing a room with another three or four young men was difficult, and it could be noisy and chaotic.

I also found somewhat contradictory the stated focus on independence – *autonomia* – a key word that is frequently used within the dialogue of the staff, and a purported aim of the centre, compared with the much more paternalistic approach adopted in practice. Consider, for example, that the young men are not allowed to do their laundry themselves. Laundry must be given to staff to wash. Occasionally, staff said things like *'they don't know how to use the washing machines, so*…' and *'well, they'll only break it!',* enacting a paternalistic disempowering narrative to justify this set up. This adult paternalism reveals how the young men may be constructed as 'inept', something under the surface at times in interactions between staff and young men, a notion of progress and superiority within the Italian (European) system when compared with where they came from (Africa).[26] Yet the paternalism also arose as an easier means of control in a resource limited setting. Staff had less time available to train young men how to use equipment and were focused on more of the essential elements of the centre: the daily chores and finding education and training placements.

The kitchen is another space that is controlled by staff. Young men are not allowed in on their own, knives are locked away. The young men are required to assist with clearing and setting the dining table, part of the daily chores rota pinned to the wall opposite that assigns each individual a task, but not the cooking. This is done by the staff (the previous in-house cook was cut due to funding). Some of the young men tell me of the different things they would cook for their families, themselves, their friends (generally, couscous, rice, and stews for the Africans; bean stews for the Albanians). Not all know how to cook, but many do. Here, in Giallo, inside the space of the Italian reception system where care is enacted in a paternalistic manner by adults for the infantilized 'child' subject, they must eat the daily pasta prepared by the staff, something they were not happy with, as the next section sets out.

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[26] Fieldnotes March – July 2018

Giallo: camp, home, care, control, basta pasta!

My first visit to Giallo is in May 2017, when I carry out the focus group. In the space of the focus group, conducted in Giallo itself, in a classroom on the ground floor, the responses to my questions about the centre are mainly positive:

'I have learned so many things, ... how to move on in life'
'I have build up something I never had before in this place'
'If you are living in a place with people from different communities you learn so many things'

Here, in this space, without knowing much about me or my research, having parachuted into their lives and the centre, all agree that living in a place with people from all over the world is a positive, learning experience. A convivial space (Gilroy, 2004). A partial truth. Something I reflect on after my experience working at the centre as a volunteer over a seven-month period a year later. Something that is not wholeheartedly maintained once I get to know the young men better. Inevitably, living in a large accommodation centre which houses up to 28 young men from different parts of the world, with different backgrounds and emotional needs, as well as lived ongoing difficult experiences and psychological traumas, is a difficult process. There is both joy and pain, and lots of frustration about being in a controlled space, which is also full of people, diversity, and noise.

Figure 7. Representation of Giallo, by Ekku
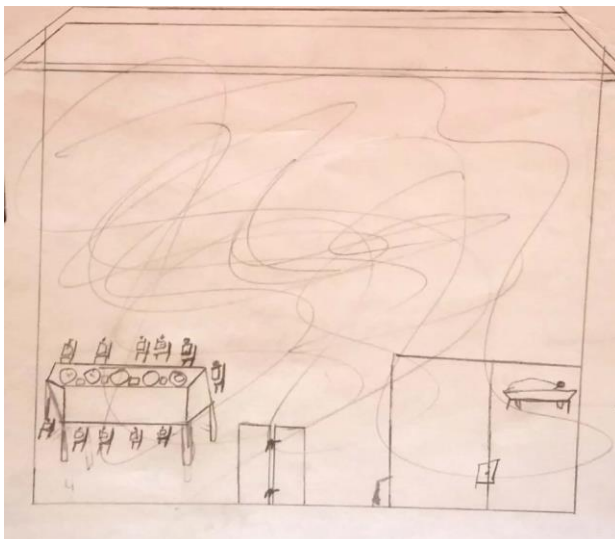
In the art workshop (see Chapter Three), in response to my request to draw something representing themselves, Ekku draws Giallo. He draws a picture of a table with people sitting around it to eat and

a room full of chaotic squiggles, shown in figure 7 above. The table, he says, represents the communal eating at Giallo, something he loved. It was '*like a home'; 'like a family eating together'*, he tells me as we discuss the drawings as a group. Staff on shift and young men would come together to eat around the large table in the dining room at fixed mealtimes. The family-like element of Giallo is referenced by all as a positive, important part. However, other elements are less pleasant: it is too hectic, too noisy, Ekku explains - as represented by the swirling squiggles, and there are too many rules. With up to five young men per room, it was difficult to sleep properly, and there was no privacy. This generates a chorus of complaints about the large numbers of people in Giallo, the overly strict rules, and the cheap pasta for food. Thus, the common refrain when asked to describe the centre: '*it is/was very good but is/was very difficult.'*

Ekku's drawing is a visual representation of the contradictory narratives that often emerged in young people's conversations about Giallo, the positive aspects of how they lived 'like brothers' and the family-like elements of some of the settings there, the warm relationships constructed with (some of) the centre staff, as well as the difficulties of the spatio-temporal control that they struggled with. Epitomising the duality of their status and the contradictions inherent in their 'home' space, a space opened to the constructed subject of the 'child migrant' (Bacchi, 2009). A gendered space; only for young men. Domopolitics is a useful analytic here to examine the workings of Giallo, a concept which draws attention to the proximity between domus, or home, and domo: to break in/ tame/ domesticate (Walters 2004), and reveals how the spatio-temporal control of the young men in the centre acts as a form of governance, of domesticating the unchildlike child, who through their unruly mobility is 'out of place'.

In the centre, the young men are subject not just to control over *when* to eat via the fixed mealtimes – but also *what* to eat. They are served pasta at least once, sometimes twice, a day. This is the cause of many complaints from the young men, none of whom are big fans of pasta, certainly not every day. Thus, it is that notions of home, belonging and identity are enacted through the eating of Italian food (pasta) as a form of reinforcing that the young men are in Italy now, part of the 'integration' process. The 'home' space is now another: '*This is Italy!*' as Luigi, one of Giallo's keyworkers told me when referring to the young men's complaints about the pasta. Luigi here reinforces the notion of his 'being-at-home' (Derrida, 2000) and the construct of a solely Italian culinary space. Here, we can see domopolitics at work; Giallo/ Italy is presented as Luigi's home, where he belongs naturally, and where, by definition, others do not (Walters, 2004, p. 241)*.* As such, the politics of food can be seen to represent the one-way form of integration, where 'others', in order to belong, must also eat pasta.

Indeed, as Paolo Novak argues, aside from being a cheap and easy meal, in Italy: '[food] has, perhaps more fundamentally, become a marker of a pure 'national identity' into which migrants should assimilate', thus it is that 'asylum seekers are asked to integrate into Italian society by eating pasta' (2017 np).

Michael Billig (1995) has drawn attention to the practical and 'banal' aspects of 'doing nationalism' found in the everyday, and the role of food in constructing national identity can be seen as part of this practice (Avieli, 2005; Porciani, 2019b). Italy and pasta are connected (Castellanos, 2011), with pasta being considered indisputably Italian (despite its contested origins) (Avieli, 2005). Indeed food acts as a powerful tool in the maintenance of 'Italianness' (Castellanos and Bergstresser, 2006). For example, historically Fascism used food in order to build an Italian national identity (Helstosky, 2004; Porciani, 2019a). Food can then feed into the way in which the nation is an 'imagined political community', as Benedict Anderson argued in 1983 (2006). A technique utilised by Matteo Salvini, leader of the far-right political party the Lega, as I discuss below.

The young men resent this, as expressed by Saaki, an eighteen-year old Gambian, who during the art workshop tells me that living in Giallo was difficult: '*because of the food. Their food, how they cook it. Everybody don't like it because we are African! […] it is difficult for us to eat, because every day pasta. Pasta, pasta, pasta every day! we can't eat that all the time!*'. This is jeeringly taken up by all the young men in the workshop, who all agree: '*Basta pasta!*' – 'enough pasta!' Echoing the findings of Paolo Novak (2017), who also cites a refugee who obsessively repeats the word 'pasta'; a linguistic replication of how they feel in relation to the constant presence of pasta on their dinner plate. Novak even entitled his article 'Basta pasta!', it being such a common complaint of migrants in Italy, noting how 'food is a central part' of the Italian reception system that 'privileges docile migrants and rewards their 'positive signs of integration'', such as eating pasta (Novak, 2017 np).

Rachel Humphris' ethnographic work with Roma families illustrates 'how the home becomes the site where the state is defined and reproduced' (2018, p. 1196). This can be seen in the workings of Giallo, where the national identity construction of pasta as inherently 'Italian', is something into which young refugees are expected to assimilate. This reveals the way in which the state is constructed through everyday practices. Abdelmalek Sayad (2004, p.89) talks of the suspicion of the 'other', the unknown in the presence of the nationals 'house', the nationals are dominant because they know themselves to be naturally 'at home' – the masters of the house as presented by the 'rules' and the food; '*This is Italy'* after all. The borders of the delineated nation/ house provide

protective shelter from outside interference – the assertation that we are 'at home' – a place to which the 'other' must be invited or tolerated. As Baker argues, '[h]ospitality, it seems, is forever caught between the particularity that is the stranger who comes, and the universalizing move whereby the stranger, in order to be welcomed, must first be translated into the host's own idiom'. Pasta is a means of universalizing the young men to be more 'Italian'(2009, p. 121).

When young people leave the centre after demonstrating sufficient 'positive integration' and are set up in the semi-independent apartments (see figure 1) one of the most common positive changes they mention was the fact that you could cook your own food. As Saaki tells me: *'No one will force you take pasta […] For us, we normally cook rice, couscous and spaghetti sometimes…'.* The use of the word '*force'* in reference to the pasta served at the communal meals in Giallo revealing once again the culinary imposition of the hosts 'Italian' ways on the young men. A biopolitical form of care which imposes the hosts notion of 'being-at-home' (Derrida 2000), without acknowledging the multiplicity of home and belongings. The imposition of integration through pasta is then rejected by the young men upon leaving the centre. Outside Giallo they seek to create their own culinary space and tastes, which then marks them out as other.

Here again a discrepancy between the so-called focus on 'independence' - a key word in the discourses of the staff in Giallo and the reality in practice. Why not encourage the young men to cook different kinds of food to meet different tastes? This would widen notions of 'home' to be a more inclusive space where they can 'make themselves at home' (Derrida, 2000). Instead, the Italian state is reproduced through the culinary impositions and meaning-making of the pasta served. The use of food as a marker of national identity is evident in the social media strategies of Matteo Salvini, at the time Interior Minister, who regularly posts photos of himself indulging in particular well-known Italian brands or regional specialities, such as *arancini* in Sicily.[27] This is a tailored approach to portray himself as a 'man of the [Italian] people', reinforcing the boundaries of the nation through its food and imaginaries (Anderson, 2006 [1983]). A form of culinary nationalism (Horowitz, 2019) and an exclusionary mechanism which draws boundaries around who can be included in the 'Community of Value' (Anderson 2013). The young men also face this exclusionary logic when they try to access the private rental market upon leaving the SPRAR system. As Chapter Eight will discuss, those construed as 'other', who do not eat the same food as the [Italian] people are not always received hospitably, but can face exclusion from the city. [28]

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[27] Deep fried rice balls traditionally filled with meat ragu and mozzarella.
[28] An evocative depiction of the role of food in identities is given in SA Smythe's (2019, p.10) analysis of Igiaba

These ways in which notions of 'home' as a governing practice is implemented in Giallo is part of the more problematic nature of the space. These examples reveal the limitation of hospitality for Derrida. The host is thus someone who has the power to give to the stranger, but while remaining in control. This constitutes the aporia of hospitality for Derrida, as it is not possible to open up hospitality 'without reaffirming: this is mine, I am at home, you are welcome in my home, without any implication of 'make yourself at home' but on condition that you observe the rules of hospitality by respecting the being-at-home of my home, the being-itself of what I am' (Derrida, 2000, p. 14). In this sense, the internal space of Giallo becomes a replica of reinforcing the Italian state and the culinary impositions as a marker of assimilation, rather than a more inclusive space in which 'home' and belonging can involve multiple identities. However, despite these limitations, Giallo is construed by the young men as a positive space. The following sections then present why this is so.

Care and camps: 'for those who cannot take care of themselves'

All the young men in Giallo referred to reception centres as 'camps'. With regard to Verde, 'camp' was a positive word. In contrast, the camps in South Italy were invariably recounted as dysfunctional places. The difference between Giallo and camps in the South, described by those who left them as 'abject spaces', is the focus of Chapter Five. Here, I focus on the construction of Giallo by the young men as the place for a 'better future', and thus a space of resistance (Isin and Rygiel, 2007), or hospitable space, albeit with limitations. I also adopt the word camp in recognition of the young men's terminology and Paolo Novak's (2019) assertion that reception centres should equally be considered places of confinement and part of the migration regime. Ethnographic attention on Giallo reveals the complexity and ambivalence of social relations with this 'camp', and thus how camps extend beyond spaces of exception, as per Agamben's conceptualisation of these spaces (Mountz, 2011; Picker, Greenfields and Smith, 2015; Sigona, 2015; Campesi, 2018a; Martin, Minca and Katz, 2019).

Instead, as Doreen Massey (2001) evidences, the spatio-temporality of place is instrumental and

Scego's, a Black Italian writer of Somali descent, short story *Sausages* (2019). A Muslim woman, born in Italy, attempts to cook and eat pork sausages, a symbol of Italian local cuisine and identity. She finds this act, that 'was supposed to bring comforting assimilation, belonging, and identity', is instead 'recognized as aggressive and dehumanizing, something that marks her further as an outsider in her inability to consume'. For an evocative depiction of the way disgust is culturally produced and infuses city stratification see Rhys-Taylor (2013, 2016).

social relations are interconnected with the architecture of place. Giallo is thus more than a space of exception, of biopolitical care and control (Redfield, 2005). Instead, Giallo can be understood as an assemblage of people, institutions, organisations, the built environment and the relations between them that then produce particular values and practices (Ramadan, 2013). As Ramadan maintains, camp space is produced by the social relations within it, and the triad of camp, migrants and the relations between them continue to reproduce each other over time (2013, p. 70). How these social relations play out in Giallo depended much upon the performance of the young men and, as I discuss below, the normative construct of the good child 'deserving' of support.

Justice describes a camp as '*a place where orphans live, well… [laughs] somebody that cannot take care of himself. Or somebody that just come newly, and don't know anything, where to live, to move forward for to start his life […] It is a good place, a very good place*'. Although he makes the distinction between the centre he left in Sicily, which was not a good place but a dysfunctional holding space. Camps are then for those who, as Justice refers to them: '*cannot take care' of themselves*. But this is said with a laugh, in acknowledgement of the situatedness of the concept. He has been 'taking care of' himself for years prior to crossing the threshold of Europe/Italy/ Giallo. This is further acknowledged in his bemusement over why staff from Giallo 'followed' him everywhere in Verde. Even when he wants to do things alone as a child he cannot, the rigid border of childhood being enforced.

The notion of care, and who can do the caring is also apparent in the wording of Edrisa, who when referring to himself, states: '*right now, I can't take care of myself you know – like, to have these chances that I have right now, like I am going to work [internship], I am going to school; without [Giallo] here I wouldn't be able to have all these chances*'. His narrative acknowledges that, in the Italian setting, he becomes a subject dependent upon others (adults) for his care. In this context, he '*can't take care of [himself]*', as the system does not permit it for minors. When I question this, he replies that is because he is not working, revealing the importance of employment. Thus it is that as an uninvited guest he must request hospitality 'in a language which by definition is not his own' (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000). Something that he, like Justice, clearly recognises. When I ask Edrisa to describe a camp, he replies after some thought: '*There are people that help migrants. Like those who can help you and give you a start. […] People take care of you and protect you.*' Edrisa is here replicating the normative concept of the subject of the child as in need of protection and care.

Alcinda Honwana has identified young men in Africa as being in a status of *waithood*: the experience

of youth who are 'no longer children in need of care, but … are still unable to become independent adults' (2014, p.19). A status they inhabit owing to socio-economic factors. Yet in the move to Europe to resist this suspension, young men such as Justice and Edrisa are transformed normatively and legally into 'minors' still in need of care, not allowed to work. Young men who must be '*escorted',* as Justice notes, to appointments across Verde, despite having crossed great swathes of the African continent themselves. As they cross the threshold of Europe they become 'minors' (Petti, 2004; Vacchiano, 2014; Jiménez-Alvarez, 2015). Justice complains that even if he wanted to do things alone as a 'child' he cannot; he is constituted as a vulnerabilised subject, a 'child', dependent upon state and adult care. This is the 'problem' (Bacchi 2009) of the 'unaccompanied minor', which leads to specific paternalistic responses which do not recognise the young men's abilities.

Care has often been conceptualized and enacted in paternalistic ways, also because dominant Western understandings and structuring of childhood are based on assumptions that children should be cared for, rather than do the caring (Rosen and Newberry 2018). Children in societies of the Global North are seen as dependent on adults, as Justice says they are to be 'taken care of'. The hospitality of the space is thus very much on the terms of the host/ adult (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000; Derrida, 2005). The hospitality received by the young men in Giallo is thus dependent upon them performing the 'minor', adopting the language of the host. The next section examines how through a combination of playing the game and the policies and practices implemented in Giallo, the young men may move on from waithood (Honwana, 2014) and access 'ladders', or training and post-eighteen support.

Protection: Rules, ordered time and reciprocal hospitality: 'when in Rome…'

> 'In our society any man who does not weep at his mother's funeral runs the risk of being sentenced to death.' [By this] I only meant that the hero of my book is condemned because he does not play the game'
> Albert Camus, commenting on his book *The Outsider* (Carroll, 2008, p. 27)

As Justice observes, in Italy *'[B]ambinos [children] have rules, adults have rules*…' noting that when he was seventeen, and thus legally a child, he was subject to restricted mobility and temporal constraint. The daily life experiences of the young men in Giallo as *children* are produced and controlled through concepts of age (James and Prout, 2003, p. 222). They are subject to the power relations which delineate the centre workers (as adults) as having control over time itself (Hendrick,

2003) as well as their spatial mobility. When Justice turned eighteen, he entered spatio-temporal freedom: As an adult he can '*go anywhere'*. This enhances the situatedness of the concept of childhood and the rigid binary between child and adult.

Minors, being 'underage' and therefore in requirement of adult care and protection are both spatially and temporally controlled by the home space; as such these young men are held temporally in childhood, a space controlled by adults (Gardner, 2012). On entering the territorial space of the Italian reception system, mobility and temporal control is necessarily surrendered by the 'minor'. When I ask Edrisa, who is seventeen at the time, what he thinks about having an 11pm curfew he replies:

'*we are all underage, and that is the law. So that was the rules! So, if they say you have to come 11, you come 11. So, you are protected by them. At times, you just wouldn't want it, but you have to have patience you know. …*
I ask him: '*Was it easy to have patience?'*
Edrisa: '*at times, no, because, living alone without your family, sometimes it is really not easy. Because you are not really free to do whatever you want. […] you go forward and try to learn about […] the life here. Because it is a different life from yours. Like a proper system, like the saying when you go to Rome you do like Romans, so it is like all over the world.'*

Despite not necessarily wanting these rules, Edrisa's account reveals the patience and performance that the young men adopt '*when in Rome'* in the '*proper system'* of Italy. The disparities between Africa and Europe being very much a feature in the young men's discourses. While there is frustration of these rules as overly restrictive and unrepresentative of the capabilities of these young men who have made it to Italy, they also represent a symbol of difference; of being in the 'elsewhere' (Vacchiano, 2014). Rules are necessary for minors, who require protection under the rule-bound 'system' of Italy, a proper system. This is contrasted with Africa, a place where there are no rules, where you can be shot, and there is war, as Justice reflects. The migration script applied to the arrival country a means of reinforcing the validity of the migratory project (Sayad, 2004), the 'new start'. This means of reinforcing the reterritorialization in the elsewhere, involving a comparison between positive and negative, featured regularly in the young men's narratives, despite their pride at being African.

This is the trade-off, a tactical manoeuvre to 'do like Romans', to 'play the game' and be the minor

so as to access the support provided by Giallo, which is less available to those who do not perform the child in need of care. In response, the young men explain that Giallo '*make[s] you be a rightful person'*, as Justice puts it. Stressing that he feels without Giallo he would '*still be in the street, dragging and fighting to be a great person'*. Here Justice reflects on his being cared for by his 'helpers' and the recognition and valorisation this gave him. In referring to the rules in this way, the young men evoke Ghassan Hage's reflections on the pedestrian crossing as a 'social gift', a space which leads to mutual obligation (2003, p. 148).[29] This concept of mutual obligation, which Hage describes as 'an ethical structure of reciprocity that can only exist and be reproduced in societies that valorise, […] *honour* their members'(2003, p. 148), can be seen in the workings of Giallo. Through these socio-ethical gifts, the 'rules' implemented within Giallo, the young men are made to feel recognised and looked after and hence reciprocate.

Further, as a Christian, Justice's narrative is shot through with religious connotations. Indeed, for almost all the young men, irrespective of which religion, faith is a centrally important element in their lives. Faith and support from the right people can help you '*not be the wrong way'*, as Justice contends. As Amadou's drawing of the wrestler (see Chapter 3) also reflects, faith is always with him and aided him not lose himself to the 'wickedness' he faced. A reminder of the difficulties these marginalised young men face in finding a 'straight future' and the risk of having to turn to illicit means of obtaining income that it feels is always around the corner. A reminder too of the importance of religion/ faith in their lives.

The ordering of time, the domestic clock that they become subject to within the centre is both constraint and welcomed as a sign of order in the narrative of the 'elsewhere'. The order of Italy is often contrasted with the disorder of Africa, particularly Libya, a place all the young men had passed through and/or spent time working in. Amadou often refers to Libya as a place of horror in his accounts. Libya is a place where, he tells me, you leave in a truck in the morning without knowing where you are going, and when, or even if, you will return. A temporal vacuum: a place of chaos with no rules and where the very temporality of your life is in question. Amadou's descriptions of Libya are in direct contrast to his description of the first (primary) reception centre he was placed in in Verde where, he tells me:

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[29] The connection I make here is only with the concept of the rules and the valorising of the subject that Hage draws attention to in his Lebanese interlocutor's experience of the pedestrian crossing in Australia, not the reference to the colonial land theft that Hage also uses it to symbolise (2003, p. 152).

'They help you [in the reception centres] in many ways. They help you at first to respect time. If you come to Blu, the first thing you see is order. [...] in the morning they wake you up. Then everything is put in order. You have your breakfast; A good breakfast. Then you have to do your chores. They help you and they will teach you and this continues. When it is time for lunch they tell you the time to eat. So, if you are out, you come home to eat... now at least you sleep well, on time. You are taking care of yourself because you are clean. Like you are beginning to take responsibility of yourself'.

Amadou's narrative of ordered time is one of difference, of occupying a different spatio-temporal zone to that he inhabited previously. A space in which time is ordered, there are rules and with rules you can be protected and have a certainty over your own time and being, even if they are restraining. Fixed times for meals is considered important in instilling routine, seen as needed in lives of children in care to combat the chaos of where they came from (Punch and McIntosh, 2014). Foucault (1995) draws attention to the use of the timetable as a mechanism of disciplinary power to bring order to multiplicity and uncontrolled movements, and a reflection of the meaning of time itself, from contesting idleness to maximising the use of time. A form of governance through domesticity (cf. Walters, 2004). The young men's movements in Giallo are controlled by the timetable, they must respect fixed mealtimes and the curfew, but this routine also provides temporal certainty. The ordering of time produces the (un)freedom but in return you are '*protected by them'*, as Edrisa says referring to staff at Giallo.

And yet, these narratives can change, reflecting the shifting subjectivities of the young men. Many of whom worked in Libya and enjoyed the freedom it gave them, where they were not subject to being controlled as 'children'. In the same conversation where Tayo describes Libya as a 'hell', he also tells me that Libya was 'cool' because he had access to guns and money; he was working, '*living a good life',* had his own apartment and was looking after himself. He had no need of workers such as in Giallo to take care of him. '*It was hell, but it was cool'* he tells me. Highlighting the contradictions at play in narratives that suit a purpose and something that repeat conversations over time can evidence (see Chapter 3).

Performing the 'good child': 'they will see the future in my eyes'

In line with Hall's (2010; 2012) and Khosravi's (2009) findings in detention centres, a juvenilizing, yet caring discourse emerges in centre staff's constitution of young men. They cannot do things [wash

clothes, cook, find their way to appointments] without Giallo. A paternalistic form of hospitality which encourages 'victimcy', defined by Utas as a self-representation of victimhood (2005). This is then a conscious tactic which collapses the opposition between victimhood and agency (Utas, 2005, p. 408). Victimcy as a form of narrative structures the presentation of self in particular ways and cannot be detached from the context in which the presentation occurs (Utas, 2005). Victimhood is at once encouraged and produced by the workings of Giallo, but also source of complaint. An overly rigid and reductionist conceptualisation of 'children' as passive victims limits the space to which the young men in Giallo can engage their own capabilities. As Justice says, if you '*have sense'* then *'you have to ask them'*, otherwise the centre staff will consider you to be *'somebody that doesn't want to do anything*'. As such, hospitality is received through playing the 'rules of the game'. Thus, just as the mothers in Rachel Humphris' research perform 'good motherhood' to secure their families' position (2016), so the young men engage in victimcy and perform 'good childhood' tactically so as to move towards securing their 'better future'.

Mikhail Bakhtin argues that human beings are shaped in and through the words they use: consciousness and ideology develop in 'the process of selectively assimilating the words of others' (1981, p. 341) – as we can see Justice and Edrisa do in taking on the role of the minor who needs to be 'taken care of'. This is an active role, the part they must play to access support. Such elements of resistance and resilience have been highlighted in other literature in which young people subject to immigration control negotiate the spaces open to them, performing certain roles (O'Higgins, 2012; Chase, 2013; Allsopp et al., 2014). Such tactics, as others have noted in relation to subjects subject to forms of discipline and control (Hall, 2012), can be understood as tactics in de Certeau's (1984) terms as 'opportunistic'. For de Certeau, tactics are 'tricky and stubborn procedures that elude discipline without being outside the field in which it is exercised' (1984, p.96). They temporarily subvert, but cannot overturn dominant relations of power (de Certeau, 1984). The young men adopt these tactics, utilizing the status of the 'minor' and the expected performance of this child status to achieve access to training and support, the 'ladders', to put them in good stead for adulthood.

Cristina, a long-term staff member at Giallo, tells me that those young men who 'behave well', receive extra support as they have shown they deserve it, they are focused on 'integrating', and therefore it 'makes sense' to help them go further. Those who fail to perform in this manner, well 'there is nothing you can do with them', she tells me.[30] Malik, for example, (discussed in Chapter 3) in his failure to engage or 'play the game' is excluded from support. He will leave Giallo without any

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[30] Fieldwork notes, June 2018

ladders, likely returning to a space of marginality he sought to escape through his migrancy. Thus, a tacit acknowledgement that behaviour regulates progress, evidencing the moral underpinnings of hospitality, is then reinforced in the resource poor setting. If young men carry out their chores and duties within the centre, performing the 'grateful migrant' and the 'good child', then they are allowed to move to the semi-independent apartments.

In part, this can be understood as a problematic narrative of hospitality based on a legitimizing discourse of deservingness (van Oorschot, 2000; Chauvin and Garcés-Mascareñas, 2014; Holmes and Castañeda, 2016). The normalising processes at work in Giallo that subject the young men to the objectifying frame of 'good childhood' they are expected to perform may fit the techniques identified by Foucault whereby the individual is recruited into actively participating in their own subjugation as a 'docile body' (1995). However, it is more than this, as those young men who actively 'play the game' and consciously perform this role may contest their subjugation; they may use the space for their future orientation and thus hold on to hope (Hage, 2003). Some, such as Adama, see the rules and obligations as a means of exchange: '*Like you do a good thing for someone, he do you a good thing […] So I am doing many thing to make them [the workers] happy, so that they will continue helping me. Because of they will see the future in my eyes.*'

This for him is a reciprocal arrangement, in which good behaviour is rewarded. Adama explains what happens when you are placed in the first reception centre in Verde:

'*they take you there to check something before you enter Giallo. So there you have to learn so many things, […] how to clean, how to help cooking, and then if they see that you are good, they will transfer you*.
I ask: 'so you have to be good?
Adama: '*yeah you have to be good. You have to show them: yes, I deserve to do something. I don't want to just come here and every day sleep. So, if they saw that on you then they will transfer you.*'
I ask what he thinks about this, he replies:
'*Yeah, it is a good idea. Because you have to activate […]. You don't have to sit in one place waiting for someone to work for you. No, you are the one who have to work for yourself. So that is why I support their life there, how they treat people there*.'

Adama's presentation of the self as the 'good child' is a purposeful tactic, similar to Utas' notion of victimcy (2005), and a particular narrative means of storying himself. His narrative embodies the

recognition of the need to show deservingness, as this leads to access to support. This notion of exchange is formalised via an official contract that the young people sign with Giallo. The agreement details what they will receive in terms of assistance and what they are expected to provide in return (e.g. go to school, behave respectfully…). As such, bad behaviour is seen as a violation of moral obligations to the host within the Derridean concept of hostipitality (Khosravi, 2009; Hall, 2010, 2012). This is an issue of tension between staff and young men.

In order to receive extra support, young men need to 'deserve' it; to show that they are performing their side of the 'contract' with Giallo. A form of gift exchange (Mauss, 2002). The rigid construct of good childhood which underpins the migration regime, deriving from a dichotomising moral economy of legitimacy that distinguishes between 'worthy' and 'unworthy,' 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' migrants (Watters and Fassin 2001; Watters 2007), shapes and limits the space available to young men in Giallo to be other than 'good children' dependent upon workers. Yet, as Adama shows, through their own tactics, they negotiate this space, creating room for manoeuvre to access the support they believe they have a right to.

Chiara Galli draws attention, in the US context, to unaccompanied minors' embodiment of expected behaviours and how reception centres, with their dual function of care and control are 'spaces of legal consciousness formation where staff teach youths, not only about U.S. laws, but also about desirable behaviors expected from future citizens and 'good' rather than deviant teenagers' (2019b, p. 8). Similarly, so the young men in Giallo take the 'minor' role consciously as a means of portraying their 'good behaviour' and therefore deservingness of a higher level of support. However, differently to Galli's (2019b) findings, the young men in Giallo do not distance themselves through stigmatizing other young migrants, but rather contend that it is the system itself which produces 'bad' behaviour, or illegal activities through lack of alternatives. As such, the subject is not *per se* 'bad', rather it is the circumstance which produce him (or her) as such.

As the work of Enrica Rigo (2007) evidences, borders construct social relations, just as in Giallo the social relations between staff and young people, are fluid and changing but derive from the space and normative construct of good childhood and its bordering effect. Dikeç, Clark and Barnett argue that it is:

> 'the idea of a 'visitation' rather than an 'invitation'—that constitutes hospitality as a temporization: not just an event that takes place in time, but one that actually generates or gives time. … Attending to the temporization of hospitality brings us back to the question of

the appropriate timespan of a sojourn, and the circumstances under which these limits might be overlooked, exceeded, or forgotten' (2009, p. 11).

Some such bonds that exceed the threshold of childhood and can create enduring hospitality, assisting the young men for their future, are discussed in the next section.

Like-family: 'I was living good, I was living fine'

The notion of family, as referenced by Ekku in his drawing (figure 7, above) and the resultant discussion that arose during the workshop, emerged strongly in many of the conversations I had with the young men during my time at Giallo. Both in terms of the difficulties and loneliness of being without your family, and the pleasure of the substitute family they (oftentimes) found in Giallo, and some other centres; reflecting the positive bonds of care (Punch, 2012; Sirriyeh, 2013), and thus the importance of such relationships.

Amadou describes Giallo as: '*like family, because when you enter here all the operatori [keyworkers] and the people they welcome you to the family. You eat together, you work together [...] There is a lot of togetherness.*'

Young men viewed some people (unspecified who) working in the centre as just doing it as a job, not having patience and not really being interested in them; '*smiling not with their hearts'*, as Tayo tells me. Nonetheless, whilst young men clearly engaged in performances of the 'grateful migrant' and the good 'childlike child', the spontaneous joy I witnessed in their encounters with some workers, the evidently established 'family-like' bonds, was irrefutable. For example, in the middle of our conversation, Emmanuel, who had left Giallo some months ago by this time, spots Leonardo's, the manager of Giallo, car pulling into the car park the other side of the park to where we are sitting. Emmanuel was really happy to spot him, excitedly pointing him out to me. After calling his mobile to see if Leonardo had time to meet him, Emmanuel ran across the park to greet Leonardo.

Or when Justice and I are speaking together outside Giallo, we bump into the manager of the previous centre that hosted him. Justice's face lights up, a smile spreading across it. His pleasure at seeing this man is evident, and he clearly has a lot of affection for him. They hug and speak warmly. After he has gone, Justice says of this man: '*he took me as a father, he took me as a son. I was living good, I was living fine.*' When I ask how he was like a father, he explains:

'in everything he does. […] Any time I used to ask him for something he do it for me. Any time I met him, I see him in the street, just like today, he will tell me I should come and see him. …. So, I just go there and visit him, and go back home. You know, he is a very good man.'

When I accompany Anwar, a fourteen-year old Moroccan to a hospital appointment, we bump into the same man Justice was so pleased to see. The effect is similar. Anwar jumps up from where he is sitting to greet him, his eyes shining with pleasure. They engage in affectionate conversation. After he leaves, Anwar tells me he is '*like a father'* and a '*good man'*, echoing Justice's words. All the young men in Giallo spoke of the Italian teacher, Maria, as 'like a second mother'. The warmth and affection she expressed towards them reciprocated and welcomed. This reflects Ala Sirriyeh's (2013) findings from a UK study with refugee children in foster placements where some young people and key workers established new 'like-family' (Mason and Tipper 2008 in Sirriyeh, 2013, p. 8) bonds, which were important to the young people's well-being. For Amadou, Maria, in particular, provided much support and care:

'When she just came, she was very free you know, she's just laughing, she will greet you 'Ciao!' So, in Sicily people run away and then you come here, and people are hugging you, saying nice words. I was like 'wow – oh it is true! There are nice people around!''

McIntosh et al. in reference to UK children's homes, draw attention to the ambiguities of children in care, positing that 'actually knowing the individual child' is of course a crucial part of care (2010, p. 301). Thus 'watching over' and being 'watched over' can be an important part of any care context and be a positive force young people's lives, particularly those who have experienced neglect; surveillance then, can be part of therapeutic practice (McIntosh *et al.*, 2010). Justice states he was *'living good', 'living fine'* with the 'father-like' man. He also refers to his '*helpers'* as the people that brought him up, who he can '*never let down'*, portraying the ongoing relationship that has been created and his sense of reciprocal return to these people. Giallo provides space for this ethical structure of care, which offers the young men the 'gift of valorisation and recognition' (Hage, 2003, p. 147). Maria reconfirms Amadou's faith in people after the 'wickedness' he experiences on his journey, as he told me many times. Her welcome warms him and reinforces his humanity in contrast to the othering he was subject to in Libya and Sicily.

This, as Dikeç, Clark and Barnett surmise, could be a form of hospitality which can bring 'encounters

with others that do not simply only occur *in* time or space but are themselves generative of new times and spaces' (2009, p. 1), which can thus transcend the threshold of hospitality, and childhood. These types of encounters can resist *hostipitality* and create space for care, generosity, and recognition (Berg and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2018). Encounters which can and do occur within Giallo, but not necessarily. Whether they do or not is based upon a relational element, and increasingly, primarily, for those who observe the rules of the game and maintain their moral obligations to the host. Family and continuing bonds are positive aspects for young people; but in the increasingly resource poor sector it seems such bonds are left more open to those who 'play by the rules' and perform the 'good child'. Those who do not/ cannot perform the 'good child', such as Malik, risk being left by the wayside. As Humphris and Sigona's examination of the UK reception system found, restructuring and budget limitations meant that 'previous basic standards become 'utopian goals'' (2019a, p. 323). Whilst not at this level, the reductive shift following budget cuts was apparent in Giallo.

As Friese observes, the language of reception in Italy reiterates the language of hospitality where the migrant is construed as guest ('*ospite*') to be housed and taken care of, and yet as a potential enemy, be kept under surveillance (2009, p.333). Nonetheless, this tension can be transcended. Giuseppe and Leonardo, the manager of Giallo, both confirm, when I ask them individually about it, that the notion of hospitality, expressed through the medium of *accoglienza* - reception in Italian - is for them a reciprocal relation.[31] Echoing Friese who, critiquing the Derridean notion of absolute hospitality, contends that instead hospitality is a reciprocal relation: 'it is the host who *receives* as much as the guest *gives* himself to the host, if hospitality is to come into being and *endure*', whereas 'absolute hospitality that suspends reciprocity becomes a site of a remarkable void and a limit to hospitality' (2009, p.63, my emphasis).

Another key stakeholder I interviewed, an immigration expert, refers to the need for hospitality to be ongoing. He tells me that in his view '*accogliere'* signifies giving someone a future.[32] It must continue beyond the borders of the reception system itself, and give the subject the requisite ability to make a life beyond mere 'bare life', involving social inclusion. Hospitality that is temporally constrained to an 'emergency' response, and which cannot continue or endure, is limited. The young men see Giallo as a space of productive time where they have the opportunity to '*make a future'*, reflecting Ghassan Hage's assertion that hospitality for asylum seekers relates hope (2003, p.

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[31] Fieldwork interviews, May 2018
[32] Fieldwork interview, July 2018

9). In this sense, Giallo can be seen as providing hope, through post-eighteen support or 'ladders'.

Conclusion

Giallo as a 'home' site for the young men represents a space they actively sought, and which serves a purpose in their migrancy. Ethnographic focus on Giallo evidences how, in performing the 'good child' and seeking a place they can find the 'life they want', young men engage in a strategic exchange for the gift of hospitality. Here, in the routine and regular rhythms of the centre, the passage of time, of life itself, is predictable and ordered. The temporal flow is controlled through the protection mechanisms for minors. The young men are very aware of this: To access protection, you must become a 'minor' and thus 'observe the rules of hospitality by respecting the being-at-home' (Derrida, 2000, p. 14) of Giallo and its keyworkers. In doing so, they adopt tactics to 'play the game' and avoid not being seen as deserving of support.

The tensions between care and control embedded within the humanitarian logic that underpins the European migration regime can be seen at play in the space of Giallo. This, formerly a space for youths exiting prison, reveals the interconnections between the control of disorder and the imposition of order; forms of therapeutic biopolitical interventions. However, the manner in which the young men interact with Giallo and the support provided to the 'minor' creates a space of hospitality which can exceed the threshold of childhood and endure, providing them with (limited) ladders to construct a future. The temporal certainty imposed in Giallo is at once restraining and yet productive; it enables the young men to feel a security and predictability over their time and that is being used productively, to be able to achieve their migrancy aspirations, and their 'better future'.

The care can be ongoing in the family-like bonds that are formed, providing affection and feelings of belonging, a positive form of being 'looked after'. They are no longer in a space of 'nontime', when time is either arbitrarily wasted or simply negated (Bourdieu 2000), nor of temporal uncertainty, as in Libya. The timetable and rules provide stability and order to the chaos they sought to escape and a base for temporal productivity to create a future. Something some of the young men actively moved to Giallo to achieve, as the next Chapter will discuss. Through the socio-ethical gifts (Hage, 2003) or the 'rules' implemented within Giallo, the young men may feel recognised and looked after and hence reciprocate. Their actions are *both* a tactic *and* a reciprocal response to the care received in Giallo; the tensions between care and control mirrored in their actions.

Temporally placed within childhood, and spatially within centres such as Giallo their abilities and

strategic decision-making processes in seeking a migratory project are not always acknowledged, Giallo can thus be construed as a (limited) 'hospitable space' a space of resistance where the young men can access support which transcends the border of childhood. A space that can set them up with ladders to move forwards, with more chance of avoiding the snakes and to have hope for a 'better future'. This Chapter has evidenced why the young men consider Giallo to be 'the place', why they stayed (still) in this centre which, unlike many reception centres, can be considered a hospitable and future focused space. The next Chapter examines the tactics they adopt as 'minors' to access Giallo. As the chapters unfold, I explore the promise of the ladders accessed.

Chapter 5. The 'Wrestlers': challenging spatio-temporal controls via unruly mobility

Saaki – 'they waste my time' 'when you don't have documents, your life in Europe is useless'

Saaki and I first meet when I accompany him to one of the many appointments for vaccinations the young men in Giallo are required to attend. As a seventeen-year old, and thus a legal minor at this time, he requires a keyworker to attend appointments with him. Like many of the West Africans in Verde, he is wearing an Africa map pendant around his neck – carrying on his chest the shape of the continent he has left behind. He is from The Gambia and has been in Italy nearly two years. He describes his time in Italy to me:

'since I came [to Italy] that time my life was somehow bad. […] Because my first place in Sicily that place is not a good place. I was there [about] five months'

He refers to a reception centre for minors in Sicily where he was first placed upon arrival at sixteen. He was unhappy in this centre because of the lack of education and:

'Because that hotel is in the bush. … There is no people. There is no company around us. Only a farm. [..] apart from that, nothing. Where we stay the town is 7km away. Just when we are going there, we just normally used to work, and go and come […]'

More importantly, he stresses: *'they waste my time like this. Because since I was there, I didn't have document'*

He complained and was transferred to a reception centre in a northern Italian city. Here, again, he was unhappy with the lack of documentation or post-eighteen support, so he ran away to Verde. He arrived at Verde through recommendations from friends and people he met when on the boat to Italy from Libya: *'I used to communicate with them in Facebook. I asked them how is Verde? I am here [another northern city], how is Sicilia, Napoli, Roma...?'* All the discussions, recommendations, warnings that criss-cross social media networks as (mis)information is exchanged, compared, utilised. Verde is recommended:

'Ah Verde! They tell me Verde is a nice place. Just before I came here, I decide to go to [another northern Italian city] first, but the train ticket cost too much, so I came to here, Verde.'

Initially, he was told at the police station that he must return to the centre he came from. But he refused:

'I told them, no I am not going back with them because I don't like the place, every day I have stress. […] there was one boy he was from Egypt, when the boy reach 18 then they send the boy away! […] They tell him now […] you are no more underage, then find your life by yourself. Eh! I tell them 'how can that be possible?!' 'Without no documents, without no nothing. Where are you going?! Without no helps. It is crazy. So, I tell them 'next year I am going to be 18, so before that let me find my documents where they can help me even if I have 18 years.' Just there are some places, when you have 18 years you can stay in the camp two years or three years or less than that, one year or something. […] So that's why I decided to come to Verde and have a good future …'

Saaki is placed in Giallo in Verde where post-eighteen support is implemented and he is granted humanitarian protection, so gets his documents: '*I am so proud!*' he tells me:

'because, even you have work you don't have document still now you will think your life is useless! For us Africans, when you don't have documents, your life in Europe is useless! Because here every step you need documents, if you want to buy something, they will ask documents, so when you don't have that your life is useless.'

Aside from his anxieties about work and post-eighteen life, racism is the main issue he struggles with. Saaki tells me that racism is bad in Italy, even in Verde, although it is better here than the South. He has never experienced racism in The Gambia: '*never before!*' he tells me, sounding shocked. He is clearly disturbed by his encounters with racism, encounters such as people moving away from him on the bus as if he smells, or people automatically assuming he is begging for money if he approaches them on the street. He tells me he would rather be back in The Gambia, if he could. Maybe, when his 'problem', as he refers to the reason he left The Gambia, is solved, he will go back. His plumbing qualification will be valid and he should be able to find work. '*It is better there*.' There is no racism, he tells me. '*It is not easy the life here*,' he says. He says this a lot, and sighs. Still, he tells me he will assess things in Italy once he finishes his plumbing course and decide whether or not to stay. Maybe he will go to Germany instead: '*where there is work and the pay is decent, not like Italy. In Italy the economy is bad so there is little work and the pay is no good*.'

Introduction

Saaki's narrative presents his reasoning for moving from the South of Italy to Verde, in the North, a movement which he hoped would lead him to achieve documentation and access to education and training, prior to turning eighteen. Saaki exposes themes of temporal suspense, segregation and particularly, the stress of being undocumented in the two centres he leaves. He deems both these centres unsatisfactory so moves forward until he reaches Verde. He enacts spatial disobedience (De Genova, Garelli and Tazzioli, 2018) to find a place he felt he could stay to achieve his migrancy aspirations, access post-eighteen support, and where he could, and did, become documented. His mobility here is both autonomous and yet, in purposefully using his 'minor' status, he remains within the system to access the support available to minors.

Saaki's narrative is clearly underscored by an acute awareness that the border of adulthood is a legal-temporal threshold by which certain objectives must be in place in order to be able to manage by yourself, as presented by the story of the boy who was forced to leave the centre at eighteen. He thus draws attention to the practical implementation of the 'biographical border' (Mai, 2014) and the lived reality for young people in the migration regime where, as Chapter Two evidenced, childhood is a bounded space. As an 'adult', outside of this space you must '*find your life by yourself*'. For Saaki this is '*crazy(!)*'. Hence, his continued movement until he reaches Verde, a city where the Zampa Law, which provides for post-eighteen support for unaccompanied minors (see Introduction), is implemented. However, as he recounts, he may take flight again to another country once he has qualified as a plumber, expressing the precarious and temporary feel of his stay in Italy and the way in which flight becomes the answer to difficulties experienced. This Chapter examines how the young men utilise the subject position of the minor, as constructed by the regime and imposed upon them, to achieve their migrancy aims.

In presenting their use of the 'minor' status, I do not wish to reify this status as one of protected support. In Chapter Two I outlined the ahistorical nature of protected childhood. My aim here, is to show the (limited) opportunities gained by these young men through their negotiation of the subject position of the 'unaccompanied minor' to obtain the best support they can for their future, including post-eighteen support. They engage in tactics to use the space granted to the 'minor' via the protection and mobility it affords. Through their mobility, they contest and challenge the imposed objectification of this subject as a mere victim in receipt of aid (Fassin, 2007b; Ticktin, 2016b; Cheney and Sinervo, 2019) which is reinforced by the reception system.

Issues of agency and temporality that are so often absent in discussions around child and youth migrants are addressed, thus enhancing knowledge of youth migrancy. I recognise that agency can be found in how people understand the temporality of how one thing leads to another (causation) and what is possible (Greenhouse, 1996 in Gunaratnam, 2013, p. 250). Thus, my intention in this chapter is not to idealise agency as individual autonomy, and I acknowledge the importance, as Yasmin Gunaratnam, drawing upon the work of anthropologist Carol Greenhouse, highlights, of the more banal elements of agency that sometimes reiterate tradition and normalcy (2013, p. 250). In this chapter, I focus on agency and aspirations in light of the temporal uncertainty the young men are subjected to. I draw attention to their actions to contest and negotiate the migration regime to reach their future imaginaries; imaginaries underpinned by the notion of mobility as freedom and a means of enabling social change.

The Chapter commences with the concepts of flight and agency, through which I analyse the young men's movements, leading into a discussion of the mobility framework underpinning it. This is followed by an analysis of how the 'minor' status is utilised as a means for mobility. The subsequent sections examine Saaki's reasonings behind his move to Verde, unpicking the narrative presentation of this imagined 'place' –a future that is both temporal and spatial. I have divided these into four main motivations discussed in separate sections: lack of access to documents, temporal suspense (wasted time), lack of education and finally, racism. These themes were echoed by the other young men who moved autonomously to Verde, away from the reception centres in the South of Italy they were placed in upon arrival. Interweaving Saaki's narrative with those of others, I examine their narratives of moving to 'the place', an elsewhere where they believe their aspirations can be met as identified in the previous chapter.

Through this discussion, I bring to the fore their decision-making processes, migrancy tactics and use of social networks to contest the forms of (im)mobility and racialisation imposed upon them. In doing so, I reveal the complex fabric of interweaving connections and analyses they make as they journey through Italy in search of a 'better future' and 'the place' where they can stay (still), without wanting to leave (Bhatt, 1996). In conclusion, the Chapter sums up how these young men frame themselves as 'wrestlers', to use Amadou's definition, taking control of their own time and mobility, whilst noting how mobility may also be a form of unfreedom for marginalised individuals. As Saaki draws a picture of a bird in the art workshop (see Chapter 3), I take this as a starting point for the next section on mobility as freedom, a theme which threads through the Chapter.

Figure 8. Bird, by Saaki
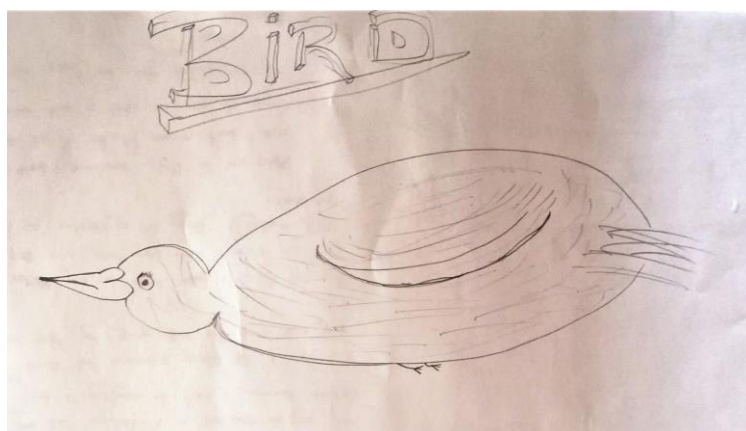
Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

From *Dreams*, Langston Hughes (1995)

'we're like birds. We always fly away'
Afghani refugee, cited in Picozza (2017, p. 246)

Saaki draws this picture of a bird (figure 8, above) during the art workshop I hold at Giallo, in response to my request for participants to draw something representing themselves. This is part of the methodology of opening up different entry points to narratives to encourage 'thick' stories (Kohli, 2006). He tells me the bird reminds him of himself before, in a different time and place. In The Gambia he had many birds in his garden '*Just, I like it […] since I was a kid, I have many kinds of this bird in my little garden. But, later, my boss steal all and I lost them. […] since I came here, when I see birds it normally used to remind me [of this]*.' The image of the bird revealing how the past is still the present, simultaneously a moment of happiness and of sorrow. A time when he had birds and a garden; as opposed to now, when he is supported by a reception centre in Italy. But also, a time of unspecified trouble, which led him to this moment.

> 'The Past—or, more accurately, pastness—is a position. Thus, in no
> way can we identify the past as past' (Trouillot 1997 cited in Sharpe, 2016, p. 8).

I include the bird here, mainly as it is a self-representative symbol of Saaki, but also because birds represent movement, flight, and hope. In the moment of seeing the birds, Saaki is transported to his past life in The Gambia. As Edward Lutwack notes, '[s]omehow sighting a bird or hearing a bird's song evokes the memory of other occasions when the bird was seen or heard and the feelings associated with those occasions' (1994, in Ware, 2016, p. 12). Saaki's image of the bird presents the

intertwining of the past and the present in self- and meaning-making processes, central to subjectivity (Jackson, 2002). Through these multiple temporalities we can see how this symbol of flight reflects Michael Jackson's ambivalent sense of the word, encapsulating both an objective and intersubjective state, reemphasizing that lifeworlds can be destabilised through flight (2002, p. 89).

Indeed, in this thesis I work with a notion of subjectivity reflected in Jackson's work on refugee flight (2002). Subjectivity for Jackson is understood as relational, with the subject, following Foucault, embedded in its own historicity, related to systems of power that interact with the self as a thinking, feeling, acting, and situated human being. The interiors and exteriors of self intermingle without one being reducible to the other (Venn, 2020). Subjectivity is then meant as 'individuality and self-awareness whereby the subject is understood as dynamic and multiple and both positioned in relation to particular discourses and produced by these' (Henriques *et al.*, 2003, p. 3). I do not collapse subjectivity and subject positions, rather I recognise how a subject position is the identity created and imposed upon a person by discursive practices (Henriques *et al.*, 2003). Here, the subject position of relevance is the 'minor' as, specifically, child plus migrant. How this subject position is imposed upon, and simultaneously resisted or negotiated by, the young men is interrogated across this thesis.

When working in Giallo, I recall, on occasion, acutely perceiving the young men there as wounded birds, in need of time, space, and care to heal and rebuild their lifeworlds. They had travelled (flown) great distances geographically and psychologically, and sometimes would be seated in Giallo, with their body language curved in, protective, communication limited, emanating a feeling of (emotional) pain, as if *broken-winged bird*s (Hughes, 1995). Yet, remaining birds with strength and dreams, that they were holding fast to.[33]

As the opening quote, taken from Fiorenza Picozza's (2017) work with Afghans in Italy suggests, many migrants are engaged in complex movements within and between EU countries, despite, or because of, the attempts of the European migration regime to immobilise them. In likening themselves to birds they give themselves the freedom of flight, a freedom which is only open to them via irregular channels and they are subject to (im)mobilising mechanisms of governance. They are like birds for whom flight becomes the means to escape trouble, to find a better life. In their trajectory, birds are not dissimilar to the young men in this study, starting out from the West Coast of Africa and heading to Europe (Ware, 2016, p. 12). Yet, as Vron Ware (2016) reflects, birds are

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[33] Fieldwork notes, 2018

global migratory beings, free from borders. Further, they may fly over the fences that contain their human, migratory counterparts (Robertson, 2018). Upon arrival, reception in Europe too is deeply different: whilst the birds may 's[i]ng at their ease' (Auden, 1979 in Ware, 2019, p. 10), human migrants are subjected to experiences, as I discuss below, that make them most *ill at ease*.

Flight is then at once a symbol of freedom, and simultaneously fear (Jackson, 2002). Too much flight indicates an inability to 'perch', to find stillness, a state that Nick Gill (2009) argues many migrants are actually seeking. These tensions are inherent in the transiency displayed by the young men and the way in which flight, or mobility, becomes their answer to achieving their ordinary wish to succeed in the world (Kohli, 2006). Saaki embodies this in his reflection on a further move to Germany, if things do not go to plan in Italy. Whilst in their flight they may be likened to birds, they are yet subject to constraints and immobilisation which birds can evade. The bird is a poignant symbol of the freedom of mobility unavailable to irregular migrants.

Mobility as (un)freedom

'To be free is to be mobile' (Pritchard, 2000 in Blomley, 2010, p. 335), such is the maxim of classical liberal political theory (Hobbes, Locke, etc.) in which mobility is associated with freedom. However, this was a freedom available only to some, mobility was regulated according to a racial, classed, and gendered matrix of exclusions (Kotef, 2015), exclusions that still exist today. Mobility is central to social formation, as Hagar Kotef states in her enquiry into the 'politics of motion': 'Regimes of movement are thus never simply a way to control, to regulate, or to incite movement; regimes of movement are integral to the *formation of different modes of being'* (2015 p.15, emphasis in original). Hierarchies of mobility and belonging are then produced by migration regimes, themselves based on racialised colonial histories (Back, Sinha and Bryan, 2012).

As Laura Brace points out, mobility itself has been theorised as a positive human good and a general principle of modernity: 'Mobility allows us to break away from tradition, to accelerate social change and to become civilised. However, the mobility of some relies on the immobility of others' (2015, np). Bauman refers to this as the 'global hierarchy of mobility' where freedom of movement is an attribute of the 'dominant'(1998, p.69). As such, certain people are immobilised so that others can travel, which Brace argues, 'means placing restrictions on some people's agency, denying them the possibility of being protagonists and of generating their own historical categories of entitlement and

sovereignty' (2015, np).

Indeed, migration policies and racial discrimination have been shown to constrain migrants in an existential and temporal condition of indefinite waiting, liminality and stuckedness (Willen, 2007; Hage, 2009). However, the counterside to this, as Nick Gill argues is that 'there is as much un-freedom in mobility as there is in fixity' (2009, p. 304). As critical migration scholars have more recently revealed, like the analogy of the bird cited in Picozza (2017), many migrants are engaged in endless onward movement, constantly seeking stability (De Genova, 2017; Picozza, 2017; Khosravi, 2018), at risk of being stuck in mobility (Wyss, 2019). Martina Tazzioli's (2019) recent work points to how enforced mobility is also a political technology for regaining control over unruly and unauthorized migrants. Such that Nick Van Hear maintains 'the most radical response to upheaval in the face of capitalism is to be still, to maintain continuity' (2017, p. 223), referring to the capacity to choose between moving and staying as 'moving power' (2017, p. 222). Young men, such as Saaki, engage in 'unruly' mobility, to enhance their moving power. They challenge the disciplinary mechanisms of the camps in the South which subjectify their bodies as 'docile' bodies (Foucault, 1995, p. 138) granted access to solely 'bare life' (Agamben, 1998). For the young men in my study, this is not acceptable, and they take flight to escape this imposition and find a better quality of life where they can hold fast to dreams (Hughes, 1995).

European migration policies are underpinned by a 'crisis' discourse (Vacchiano, 2011; Campesi, 2015; New Keywords Collective, 2016; Allen *et al.*, 2017; De Genova, 2017, 2018, 2018) and the resulting 'humanitarian logic' of the need to provide first aid in 'emergency' settings has become the main justification legitimizing the systematic detention of migrants (Campesi, 2015). As a result, the types of camps in the South of Italy described by Saaki here, are normalised - camps which fit the framework of Agamben's (1998) camp. As Andrijesevic (2010b) argues, the primary aim of camps on Southern Europe's borders are not to prevent or block migratory movements but rather to regulate the time and speed of migrations, which Panagiotidis and Tsianos argue 'produce governable mobile subjects from ungovernable flows' (2007 in Mezzadra and Neilson, 2008 np).

The next sections examine the tactics they use to become protagonists, to leave these abject spaces, and the decision-making processes behind their flight to Verde. First, however, I set out how the subject position of the minor provides room for manoeuvre and enables the young men to make use of a level of (legal) mobility that would not be possible as adults.

The minor as mobility and protection

Upon arrival in Italy it is their very status as minors that enables the young men to access the reception system, as opposed to facing immediate detention and return, as occurs in the case of many adults (Tazzioli and Garelli, 2018; DeBono, 2019). Officially, as discussed in the Introduction, minors should only be held in primary reception centres for a maximum of thirty days, but this timeframe is regularly exceeded (Rozzi, 2018; AIDA, 2019). Sicily continues to host the largest number of unaccompanied minors (ISMU Foundation, 2019). Here in particular, due to large arrivals of people who are not transferred to other regions, minors are often held indeterminately in primary reception centres or even 'extraordinary' reception centres which provide only basic needs and many reach adulthood during the process (AIDA, 2019). As such, they lose the possibility to access education and inclusion programmes which are only available to minors (Lo Bianco and Chondrou, 2019). Something Saaki and the others who moved to Verde actively sought to avoid through their secondary migration tactics.

In addition to the specific support available only to minors, in leaving the centres in the South to head North, they also utilise a mobility that is only available to them as 'minors'. As adults, such mobility would be problematic owing to domestic law under which migrants lose the right to reception support if they abandon their place of residence determined by the competent authority.[34] Effectively, this legislation blocks the movement of adult migrants, unless they wish to leave the reception system all together. Saaki refuses to return to the centre he left in the South and is permitted to stay in Verde; as an adult this would not be possible. As such, the young men's subject position as minors provides them with additional mobility and protection within Italy, which they negotiate and utilise. Thus these 'child' migrants adopt tactics (de Certeau, 1984) of their own via their 'minor' status.

In order to leave the South, money is required. The young men then seek out employment opportunities, contesting the confinement of the camps with their labour power. As Saaki says, he and others used to '*work, and go and come*' from the town to the camp. The work they engage in is exploitative, involving hard physical labour. Emmanuel, for example, explains how one of his jobs: '*was to take some [very big] wood […] up to the top floor without any lift or anything* […] *I say to my*

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[34] Legislated by article 13 of Italian Law n. 142/2015 deriving from article 20 of EU Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection. Although the latter does state that duly motivated reasons for the abandonment will be considered.

friend 'fuck! I am not doing this [anymore]!' Because my back is gone. Even my back I still have the
mark.'

Similarly, Amadou takes on employment with a cheesemaker in Sicily. The job involves stirring large
vats of whey overnight to make cheese for just €20:

'*twelve hours, stirring these pentolas* [cheese pots] *and mamma mia [*oh my goodness*!]! It is a very*
hard work! It is not easy – like from twelve o'clock at night until 12 in the morning […]and so for the
whole night I am just stirring… and then I take out the water once the cheese is out so we throw that
away, then we wash the pentolas and close them in bags. We do the whole work!'

The young men's determination to set out what they sought to achieve is clear. These narratives
portray the 'wrestler', a 'strong man' taking arms against the sea of troubles to move forwards
towards a 'better future'. The construction of a cheap labour force held in the reception centre
space creates connections and nodes out, as other scholars have identified (Mezzadra and Neilson,
2008). These young men take the initiative to seek paid work in the areas around the camps they are
placed in. They plan ways and means to leave these centres where they are dissatisfied with the
support. These initiatives and use of their bodies in hard physical labour to achieve their objectives is
very much at odds with the vulnerable 'minor' in need of care and unable to work as produced by
the migration regime. The incongruousness between the 'minor' as produced by the reception
system and the subjectivity of the young men is perhaps most starkly evident in relation to
employment and notions of care and who can do the caring, as these young men reveal.

The knowledge that as 'minor' you are protected, but that it is a temporal protection is clearly held
by the young men, who reference the 'biographical border' (Mai, 2014) of adulthood as a moment
by which you need to have certain things in place. As Saaki stresses, this rigid border between child
and adult is problematic. This is a threshold for which you need to be prepared in order to live
independently, as opposed to the minor who is placed under the care of the reception system, and
overly vulnerabilised as a passive victim. Whilst Saaki expresses knowledge of this, his understanding
of the support available after eighteen is a little vague, he is unsure whether it is for one, two or
three years. Nonetheless, he and the other young men are aware of the availability of, and their
right to, post-eighteen support and maintain this is needed. Indeed, Saaki maintains that it is
'*crazy(!)*' to think that a young African can '*find [his] life by [himself]*' in Italy at eighteen.

As the Introduction sets out, under the Zampa Law unaccompanied minors are entitled to stay in the reception system until nineteen years of age. Thus, in theory, they may have longer term support to achieve independence. However, in practice no additional funds were set aside for the provision of post-eighteen support, so this was not always implemented (Rozzi, 2018). Support thus depended on the financial situation of the municipality. Verde was one of the cities in which post-eighteen support was implemented and the young men in Giallo could benefit from this.[35] Verde is often framed by the staff in Giallo, social services or indeed more widely amongst its inhabitants, as a functional place in contrast to the dysfunctionality of other places in Italy, particularly the South.[36] Access to this post-eighteen support is part of the young men's reasoning for their flight to Verde. As Saaki reflects, he wants to go to a centre where they '*can help [him] even if [he is] eighteen'*.

Verde is recommended in social networks as a place where post-eighteen support is available and processing times for documentation are quicker. The young men in my study want to access support as 'minors' to set themselves up as 'adults' and see post-eighteen support as a necessary for this. This was available in Giallo, where they have the option to access 'ladders', as subsequent chapters will set out, to assist them into adulthood, rather than have support abruptly removed at eighteen, as occurs in other EU Member states, such as the UK (Chase, 2019; Meloni, 2019). I now build upon the argument initiated in Chapter Four, that Giallo can be considered a 'hospitable space' and a motive for the young men to stay (still). In contrast, the places they pass through on the way North are construed as inhospitable and thus not 'the place'.

Recognising 'the place' through shared practices of care

In escaping from the South, the young men continue to move northwards. Passing through Rome, where there are too many '*neglected people'*, as Edrisa describes them, sleeping and begging on the street: '*I saw so many Black people in the streets you know, like neglected people. So, I was like, no, this is not my place*.' A sign that this is not a good city in which to have a 'better life' owing to the lack of care or 'neglect' faced by people there. The young men engage in considered tactical decision-making, focusing on where they can find a place to construct their future. A place that needs to both represent the modernity and social change that they aspire to, and where they can receive the level of care they maintain they are entitled to.

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[35] Fieldwork interviews and observations
[36] Fieldwork interviews and observations

Emmanuel likens Roma to Lagos, spatio-temporally locating it in the past, and not the elsewhere of migrancy aspirations and the future: '*So when we got down to Rome, I told myself, I don't like this Rome. I am not staying here. I just saw too much people; people are too much. Too much noise. It's like Lagos, to be honest. Like Lagos is more dirty, because it's not Europe. But Rome is too hectic, and too noisy.*'

Adama also reasons that Rome is not a good place to stay:
'*in Rome there is violence, because you will see so, so many different countries, and there, they don't get place to stay. They are sleeping on the way, in the street there. … So, me, I decide, I am searching for my future, I am not searching for something bad. So, I decide to move forward [north], to Verde here.*'

The inhospitable practices in Rome are recognised by the young men who chose to move on from them, and to find a place to stay where they can be cared for, as Edrisa implies. In Rome, housing problems have long been an issue for the city's inhabitants (Belloni, 2016), such that a 'housing emergency' was declared in the capital around 2015 (Nur and Sethman, 2016). With already existing problems, and an increase in the numbers of migrants arriving in Italy from 2011 on, many migrants were often then left on the street, homeless, leading many to occupy abandoned buildings in the main urban centres of the country, such as Rome (Ministero dell'Interno 2012 in Belloni, 2016, p. 512). A form of 'neglect', as Edrisa recognises.

Emmanuel tells me that after Rome, the train stopped in Verde, where he converses with other Black Africans around the station, who tell him it is good place. It is a place where Black people can be '*opportuned*' he says, meaning find work. He knows people, and has seen Black Africans working in cafes, shops, a good sign. So, he stays. Information is gathered, gained, and shared on social media platforms, and in physical spaces, such as internet cafes, along the way. Information about where a good place to stay is, about support that is given, about problems that are faced, racism that is experienced and means to avoid this. A shared repertoire of strategies and knowledge about survival (Menjívar and Perreira, 2019). In this way, information exchange networks stretch across Italy and Africa, extending to those who have moved to other European countries, where networks of support provide an important source of information and assistance (Wells, 2011; Allsopp, Chase and Mitchell, 2014; Rosen and Crafter, 2017; Rosen, Crafter and Meetoo, 2019). Facebook, as Saaki, and many others, told me, is an important source of information (see Donini, Monsutti and

Scalettaris, 2016, p. 29).[37]

The young men utilise these virtual and physical spaces of shared knowledge, what Papadopoulos and Tsianos (2013) refer to as 'the gift economy of migration', which takes place in the 'mobile commons' of migration, to reach and create convivial spaces in Italy. In this way, they react and create new realities - spaces of hospitality, of sharing pain and exclusion and recommendations of where Black people can be 'opportuned', as Emmanuel puts it. Their actions can be theorised as a form of 'intimate citizenship', a *'sensitising concept'* coined by Ken Plummer which *'suggests appropriate ways of living lives with others and to foster the civilising of relations'* (2001, p. 238). It is a way of providing these young men with a means of living with ontological insecurity and threat (Gunaratnam, 2013). They use their 'minor' status to move away from these spaces where migrants face 'neglect' to spaces of care. The next section examines the experiences of neglect they found in the South of Italy that propelled them to leave.

This is not the place: nontime, idleness and abject spaces

Saaki's description of the camp he was first placed in Sicily as a '*bush*' where there are '*no people', 'no company around us'*, is echoed in Justice's description of the camp he was allocated to in Sicily: '*It is a very small city. It is a bush. It is a very big bush. Before you get to the city you have to trek one hour, we don't have bus […] we don't have somebody that would take you there.*'

Terms such as '*the bush'*, '*a village',* evoke an imagery of something less than modern, not the social change they aspire to. This is compounded by the fact that they are held in idleness, given nothing to do, with just basic provisions of food and shelter. This was a common complaint of all the young men when discussing camps in in the South of Italy. Camps which practice a form of minimalist biopolitics (Redfield, 2005) and provide only the bare necessities. Here, these young men's narratives make evident the dialectic of care and control that underpins what Fassin (2011) calls the 'humanitarian reason' of the European migration regime, where the pretence of humanitarianism masks the control mechanisms at heart of the regime.

The young men are subject to spatial and temporal control in these camps. These places are isolated

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[37] As discussed in Chapter Three, I did not specifically ask young men about their journeys, however, it was a topic that regularly came up, a lived and embodied trauma, or sometimes part of the survival story of the 'wrestler' overcoming the odds.

and segregated from the nearest local community, Emmanuel, likens the camp he was in in Sardinia to '*a prison*', a place where: *'you are not living. You are not free. I am not living the life I want*'. He further stresses: '*There was no life for me there. […] We do nothing! Just eat and sleep. Nothing! No future!*' elaborating that:

'In Sardinia, we are living alone, just in a big compound and just alone! Nothing like schools around, nothing. We are just alone inside the compound and there is a gate, when the gate is locked you cannot go out without jumping. So, there was no way of us going out of the camp. I don't want to perceive like, I am in a prison. Like, while I am in my house I am in a prison. It's better for you to leave me in the street. I know I don't have a home. While you tell me I have a home and my home is like a prison – I can't do what I like, I can't go out. […] I don't want to be on the streets like everyone wearing the same clothes, and the operatori [centre workers] – some at the front, some at the back, like guides. Like a sheep! Oh god! Each time I think about this life, I will laugh a lot. […]'

The confinement and controlled movement in this centre are unacceptable for Emmanuel, he is '*not free'* not mobile. He wants to '*go out,'* not be contained in a homogenised group of young migrants all '*wearing the same clothes*' and guided '*like sheep'*. In comparing himself here to a *'sheep',* he presents how these homogenising practises negate his agency and identity as an individual. Unlike birds, sheep are herded and contained, their mobility subject to others' control. Emmanuel uses humour and a sense of the absurd to distance himself from these spatial homogenising and controlling disciplines. Liisa Malkki referring to refugee camps in Africa confirms that one of the first therapies (cf. Foucault) directed at refugees is a spatial one (1992, p.34). The camp is a technology of 'care and control' -a technology of power entailing the management of space and movement for 'peoples out of place' (Malkki, 1992, p. 34). This spatial control is highly apparent in the descriptions of Saaki, Justice and Emmanuel.

Charles describes the camp he was in in Calabria as '*a hell'*: '*before [coming to Giallo] it was very difficult for me in [the Calabrian camp]. […] we don't go to school, they don't give document, they don't give money, nothing. […] so just you get your breakfast, eat and sleep. That is how we do it. So that place was a hell for me, so I decided to leave it and came to Verde to have a better life.*'

Being held in limbo, in idleness is, for Charles, a hell. The emergency logic underpinning the camps is evident in the descriptions of large, chaotic spaces where nothing happens. Amadou describes the camp he was in in Sicily: *'we were about 45 people. You have like four people in each room. And*

sometimes even five people. It is a camp for minori *[minors]. A big camp. Two toilets, for all the people. […] There is no activity in that camp. There is not one day they say 'today we will go and see something.'*

The camps in the South are framed as abject spaces in which the child is protected, where you '*just eat and sleep'* and '*there is no activity' 'nothing'*, only basic needs are met. Here, the migrant body is constructed as victim via the 'humanitarian logic' (Fassin, 2011). The young men's descriptions reflect Isin and Rygiel's conceptualisation of camps as spaces where people are not to be disciplined, nor eliminated, but just left without a presence, invisible and inaudible (2007). As discussed in Chapter Two, throughout history people on the move have been defined as 'vagabonds' or 'idle beggars' (Geremek, 1991), subject to discipline and control owing to fears of social disorder. Foucault has identified how disciplinary mechanisms fix through 'arrest[ing] or regulat[ing] movements' (1995, p. 217). We can see in the contemporary form how these camps effectively produce the inhabitants as 'idle beggars'; held idle in spaces, their movement arrested, and dependent on support.

This is the 'humanitarian logic' at work, constructing and governing the essentialised and depoliticised refugee body as simply a recipient of aid. They are granted access to these spaces via their supposed 'vulnerability' as minors, subjects not capable of taking care of themselves who must submit to the 'care' of others. Through such camp mechanisms, the young men are produced as 'victims'. Fassin argues such people are then 'those for whom the gift cannot imply a counter-gift, since it is assumed that they can only receive. They are the indebted of the world' (2007b, p. 512). Instead, the actions of the young men reveal how they reject this pathologizing of their subjectivity. As Justice stresses: '*I don't want to live like that. I want to make money myself. … I'm gonna make it, not somebody will give me, nah*.' These young men challenge this technique of power, they do not wish to be the 'indebted of the world'.

Life in camps such as these is '*somehow bad'* as Saaki puts it, being held in idleness is '*no life'*; a '*hell'* even, as Charles describes it. As such they contest the 'mechanics of power', evading the manner in which 'discipline produces subjected and practised bodies, 'docile' bodies' (Foucault, 1995, p. 138). They contest it through their spatial and temporal disobedience. They actively resist this subject position, evading their subjectification via the minor subject, and the mobility it affords.

Mary Bosworth (2013), referring to detention centres, argues that holding somebody indefinitely in

idleness fails to recognise them as fully human beings, and thus such spaces are not 'decent' systems in Margalit's terms. For Margalit, a decent system is one that does not humiliate the people who depend on it; 'acts or gestures of inequality are communicative acts that express a certain attitude towards those who are not equal or free' (1997, p. 148). These symbolic acts Margalit argues 'see the other as nonhuman' (1997, p.148). This is the assessment of these young men. For them, these reception centres in the South are not 'decent' and they resist them. Such actions draw attention to their political subjectivity and refusal to be reduced to 'bare life' (Agamben 1998). Here, their narratives also draw attention to the similarities between detention and reception centres, the latter not seeking to eject people but to govern flows and an essential part of the governmentality of the migration regime and its technologies of care and control (Andrijasevic, 2010a; Novak, 2019).

Processes of 'mortification', as Ruben Andersson (2014a), drawing on Goffman, refers to them, are an essential part of the migration regime which strips migrants of their identities and removes their autonomy. Such processes, a form of humiliation, are evident in the young men's experiences such as when Amadou complains of only two toilets for 45 people, or Emmanuel compares himself and the other minors to sheep referring to the homogenising practices he is subject to. These processes are apparent in Edrisa's description of the camp he ran away from in Sicily:

'*Like, if you are underage you have rights. You will be taken care of, they will protect you, but there [the camp in Sicily], they don't do that. They don't protect you. They just tell you that there is no future for you there […] So it feels like these people they don't care about you, they don't like you; So, you will be alone always. It will be really hard, after all you have been through, to be in that place.*'

Edrisa expresses feelings of neglect, not being protected, or cared for. The disappointment of experiencing 'no future' there and that the workers '*don't like you*' is both a humiliation and upsetting; a rejection which reinforces his feeling of being alone, of not having achieved '*after all [he] ha[s] been through*'. In the young men's accounts of these primary reception centres, we can see the fallacy of the notion of Italy, as a border of the EU, as the welcoming host. The strong discursive practice of hospitality within the reception system in Italy (DeBono, 2019), is counteracted by the young men's experiences at the lack of care in places likened to 'hell'. Their narratives contrast with the hegemonic discourse of the European states as sources of protection and that any problems stem from outside the state boundaries, revealing instead the difficulties caused to them through these biopolitical forms of care. Edrisa presents this within a rights-based dialogue, where the minor has rights to protection and certain services or 'care'. For him, this involves a right to

support for a future.

Time is a key theme in their narratives, and aligns with the temporality of borders identified by numerous scholars (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2008; Anderson, Sharma and Wright, 2009; Andersson, 2014b; Tazzioli, 2018; Anderson, 2019). For the young men in my study, the notion of *productive time* which leads to a future, as opposed to '*wasted time'* is of particular importance. For Saaki, the centre he was in in the South of Italy was a '*bad place'* where '*they*' '*wasted his time'*. Justice also says time was '*seized*' or '*stolen*' from his life in the centre he was in Sicily. These narratives grammatically construct an accusation against an active subject: the 'they' responsible for the negation of their time. As such, time does not merely pass in these centres, it is actively '*stolen*' by 'them'. A subject which may at once be at the micro-level the people working in these centres, and at the macro-level, the migration system itself. As Drangsland shows, biopolitical interventions work to govern and filter migrants through operating on their embodied experiences and conceptions of time (2020, p. 14). The young men express notions of temporal injustice, which they challenge through their mobility, a mobility available to them as 'minors' to enact the possibility of being protagonists and generate their entitlement to what they deem 'decent' spaces.

In their discussions of stolen or negated time, the young men reveal a political sensibility and awareness of that which Shahram Khosravi (2018) addresses in an article similarly entitled: '*Stolen time*'. Namely, the way in which the capitalist system, in which the migration regime is embedded, negates time from the migrant body through the system of deportation, containment and temporal stay. It is how the system itself, as Susan Coutin puts it, negotiates 'the meaning of presence, and the legitimacy of existence' (2000, p.10). These young men are 'absent' from their places of origin, and risk remaining 'absent' in the country of arrival, held in liminal spaces without documentation, a double absence. Whilst absence may also be used as a survival strategy, these young men have chosen to seek documentation, seeing it as vital for their future, as will be discussed in a subsequent section. Through taking flight from these spaces, they contest this negation of their time and take action to legitimate their existence, to record their presence. To regain control of their own time; mindful of the border of adulthood that looms ahead, they seek a place of productive time where they can construct a future for themselves.

The young men's descriptions of these centres are reminiscent of spaces of what Bourdieu refers to as 'nontime' (Bourdieu, 2000). As Lucht, drawing on Bourdieu, notes time exposure, 'when time is either arbitrarily wasted or simply negated, is a form of nontime, a testimony to one's social

insignificance...' (Lucht, 2011, p. 73). Bourdieu argues that tactics of 'making people wait, of delaying without destroying hope [...] is an integral part of the exercise of power' (2000, p.228). The young men in Giallo chose actively not to wait, to escape 'nontime' and react against the migration regime and its negation (stealing) of their time. They thus contest the subject of the idle beggar held in 'nontime' with their mobility; the very characteristic these centres seek to curtail. In doing so, they then frame themselves as 'wrestlers', to use Amadou's term. As discussed in Chapter Three, Amadou's self-representative drawing of a wrestler portrays a strong and dignified masculine adventurer. These young men are thus 'wrestling' with the impositions placed upon them; attempting to generate their own entitlement to rights that are removed from them by the policies of the European migration regime. They seek to frame themselves as other than the vulnerable, weak disposable migrant.

This is not the place: no education, no opportunities

From my very first meeting with young men in Giallo, in the focus group, their frustrations at the lack of education in camps in the South of Italy were very clear. Further discussion with young men when I returned confirmed this. The 'better future' many are searching for involves education; an education they feel they were unable to access in Africa, as it either just wasn't available, due to poverty and historical underdevelopment or they had to leave due to political or familial problems. Education for these young men is a symbol of progress, a 'ladder' which provides them with the means to move forward, to access training and, eventually, employment.

In Italy, access to education for separated children is only obligatory for children hosted in secondary reception centres. Many of the centres in the South are primary or even 'extraordinary' (CAS) reception centres – construed under the 'emergency' discourse to respond to the migration 'crisis', as discussed above (and see Introduction). A recent NGO report (UNICEF and REACH, 2017) found that education was of such importance to some young people that they dropped out of primary reception centres in the South of Italy to reach reception centres further north where they thought they would be able to go to school. This was the case for the young men in Giallo who enact their mobility as minors to access education before reaching eighteen. Unlike other studies with young migrants in Italy who chose not to stay in reception centres (Mai, 2011; Vacchiano, 2014; Rossi, 2017), the young men in my study had all actively sought to stay *in* reception centres to access education as minors, in the belief that this would stand them in better stead for adulthood.

There were many, many complaints about the lack of education and support in the South, about centre staff who spoke limited or no English, or any languages other than Italian (although it has to be said that nobody in Giallo spoke particularly good English, or any other language relevant to Africa either). Communication was difficult. As Emmanuel put it, laughingly, during the focus group, '*Italian is not a popular language!*' None of them spoke it before arriving. In Giallo, however, they can access language classes.

Justice tells me he could not speak Italian on arrival in Verde: '*I don't speak anything. I spent six months [in Sicily], I don't learn… when I come to Verde the police catch me, they tell me 'ciao' – I don't know what is the meaning of ciao*!' It is likely that Justice exaggerates to make this point, but many young men spoke very poor Italian on arrival in Verde. This is despite having been in centres in the South for several months, due to the lack of language classes and interaction with centre workers described. Justice describes this enforced idleness as '*not living'*. The notion of 'no life' as a reference to a life held in idleness, without hope for the future is reinforced by the young men. Amadou similarly explains how he '*knew*' the camp in the South of Italy was '*not the place':*

'*Because number one, I want to go to school. Because that's me, I want knowledge I want to learn things, which was not there. And I want to live my life. I don't want to sit in that place for a year, without having documents or nothing.*'

Without the ability to realise their hopes and dreams, to envisage a future, life becomes a form of 'hell', a place in which there is 'no life'. The notion of 'no life' recognises a state of abjectivity, which, as James Ferguson noted, is when people live lives disconnected from the life they had imagined for themselves (2002, pp. 140–141). Thus, these young men seek to keep on the path to the projected imaginary of the 'better future' to live their life, both a geographical and subjective imaginary. They seek what Hage (2009) refers to as 'symbolic mobility', or the feeling of 'going places' in life. This cannot be found in the temporal limbos of centres in the South of Italy.

These centres are contrasted with narratives of Verde as a place of learning. The fact that Verde has a prestigious university is mentioned by many as an asset. Edrisa explains to me the importance of education and the university of Verde as a symbol of this, and of what he hopes to achieve: '*I prefer Verde. Because it is more stable and we have more chances here to go to school. And that is the most important thing you can have, to have education*.' The university also symbolises his aspirations: '*I would love to go university to study […] I have always wished to study engineering.'*

Being in a city with a prestigious university represents achieving that equality, giving access to a space that these young African men feel they have been denied within the post-colonial setup. This was the topic of many of my conversations with young men in Giallo during my time there. The university is both a symbolic framing, a representation of the space of modernity and change they seek; as well as a pragmatic approach to being in a Verde where more educational opportunities are available to them.

Whilst centres in the South, particularly CAS, have been criticised for poor legal and reception standards, it should be stressed that not all camps in the South of Italy are the same, and some are well-run centres.[38] Indeed, the head of social services in Verde advised me that, from conversations with some of the centres in the South that young people left, he had discovered they had been attending school and had lodged their asylum claims.[39] Young people engage in chain migration, wishing to go where their friends or family were, as well as going North as it is considered a place of opportunity. Aside from Albanians, Gambians were the largest nationality accommodated in Giallo. Yet during the time most arrived in Italy, between 2016 to 2017, according to UNCHR data, Gambians accounted for only 7% and 5% of total sea arrivals, indicative of the chain migration effect.

Adama, for instance, tells me that he was granted humanitarian protection, and thus 'documented', whilst he was in Sicily. However, he still left. His reasoning was that there are more opportunities for work and education in the North of Italy:

'in Sicily they don't get the economy like here, because of Sicily and the north here is not equal. If you want to do your project, it is better you come to the north. […] I have my diploma called Terza Media, but then I don't see no future in Sicily. Yeah, I have my document, my residence to stay. But there is no future. So, I decide to come here [to Verde].'

Despite having obtained his qualification (the Terza Media is a diploma attesting a certain level of literacy in language and maths that is required to access continuing education and for many jobs), Adama still maintained that Sicily was a place where there was 'no future' for him. He explains why:

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[38] I visited a centre in Campania, near Naples, during my fieldwork and found it to be a functional space. People hosted there were engaged in training and education. However, everyone I spoke to (all over eighteen) had been waiting for an outcome on their asylum claim for over a year. Thus, they were documented in the sense of registering an asylum claim but had no official permit of stay. At the time of my research, as asylum seekers they were entitled to remain in the reception centre and to work (since changed following Decree Law 113/2018, implemented by Law 132/2018). Something that for the young men in Giallo would not have been acceptable (June 2018).

[39] Interview, May 2018

'because there was no work. Even the Sicilian people used to tell you that their children are north, some went to Germany, France, because there is no future in Sicily. If you want to find your future, you will go for work. So, they encourage me. Then I decide to come forward and search for my better life.'

The narratives reflect and reproduce dominant narratives about North and South Italy; and may lead to aspirations to be in the more developed north as a geographical imaginary of progress and a 'better future'. To move from the 'bush', these young men head north, 'uptown' as Justice refers to Northern Italy, as opposed to the 'downtown' of Southern Italy. This is both a current reality and a reinforced framing of the underdevelopment of Southern Italy - a situation that has existed since the country's unification in 1861 and that continues today (Ginsborg, 2003). Pugliese recognises the ongoing inequality between North and South Italy as a form of internal racism (2008). These young men then replicate the movement of their Southern Italian peers who leave the south to seek better employment opportunities in the north; an increasing phenomenon according to a recent report by SVIMEZ (Association for the Development of Industry in Southern Italy) (2018). Revealing how these young men become inscribed into labour market flows, despite their segregation, and some of the similarities with Southern Italian youth in precarious employment (discussed further in Chapter 8).

Nonetheless, stories of the lived reality of abjection in the South of Italy where their very existence is negated, both by judicial (non)procedures and racialisation were very strong. The pain and surprise at the racism they were subject to was highly apparent when talking to the young men. Their bodies wore it upon them in their physicality as they spoke of it: To use critical race scholar Christina Sharpe's (2016) phraseology, the exposure to the anti-Black climate in the South had 'weathered' their bodies. Sharpe (2016) uses this term to refer to the anti-Black climate and its effect on Black bodies. Weathering is a situated phenomenon embedded in social and political worlds in which Black bodies are exposed to forms of symbolic and actual violence (Neimanis and Hamilton, 2018). I discuss this further in Chapter Seven. The next section discusses the legal negation of their presence through the lack of documents. I follow this with a discussion of the racialised physical negation of their presence. Two very strong motivating reasons for their flight to Verde and what, following Gail Lewis, we might call 'practises of presencing' whereby the dehumanised seek to claim their humanity (2017, p. 22).

This is not the place: no documents

The importance for the young men of being documented has already been touched upon in the previous Chapter, I here evidence it as a central reason for their move North. As Saaki evidences in the opening vignette, there is both a pragmatic and symbolic requirement for documents. Life is '*useless*' without documents in Europe, as they are needed for '*every step'.* Similarly, Justice expresses the thoughts of many when he says that without documents he feels '*bad! Like someone who is still in Africa!'.* An exclamation which marks the document as both a symbol of arrival, and the narrated difference between Africa and Europe.

The fact that Saaki is '*so proud'* of becoming documented and that he managed to achieve this through reaching Giallo reveals both the symbolism and utility of being documented. He is proud that he has achieved what he set out from the South of Italy to achieve, proud of being able to '*have a life'* and the pragmatic utility of the document. He is also proud of the symbolic meaning of this. Being documented signals he has the legal right to stay in the country: this is a symbol of arrival, of presence, of his existence in Italy being recorded. We can see the same themes in other young men's narratives, as this discussion with Amadou reveals.

Amadou: '*I want to live my life. I don't want to sit in that place for a year, without having documents or nothing. Because I see people living there for two years without even having their fingerprint taken. Without even having asked for the C3 [asylum request] […] you are not even in the system! You are physically there, but theoretically you are nowhere!'*

Sarah: '*so legally, you don't exist?'*

Amadou: '*you don't exist nowhere! And they use that to threaten you, you know. And sometimes before they give you the pocket money until the next morning and you complain and ask where is our money? Then they say 'oh, you people here, you make casino [trouble], no documents! We will call the police.''*

Similarly, in the focus group, Lalo expressed deep concern about his lack of document (see Chapter 3). For Lalo, not having a document is like not existing. The words of both Lalo and Amadou strongly echo Susan Coutin's (2000) notion of 'spaces of nonexistence'. Coutin writes '[t]hose who lack legal status are nowhere. They do not exist' (2003, p. 175). They are 'outside the law', 'even though it is the law itself which denies their existence by distinguishing between citizen and alien' (Coutin, 2003, p. 175). The young men wish to be on record, to have a legal and not just a social presence,

otherwise they do not exist.

Pragmatically too without documents they have 'no life'. As Derrida affirms, the very term *un*documented or '*sans*-papiers', defines these subjects as those *without*: they are without papers and thus without rights. 'By contesting his normality and civic identity one is not far from questioning his very identity' (Derrida and Rottenberg, 2002, p. 135). For Derrida, this is a dereliction of justice, which reflects a refusal of dignity towards these individuals, and is thus a means of both assuming and assigning unworthiness to such subjects (Derrida and Rottenberg, 2002, p. 135). Socio-legally categorised as *un*accompanied minors, the young men are further construed as being *without* the adult assumed necessary for their care within normative constructs of childhood. This lack or absence complicates their child status, rendering them 'unchildlike children' (Aitkins, 2001) and subject to spatio-temporal control by adults within a domestic space.

As Ekku tells me: '*It feels like this document is our life, understand? Without it you can't live, you can't stay here in Italy, you can't travel… we can't stop thinking about this document*'. To become documented is life. It is a mechanism which allows mobility, and mobility is key. As Liza Schuster (2005) found, having documents for the migrants in her study was of significant importance as it meant that they could return home to visit family and friends. They could become geographically mobile again. These findings encompass the way in which the document comes to symbolise life, and the ability to have 'moving power' (van Hear, 2017).

In engaging in mobility as minors, the young men seek to be documented, to be *with* presence and rights. This is the key motivator in their decisions to leave camps in the South, to head northwards, perhaps to Verde where, they have been informed, they are more likely to be documented. Gail Lewis (2017) has drawn attention to how Black women are denied presence through practices of abstraction and racialisation. The young men enact spatial disobedience to subvert the regime's removal of their presence, to be present legally and socially and make a claim to their belonging and to avoid these abject spaces and racism, as the next section discusses.

This is not the place: 'neglected people' and racism

For Amadou, the racism he experiences in the town close to the camp he is first placed in Sicily is the final trigger which compels him to leave:

'*we walk through the streets sometimes, so we take a stroll a little child just sees you – a Sicilian*

child, young child. They just see you from a distance and they run away. Like they see a dead person. They are afraid. They just run away. This made me feel so, so so bad [..] It wasn't much because I have seen worse you know. But when I see little kids running, I couldn't take it anymore. I just said, 'wow! What's this?' It is better to die anyway.''

Amadou is deeply upset and disturbed by such experiences, being made to feel like a '*dead person*', his physical existence negated in the racialised encounter; an encounter which provokes fear in the other. Experiences which also push him to take flight, like the bird, to somewhere new, where things might be more 'as things should', away from the objectifying gaze which racialises him as something 'other', something Black and something bad. This is the objectifying gaze described by Fanon (2000); a gaze which has 'a crushing effect on the Black subject who is reduced to the level of the body' (Sithole, 2016, p. 28). Not only legally denied a presence through lack of documents, these young men are also physically negated, crushed, in the racist and hostile reactions to them. Just as Fanon exposes in Black Skin White Masks (2000), this encounter for Amadou reinforces the psychic violence and injury of the 'discovery' of his 'Blackness' and the lived experience on inhabiting a body constructed as dangerous and a threat.

Edrisa also tells me people would run away from him in Sicily: '*I don't understand why really. I just look at myself,' why?' I ask myself 'am I an alien, coming from another planet?*'' He tells me he bought new clothes when he was in Sicily in an attempt, as he put it, to try:

'*not to look like a migrant'* but instead '*to look more good, like a normal person,' ' like, maybe I am an immigrant that came from the back way to Italy, so I don't even know why, you even look good, you buy new shoes, new jeans. Like a new look, you look good, you know, fresh and clean.'*

But even that did not change anything: *'They are just like that because they are racist',* he concludes. The subject of the feared 'boat migrant' is projected onto these young men, as if they were some strange, sub-human creature emerging from the sea. Notably, the 'migrant' is contrasted with the 'normal person' even in Edrisa's own narrative. In the dehumanising discursive trope applied to migrants, to be a migrant is then not to be 'normal'.

The young men's experiences of racism bring to mind what Frantz Fanon refers to as 'zones of nonbeing' (2000). Explained well by Lewis Gordon as: '[a] structural zone in which there can be no Self-Other dialectic owing to the non-humanity of Black people, which then construes a system of

'arbitrary death and social practices that demonstrate that one group of people's lives are less valuable than others' to the point of their not being considered to be really people at all' (2007, p. 11). Hence Edrisa referring to himself as 'alien'. The result of modern colonialism is 'the creation of disastrous people, modern monsters' (Gordon, 2007, p. 10), and evident in responses to the young men.

For Saaki, to suddenly be 'other' as he comes under the Italian gaze, is difficult and upsetting. He is visibly shocked when he recounts to me the experiences of racism he has encountered in Italy. It is the first time, outside of Libya, he has felt himself subjected to such a negative framing of 'Blackness'. He has become 'Black' through being in Italian society. Christina Sharpe refers to Black people transmigrating from Africa towards Europe, by which she means 'movement across and also the movement from one form to another,' movement from 'a human to a sub-human, vector of disease, threat' (2016, p. 138). These young men have the double bind of being 'migrants' and 'Black': modern monsters, threats. The mode of being imposed upon them by the migration regime (Kotef, 2015). Yet, they are still 'minors' and can utilise the protection this status grants them to evade this framing, remaking themselves through their mobilities.

Upon arrival in Sicily, they are subject to the objectifying gaze as identified by Frantz Fanon: 'I am being dissected under white eyes, the only real eyes. I am *fixed*.' (2000, p. 116). Thus it is that 'The objectifying gaze here operates as a prison of anonymity: one Black person becomes all Black people, and through this collectivisation the group are hypostasised and held in place' (Webber, 2013, p. 10). It matters not what Edrisa does to try and alter this gaze; his body is fixed as undifferentiated 'Black' and construed as a threat. His identity is prescribed by (post)colonial pathways. His confusion is clear, he asks himself why? How has he become something '*alien*', nonhuman? Unaware that not only are young men, such as himself, upon crossing the sea, transformed into 'unaccompanied minors', on entering Italian society they are contemporaneously constructed as 'Black'. The act of migration into a majority White society is where Blackness is created. They become 'Black', an identity linked to historical views of Blackness, which are overwhelmingly negative (Giuliani and Lombardi-Diop, 2013). As I will elaborate on in Chapter Seven, whilst they are aware of post/colonial racist constructs and the dominance of the discourse of Europe/ans superiority over Africa/ns, lived experiences of this are something else.

Conclusion

As this Chapter evidences, the young men who move autonomously to Verde make active choices

and take action to refuse to stay in camps they define as indecent. They utilise their status as minors to take flight from places they maintain there is 'no life' and where they are confined in idleness, which is *not the life [they] want'*. These narratives echo Judith Butler's notion of the abject as a domain of 'unliveable' and 'uninhabitable' zones of social life (1993, p. 3). These young men contest this subjectification and engage in practises of presencing (Lewis, 2017), where they resist power structures and enact unruly mobility. In doing so, they actively react against the migration regime and its negation (stealing) of their time, to contest imposed vulnerabilities and create room for manoeuvre for themselves through accessing post-eighteen support. Their agency and tactics reveal them to be complex political subjects, agents for social and cultural change, as opposed to passive and vulnerable 'adults-in-waiting', as the label 'unaccompanied minors' so often implies. Their narratives present a counter narrative to hegemonic discourses of migration and childhood as identified in Chapter Two. These young men do not wish to be 'idle beggars', but protagonists, holding fast to dreams of their hoped-for future.

They use their status as minors not only to access Italy, but also *within* Italy, using it to access spaces of protection and support they see as best for their future, to find their ladders. Their mobility is narrated as a resource, and a means to navigate the system, they are 'wrestlers', with strength and dignity seeking to access their rights. However, if they continuously utilise this resource, they risk further marginalisation, of never finding 'the place' where they can belong. Elements of recklessness and fragmentation abound in their narratives, like birds wishing to take flight when things do not go as they should. As I set out in this Chapter, these young men make claims to their own 'moving power' (Van Hear, 2017) as minors, so that they may decide upon the place they wish to stay still (Gill, 2009). They chose Giallo as the place. Giallo is deemed to be a space of future orientation and access to care, including post-eighteen support, held to be necessary for a chance at a 'better future'. The next Chapter discusses the benefits of this post-eighteen support and, importantly, how the transition to adulthood for the young men in this study was not a moment of fear inspiring flight.

Chapter Six. Dreams and ticking clocks: the deadline of adulthood

Charles – 'being an adult was like, there is this load on my head that I am going to carry alone!'

I first meet Charles in the focus group in May 2017 when he is seventeen-years old. Sitting in the circle of chairs, the young Nigerian is curled in on himself. Like a wounded-bird, a feeling of suffering emanates from him. He tells me he wishes to attend catering school as '*there is an opportunity for me to fulfil my dream to become a good chef*.' When I return to Verde the next year, we meet again outside Giallo. He now has humanitarian protection, valid for a further year, and is living nearby in an adult reception centre as he is over eighteen and a half. He got onto the catering course and is doing an apprenticeship in a local restaurant. He seems so much happier and more relaxed; smiling as he greets me. We head to the park to sit in the sun. He explains why he shared only one photo of his apprenticeship with me (see figure 9, below):

'*It is the only thing that make me happy for now in Italy. [..] My mother is not with me, nor my family. But doing this work makes me happy […] In this work I see a lot of people that have like my situation; and I feel stronger. They are there without their mother, without their father, without their family. Once I see this, it makes me happy […] because I see that they have gone through what I have gone through. We have the same story […] That's why I love this job, very much.*'

I tell him I remember when we met last year, and he told me he wanted to be a good chef. He replies, laughing: '*Yeah, yeah, I remember! It is like my dream is come true!*'

I ask him how he felt about turning eighteen:
'*I was alone! I know that eighteenth birthday is very important, my eighteenth birthday was, like, no one. No family, no cakes. No friends. Nothing. I was only here in Giallo. I was thinking, is this really my birthday? It was awful that day. […] because I wanted to celebrate […] with my family because I have become an adult, eighteen. […] So, it was hard for me.*'

I query if he felt like an adult then, he replies:
'*mm [laughs] uh, mmm…. Yes…. yeah… because the things that I was doing make me to know that I have become an adult. The things that I wasn't doing before when I was seventeen, but I was doing when I became eighteen. So that make me feel like I am an adult. […] You have to do everything yourself. Operatori [keyworkers] are not going to go with you. […] So I think that that was the reasons I think that I am a full, completely adult. I have to do things on my own.*'

I ask him about moving on from his semi-independent apartment for young adults managed by Giallo into SPRAR Adulti when he was eighteen and a half. He explains:

'I was shocked! […] because in my life I have been staying with minori [minors] like me that have seventeen to eighteen. So I was thinking, how am I going to live with adult people? Life in that place is going to be different; I was worried. […] I was really shocked. […] because if you don't want to go to SPRAR Adulti they will take you to live with a family. So that was what I was thinking was going to happen to me. […] There is no operatori [key workers] in [SPRAR Adulti]. You are going to […] do everything by yourself […] So being an adult was like, there is this load on my head that I am going to carry on my head alone!'

He tells me he still feels he needs help:

'Because what I am doing now, I don't think I can do it alone. So, I still need someone to support me to go further […] Because very soon I will leave [SPRAR Adulti] […] when I leave, they say that I am going to get a house for myself and do everything alone, pay for the rent, everything will be on me. So, I think that is another stage of life.'

Introduction

Figure 9. Charles during his catering apprenticeship

This Chapter examines the transition to adulthood for the young men in my study. Whilst Charles has managed through his own endeavours, together with the support of Giallo to access ladders, he still feels the need for support to go further. This Chapter discusses the importance of post-eighteen support for these young men, not only for future orientation, but as a mechanism for overcoming ontological insecurity. It sets out the particularities of Giallo as a temporal space that is future focused. The Chapter then presents how this temporality can contest and challenge the limitations of childhood embedded in the regime.

As Charles' narrative reveals, there is still a replication of a threshold between child and adult, yet this is not the 'biographical border' (Mai, 2014) of fear. Instead, and more in line with citizen children, it is perceived as a border of greater autonomy. As such, I set out here how and why the transition to adulthood for the young men in Giallo does not encompass a transition into illegality (Gonzales, 2011), nor a sudden and dramatic loss of support. This is in contrast with young migrants coming of age in other EU states, such as the UK (Chase and Allsopp, 2013; Chase, 2019; Meloni, 2019), or cities in Italy which do not implement the Zampa Law (Allsopp, 2017). As Chapter Two identified, the ontological insecurity produced by this transition has been found to potentially have extremely detrimental social and psychological consequences for young people, particularly in

relation to their futures (Sigona and Hughes, 2012; Chase and Allsopp, 2013). Importantly, this was not the case for the young men in Giallo who, as I illustrate here, were able to access 'ladders' to overcome this moment and focus on their futures.

The key point that I wish to draw out in this Chapter, and what is noticeable from Charles' retrospective reflections on turning eighteen, is the lack of fear of this moment. Importantly, instead of fear, Charles expresses only a painful isolation and disappointment at not having a celebration upon turning eighteen. Instead, thanks to his own spatio-temporal disobedience and the post-eighteen support provided in Giallo, together with his continuing legal status (humanitarian protection) which supersedes the 'biographical border' (Mai, 2014), Charles may still dream of his future of being a good chef. For Charles, successfully obtaining a place on the catering course organised via Giallo is '*like [his] dream is come true'*. The Chapter recognises that he is one of the lucky ones; for many of the young men the project clock is such that their time runs out before they can access their dreams. However, I argue that Giallo does, to a limited extent, provide (some of) the young men with 'ladders', or training and education programmes. Thus, providing them with the ability to contest the game of *Snakes and Ladders*, to focus on their 'better future'.

The replication of the language of the regime is also apparent in Charles' reflections on his eighteenth birthday, where he tells me he '*know[s] that eighteenth birthday is very important'.* This knowledge, I argue here, is imparted to him via the Italian migration regime and the Western construct of eighteen as a marker of adulthood (Stephens, 1995; O'Connell Davidson, 2005); thus, socially and legally important. Charles '*knows'* he has become an adult because of '*the things that [he]was doing'*. He is adopting what Butler (1990) refers to as a discursive and material performance of the essentialized subject of the adult, as counter posed to the 'minor'.

This can be seen in Charles' narrative, where he presents the vulnerable 'minor' who requires support to continue. Reinforcing the rigid binary between child and adult, Charles stresses how '*liv[ing] with adult people'* will be *'different'*. Charles here is referring to his transfer at eighteen and a half to the adult reception centre. After leaving the main accommodation centre in Giallo, young men are housed in semi-independent apartments (see figure 1). These spaces are aimed at providing a bridge for young adults between fully supported accommodation (Giallo) and living independently as adults. Once they become adults, they are eligible for further post-eighteen support and transferred to the adult reception system before having to find their own accommodation in the private rental market at age nineteen. Charles is '*shocked*', he says, as he was hoping to be

accommodated with a family. This is a home sharing practice whereby young adults can be supported by a family for a period of six to twelve months instead of being housed in the adult reception centre. The family is held to be a better provider of support and inclusion (for further details see Marchetti, 2018 (in Italian)). Unfortunately, this fell through for Charles, but he was still able to transfer to the adult reception system, and did not become homeless at eighteen.

The Chapter commences by examining how the temporal spaces of child/adulthood within the reception system are negotiated or resisted by the young men. I outline the life course epistemology that I use to make sense of migration as a temporal strategy. I set out how the young men use their time in childhood to further their migrancy goals, which are intertwined with their life course goals, to become independent adults. Here, I build on Chapter Four to evidence how the young men – those who perform the appropriate behaviour – are able to hold fast to their dreams and utilise the space of productive time in Giallo to create 'ladders' for their 'better future'. This discussion leads on to how the limitations of being a 'child', as a Western construct of passive victim in need of (adult) care, produces the 'unaccompanied minor' via the bordering process of good childhood and how this is replicated by the young men in their narratives.

The subsequent section sets out the notion of the 'project clock' and the temporal urgency of preparing for adulthood in order for the young men to manage 'alone', once leaving the reception system at nineteen. Here, I present the argument that the space of Giallo, combined with the young men's tactics of spatio-temporal disobedience to access post-eighteen support, provides them with a means of living with ontological insecurity and threat (Gunaratnam, 2013). I follow this with a discussion of the semi-independent apartments, embedding this within a wider framework of the notion of the 'camp' as understood by the young men. I show how processes of bordering still continue within this space, in which the young men are construed as 'guests' in a reinforcement of the morality of hospitality. I then examine the young men's discussions about turning eighteen with me, and how their experiences differ greatly to the ontological insecurity produced by this temporal rupture in countries where eighteen is a 'biographical border' (Mai, 2014).

The following section draws attention to how understandings of adulthood are highly gendered. Being an adult for these young male migrants may also be synonymous with 'becoming a man', as Justice alluded to in Chapter Five. I evidence how the imposed vulnerability of the migration regime is emasculating for the young men, who must necessarily lose their autonomy upon becoming a 'minor' and how this is enacted in Giallo. Further, as Wetherell and Edley have shown, it is not just

hegemonic tropes of masculinity but also being a person in Western neoliberal societies that is linked to being a rational independent subject (1999). As such, the central importance of employment in these young men's lives, as symbolised by Charles' sharing of just the one photo of himself at work, is foregrounded. Finally, I conclude by evidencing how Giallo is underpinned by a slightly more relational (Punch, 2002; Alanen, 2014) understanding of childhood, albeit with limitations, which recognises the ongoing support needs of young adults and the 'both/ and' of their beings which can overcome rigid age boundaries. Giallo may thus be considered a 'hospitable space' in a raced landscape that is hostile. The next section explores the temporal strategies of the young men and describes in detail the concept of 'ladders' as provided for by Giallo.

Using the time in childhood – Temporal strategies to access productive time (ladders) for future time.

The spatial disobedience of these young men can be considered a temporal strategy to avoid remaining in the present. They seek to access productive time as minors to construct more hopeful futures, the 'better future', that underscores so many of their narratives. As Judith Suissa and Rachel Rosen (forthcoming, 2020, np) have shown, whilst children may embody the future in their narratives, they are not seen to have a contribution to make to its formulation. These young men challenge such constructions. Bastia and McGrath observe that in the literature on migration, there has been a tendency to emphasize 'movement across space to the relative detriment of developing an understanding of how migration is also a temporal strategy, involving an evaluation of past experience and a desire to achieve some improvement for the future' (2011 in O'Connell Davidson, 2013, p. 185). As Susan Coutin evidences, migrants move across as well as through time: 'Time takes on a planar (as well as linear) character, making it possible to move not only from past to future but also from one present to another' (2005, p. 200).

Ansell et al. (2014) contend that children are always both 'being and becoming'. Thus, the connections between current and future lives merit much greater attention 'because young people's thoughts and actions are so often geared to the future, and this future orientation shapes their present worlds' (Ansell et al., 2014, p.387). Yet here, in the context of child and youth migrants, future orientations are constricted by the options open to them. Anderson, Sharma and Wright argue that immigration controls and the temporality of borders can preclude people from being able to imagine a future and 'can force people to live in an eternal present' (2009, p. 7). Instead, with access to support in Giallo, young men such as Charles are open to dream about the future, and via

the support granted to the 'minor', have minimal leeway to access/ create productive time.

I examine the transition to adulthood via a life course approach, using this as a specific epistemology for studying migration through time (King *et al.*, 2005). The temporal strategies of the young men are analysed through this frame. Particularly, I examine Clausen's notion of 'planfulness', defined as 'self-confidence, intellectual investment and dependability' which is adopted by adolescents in order to better prepare for adulthood (1993 in Elder, Johnson and Crosnoe, 2003, p. 11). However, as Elder, Johnson and Crosnoe caution, planfulness depends on context and its constraints (2003, p.11). In the context of young migrants, it is important to recognise the structural constraints they are subject to which limit their room for manoeuvre.

Their planfulness must be enacted within the timeframe of the 'project clock', as constructed by the regime, which then becomes superimposed upon what Elder, Johnson and Crosnoe (2003) refer to as 'social clocks' or 'normative timetables'. This is a concept devised by Neugarten which refers to the expectations for appropriate times and ages of important life transitions and how these are used to evaluate lives (Neugarten, Moore and Lowe, 1965). This reveals how the social norms constructed by the regime give meaning to, and even direct, individual trajectories as replicated by the young men, as Charles' narrative portrays. Additionally, according to Neugarten (1965), temporal thinking is fundamental to what it means to age and feel satisfied with life. This is confirmed in Elaine Chase's (2013) work with unaccompanied minors in the UK, where she found their sense of wellbeing was linked with feelings of belonging and a projected sense of self within a future trajectory. For young people transitioning to adulthood, having the space for temporal thinking to envisage a future is an essential part of their development and migrancy aspirations. Giallo, as I argue here, allows for this.

In Charles' account, he portrays himself as afraid of going to the adult reception centre where he would not have access to the support from keyworkers as he did in Giallo. Being an adult was narrated as needing to '*carry alone' 'this load on [his] head'*. Charles tells me he still needs help as leaving the reception system is '*another stage of life'*. A life which you must manage yourself '*alone*', without the keyworkers and in a context submerged in the complexity of red tape, bureaucracy, and language requirements. A reminder that, despite their portrayal as 'wrestlers', they are still young adults seeking to make a new life for themselves in a new country.

In accessing support as minors including post-eighteen support, the young men seek to contest the manner in which the migration regime keeps people in suspended temporal stays, in circulation, and

thus in a constant state of 'not arriving' or 'not becoming' in what is supposed to be a 'normal life course' (Khosravi, 2018). They also evade the temporal governance of childhood, in that the Humanitarian protection most of them were granted supersedes the biographical border. They can thus contest the temporality of immigration controls which enhances the precariousness of migrants. Gilles Deleuze refers to 'the limitless postponements of the societies of control' (1992, p. 4) which constructs a system of domination. By putting in place structures of employment and accommodation as 'minors', what I am calling 'ladders', to climb forwards and allow for a level of 'planfulness' (Elder, Johnson and Crosnoe, 2003), Charles and the other young men in my study can maintain a stability of presence, and arrive at a status of greater certainty. They are able to become, to avoid 'not arriving', and contest the mechanisms of the control society.

The border of good childhood

Taking Charles' narrative, we can see how he constructs adulthood as a new space in which '*you have to do everything yourself'.* Considering that Charles, like the other young men, will have 'done everything' himself prior to being hosted in Giallo, this suggests that he is replicating the binary categories of the Italian migration regime. A replication of the subject position of the 'minor', which, as a passive incapable subject, as keyworkers continually reinforce, needs to be 'taken care of'. The young men's counter narratives in Chapter Five reveal their ability as 'wrestlers', as protagonists able to navigate the regime and escape some of the subject positions imposed upon them. Yet, upon arrival at Giallo, these capabilities are removed from them. This reveals the normative construct of idealised childhood underpinning the system and the way in which as they cross the border of Europe and the young men are transformed into the incapable subject of the 'minor'.

This is emblematic of Leena Alanen's (2001) concept of 'generationing', a practical and material process which can be seen in the interactions between staff and young men. The notion of eighteen as a marker in time, a threshold by which you must have climbed the ladder to take you to the next level is very apparent in the weekly Team meetings at Giallo I attended. At these meetings, keyworkers, Centre manager and social workers converge to discuss the young men's progress. The phrase '*when he turns eighteen'* is said so frequently, that if one were to do a word cloud of their discussions it would be the boldest phrase of all, revealing its central importance in the system.[40] The meetings also revealed a somewhat paternalistic approach towards the young men, with staff

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[40] Fieldwork notes, February – July2018

adopting an infantilising discourse, and yet, at times, referring to them as somehow playing the system. An uneasy tightrope to walk and emblematic of a system which imposes a binary divide between child and adult, resulting in an overly vulnerabilised version of a child. In not matching this image, these young men present something more complex that workers can find more difficult to categorise.

Within this dominant discursive regime, becoming an adult is synonymous with turning eighteen. This is then replicated by the young men in the reception system, as Charles' narrative indicates, he 'knows' the importance of the eighteenth birthday. The same goes for Adama. When I ask him when he will become an adult he replies '*December 7th*': his 18th birthday. As does Justice, who tells me he will become '*a man*' '*when [he] become[s] eighteen*'. The complexity of masculinities and gendered notion of adulthood within this context will be discussed in a subsequent section. Here, I focus on how the 'minor' is a subject position imposed upon these young men within the context of the migration regime. Prior to being in Italy these young men did not consider themselves 'minors' and took care of themselves.

Indeed, when I sat in on some of the young men's interviews with Marinella, the legal consultant, it became apparent that the word 'minor' was a wholly European construct for them.[41] The 'minor' is a particular legal construct which, in the European migration regime, is accorded a set of rights, protection and access to education that an adult (i.e. over eighteen) is not. It also implies a helplessness and need for care which allows for support whilst constraining some other rights, such as mobility and temporal control, a form of subordination to the regime. As a result, the adult becomes the polar opposite to this, and the young men embody this binary and request hospitality 'in a language which by definition is not [their] own' (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000). In this transition, 'thin' stories (Kohli 2006) abound, as young men perform the 'minor' and yet simultaneously contest it by their acknowledgement that this is the system.

Adama, who is seventeen at the time of this conversation, explains to me what being an adult means:
'*So, adult mean you have your own work. […] You are the one who will wake yourself, cook for yourself, do many things for yourself. Nobody will help you. Because adult and minore is different. Minore, there is a person who help minore, there is like a family who help minore. But adult, you are the one who will help yourself…*'

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[41] Fieldwork notes June - July 2018

Adama's narrative replicates that of the keyworkers, who repeatedly reinforce the notion that young men will have to 'manage by themselves' once they leave the reception centre. In contrast, as Adama reaffirms, the minor has help. The dominant Western understandings of childhood that children should be cared for, rather than do the caring (Rosen and Newberry, 2018) are apparent. The flipside to the 'minor' who is helped, is the adult who must manage 'alone'. Keyworkers often commented to me that many of the young men did not understand this, and thus it would be hard for them once the support of the reception centre is taken away, reinforcing the passive vulnerability of the child.[42] This denies the protagonism and capabilities of the young men prior to reaching Giallo. It is as if this is wiped away as they necessarily become 'minors'.

As 'minors', in order to be considered sufficiently mature to move on to semi-independent apartments, the young men must demonstrate that they meet the requirements to pass the threshold and are deserving of this move. Saaki explains the process of moving on to me:

'Since I came to Giallo, Leonardo told me […] 'When you can do many things by yourself, without no one helping, like sweeping, cooking, then we will sit and decide together 'OK Saaki is very good', he can go to the apartment''. So, I was there, and Leonardo called me and said 'OK now Saaki you are very good. We know your system, now you can go to the apartment'. […] I was really happy.'

The young men, as Saaki outlines here, need to show they are sufficiently 'independent' and capable of looking after themselves in order to be transferred to the apartment. It is not the age of eighteen *per se* that permits a transfer, but rather a demonstration of maturity and being able to 'do things by yourself', to deserve this move. When I ask Saaki whether he knew how to sweep and clean before he replies: '*really I know it!* [sounding offended] *I know it. Like, many people know how to clean, but the problem is they don't like to do it! [laughs] They just like to eat and sleep and go out but not to do nothing'.* The issue then, as discussed in Chapter Four, is one of performance, of meeting the workers' expectations and conforming to the deservingness frame imposed on the child subject. If the young men carry out their chores within Giallo and thus perform the 'grateful' '*very good'* child migrant, then they are allowed to move to the semi-independent apartments. As a result, engaging in victimcy (Utas, 2005) enables more support to be received. This is recognised in the narratives of the young men, as Saaki indicates.

In conversation with Leonardo, he recognises the risk that the system produces an overly passive

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[42] Fieldnotes March – July 2018

subject. He suggests this is in part because these young men have '*constantly been exploited'* and thus enact a form of rights-based dialogue from a post-colonial perspective. For Leonardo, this is unhelpful as it leads to their enhanced passivity in that '*you [EU] exploited me under colonialism so now I am owed something in return*'. However, he does muse that this passivity may also be reinforced by an overly 'saviour' mentality which can occur within the sector, and that this is unhelpful. Support, he tells me, requires an exchange, otherwise it is purely a passive receipt of assistance which does not enable people to draw upon their own resources.[43] However, whilst workers may recognise this, the dominant discursive regime of the system in which they operate produces a normative child dependent upon adult care.

Urgency and the ticking project clock

For the young men in Giallo, it was essential to gain 'documents' or immigration status to legally stay in Italy prior to turning eighteen. Giallo is recognised as a temporal space of protection or a 'hospitable space', which, as the previous Chapter set out, they autonomously moved to prior to becoming eighteen, tactically manoeuvring as minors to access this support. These young men are highly capable of navigating the migration regime to reach 'the place', yet they still express a need for support post-eighteen and to access legal status prior to adulthood.

For Saaki, lack of support post-eighteen is '*crazy!*'. Whilst these young men may be complex political subjects or 'wrestlers' and not solely the vulnerabilised un-agentic child so often portrayed in literature, there is nonetheless a stated recognition that more time is needed to be able to be independent. As a lived experience for these young men supported by the reception system, the transition to adulthood is a temporal rupture; taking them from 'protected minor' to adult who must stand alone. The young men recognise this and the need to prepare for this transition to be able to construct a future.

In discussions around the need to leave the South in the focus group, Lalo tells me he left:
'*because in Italia if you stay there like that, when you become of age, when you become above 18, they will not help you as when you are under age. So, I think that when I stay in that place until I become of age, no future for me... that's why I decided to leave that place and then came to [Verde].'*

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[43] Interview June 2018

This was replicated by the other Africans in the focus group. Their narratives clearly underscored by an acute awareness that the border of adulthood is a legal-temporal threshold by which certain objectives must be in place; the 'future' must be worked towards whilst still a minor. Their temporal sense is constructed as one of urgency in terms of the limited timeframe of their 'minor' status, which, once transcended, means less support. Being documented prior to turning eighteen is part of their temporal strategy, to avoid the vulnerabilities imposed by the migration regime through the precariousness of their status. They seek to construct ladders and make a life for themselves.

Time was a central element to emerge in the focus group (see Chapter 3). Lalo confirmed the general consensus over the feeling of temporal urgency in relation to preparing for adulthood: *'there is no time. I know when I have this 18 years, this is the right time to have a document, when you become over age it is a different process from when you are under age. […] They keep telling me 'tranquillo', 'tranquillo' [don't worry] but the time is going…'*

The '*time is going*' – the ticking clock of adulthood looms large in the narratives of the young men, revealing the felt need to have acquired legal status prior to becoming 'over age', when they will be in receipt of less assistance. Ruben Andersson's ethnographic study of the interaction between 'illegal' migrants and the European border regime complicates the 'arbitrary landscape of time' migrants are compelled to inhabit in camps, revealing it to be a more complex space of multiple temporalities (2014a, p. 239). These multiple temporalities can be seen in the realities of the young men in Giallo, where the notion of the project clock is apparent. They seek to find and prepare ladders and avoid the snakes, before the ticking clock reaches adulthood. Here, the productive nature of the border (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2008) is evident as the minor is constituted as a temporally limited status.

Cristina tells me: '*When they understand that after eighteen years old, they need to sort themselves out, the clock starts ticking*'. This underlying notion was highly apparent in the discourses in the team meetings, as my field notes reveal, the age of eighteen as a marker in time and the centrality of work is a constant subject of the team meetings.[44] The time pressure to set something up and '*have a project*' by the time the young person '*is eighteen*' is the key objective of Giallo. The key labour market focus foresees finding a vocational training course as a 'minor', that can then lead to an apprenticeship (unpaid or low pay) which, the hope is, will then become a proper contract. Obviously, this is not a guaranteed outcome and there is some concern, mainly from the young men

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[44] Fieldnotes March-June 2018

themselves, who are generally very indignant at the notion of labouring for free, that these apprenticeships are apprenticeships forever, until they stop - never to become proper employment contracts. Chapter Eight will elaborate on this notion of surplus labour.

Here, I wish to stress the importance of these projects before the young men turn eighteen, a means of putting ladders in place for looming adulthood when, on leaving the SPRAR system they must be able to live independently. This is the 'project clock' which ticks over their heads, reinforced by the narratives of staff and social workers. It then places a temporal urgency of having things in place by adulthood in order to construct the hoped-for future after childhood. Daaud tells me: '*before the project [SPRAR] ends you need to do many things and you need to go to school so that when you leave you can find a job and have an OK future.*'

Daaud here recognises that education and inclusion programmes are available only to minors and thus must be accessed prior to adulthood to benefit from them. William Walters has noted how governance mechanisms are simultaneously becoming hyper-local and extra-national, 'exemplifying strategies of 'remote control' (to prevent 'undesirable' migrants reaching EU Member States) and 'internal controls' (to eject them afterwards) (2006, p. 193). These internal controls include the borders of age, which once surpassed, leave only employment to allow those (except those with refugee status) to remain in Italy.[45] These young men seek to evade these forms of temporal governance through accessing documentation as minors and setting up employment which can provide ongoing stability, the ability to 'take care of themselves'. As Bridget Anderson evidences '[t]he ways that states exercise control over time is intrinsic to immigration controls and to the moving of the border inside of territory' (2019, p. 11). States govern through temporal controls, subjecting migrants to precarious states of uncertainty. These young men seek to contest these controls.

Temporal restraints also factor in relation to education, as Daaud alludes to earlier. Certain education and training courses are not open to you once you are eighteen, such as *Scuola professionale* [vocational college] , as this is only for those under eighteen who will have sufficient time to complete it, i.e. two years. Thus, there is an age restriction and those who arrive in Italy after sixteen years of age, or access the secondary reception system after sixteen, were not eligible (the majority of unaccompanied minors arriving in Italy being sixteen to seventeen). This is the case for

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[45] See Introduction. Humanitarian protection was for two years, renewable and convertible to a permit for employment. Refugee status, five years, renewable.

Daaud, he is very despondent about his life chances and tells me he feels that Italy '*took his future'*. He wanted to study and go to university, but as his documentation process took so long, he was out of time and told he should study tourism- something he has no interest in – his ambition being to go to university to study mechanical engineering.

Edrisa also wants to go to university to study, but instead he is doing a bricklaying course. Something he later tells me he is not very good at; it is a hard, physical role: '*I didn't have much choice. It was [Giallo] that choose the course for me. I started after the start of the school, so if I wanted to wait, I would have to wait for another year. So, I just prefer to go to school, otherwise I just do nothing. [To] learn the language you know*.'

In terms of educational attainment, young people enter at different times in the academic year, and thus may lose out in accessing courses they would like to attend or feel suits their skills set or future aspirations. As is the case for Edrisa, he would prefer to be doing something else, but would have had to spend a year doing nothing, in order to access the course he wanted, so he chose to get started, and get on the path to being able to 'stand alone'. The onus is then very much on a job, any job. Thus, whilst some young people, such as Charles, are lucky and can access training and education that they want, many do not. Charles' time intersected with the 'project clock' and so he has held tight to his dream of becoming a good chef, but the dreams of others risk being reduced to low-skilled employment opportunities. The next section evidences how, crucially, for the young men in Giallo, despite its bordering effect, turning eighteen is awaited for with joy. It is not a moment of fear, like for so many other young migrants as they become adults in Europe.

Turning 18 without fear: dreams of a(n adult) life

Hold fast to dreams,
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

From *Dreams*, Langston Hughes (1995)

For Charles, successfully obtaining a place on the catering course organised via Giallo is '*like [his] dream is come true'*. The productive temporal space within Giallo enabled him to access this course.

Following the course, he gained an apprenticeship as a chef in a restaurant, with the possibility of a long-term contract once completed. It has given him hope, a hope for the future that his efforts to wrestle with the migration regime created for him. This temporal strategy, access to post-eighteen support and the legal right to stay, in the form of humanitarian protection for two years, prevented (or deferred) the fear of deportability at eighteen, providing an ongoing platform of support. These young men can then engage in temporal thinking (Neugarten, Moore and Lowe, 1965) and focus on adulthood as a space for growth, not a fear of deportation.

The only anxiety that Charles expresses to me, upon reflecting back on being told he was to leave the semi-independent apartment at Giallo and move into the adult SPRAR system, is of his being '*worried*' and '*really shocked*' at the thought of having to live with adults. His narrative displays a sense of apprehension, perhaps at the lack of keyworkers, who provide some control in the somewhat chaotic space of the reception system. Perhaps a form of enforced narrative (Steedman, 2002), which they sometimes perform and replicate to me. Charles is one of the young men who I do not see regularly as he was housed outside of Giallo. We meet only on the occasions I ask him to speak with me. Sometimes we exchange WhatsApp messages. The interaction between us is then more formal and premised upon me as a researcher. Charles shares one photo with me, which provides a different insight, but otherwise we follow a more linear narrative. In contrast, I see much more of the other young men in their domestic space in Giallo, and accompany them to various appointments, thus providing them with assistance and enacting a different role. With these young men, the presentation of a canonical narrative is to a large extent broken by the repeat interviews, informal conversations, visual methods and observations I undertake, which open space for diverse stories to emerge.

Kwasi and Amadou were over eighteen when I first met them. Emmanuel and Charles turned eighteen between the time of the focus group in 2017 and my return for fieldwork in 2018, and everyone else turned eighteen during the course of my fieldwork in 2018. None of these young men expressed anxiety or fear over turning eighteen. To the contrary, as both interviews and observations revealed, this was a moment awaited for by the young men with relish, symbolising greater freedom. Indeed, all generally considered this moment to be 'a good thing'.

In contrast, Francesca Meloni found in her work in the UK with young minors that many 'experience[d] the transition into adulthood as a sudden and violent abandonment by institutions' (2019, p. 4). This is a common finding for young people subject to immigration control as they turn

eighteen in Europe and may face deportation. Importantly, for the young men in Giallo this is not the case: They have ongoing legal status (refugee status or humanitarian protection) which supersedes the border of childhood and Giallo provides continued support, including accommodation. Significantly, as a result of these 'ladders', there was no discussion of illegality or fear over status in any of the young men's narratives about turning eighteen. Rather, an acknowledgement that in the European 'rule based' society the rigid division between adult and child meant that turning eighteen led to greater freedom, less rules, and the ability to work. For these young men, turning eighteen is neither a border of deportability, nor a moment of ontological security; their trajectories towards their 'better futures' may continue. Instead, it is a reinforcement of the Western border of adulthood and thus symbolises greater independence, as the next section elaborates upon.

Turning 18: On freedom and 'being a man'

Justice tells me, now he is eighteen: '*yeah, I am an adult now. Nobody will tell me how to..., when I am to sleep, when I am to wake up, nothing. […] very soon I will feel like a full man*.'

I ask him what this means. He explains:
'*now I am not a full man. Because …*' [clears throat, pauses] […] '*being a man means if you are able to take care of yourself, like paying tax, doing things that other men are doing. So, like this you can become a man.*'

Whilst Justice is the only one to make specific reference to masculinity in relation to adulthood, the discourses of the other young men reveal hegemonic and heteronormative scripts of 'taking care of yourself'. Their narratives reflect the gender dimensions associated with heteronormative tropes of the male breadwinner, or a provider of self-care. When linked with the heroic imagery of the 'wrestler' present in their narratives, it would seem the young men adopt a gendered positionality which replicates the traditional masculine tropes of men as 'heroes' and 'breadwinners', identified by Connell as hegemonic masculinity (1995). However, such fixed notions have since been critiqued, including by Connell herself (Wetherell and Edley, 1999; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2016), and the young men too present more complex portrayals of masculinity.

It is interesting that Justice refers to paying tax, since tax evasion is widespread in Italy, yet he refers to it as something 'other men' do. His reasoning chimes with Bridget Anderson's (2013) argument that the migrant must become an 'ideal' or 'good' citizen, doing what actual citizens may not do. For

young men like Justice, paying taxes is necessary for residency (where an income is not taxable in Italy, it is not considered 'work' and hence, not valid for residency). Justice takes on the language of the host (Derrida, 2005; Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000), interweaving it with his own need for autonomy, which is very much tied to employment. In her critique of the limited space for diverse Black masculinities in the US, bell hooks evidences how patriarchal socialization reinforces the notion that wage-earning is the definition of 'responsible manhood' (hooks, 2003). This is replicated by Justice here. Work then becomes central to feelings of adulthood and masculinity, reinforcing notions of the neoliberal rational subject (Wetherell and Edley, 1999).

There is still limited literature within migration scholarship on migrant masculinities, particularly in relation to racialised discourse (Allsopp, 2017; Suerbaum, 2018; Turner, 2019), as discussed in Chapter Two. Whilst there is not space within this thesis to fully discuss this complex issue, some of the stereotyped racialised and gendered tropes imposed upon the young men are identified in their encounters with racism in the South of Italy, where they are construed as a 'Black' (male) threat (Fanon, 2000; hooks, 2003; Gordon, 2007), as further discussed in the next Chapter. Such encounters, along with their own intersectional experiences and understandings of manhood, interplay in how they 'do' masculinity within the (post)colonial European space.

Masculinity has been shown to be complex and constructed in varying forms, not just in the 'heroic imaginary' of the 'strong man' but embodied in multiple positionings. Rationality and independence, provide a form of autonomy that Wetherell and Edley argue, can be understood as tied to notions of hegemonic masculinity (1999). The young men's narratives reflect the ways in which 'hegemonic masculinity cannot be sealed off from other hegemonic ways of being a person in western societies, such as demonstrating individuality and autonomy from social forces' (Wetherell and Edley, 1999 p. 35). This is reinforced by the migration regime and the heavy focus on independence (*autonomia*) as stressed in team meetings, a discursive practice that reinforces the neoliberal autonomous subject and work as freedom.

The 'freedom' of being able to work as an 'adult' was a common theme for all the young men. For example, Tayo tells me he is looking forward to turning eighteen as: '*Over 18 means you get freedom, you can do what you want. Cannot be free to go where you want as a minor. Also, you can work.*' Daaud too also mentions the 'freedom' of turning eighteen as he reflects back: '*when you turn eighteen, it's different to being a minor, now I am free*' He explains that it is different in Italy to Somalia, where he is from: '*in Somalia there's no difference between child and adult and how you*

are controlled. Because Somalia is not a place where there are rules. There are no rules.' Our conversation is in fact peppered with the words 'rules' and 'control' – the message being that Italy is a very controlled and rule bound society, which in some ways is better and more protective than Somalia. But, in this rule bound space, there are spatio-temporal controls which impact upon mobility and access to education, as the subsequent section will discuss.

The 'minor' is, according to Edrisa:
'S*omebody under 18. So, like a migrant under 18 years is to be protected by people. To be taken care of by people because he is underage, but if you are over 18 you will be like adult you will be more free to do what you want. […] when you are underage you always learn and go to school. But when you are over 18 you just go to work, you will be more free*.'
 Free how?, I ask

He replies: '*because when you are underage you will be more controlled, because there are people there who are protecting you because you are underage and that is what the law say, so…*'

When I ask if it is the same in The Gambia, Edrisa replies, no, kissing his teeth, then asks if I mean '*for the law*?' Further revealing this legal construct underpinning the 'minor' in Italy/ Europe and which they are very aware of. A kind of trade off; the minor is '*taken care of*' by adults thus once you yourself are 'an adult' you can be '*more free*' and work. It is important here to remember the specificity of this construct, as these young men have worked previously in diverse settings, depending on their experiences, in their home country, on the journey, in Libya, as well as in Italy to finance their move north to Verde. Edrisa here replicates the regime and the 'minor' who is unable to work. Subordination to the regime can then be frustrating and emasculating for these young men.

Edrisa tells me he is feeling good about his 18th birthday, in several months' time: '*because I will be 18 years old! Because I will be an adult […] Life will be different because I will start to work.*' As a seventeen-year-old, he tells me: '*Now they told me I am not allowed to work because I am underage. I don't know why*.'

Again, the notion of *care* and the ability to '*take care of yourself',* meaning to work, is central in all the young men's narratives of adulthood. This freedom is tied strongly to the notion of being able to work. Work and the notion of being a 'provider' can be understood as a form of 'doing' masculinity (Herz, 2018). Gender, as Judith Butler (1990), has identified, is a performative act. Gender is here

performed by the young men in an enactment of the social norms in Italy in which the 'man' is adult at eighteen, and yet also enmeshes their own notions of masculinity and the need to be autonomous, independent providers. Thus, we can see here how the young men are active in their constructions of masculinities, but also draw on the constructions found in available discourses of masculinity (Mac an Ghaill 1994 in Herz, 2018, p. 2).

In part, their narratives can be understood as a dual mechanism to counterpose the imposed gendered and racialised stereotypes they are subject to as Black migrant youth. In part, they could be considered a means to counteract the racist and sexist stereotype of the 'Black' man as a violent uncivilized threat to be feared through the positionality of the 'responsible' wage-earning and tax paying man (hooks, 2003). Indeed, as I go on to discuss in the next Chapter, these processes can be understood as counteracting 'othering', through seeking inclusion and belonging, as Edrisa puts it, to '*be respectable*' '*like everybody*'. In the young men's narratives, the 'responsible' newly adult migrant becomes a man through his breadwinner status, and ability to then care for himself.

Prior to turning eighteen these young people are not considered 'men' by the migration regime, but passive 'bambini' [small children], as Justice and Kwasi sarcastically indicate, and are thus emasculated. In becoming adults, in regaining the ability to take care of themselves and shedding their subjugation and dependence on the regime they are able to reclaim independence and challenge the ineptitude of the child subject imposed upon them; a subject which is also racialized. This framing can be seen as a means to re-masculinize themselves and regain that element of personhood denied to them via their subjectification as 'minors'.

The uncontroversial passive subject of the child as subject of assistance within the reception system is then at odds with hegemonic notions of masculinity (Allsopp, 2017; Turner, 2019) and the young men's own capabilities and agency. As Allsopp evidences, the migration regime enforces a problematic 'binary portrait of masculinity', whereby the 'vulnerable' child must, upon turning eighteen, then internalize and enact traits of the 'strong young male' stereotype (2017, p. 170). This fails to recognise the multiplicities and intersectionality of the young men's identities Instead, as the young men reveal, they are at once *both* wrestlers *and* vulnerable. Greater space for 'new kinds of 'both/and' political spatialities' (Pred, 1995 in Merrill, 2015, p. 80) would allow for diverse understandings and framing of masculinity for young male migrants. There is some space in Giallo for this, but it remains limited given the strong normative construction of the 'child' embedded in the regime. I illustrate this in the next section which examines the independent apartments and the

extensiveness of the border regime.

The apartment: independent living and continued 'camps'

The main stated aim of Giallo, as per SPRAR's objectives (see Introduction), is to aid these young men to be able to live independently, without Giallo's support. Hence, in addition to employment, the semi-independent apartments, something introduced relatively recently, were seen as a source of pride and innovative service provision by some of the staff.[46] Giuseppe, the Director of Giallo, however, is up-front about the underpinning motives for their strong focus on 'independence'. He admits that the reception system has less money and more minors to support now, meaning there are less resources available. As he reflects in our conversation, in part, this is where the focus on independence stems from. Whilst he believes this can be useful for some young people, who can be very independent and quite different to their Western counterparts owing to the lives they have lived, he tells me, it should not be uniformly implemented for all. Those with additional vulnerabilities are not supported well by this system.[47] The next section sets out the workings of these apartments.

For the young men in Giallo, moving into one of the apartments was a key objective and many of my conversations with them, whilst still in Giallo's main reception centre, were about how they wished to move to the apartments. The apartment space was seen as a site of greater freedom and less chaos, unlike Giallo, as per Ekku's drawing in Chapter Four. The apartments are smaller, housing four or five young men. Each apartment is overseen by a peer-adult-keyworker who is responsible for making sure all living there respect the rules, particularly the curfews imposed for minors. Breaches of curfew are reported to Verde Council, and more than three breaches can lead to the person being asked to leave.

Ekku is living in one of the apartments in central Verde when I meet him. He tells me he feels freer in the apartment than he did in Giallo, but that is *'still controlled'*. As an under eighteen, he still has a curfew of 12am. This freedom also relates to being able to cook his own food and eat what he likes ('*no more pasta*!', he laughs). You can also invite friends over, something that is more difficult in Giallo, where permission is needed. For Ekku, this is acceptable as it is '*not our house'* – it is still a

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[46] Leonardo, for instance was very proud of that fact that Giallo offered this possibility (fieldwork observations and interview)

[47] Fieldwork interview, May 2018

form of *'camp'.* Saaki also agrees that: *'The apartment is a camp. That is our talking. Camp means it is not your house.'* He goes on: *'When you are in apartment you have to fend for yourself.'* This for him is a positive development, again the culinary freedom to avoid pasta is referenced. Nonetheless, despite these limitations, having more control over your own temporal space, as well as your body in terms of what you eat is recognised and appreciated by the young men. No longer do they have to confirm so rigidly to the rules of the host and [forcibly] eat pasta, unless of course they wish to. However, it is still *'not [their] house'* but a *'camp'*, and in this way, the extensiveness of the border regime continues. It continues in the application of state technologies in the production, subjection and subjectivation of individuals through the production of boundaries (Fassin, 2011). Forms of everyday bordering are then evident in the apartment, reinforcing the notion that the young men are 'other', guests. Saaki and Ekku accept the notion of control as *'it is not your house'*; a form of recognition that they are 'guests' and hospitality extends to them, in so much as they respect the rules of the host.

This discussion of the apartment with Kwasi, who is over eighteen at this time, outlines some of the tensions and contradictions in the space, and how it is experienced differently amongst the young men. Kwasi refers to the apartment as 'a camp' and 'not a home' and finds it difficult. I ask him to describe the difference between a home and 'camp'.

Kwasi: your home is your home. A place you can live and feel comfortable. Not living with other people. Something like that
S: OK, because you are still sharing with other people?'
Kwasi: yes
S: but it is less controlled now?
K: it is very controlled! Every day they come there twice. Imagine if someone is adult, you are just giving him rules
S: So they are still giving you rules? and you think this is not a good thing?
K: it is no good. They just control us like we are too small… […] like children…

He goes on to complain about the curfew and need to be in by 12 midnight each night. I ask him: *so how do you feel about this control?*

K: it is very bad.
S: Bad?

K: yeah, because also they have their key and they can come at any time, because we are boys, you understand, we are not girls, and if they come and open it and just enter

S: they don't knock?

K: At times they knock at times they don't, no […] How can they come every day to control us like that?

S: you don't feel it is a helpful check to see that everything is OK?

K: they don't believe us

S: What do you mean?

K: believe mean, they don't believe us. Maybe they think we can do something bad or something

S: oh, so they don't trust you. They don't trust you to be adult?

K: yeah, yeah

S: that's how you feel?

K: yeah.

Kwasi reveals here how the apartment for him is an ongoing space of bordering, in which he is, despite being over eighteen and thus an 'adult', subject to the control of Giallo's staff. Many of the staff are female and staff may enter the apartment at any time. He feels a lack of control over both his own (gendered) space and his own time (curfew). He is then, although now an 'adult' at eighteen, still subject to the timetable and scheduling of the migration regime. When talking to Kwasi, I think to when I accompanied one of the keyworkers on an apartment visit and how surprised I was that he entered without knocking. I felt it was an invasion of privacy, a reinforcement of his hierarchical position as the 'carer' of the inhabitants of the apartment. This invasion of intimate space is common to camp and, referring back to Chapter Four, be considered a form of humiliation.

Kwasi perceives this as a reinforcement of his passive status as 'minor', who does not have his own time-space autonomy, which is subordinated to adults. He feels he is 'not believed' in his capability as an 'adult', despite being over eighteen. This for him is an unwanted invasion of his private space and makes him feel 'small' and emasculated. As Ticktin (2016b) has argued, the innocent subjectivity imposed upon migrant children, establishes a hierarchical relationship between those who care and those who are cared for. However, for others in Giallo this control is welcomed as a sign of being 'cared for' in the positive sense.

Edrisa has been living in one of Giallo's semi-independent apartments since he was just over

seventeen. He describes it as follows: '*it is very comfortable. It is really cool, calm; you have your privacy for your own things. You are not in large numbers. […] it is your house*.' But it is still controlled by Giallo's keyworkers, which, he says, is a good thing:

'*yeah they still come to control to see how we are doing, because they are the ones responsible. They are the ones taking care of us, so… [this control] it is helpful. You can meet them at any time, they are there for you. They are the only ones that can show you where you have to go. […] you are still protected by them. Because I am still underage*.'

For Edrisa, the control is 'helpful'. He mentions being '*tak[en] care of*' and '*protected*' by them (the staff of Giallo), something he appreciates. The care provided by Giallo extended to the semi-independent apartments is appreciated by Edrisa, who, unlike Kwasi, feels supported – yet he makes reference to the fact that this is because he is *underage*. The concept of being 'underage' is one that has become apparent to him and the other young men upon arrival in Italy and which they replicate in their narratives and performance of the 'minor'. Yet, it also brings to mind the notion of being 'watched over' as a form of therapeutic care, as outlined in Chapter Four, and how this is appreciated and welcomed by some of the young men.

Young men in the apartments are not given cash to purchase grocery items, but rather supermarket vouchers '*coop buoni'*. These vouchers, Ekku tells me, kissing his teeth in an annoyed fashion, only valid in the Co-op supermarket. Each voucher is worth €5 and you cannot get change if you spend less than a denomination of €5 . As he tells me this, my mind wanders to what the Co-op supermarket I shop in in Verde offers in the 'world food', as it is labelled, section: A random and limited selection displayed in a small section of the supermarket aisle. Only this small area is required to house these foods from the [non-Italian 'rest of' the] world. The selection contains items such as coconut milk, cans of Guarana drink, soya sauce and packet noodles. In the whole supermarket, this tiny section reveals the limits on offer for the 'rest of the world', as it is determined in this space, – everything else being firmly focused on Italian produce and culinary traditions. Even spices are limited. I ask Ekku if he can find what he needs in the Co-op, '*not really'*, he tells me, '*and it costs more. So sometimes I sell my vouchers to friends who want to put credit on their mobile phones so I can use the money elsewhere.*'

Here again, we see the notion of culinary borders. In the use of vouchers, the young men are spatially controlled as to where they can shop. They are constricted to shop in a space which caters for a predominantly Italian cuisine, and is more expensive than the markets or smaller independent

shops offering a greater variety of non-Italian foodstuffs. Whilst they are not 'forced' to eat pasta, the vouchers shape their shopping and they must still shop Italian, hence the culinary border. Such bordering processes serve to reinforce the political production of the young men as 'guests' via the hierarchical relationship of hospitality (Rozakou, 2012). The hospitality offered reinforcing that they are 'at-home' in the home of another, this is not their home, or not yet, they are merely guests (Derrida, 2000).

These forms of everyday bordering (Yuval-Davis, 2013), can be seen to function as a biopolitical mechanism which reinforces the being hosted notion applied to these young African men as 'guests' in receipt of aid. Nonetheless, in selling the vouchers to friends, and opening up the culinary borders, the young men once again reveal their tactics to evade such controls. Instead, their tactics enable them to create more of a sustainable, biographical life (Fassin, 2011). A life which allows for ways and means of accessing spaces within Verde, which can aid their process of belonging and contest some of the (new) hierarchies they are subject to (Back, Sinha and Bryan, 2012). Here in Giallo, although the hegemonic discursive regime of good childhood remains strong, this is superseded by the post-eighteen support and the way in which the space of childhood is constructed as a productive, future-oriented space which provides access to ladders.

Conclusion

The Chapter has shown how Italy's protection system, when implemented, did allow for the possibility for young migrants to hold fast to dreams, to envisage a future and not face the hopelessness of a 'barren field, frozen with snow' (Hughes, 1995). Instead, the young men in my study could engage in *'the exchange of hope',* which as Hage, argues, is what hospitality in relation to the reception system means (2003, p. 9). For the young men in Giallo, becoming an 'adult' does not encompass the ontological insecurity produced by other European migration regimes, such as the UK. Instead, these young men were still supported by Giallo, still documented, and hence legally allowed to stay in Italy for at least a further one and a half years. Thus, they have additional time and space to focus upon constructing better futures for themselves to engage in temporal thinking and have some choice over staying still; to hope.

Masculinity, place, race and understanding of work and the European construct of adulthood intersect to create particular experiences for these young men, experiences that are shaped by the spatio-temporal controls they are subject to as children. The space for manoeuvre is very limited.

Yet, the implementation of Zampa law and thus ongoing support and accommodation, together with the status of humanitarian protection. As this Chapter evidences, this meant that Giallo provided a useful springboard for young men that not all reception centres do. Many of the young men in Giallo were able to access useful vocational training courses and apprenticeships which set them up with a better chance of finding employment in the future. These practises allowed for them to legitimate their existence and regain control of their own time (Coutin, 2005); in preparation for the role of the independent adult, as constructed in Western binary thinking, ahead.

In this way Giallo was able to provide these young men with a space of hospitality as temporization (Dikeç, Clark and Barnett, 2009), a hospitality which could *give time* through the additional support so necessary for these young people in the reception system. A hospitality that is not limited solely to the time of childhood, but extends beyond, providing additional time into 'adulthood' and greater opportunities for them to dream of a future. Giallo provides room for manoeuvre for these young men to construct ladders so as to find a life for themselves post-reception system. Consider that citizen children in care are legally entitled to support up to the age of 21 in recognition of their ongoing support needs. Thus, whilst not always implemented in practice there is a legal recognition of this need embedded in the Zampa Law. As this law was implemented in Verde, it was then embedded in the policies and practices of Giallo. The spatio-temporal protection provided by Giallo allows for the young men to focus on a future. Charles manages to realise his dream, as he is offered a permanent position at the restaurant where he did his apprenticeship.[48] Sadly, this opportunity for future unaccompanied minors has now been drastically reduced by the Decreto Salvini, which abolished humanitarian protection and reinforces rigid age binaries.

Transition is not a rigid abrupt switch, but rather a slow, individual process in which even these young 'wrestlers' value the additional support given to create more opportunities for their future. The productive time granted in Giallo, reveals why it is considered 'the place'. Within this space, whilst the social norms are in part constructed by the regime, which gives shape to the individual trajectories of the young men, they are nonetheless given the opportunity to envisage their future. This, as I have argued here, is an essential part of development and their migrancy aspirations. It enables them to contest the game of '*Snakes and Ladders',* which traps many migrants in a constant state of 'not arriving' (Khosravi, 2018). Instead, it gives space for them to follow their own trajectory and become independent beings post-eighteen. Giallo can be understood then as a 'hospitable space' in a landscape that is increasingly raced and hostile, as the next Chapter will discuss.

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[48] WhatsApp communication February 2019

Chapter Seven. The ill wind: 'weathering' the emotional and material impact of the racialised migration regime

Edrisa – *'it is difficult to bear'*

– <u>After. November 2018</u>. My final meeting with Edrisa, now eighteen. The new right-wing government, elected on an overtly xenophobic platform, has recently legislated significant changes to the Italian immigration system. We meet in a café in the centre of Verde. I can tell as soon as I see him that all is not well. His face is dark and furrowed; he exudes stress. We order a cappuccino each and sit down. He is upset and anxious about the future; no longer hopeful.

His document (humanitarian protection) will expire in a year and a half. He is already anxious: '*what happens next? If I don't have job what can I do?*' A lot of his friends are struggling: '*many of us, we are in this situation, it is hard to stop thinking about it. We talk a lot about these things* […] *The changes by this government impact us badly*'. This is exacerbated by increased anti-migrant rhetoric on the TV: '*Constantly seeing these images and hearing hateful words against people like us, like Salvini does, is upsetting and difficult to bear. It is hard to go on […] It makes everything a struggle.*'

- <u>Before. May 2018</u>. Edrisa and I meet in the park. He is relaxed and happy to talk about the photographs he has shared with me. We talk about his rapping, which he loves. His rap name is Naps: '*because I believe that people that struggle a lot they don't sleep, they only take naps, so I call myself Naps.*'

I ask what is causing him to nap rather than sleep.
Edrisa: '*I don't know, just the unstable situation, I guess… I don't feel stable […]. I am working [internship] and going to school. I feel great about it, like, I mean, about the future. Because I know how it is like to live a bad life, or to live a life without nothing. Being nobody. Being nothing. But I wouldn't wish that for myself in the future, I wouldn't want to face something else difficult. I just want to be somebody good, to be, like, respectable. To have a stable family, like everybody does….*'

He shows me a photo of the moon. A photo he has chosen to show me so as to share something about himself, about his life in Italy: '*I am inspired by the moon it is really important [...] Because it reminds me of the bad times. Like the past days, whilst I was in nowhere, whilst I was on my journey. Just in a big hole. That's where we stayed before [in Libya] in a mining place. […] It is a mountain, but they dig big holes for mines […] and they are not being used any more, that's where we used to live…*

[…] So I have never seen anything around me. It is only the moon I can see above me […] During the night the moon is so bright, so I just lay down and looked at it, thinking about so many things. Praying to the lord. I see and believe that it is only him that can do such a thing. Like, create something beautiful like the moon […] So I just like the moon. It is part of me. […] Any time I see it, when it is bright like that it reminds me of that image I cannot forget.'

When he sees the moon now, he says: '*I feel stronger now. It makes me feel grateful for my life. I feel like I am strong. Like, I don't say even more than superman, because superman is just a movie. I do it in real life! [laughs] […] Yeah! I am like the strong man, and I just feel grateful to still be living.*'

I ask Edrisa if Italy is how he thought it would be:

'*mmm, no. No, I never thought it would be like this. [I thought it would be] just like in the movies that I watch way back in Africa […] of Europe, where everything is just like WOW! But it is fucked, it is another thing… […] It is all different […] Maybe I can say less developed than I thought. Because I thought that the possibilities, the chances, were to be more easier [...] like, you just arrive and win the lottery you know! […] Waaay like this! I just thought it would be easy. I didn't expect that you have to find a job, learn the language. You have to follow a process… So, I never know about this process, and I am finding out about it now.*'

Introduction

During my fieldwork, in June 2018, a far-right populist coalition government was elected in Italy and brought in wide-ranging changes to immigration law via the Decreto-Salvini (see Introduction), named after the then Interior Minister, leader of the far-right Lega party, Matteo Salvini, who drafted it. I refer to this Decree and resultant changes brought in as an *ill wind.* As the Chapter unfolds, I examine the material and emotional impact of the ill wind on the young men in Giallo using the notion of 'weathering' (Sharpe, 2016). As Sharpe argues, in the wake of slavery, Black bodies must continue surviving, or *weathering*, the total climate that is anti-Blackness (2016, p. 104). The ill wind changes the atmosphere, even in Verde, and the young men can feel it upon them and are fearful. It is a wind which weathers them, blowing undercurrents of racism and hostility into the open.

The Chapter builds upon the spatio-racial technologies of control discussed in Chapter Five, and

connects back into the notion of domopolitics (Walters, 2004) raised in Chapter Four, to interlink these underlying themes of the migration regime and how these young men understand and attempt to contest the subjectivities that are, as a result, imposed upon them. As all the young men in my study had already been granted either humanitarian protection (most), or refugee status (two), the legal changes brought in did not apply to them. The ladders allowing them to go further were still in place. However, as the notable difference in Edrisa's narrative from 'after' and 'before' this Decree is implemented reveals, it did have wider destabilising implications. Here, I wish to shed light on how the legacies of colonialism and racism from Europe's past are reinforced by and incorporated in the migration regime and the reterritorialization of the Mediterranean Sea as a European border space 'Mare Nostrum' [our sea]. I examine the contingent effect this has on how Black men's bodies are constructed.

'Our sea' is reminiscent of the terrestrial expansion of the border, in which migrants are not welcome. An 'our' which, Einashe reminds us, 'does not include Black bodies. It's a sea which the European Union has militarized as its member states squabble over the legality of search and rescue missions' (2018, np). Van Houtum refers to this as a process of 'ouring', of marking out ownership: ''Ouring' the territory in this way communicates the making of a place, in order to classify what is within and what is beyond' (2010, p. 126); thus separating off (Black) Africa from (white) Italy. Borders, then, 'create a space of legitimate withdrawal, where actions need not be justified, where the beyond-space is morally emptied, neutralized, tranquillized, made indifferent' (Van Houtum, 2002, p. 45). As is tragically evident in the many deaths at sea.

Visibilising the Eurocentric lens in this way reveals the way in which migration is not treated as a constant reality of humankind, but rather a threat to societal well-being. A threat that is utilised for the purposes of reinforcing the state of the 'nation' – in this case, Italy, and Italianness. But it is a discourse that could be applied to other EU states. As the Italian legal scholar, Cecilia Corsi points out, the title of the Decreto-Salvini conflates the notion of immigration with threat: 'Urgent Provisions in the Matter of International Protection and Immigration, Public Safety...' (her translation) (2019, p. 3). I examine the impact on the young men in Giallo who are constructed as this 'threat', and thus excluded from the society in question despite their legal right to stay. Prior to the election of the new far-right government, Edrisa portrays himself as a '*strong man'*, who feels '*great about the future*', although he still naps. After the election of the new government, this future comfort dissipates: His document is still valid for a year and a half, but he is already concerned about '*what happens next?'*. Exemplifying how the ill wind (intentionally) increases lived experiences of

deportability (de Genova, 2002).

The young men's experiences are contextualised within the Italian racial landscape, thus drawing attention to the postcolonial connections and racism still underpinning Italian society, a discourse often evaded in the literature (Curcio and Mellino, 2010; Giuliani and Lombardi-Diop, 2013; Migliarini, 2018). This is a silence that is overridden by the narratives of these young men. They provide a counter-narrative to the hegemonic discourse of the liberal (European) state as protector which then unveils the story masked by the representation of the humanitarian response to the 'crisis'. As discussed in Chapters One and Two, critical migration scholarship has exposed the Eurocentrism of the 'crisis' discourse and the fallacy of its separation between what happens outside of Europe and Europe's own past and geopolitical formulations. Instead, as I illustrate, the young men bring to the fore how what Walters calls humanitarian borders (2004) are mostly organized along racialised, colonial and economic hierarchies (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2012) which manage migrants' bodies and lives (Dadusc, Grazioli and Martínez, 2019).

As Pierre Bourdieu, commenting on the work of Algerian sociologist, Abdelmelak Sayad, explains:

> 'Because analysts approach `immigration' – the word says it all – from the point of view of the host society, which looks at the `immigrant' problem only insofar as 'immigrants' cause it problems, they in effect fail to ask themselves about the diversity of causes and reasons that may have determined the departures and oriented the diversity of the trajectories.' (2004, p. xiii, emphasis added).

I am here mindful of the 'sociology of absences' (Santos, 2016) and the ways in which certain tellings can hide others, particularly as colonial paradigms continue to evolve and to marginalise minority groups (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012). My aim in this Chapter is then to invert the Eurocentric lens, and instead, by focusing on the problems caused *to* these young men, reveal both the racism underpinning European migration regimes and the vulnerabilities these regimes themselves cause (Anderson, 2008). This is informed by scholars engaged in anti-colonial knowledge projects that draw upon postcolonial and decolonial thinking to unsettle and challenge dominant Eurocentric epistemologies (Di Maio, 2012; Ahmed, 2013; Bhambra, 2014, 2017a; Lentin, 2014; Hawthorne, 2017; Achiume, 2019). An attempt, then, to step away from what Gurminder K. Bhambra terms 'methodological whiteness' and instead to account for the 'racialized histories of colonialism and enslavement that continue to configure our present' (2017b, p. 227).

Particularly, I connect here with the concept of the Black Mediterranean (Di Maio, 2012). Adopting the lens of the Black Mediterranean, as SA Smythe maintains 'lends historical consciousness to the 'crisis of migration' and the politics of belonging' (2018, p.8). This is reflected in these young men's counter-narratives which give weight to historicizing the 'crisis', which is not a crisis after all, except 'of Europe' (Bhambra, 2017a). In using this framework, I root the 'crisis' in the longer historical pathways of postcolonial exploitation and present-day restrictions on mobility. Pathways which cross the Mediterranean Sea – a space which has been representative of the colonial elsewhere and of the reinvention of Italianness (Proglio, 1026 in Proglio, 2018, p. 411; Agbamu, 2019), which Salvini taps into.

Edrisa's narrative speaks to how the postcolonial landscape continues to shape expectations today. The geographical imaginary of the promise of the more developed European lands, where, in the movies he has seen in Gambia, '*everything is just like WOW!'* On arrival, instead he discovers it is '*another thing'* and '*all different':* the geographical imaginary of the movies is revealed to be a myth. This in part may be due to the naivety of his youth – Edrisa was sixteen when he arrived in Sicily. Yet also reveals the integral influence of the ongoing historically constructed discourse of the more developed North/ Europe. Whilst imaginaries of 'elsewhere' have been shown to be more complex, ambivalent and historically grounded (degli Uberti and Riccio, 2017), as Eduoard Glissant contends the West is not a place it is a project (1992, p. 2); a project that continues to implement a strong discursive portrait of Europe as a place of progress.

The Chapter will set out what I mean by the '*ill wind'* and its repercussions. First, I discuss how the legislative changes lead to a reduction in the protective space, evidencing how the 'ladders' discussed in Chapter Six are dismantled by the Decree. I then discuss how the shelter these young men have sought for their 'better future' in Italy, is buffeted by the ill wind, which they are forced to 'weather'. I go on to examine how young men such as Edrisa are othered through a racialised lens, reduced to bodies to be used and abused for labour and how this racial script is played out in their experiences in Libya and beyond. The final section discusses how the ill wind destabilises the young men's precarious feelings of belonging despite them being documented. I conclude by reflecting on the implications the legislative changes have for the concept of hospitality within Italy's reception system.

The arrival of the ill wind: a reduced protective space

'the ill wind which blows no man to good' Pilot

Shakespeare (*Henry IV, Part II, Act 5, scene 3*),

I return to Verde in October 2018. '*You will see, there is a change in the wind*', Maria, the Italian teacher, tells me, looking anxious, when I meet her again at Giallo to assist with her language class. It is almost the first thing she says to me: '*You can sense it; feel it in the air. The chaps are very worried, it is re-traumatising them'.* [49] By which she means a reviving of their horrific experiences in Libya. Maria is referring to the changes brought in by the new Italian Government and the Decreto-Salvini, recently passed in parliament. In Italian the expression '*e' cambiata l'aria'*, translates literally as 'there's a change in the air', which usually has negative undertones. This was a phrase I heard frequently on my return, both from colleagues in Giallo and other council and NGO workers I met, inevitably accompanied by worried looks. I am choosing to translate this phrase as an 'ill wind'. As in the above Shakespeare quote, this is a wind which blows none of the young men in Giallo to good. It portends ill for them.

The Decreto Salvini came into law in December 2018 (law no. 132) and, as discussed in the Introduction, abolishes the status of 'humanitarian protection' [*motivi umanitari],* replacing it with a new status of 'special protection' [*protezione speciale*]. This is granted for one year only to those who can prove themselves to be sufficiently 'vulnerable'; thus, applicable to 'minors'. Additionally, once 'children' become adults, unless they have refugee status, they will be housed in much larger 'emergency' reception centres with questionable reception practices. As such, the Decreto-Salvini has reversed the integration model of the SPRAR system, under which Giallo operated. Corsi argues that the provisions of the new law 'will create greater precariousness and therefore more irregularity, marginality and, finally, insecurity' (Corsi, 2019, p. 5). [50]

Giuseppe told me he was very worried about the detrimental impact of the new law. He similarly believes that '*rather than improving safety it will make life more difficult and provoke great insecurity via the changes it makes to the SPRAR system'*. Giuseppe was particularly concerned about the abolition of the status of 'humanitarian protection'. [51] A number of children's rights organisations

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[49] 'Chaps' is how Maria refers to the young men in Giallo when speaking in English.
[50] For a full critique of the Decree-Law and its unconstitutionality see Corsi (2019).
[51] Fieldwork interview, December 2018

have also warned that this is leading to increased homelessness for former child migrants, as they can no longer access the SPRAR system after eighteen.[52] Verde council itself outlined its grave concerns that the abolition of humanitarian protection would leave separated young people in a precarious position through the withdrawal of support at eighteen.[53] As did other local councils across Italy, many of whom made a symbolic stance to not implement the Decree in protest at the increased risk of precariousness and difficulty for migrants to access support and integration as a result of leaving migrants with little ability to regularise their status.[54]

Marinella, the legal advisor at Giallo, referred to special protection as a reduction in the protective space, in that it has a duration of only one year, whereas humanitarian protection was for two years and so could override the biographical border of eighteen. Further, Marinella pointed out that 'special protection' effectively '*reproduces the legal framework of refugee status or humanitarian protection'* in its eligibility requirements and '*so, why should a person who is at risk of persecution have protection only for one year, when this same status was covered by humanitarian protection, which gave two years?*' Thus, she contends it is a '*fictitious*' status which serves to enhance the precariousness of migrants and is legally suspect.[55]

Unlike humanitarian protection, special protection cannot be converted into a permit for employment upon expiration, although it does allow the holder to undertake employment. It must also be renewed annually. This is not an automatic process so renewal requests must be submitted to the Territorial Asylum Commission, thus increasing bureaucracy and time delays – enhancing the 'waiting' in limbo for documentation. I would also argue the process increases the likelihood of a removal of status upon reaching adulthood, given the importance of childhood as a vulnerability factor and the rigid age binary the Decreto-Salvini reintroduces. Indeed, preliminary research shows the changes have actually increased the numbers of irregular migrants owing to the greater difficulties migrants in Italy now face in accessing legal protection.[56] Yet again, emblematic of the illogical functionality of immigration governance, which actually creates the problems it purports to

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[52] See for example Andrea Iacomini, UNICEF spokesperson open letter to *Avvenire* newspaper (28/09/18), outlining the organisation's concerns: https://www.avvenire.it/opinioni/pagine/il-decreto-asilo-mette-a-rischio-i-minori [in Italian] and https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/16547/migrant-youths-left-homeless-because-of-salvini-decree-aid-organization-warns (ANSA, 26/04/19)

[53] Personal communication, December 2018.

[54] https://comune-info.net/2019/01/cresce-la-protesta-dei-comuni-decreto-sicurezza/

[55] Fieldwork interview, December 2018

[56] https://valori.it/i-numeri-verita-sui-migranti-calano-gli-sbarchi-aumentano-gli-irregolari/

be addressing.

The previous Chapter drew attention to how, under the previous legislative framework, in Giallo there was less of a rigid division between childhood and adulthood and the young men could access support or ladders that continued into adulthood, as well as having on-going legal statuses beyond childhood. Thus, importantly the transition to adulthood for the young men in Giallo was not a moment of fear or ontological insecurity. The Decreto-Salvini has removed these ladders for unaccompanied minors going forward. As such, it reinstates the biographical border (Mai, 2014) between those who 'deserve' protection and those who do not; enforcing a return to the 'rigid age hierarchies', (Ennew 1986 in James and Prout, 2003, p.224) utilised as a controlling device.

This shift represents an increase in the problematic moralistic nature of support in the reception system, evidencing the falsity of governing through 'compassion' (Fassin, 2005, 2007b; Ticktin, 2006, 2016a; Vacchiano, 2011; Sirriyeh, 2018). Ala Sirriyeh (2018) has drawn attention to the importance of the tactics of humanising emotions, such as compassion and the way in which this is utilised by those, such as Salvini, with an anti-immigration stance. For example, Salvini posits that not allowing migrant boats to dock in Italy will deter people from taking the sea route and there will be less deaths as a result. This is a form of what Sirriyeh (2018) refers to as 'compassionate refusal', whereby the politics of compassion are used as justification for deterrence. This stance is intertwined with its seeming opposite in the xenophobic anti-migrant rhetoric also adopted by Salvini, as I outline below.

The arrival of the ill wind: a repetitive weather pattern

The legislative changes may not have directly impacted the young men, however, the wider climate, the 'total climate' as one of anti-Blackness (Sharpe, 2016), did: both materially and emotionally, as I discuss below. This then is the ill wind - a term which aligns well with the concept of 'weathering' utilised by Sharpe (2016). As Neimanis and Hamilton explain: 'weathering as a concept learns from a feminist politics of difference and intersectionality: not all bodies weather the same; weathering is a situated phenomenon embedded in social and political worlds' (2018, p. 81). Edrisa and the other young men in Giallo must weather this ill wind and all it portends for them. It blows embedded hostility out into the open; enhancing their feelings of unwantedness through constantly '*hearing hateful words against people like [them]*'.

The ill wind is caused by repeat weather patterns; patterns which are recognised by the young men. As Neumanis and Hamilton point out: '[o]ver time, new weathers emerge. Weather is not ahistorical, but nor is it facilely 'made'; it is rather wrought from a specific set of conditions' (2018, p. 82). The conditions for the ill wind are set in the historical processes of colonialism and construction of Italianness, linked-in with a present day increase in ethno-nationalistic politics and populist rhetoric as exemplified by Matteo Salvini. Notions of weather also thread through the increased racism that arose as a result of intentional increased and repetitive anti-migrant and racist rhetoric on TV during and after the election of the far-right coalition. Racist terminology becomes normalised and, as a result, normalises behaviours in everyday encounters. The number of racially motivated attacks in Italy tripled between 2017 and 2018 (Tondo, 2019).

An Italian friend commented that in Italy discussing the negative impact that migrants have on society has become so commonplace as to 'be like discussing the weather'. Other friends recounted overhearing conversations in the post office queue, the police station, the doctor's surgery, where the queue, the wait, the difficulties were all blamed on 'the immigrants' who 'get everything first' and 'shouldn't be here'.[57] Anecdotal, but emblematic of the insidious nature of divisive and hateful rhetoric and how it becomes the norm; a pervasive norm that becomes the 'total climate'. Balibar refers to this as an 'immigration complex', which induces 'a transformation of every social 'problem' into a problem which is regarded as being posed *by the fact of* the presence of 'immigrants' or, at least, as being aggravated by their presence'—regardless of the problem in question (1991, pp. 219–220 emphasis in original).

Salvini utilises social media effectively as a campaign tool, adopting the hashtag #closedports *[#portichiusi]* referring to his ruling that Italy's ports would not allow migrant boats to dock. As a result, many migrants were held at sea for days at risk of dehydration and death (a horrific situation continuing at the time of writing). This is weathering in the harshest climate. Kept exposed at sea through the racialised regime of the Italian Interior Minister and his allies who can effectively veto the disembarkation of migrants on Italian territory (Cusumano and Gombeer, 2018, p. 2).[58] The EU itself has done little or nothing to prevent this. In fact, the EU failed to implement a sharing of responsibility for asylum requests across member states, as the Introduction discusses.

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[57] Fieldnotes December 2018

[58] Whilst the Ministry of the Interior does not have the right to close Italy's sea ports *per se*, as the disembarkation of migrant boats must take place at designated hotspots in order for individual's details and asylum claims to be registered, the Interior Minister, as head of this department, effectively has the right of veto over who docks at these ports (Cusumano and Gombeer, 2018).

Thus, the bodies and lives of people seeking sanctuary and making the perilous journey across the sea are reduced to a hashtag slogan, exemplifying that they are not welcome/ wanted, rendering their disposability ever easier. In reality, the majority of undocumented migrants in Europe are visa overstayers (Friese, 2009). Arrivals by sea are, as Alana Lentin and Gavan Titley (2011, p. 133) contend, spectacles that work as border events, enactments of 'domopolitics' (Walters, 2004) that secure the home against bad flows of unwanted peoples. A replication of the colonialist binaries of 'them/us' which fails to recognise the colonial connections across the sea. A sea which is utilised as a border space. Heller and Pezzani (2017) use European Border control surveillance techniques in their Forensic Oceanography project to document the deaths of migrants at sea. As such, they bear witness to how 'the conditions in which the sea becomes a liquid trap' (Heller and Pezzani, 2017, p. 96) have been created by European governmentality (Heller and Pezzani, 2017, p.108).

Salvini has been most effective at employing the power of spectacle. In reality, the previous Centre-Left government under Marco Minniti, the then Interior Minister, had already dramatically reduced arrivals to Italy via Libya prior to Salvini's election. An agreement signed by Minniti with the Libyan authorities in May 2017 to intercept migrant boats led to a fall of around 80% in migrants arriving in Italy via this route, a much larger reduction than Salvini accomplished (Reynolds, 2018). Yet, with his 'hard man' posturing and social media campaigns construed within the ongoing narrative of 'crisis', it is Salvini who is portrayed as reducing irregular migration to Italy, not Minniti. In enacting 'domopolitics', Salvini portrays himself as the host of the house, defining the rules of access and hospitality. Posturing as the 'strong man' in politics, he uses 'hard' emotions to 'stand up to' Europe (cf. Ahmed 2013) and protect his home(land) from unwanted 'illegals' or 'fake refugees', as he refers to people arriving via sea. Salvini featured on the cover of *Time* magazine in September 2018 with the subtitle 'Why Italy's Matteo Salvini is the most feared man in Europe' (Walt, 2018).

This is a spectacle of power which transmits fear to young migrants such as Edrisa, who feel disposable and unwanted; exposed to the climate of fear and blame: '*hearing hateful words'* is '*difficult to bear'*. Edrisa portrays himself as the 'strong man' in relation to surviving (or weathering) all he has been through. This is in contrast to the 'strong man' posturing of the tactics of Salvini which are more an aggressor style, a performance for the electorate about 'strengthening' the borders of Italy. These emotional tactics of fear and hate, as adopted by Salvini, which render the people seeking to arrive by boat as 'bogus', reinforce the perception of such people as uninvited deviants and criminals. As Taran points out, the categorization of people as 'illegal migrants' 'renders such human beings simply outside the applicability and protection of the law, contrary to the

inalienability of human rights protection. The imagery of this characterisation is of persons with no legal status, no legal identity, no existence' (2001, p. 23). Such people are construed as a threat to the national body and as figures of hate *'[i]n advance* of their arrival' (Ahmed, 2013, p. 47 emphasis in original).

As Sara Ahmed argues, the reason they may be 'perceived as dangerous *in advance of their arrival'*, is 'mediated by histories that come before subjects' (2013, p. 212). Histories rooted in practices of colonialism and binary divisive mechanisms of 'we/them'. A practice visible in the narratives of Salvini. Edrisa's reactions reveal how these narratives 'also shape bodies and lives' (Ahmed, 2013, p. 145). Edrisa's feelings can be theorised through Sara Ahmed's (2013) work on the political use of emotions via narratives of 'othering'. As Ahmed shows, this powerful rhetorical tool creates 'others' by aligning some bodies with each other inside a community and marginalizing other bodies, excluded as they are 'not us' (2013, p.1). Here I focus on the emotional and material effect on those bodies, such as Edrisa, that are excluded from the community.

Edrisa is made to feel excluded via the hateful words directed *'against people like us'*; inscribing this division into his own narrative. Bodies are excluded via the use of words constructed from a historical economy of difference (Ahmed, 2013, p. 60). The use of repetition, Ahmed explains, is central to how certain uses of words are constructed as intrinsic. We can see this in how the effect of repetition in relation to the 'immigrant' is binding and works to generate others as 'immigrants', having then 'particular effects on others who recognise themselves as objects of the address' (Ahmed, 2013, p. 92), such as Edrisa. The effect of a history of articulation allows the sign to accumulate value and causes such words to 'stick' (Ahmed, 2013, p. 91). The word 'immigrant' becomes an insult through its association with other words, other forms of derision such as 'outsider', 'dirty', and so on (Ahmed, 2013, p. 92). Edrisa has internalised this term and seeks to be 'good', to escape it.

Young men such as Edrisa are constructed as 'them', as 'immigrants' and a 'problem' for security in a society from which they are excluded, despite their legal right to stay. This anti-Black/ anti-migrant climate *'makes everything a struggle'* as Edrisa explains. It enters their very being with its pervasive toxicity: '*it is hard to stop thinking about it*' and puts a question mark over futures. The racism underpinning these changes is an endemic part of the persistence of coloniality and reveals the centrality of race in Europeanness (Lentin, 2014). As many scholars make clear, historically Europe was constructed in contrast to what it is not, as a white space in contrast to the 'Blackness' of Africa

(Lentin, 2014; Danewid, 2017; De Genova, 2017, 2018; Hawthorne, 2017; Proglio, 2018; Agbamu, 2019; Smythe, 2019). These constructions are deeply intertwined, the one constructing the other (Kelley, 2000).

The lived experiences of these young men bring to the fore how the construct of the migrant is inherently racialised (Silverstein, 2005; Back, Sinha and Bryan, 2012; Anderson, 2013) and utilised, as Bridget Anderson (2013) has evidenced, as a means to construct the nation by his/ her otherness. Focus on Salvini's Lega provides a clear example of how borders shift and change, who is included and who is not is subject to political will. The Lega was originally the 'Lega Nord' (Northern League) an anti-Southern Italian political party focused on separating the (richer) North off from the (poorer) South of Italy. Salvini has now dropped the 'northern' moniker and garnered support from Southern Italians, construing the Italians as a cohesive national identity.[59] Despite the fact that he himself referred to Southern Italians, when the party was still Lega Nord, as 'peasants' and 'parasites' (Madonia, 2018).

Salvini has then shifted the boundaries of the 'us' of the Lega to the 'us' of Italians (*Italians first!),* effectively turning a movement of regional separatism into its seeming opposite, a nationalist party. Now, the whiteness and Europeanness of 'Italians' – North and South- is counteracted against the Blackness and unbelonging of migrants. Bodies that are turned away at the shore of 'our sea', in a narrative which fails to acknowledge the historic connections (Di Maio, 2012). Connections these young men are astutely aware of. Returning to the Derridean framework of *hostipitality*, here is a clear example of the internal contradictions and underpinning morality of hospitality, revealing the troubling common etymological origin between *hostis* as host and *hostis* as enemy, and thus between hospitality and hostility (Derrida, 2002, p. 14) and how this border can easily shift and change. Evidencing how, as Van Houtum (2002) argues, borders should be understood primarily as social phenomena.

The borders of race persist. Edrisa has already been *'in nowhere' 'being nobody. Being nothing'* and does not *'wish that for [him]self in the future'*. Having escaped the hole in Libya, he feels like a *'strong man',* a real life *'superman'* as he has been through so much. He self-defines as strong, a survivor. But sometimes even strong men are bowed by the force of the weather, particularly when,

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as Christina Sharpe puts it: 'the weather is the totality of our environments; the weather is the total climate; and that climate is anti-Black' (2016, p.104). Thus, he and the other young men in Giallo perceive the hostility openly directed at them as a totality of Italy; as a nation rejecting them as a source of injury (Ahmed, 2013). It risks returning them to '*nothing*', as the next section discusses.

Weathering the ill wind

I am struck by a physical manifestation of the effects of the ill wind shortly after my return to Verde in October 2018, when I unexpectedly bump into Amadou. He arrives whilst I am with Maria in her classroom in Giallo. He is just passing by to greet her and receive some moral support and affection, as she gave to all the young men in Giallo, who generally referred to her as '*like a mother*'. He looked grey, thin, and drawn, and had lost weight. When I tell him this, he replies that he was having trouble eating. He was anxious and upset about the political situation and the negative impact on him and his fellow brothers. He was too upset to eat and said the anxiety he felt about Salvini and the right-wing government was making Italy a place he no longer wished to be. It is racist, it is against us, he says. I ask whether he feels like this because of perceived or actual experience of racism in Verde; both, is his dejected reply.

Things have got worse, he tells me. There is constant TV coverage of boats from Libya carrying people in search of safety being unable to dock in Italy. People in Italy feel entitled to publicly say racist things and be more openly hostile. He seemed defeated and weary. Worn down by the weathering effects of the ill wind. He told me he felt like fleeing, running away from Italy to another illusory 'elsewhere'; just like the birds in Chapter Five. Amadou's mental and physical reaction to these '*hateful words*' and the changes he feels pressing in, highlights the delicate balance between a sense of acceptance and belonging and how this can be easily disrupted for young men who have previously been exposed to significant forms of exploitation: '*being nothing, being nobody*' as Edrisa says. The ill wind blowing through Italy, even Verde, at least momentarily, risks returning the young men to the state of abjection they sought to evade through their mobility.

The young men's feelings of security and acceptance are undermined by repeated media imagery of unwanted migrants and 'Italians first!' (*Prima gli italiani*!) – the slogan of Salvini, with its undertones of Fascism –the '*hateful words against people like [them]*'. The deservingness division between those who belong and those who do not is made clear, as Salvini states: 'We will use the money that we save to help Italians or whoever else is in need' (in Squires, 2019). This is domopolitics at work – reinforcing the border between 'them' and 'us'. It reinforces the 'immigration complex' (Balibar

1991), that without these troublesome migrants – more money would be available to the 'we'/'us' of the Italian people. It then reinforces Edrisa and Amadou's feeling of exclusion as 'others' from this community.

There is little research on the mental health impact of the overall public discourse environment, especially anti-immigrant rhetoric, on the targets of that rhetoric (Chavez *et al.*, 2019). A recent study led by anthropologist Leo Chavez and psychologist Belinda Campos (2019) addresses this neglect, finding that negative political rhetoric adversely affected the mental health and physical well-being of the targets of this rhetoric – Mexican Americans - causing feelings of hurt, anger and distress. They found the prominence of the anti-immigrant and anti-Latino rhetoric during the US presidential election was anxiety-provoking among participants of Mexican heritage, as they conclude: '[t]his doesn't seem unreasonable. After all, their new president came to power by denigrating and stigmatizing people like them' (Campos and Chavez, 2017 np). Just like Salvini. This is constant border-work involving practices of geo-and bio-political control, together with fear-mongering security politics to separate out those who belong from those who do not.

Indeed, from the run up to the election to the victory for the far-right party, it was upsetting to see the increasingly negative impact of the ill wind on the young men in Giallo. Many of my conversations with them began to focus on the new government, the changes in immigration law and the increased racism they perceived from the constant imagery of Black bodies being denied safety, denied their humanity, reduced to numbers and human 'waste' (Bauman, 2003). There was much mention and talk of 'Salvini' – the word itself coming to represent insecurity and racism.[60] The ill wind could be felt, ruffling feathers even in Giallo, a secure 'nest', and unsettling these young men who had begun to find a precarious peace.

I do not pretend to be speaking for the generalisable impact of the negative rhetoric of Matteo Salvini, who, like Donald Trump in the US, came to power on an overtly xenophobic and anti-immigrant platform. However, the negative changes and embodied anxiety I saw in the young men in Giallo shortly after the implementation of the new law, and the surrounding pervasive anti-migrant climate was evident, reflecting Chavez et al.'s (2019) findings. The emotional impact manifested in their bodies; Edrisa's body language, Amadou's loss of weight. The future which Edrisa had felt *'great about'* has been destabilised to a space of anxious uncertainty about '*what happens next?*' The new law and accompanying rhetoric portray these young men as a threat, producing in

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[60] Fieldwork notes December 2018.

them an ontological insecurity, detrimental to their well-being, particularly in relation to futures. They have constructed their ladders, but the landscape is becoming more hostile as the ill wind picks up.

The next section examines the historical basis for the ill wind to arise. It sets out how these young men are irregularised by the European migration regime and the racism underpinning it, and how this leads to a devaluing of their personhood. It starts with Libya and, as Edrisa alludes to, the constructed worthlessness of the Black African body within the postcolonial climate – a climate that derives from ontological and epistemological racism and coloniality.

Used and abused: The ongoing postcolonial legacies between Libya and the Mediterranean

Reversing the lens is an analytic that draws attention to how the problems caused to young men in Giallo derive from the structural inequalities and raced landscape of the geopolitical terrain in which European interests and histories still shape lives of postcolonial subjects today. It unpicks the notion of 'crisis' as a beginning and roots trajectories in longer historical pathways. Indeed, Libya was once an Italian colony (from 1910-1947) and the historical linkages between the two countries influences the construct of 'other' (Brambilla, 2014). Foregrounding these connections belies the myth of immanent others from 'elsewhere'. Iain Chambers calls for this to be rectified via the historicization of the migrant, and thus for attention to be placed upon:

> 'the accumulated memories of migration that make up the Mediterranean. […] In Libya in the 1930s some 13% of the population was made up of Italians. Today, the Mediterranean is traversed in the opposite direction by those coming from Africa and Asia looking for a better life' (Chambers, 2017).

The young men are very conscious of this history, as Adama tells me:

 'We take the back way because Europe has closed the front door… these are the routes that were made by Europe from Africa for the slaves'. He tells me they are proud of this because*: 'We cannot get on a plane or get a visa to study, so we do what we can. Yes, we are back-way boys'.*

Here, Adama shows an astute knowledge of the limitations he faces in accessing the future he

wants, a future that is desired irrespective of his past and the traumas and difficulties that led him to leave, to make the perilous journey to Europe via Libya. As a postcolonial subject, Adama is cognizant that current routes have historical connections in the old caravan routes made *'for the slaves'*. As legal channels into Europe are ever more restricted, taking the 'back-way' increasingly becomes the only alternative for those seeking a better life. Adama contests the notion of the 'vulnerable' victim and reveals his pride in their capabilities as 'back-way boys', negotiating and navigating the increasingly restricted and dangerous routes into Europe.

Without legal routes to migrate, young people find alternatives. This is a discourse of people exercising their right to free movement whilst being channelled into increasingly dangerous and precarious routes into Europe (Squire, 2010; De Genova, 2018). Notions of justice and mobility underpin narratives and aspirations. The 'perfect picture' drawn by Amadou is emblematic of this. He shows me his drawing of young men carrying a boat to the sea in Libya, referring to it as the 'perfect picture' of 'illegal' immigrants (figure 9, below). He talks me through his drawing:

'It was night, this represents the storm, and this is us, coming from the back way, holding the boat …. This is the perfect picture of people coming from the 'back way', and illegal immigrants [laughs]. So, they use us in everything. We carry the boat. With the machines and everything fixed. So heavy, so difficult. You have to drag it to the sea.'

Figure 10. The perfect picture, by Amadou
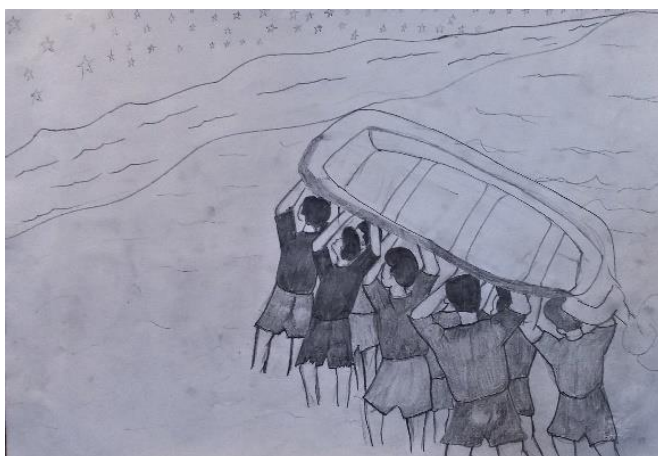
The picture is perfect in how it sets out the use and abuse of the racialised body – '*they use us in everything,*' as Amadou says. The Black body has no value, save as labour, it is otherwise disposable. When I naively ask him if they had life jackets, he snorts derisively: '*this is not a mission to save you!*' It is purely about profit and the money available for the journey. The tales that are told, the lives

that are sold: Profiteering on the hopes and dreams of young African men fleeing from abjectivity to a (hoped for) 'better future' where they can stay (still).

This wish for a life, as Edrisa puts it, like '*everybody'* has, to be '*good*' and *'respectable'*, is exemplar of Kohli's (2006) 'thick' stories, or the expression of an ordinary wish to succeed in life. Such desires are rooted, as discussed in Chapter Six, in heteronormative notions that wage-earning is the definition of 'responsible manhood' so as to take care of yourself and future family (hooks, 2003). These are the subjects that compose 'the community of value': the 'good-citizens', *valuable* people who are 'law-abiding and hard-working members of stable and respectable families' (Anderson, 2013, p. 3). As such, it may also be a way to counteract the shame and othering they are subject to, a way to seek inclusion, to be '*like everybody'* and not construed as drastically 'other', as I discuss below. For young men like Edrisa and Amadou, the only way they see to achieve this ordinary wish is to risk death on a rickety boat across the dangerous waters of the Mediterranean, without even a life jacket; so disposable are their lives. This then is the lived experience of exposure to the weathering (Sharpe, 2016) forces of European governmentality.

Amadou's drawing brings to mind the connections Di Maio (2012, p. 153) draws between the image of the ship as used by Gilroy (1993) in the 'Black Atlantic' and the rickety fishing boats that migrants travel in across the lethal Mediterranean sea. As Di Maio (2012) reflects, not to compare the experiences of these present-day travellers to those of the slaves, but there is something in the imagery of the disposable life held in the boat and what that symbolises. For Gilroy 'The image of the ship — a living, microcultural, micro-political system in motion — is especially important for historical and theoretical reasons' (1993, p. 4). He explains:

> 'Ships refer us back to the middle passage, to the half remembered micro-politics of the slave trade and its relationship to industrialisation and modernisation. As it were, getting on board promises a means to reconceptualise the orthodox relationship between modernity and what passes for its prehistory […] it provides a different sense of where modernity itself might be thought to begin in the constitutive relationships with outsiders that both found and temper a self-conscious sense of western civilization' (Gilroy, 1993, p. 17).

Some of the connections between the symbolism of Gilroy's ship and Amadou's drawing can be understood in its reflection on the use of the Black (migrant) body in its own labour. It captures more than the helpless victims on the boats, so often portrayed in the media: usually an image taken

from above showing packed (Black) bodies in overcrowded vessels bobbing helplessly in the sea. Amadou's drawing is from the other side. It reverses this image, showing the agency and complicity of those about to embark on the journey, as well as the way in which they are 'used' at every stage. The small boat, too small for so many people, held over their heads, at once a talisman of hope and a weight and burden. This, too, providing a different sense of the constitutive relationship between the border regime and its outsiders, as foregrounded via the Black Mediterranean.

This is also a visual representation of the politics of abandonment and the European governmentality as a result of which the sea 'has been made to kill' (Heller and Pezzani, 2017, p. 96). Something compellingly shown by Forensic Oceanography's 'Left-to-die boat' shows as the deadly natural forces of the sea must be faced by this vessel which is literally left to die; its distress signals ignored.[61] And yet, as Enrica Rigo (2018) has shown, still people embark on this journey more than once, knowing full well the risks that await; still they face this liquid trap (Heller and Pezzani, 2017). This is the illegalization machine (Andersson, 2014a) exposing these bodies to extreme and deadly 'weather' conditions.

Amadou describes another drawing he has done. It too is Black and white. It is of Grigarage, the Black people's neighbourhood in Tripoli, he explains. On 14th January 2017, Amadou tells me, Libyans arrived to let the Black people out, to arrest them and put them in prison, to sell them as slaves. As he puts it: '*In this world in which Black people have no power at all*'. Again, the traces of slavery live on in the young men's experiences, and how they choose to narrate them. They use the analogy of slavery as a reference point for their experiences. Tayo also tells me of the police crackdown in Libya and the lack of free movement for Black Africans. He tells me he would have stayed in Libya were it not for this; he had a job and was earning good money, '*the life was hell, but it was cool*', is how he described it. A hell, and, yet, having money for a young marginalised man is central to his sense of identity and pride. However, Tayo explains things changed after the crackdown when:

'[the police] killed many people and they captured some […]. Me, God saved me that day because I went to work. […] When we got to Sabratha […] the life there is very, very also wrong. And there, Black doesn't have free movement. Every time when they see Black outside, they just catch Black.'

God saved Tayo. Faith is a key element in all the young men's narratives, in their lives which are

[61] See: https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/the-left-to-die-boat

exposed to such arbitrary disposability. One of the ten photos Edrisa shared with me is a bird with 'God is great' inscribed upon it in Arabic: '*because I am a Muslim and my religion is important to me*', he explains. In his discussion of the moon too, he references how God created it. It is a sign of hope and survival; of God's presence. I do not have the space to fully explore faith in the lives of these young men. However, it is important to note the central importance of religion for all of the young men, be they Christian or Muslim. Faith is represented by the fairy at the side of Amadou's wrestler (see figure 3, Chapter 3); she is always with him, he tells me. He maintains that without his religion and his faith, he would not be here today.

For the young men in Meloni's (2019) study, religion often served as a moral centre of gravity they could hold on to when they felt lost. Similarly, for the young men in Giallo, 'God's plan' was a constant refrain; the reason they had made it alive to Italy. Amadou tells me:

'*Faith, my faith was my key to all this. I remember my faith and my prayers, and I make certain decisions and do things that only my faith took me there. Faith was the only thing that I have […] it gives you something to lean on.*'

But faith is more than a pillar of strength, it can also provide meaning when all meaning is otherwise lost. Ruben Andersson touches upon religion in his ethnography of people held in Mellila, revealing how the notion of 'divine time', the 'time of deliverance, godly time' (2014a, p. 238); or the way in which invocations to God bring some order and meaning to the lives of the people stuck in the camp. People there are 'waiting for divine or state intervention to take them to Europe' (2014a, p. 239). Such is the arbitrariness of the plight of those in Mellila, fate depended upon the 'grace of God' and the state, the two perhaps intertwined. The young men in Giallo sought to negotiate state intervention, but still maintain their fates are part of 'God's plan'; invoking the notion that there *is* a plan, some meaning in their lives. Faith can then provide a structure to deal with ontological threat. Indicative of this, the rapper Drake's song *God's Plan* was very popular and often heard playing on smart phones in Giallo.

Gods Plan by Drake (2018)

'God's plan, God's plan
I hold back, sometimes I won't, yuh
I feel good, sometimes I don't, ay, don't

….

Bad things

It's a lot of bad things

That they wishin' and wishin' and wishin' and wishin'

They wishin' on me

…

God's plan, God's plan

I can't do this on my own, ay, no, ay

Someone watchin' this shit close, yep, close ….'

As Drake raps, if God is with you, you are not alone; someone is 'watchin' over you 'close' and can help you with the 'bad things'. The drawing Innocent did in the art workshop (figure 11, below) is an evocative portrayal of the enmeshing of these elements. Religion and hip hop are important pillars of strength in the young men's lives. Additionally, the branded Gucci bag epitomises the luxury goods and wealth aspired to in many hip hop songs the young men listened too, as well as their own consumerist desires.

Figure 11. God's Plan, by Innocent

Many of the young men also performed their own rap, often referencing the struggles they have overcome, desires for justice or their strength, as well as material wants such as cars and branded goods. Inspired by and referencing rap artists such as Drake, Tupac, and others. Amadou shows me a drawing of Tupac, over which he has written the lyrics: '*even though you are fed up, you gotta keep your head up'.* It gave him the motivation to keep going, he tells me. Here we can see how hip hop's

aesthetic practices offer, as Dattatreyan contends, 'opportunities to creatively and reflexively navigate and critique racialized borders and bordering practices', given that the origins of the genre 'lie in its creative resistance to colonial racial formations and its enduring effects in 20th century urban contexts' (2018, p. 3).

Whether this is God's plan or not, Tayo narrates the red herring of choices available to him. He evidences the complexities of the decisions or events that lead people to where they are, and how migration, flight, becomes the answer when life '*is very very also wrong'* and there is '*no free movement'* for Black people. They risk being captured, killed, exploited and abused, as scholars and media coverage has testified (Pradella and Cillo, 2020).[62] There is a clear racial distinction in Tayo's narrative that relates to Black people as a category at risk. A racialized recognition deeply apparent in Amadou's narrative also when he tells me that following his experiences in Libya, he lost trust in white people. He maintains that the '*wickedness*' he experienced was purely because of the '*colour of [his] skin'*:

'*I never thought I would see such wickedness [in Libya]. All that I suffered there at the hands of those Arab people, it made me lose trust in all white people. […] If I see any white person, straight my heart start beating fast, because I lose trust in them […] because of light skinned Arabs in Libya, in Algeria. Coming to Italy and Sicily. […] just because of the colour of my skin.'*

The reference Amadou makes here to the 'whiteness' of the Arabs is an oppositional representation of his 'Blackness', a mode of being based on his skin colour that comes into play in his experiences in Libya. The reduction of the Black body to a position of disposability and inferiority is also starkly evident in Tayo's earlier description of 'Blacks' not having free movement and Black bodies being discarded as if they were dirt:

'*when I was in my country, I never saw a dead body, but in Libya it got to a time that I passed a dead body as if I am just passing a piece of dirt on the street. […] So, so, common…'*

Their experiences of anti-Blackness in Libya cannot be separated out from global racial ideologies and practices structured by postcolonial legacies of race and racialization. This leads to the

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[62] In October 2017, CNN reported Black Africans being auctioned in Libya for around $400 each (Agence France-Presse, 2017).

persistence of white (and racialized Arab) privilege in postcolonial spaces (Pierre, 2013). As Pierre acknowledges, whilst the explicitly racist scholarship of the past that 'attempted to link levels of civilization to skin colour, and connected North African advanced civilization to the area's proximity to, and biocultural influence by, Europe' has largely been discredited, these inflections inform much thinking around and in Africa (2013, p. 548). Indeed, 'Arabness' in many North African countries, is still synonymous with a racial superiority that privileges whiteness and denigrates Blackness (Fábos, 2012). Brambilla argues that the recent conflict in Libya exposed an ''endemic' racism, directed not just against non-Libyan Africans, but also within Libya itself, against those racialised as 'Black'' (Brambilla, 2014, p. 238).

More recent scholarship has also drawn attention to how the militarization of EU borders further empowered militias involved in fuel, weapon and human smuggling, boosting a brutal system of detention and forced labour that both traps migrants in Libya and pushes them towards Europe (Pradella and Cillo, 2020). This ongoing racial climate then crosses boundaries from Global South to North as colonialism (Pradella and Cillo, 2020). When I ask Amadou whether he could trust Black workers, particularly as a Black Nigerian-Italian keyworker works in Giallo, he replies, in a narrative highly evocative of Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (2000):

'for me he would be like the worst one! [...] that is the same thing in Libya. And even in Sicily. My old brothers, Black skinned people being friends with whites, they are the most wicked people. Because they are the ones that give the information. They are even the ones that suggest some bad things to do. [...] Because even the Black person is trying to please the white by doing wicked things to his own kind [...] to save themselves. You have so, so many people here, they are living that same self-hatred. 'Yeah, yeah, I'm a Black and proud of it', blah, blah, blah. But the reality is you look in the mirror and it is like you are living in the mask, because that is the way they want you to feel.'

Amadou and I have numerous conversations about mental slavery and the imposed inequality and inferiority of Africa in relation to Europe. A construct of colonialism and an ongoing reality for these young men. What Ngugi wa Thiong'o has termed the 'metaphysical empire', in which 'a people's belief in their names, in their language, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves' is annihilated via what he terms the 'culture bomb' unleashed by colonialism (1986, p. 3). Amadou states that Black people '*do wicked thing to their own kind' 'to save themselves'*, such is the resulting structural violence at work.

Amadou's words reflect Back and Sinha with Bryan, who, drawing on Fanon (1980), evidence how the 'colonizing culture produces 'affective complexes' that pit each against the other in a scramble to find a footing in the society whose modes of belonging are imbued with racism' (2012, p. 145). An internalised violence of inferiority that plays out on a global scale so that people are living '*self-hatred*' as if '*in a mask*'. As Ndlovu-Gatsheni maintains, the 'success of the 'metaphysical empire' has been in its submission of the colonized world to European memory' (2018, p. 100).

Amadou tells me he got his trust back by talking '*to people like Leonardo [director of Giallo], or Maria, so not all people, because I still have my guard on. So, I don't allow people to just enter my life anymore like that. Because […] since I left my country, I lose the sense of liberty. I do what they tell me to do, I move when they tell me to move, I sleep like a slave, like an animal. […] This is the way that people treated me. Even in Sicily… but coming to Verde here…*'

Amadou also evidences how slavery is a recurring theme in the narratives of these young men, cognizant of the past and how its legacy still informs their being in the world. Tayo references the lack of free movement for Black people, the disposability of the Black body. Adama notes that these routes are the routes '*made for the slaves*' – recognizing the historical connections between these pathways and the lack of liberty for postcolonial subjects today. Whilst I do not wish to equate their experiences with the enslavement of the Middle Passage, the legacy of that period is a felt and embodied experience for these young men which destabilises their ontological security (Giddens, 2013). Giallo enabled Amadou to reclaim this trust.

The emotionality of racist encounters

In Chapter Five, I highlighted the racism some of the young men experienced in South Italy, a racism that they sought to escape through autonomously migrating North, to Verde. Here, I reflect further on their encounters and the emotional impact of such experiences, rooting these in the Italian race landscape (Curcio and Mellino, 2010; Giuliani and Lombardi-Diop, 2013). Edrisa describes the town he was in in Sicily as a place where '*there are so many of them who don't like Black people […] not everybody – but the atmosphere there is racism*'. The racist encounters he experiences producing feelings of anger and shame:

'*… you enter a place, it's like for them you are smelling. They will be holding their nose […] Kids will*

run away from you. Scared. Like we are going to hunt them. For me it is what their parents told them. That's what I was thinking, because kids they are innocent. They will greet anyone they meet, Black, White, Indian, they will just smile because they are kids. But what the parents told their kids to make them run away when they see you on the streets, so many times you know! At times, you even try, you too, to run away! It is really shameful you know.'

Such is the extent of Edrisa's shame pressing in on him, and the emotion of the encounter, that, at times, he too '*tr[ies] to run away'*. Shame, Sara Ahmed tells us, is an 'intense and painful sensation that is bound up in how the self feels about itself' (2013, p. 103). Shame is both a self-negation, an internalisation of pain and a social experience: 'apartness is felt in the moment of exposure to others, an exposure that is wounding' (Ahmed, 2013, p. 105). This wounding places Edrisa in the zone of nonbeing (Fanon, 2000). The encounters between Edrisa and the children and his reasoning of their fear can also be understood via Sara Ahmed's work on emotions as social constructs. As Ahmed, referencing the use of the child encountering a bear in psychological literature to examine emotions, notes:

> 'We have an image of the bear as an animal to be feared, as an image that is shaped by cultural histories and memories. When we encounter the bear, we already have an impression of the risks of the encounter, as an impression that is felt on the surface of the skin' (2013, p. 7).

So it is that in encountering Edrisa, these children already have an image of him – the racialised 'boat migrant' - as a source of fear. An invasive threat, which invokes a physical response – to run. The encounter between Edrisa, Amadou and others who arrived by boat and the small children who run in fear is the physical manifestation of this political cultural construction. Fear is socially constructed. The child, as Edrisa surmises, is merely replicating the present conjuncture that politicians, such as Salvini, draw upon and incite. These racial encounters make him feel:

'really emotional. Like bad inside. I cried inside so many times, because it is horrible. I am a person you know. What does this stupid man think? Because I am a person. […] You wake up, take your bag, wear clean clothes and go out […] maybe they are judging you like immigrants. The media is judging the immigrants like it is our fault […] so they will be talking about us all the time in the media. Judging us like we are numbers, not people. We are people, not numbers. And they look at me and act like I don't have feelings. Because I do have feelings you know.'

The fact that he is '*a person*' is repeated, in contrast to 'immigrant'. He also stresses the word feelings several times, reinforcing his humanity; a humanity that these encounters negate from him in their production of shame and difference. He is made to feel '*bad inside*', it is '*horrible*'. These are bodily sensations of the shame he is subjected to. He also references the media feeding these narratives – as if they '*are numbers, not people*' – a negation of their humanity and '*talking about us all the time*' '*like it is our fault*' – the blame and accusations such young men are burdened with.

These constant negative discourses and judgements press in on the young men, who are forced to 'weather' this climate (Sharpe, 2016). Even attempts to wear clean clothes fail. It is notable that again, Edrisa references his 'clean' outfit, as discussed in Chapter Five. Here his narrative suggests some internalising of the derogatory subject of the 'dirty' 'immigrant' subject that is imposed upon him in opposition to what is 'normal' (Ahmed, 2003). This also reveals the internalised violence/ bordering effect of the racialised migration regime. It is pervasive, entering the orifices and mind of the body; to contest it requires great energy. Amadou describes the racism experienced in the local town in Sicily similarly:

'*You go to the supermarket to buy stuff, nobody will stand beside you. There will be a big space like you are smelling, or you have some kind of disease. Nobody will even look at you. […] You see two security behind you, following you. […] Until you get out of the supermarket, they will be following you. What do they think! Like we are machines, like animals? We have feelings!*'

Again, Amadou makes a reference to '*animals*' – such is the dehumanising effect of these racialised encounters. He has been used and abused already, '*like a machine*' in Libya where the body is '*use[d] in everything*'. Instead, like Edrisa, here he stresses the notion of '*feelings*' – the importance of his humanity and ability to feel – as a person. Their personhood being negated in such encounters. Notions of cleanliness and newness are his mechanisms to try to shake this off, to alter the gaze. But it is in vain. The 'boat migrant' subject is too well ingrained, reinforced through repeat weather patterns, and media portrayals of the inhumanity of migrants arriving by sea, reducing people to a racial calculus (see Smythe, 2018). In these encounters, Edrisa and Amadou are faced with the constitution of their racialized subjectivity.

Conclusion

A focus on the narratives and lived experiences of the young men in Giallo allows histories of the

Black Mediterranean that have been evaded to emerge and challenge the 'crisis' narratives of the liberal European state. Their counternarratives provide a historical re-rooting of the problems caused to these young men by weathering processes such as the ill wind, brought in by Matteo Salvini and his far-right coalition government. These young men reveal the social relations constructed by humanitarian borders, particularly that of race, and the violence of the migration regime. Whilst they are not directly affected legally by the legislative changes of the Decreto-Salvini, the totality of the increasingly hostile environment they must weather is pervasive, with a material and emotional impact.

The lived experiences of the ill wind also reveal that having legal status is necessary, but not sufficient, for belonging. As Bridget Anderson (2013) shows us, belonging is a far more complex process than its legal framing would suggest. Edrisa's immigration status has not changed, he has humanitarian protection which is valid for a further year and a half. However, following the ill wind, his deportability – or perception of deportability - has increased, his precarious peace destabilised, and the boundaries of his belonging have altered. The future has become a question mark, although his legal status has not changed. Amadou now feels like Verde is a place he is, at least momentarily, again exposed to racist encounters, becoming so anxious he is unable to eat and has lost weight; feeling like he wishes to flee. This then is the weathering impact of the ill wind, a wind which circles around the young men seeping into their encounters in Verde, blowing up hostility and racism. It purposely enhances their feelings of precariousness and deportability, despite their legal right to stay in Italy.

This chapter also exposes how the ill wind reduces the support available to unaccompanied minors after they turn eighteen, signifying a return for the Italian migration regime to rigid age binaries, undone by previous legislation. The ladders Edrisa and the other young men in my study could benefit from will no longer be accessible to unaccompanied minors, who will face greater insecurity after they turn eighteen and must leave the support of the SPRAR system. I argue that this is evidence of the bordering work of childhood and a return to deservingness based on vulnerabilities available only to the child. The new law enhances the vulnerabilities and insecurity of young migrants as they transition to adulthood, as human rights organisations have argued. It is not just temporal governance, but racialised borders which enhance migrant precarity and senses of (un)belonging. The ill wind is clear evidence of the racism and moralistic constructs of deservingness at the heart of Italy's, and the European, migration regime, which tellingly reveals the contention of this thesis, that age is a rigid border, where its effects are worsened by race.

Chapter 8. *Snakes and Ladders:* creating stable ground in the space of the *afterwards*

Amadou – rental racism

When I first meet Amadou he is nineteen. He has been in Italy nearly two years and is living in one of Giallo's semi-independent apartments. We speak often about racism and inequality and how much he loves being in Verde. When I first ask him to describe Verde to me, this is what he says in May 2018:

'since we came here it's like a different world. Since the day that we were in the bus, immediately that we entered in Verde, everything changes. […] everything was new again. The weather was change, everywhere was green. The city was calm. So, immediately, you get a sense of security, the sense of, like, peace. So, I felt good in Verde since I came here.
[…] when I came to Verde, that's the time that I really feel living, like hope about the situation. That is the time I started to see things working. Like, before […] I cannot even tell you my state of mind, because right now I am cool and calm and am speaking, there are things going good, and I have received so many help, so I am like kind of normal. But when I was coming from Sicily to come to Verde, it was different. Immediately, if you saw me, you know that this person is going through a lot of suffering inside, and alone. So, the first thing that I learned from Verde is the togetherness. The way that people treat each other. It's about the attitude of the people of Verde, so I like the people of Verde…'

S: *'So, you feel like it is your city?'*

A: *'Yeah, you feel like it is home and accepting. It is different when you feel home and people don't accept you as here. I mean, like, if you like somebody who doesn't like you it is different, but if you like someone and they like you then it is different. So that is how I see it in Verde: that the people like us and we like them and so it is nice. You feel home and safe and you feel accepted and that is the most important thing.'*

I meet him to say goodbye, several months later in December. We agree to meet for breakfast in a café in the centre of town. I bump into him on the bus on the way in. He seems relaxed and happy. I'm surprised to see him; it is not his usual bus to the centre: *'I've moved!',* he reminds me, a large smile spreading across his face. Ah yes, he had told me on the telephone he had finally found a place

to live with the help of Giallo. He's now moved into a centrally located flat, which he's happy with.

Amadou had to leave the SPRAR system as his income of more than €600 a month from his job at Burger King meant he was no longer eligible for a place. He tells me it was extremely difficult to find a flat in the private rental market in Verde, even with the help of Maria and some of the other workers from Giallo. He recounts numerous occasions when he sourced a flat to rent, and either called himself, speaking Italian, or someone Italian called for him. Then, when he went to view it and they discovered he was African, they refused to rent to him, inventing some excuse. '*It is racism*', he tells me, '*there is a lot of ignorance and racism.*' This happens to his friends too, he says. He sighs, '*this is how it is.*'

He also now has an employment contract, an '*apprendista*' [apprenticeship] contract, but a contract nonetheless, with Burger King, which means he gets paid more and has two days off a week, having previously worked six days a week. He is really happy, he tells me. With this contract and his new accommodation, he should be able to convert his humanitarian protection status, once it expires, into a permit based on employment [*permesso di soggiorno per motivi di lavoro*]. Now he has stable accommodation and employment he can think about other things, like '*relaxing, having fun, finding a girlfriend.*' He wants some time out, to '*do fun things',* he says. He tells me the other guys are pleased for him, and that him making it (at least this far) up the ladder, gives hope to them.

Introduction

This Chapter explores the young men's experiences after coming of age in the Italian reception system. It examines the 'what next' for these young men once they have left the protective space of Giallo. In doing so, it interrogates the promise of the ladders they have put in place through negotiating access to post-eighteen support. Drawing on repeat interviews conducted with the young men after turning eighteen, I examine how they position themselves once outside Giallo and how their subject position as (deserving) child subjects shifts and changes as they transition to (undeserving) adults. As Amadou finds when he tries to access the private rental market, Verde is less welcoming then.

The chapter structure is reflective of the non-linearity of diverse migration trajectories. This is emblematic of how the past is not passed and narratives may have multiple entry points, as discussed in Chapter 3. It commences by unpacking Amadou's narrated description of Verde as a place of arrival, and hope; a form of migration script (Sayad, 2004), where notions of newness wipe

out the past that went before. I then return to the migration script of the 'new start', and the

crossing of the sea as a rite of passage (van Gennep, 1960). I use this as a device to contrast how

such aspirations can risk then, in reality, translating into a false start and an unknown future. I set

out how the 'what next' is complicated by the ongoing weathering processes (Sharpe, 2016).

The next section explores false starts and how, following the removal of 'minor' status, the young

men's deservingness becomes subject to their employment. I then provide a critique of the false

haven of the document. I contrast the narrated aspirations of the document as 'life itself', set out in

earlier chapters, with some of the realities that face these young racialised and marginalized young

men once outside the reception system and the protective border of childhood. I go on to examine

experiences of rental racism and discrimination in the housing market. Finally, I examine the young

men's future aspirations, and the intersectionality of their aspirations and outcomes. I shed light on

how the form of hospitality in Giallo which gives time (Dikeç, Clark and Barnett, 2009), can enhance

their options to remain in Italy as independent young adults. In focusing on future aspirations, I

introduce the notion of stability, as relates to a 'stable life' and its interconnection with ontological

security for these young men. From new beginnings, to false starts and unknown endings, the

Chapter follows their transition out of the SPRAR system to shed light on lived experiences of this

invisibilised trajectory into the space of the afterwards.

In doing so, I reveal the ways in which, as Anderson, Sharma and Wright argue, 'immigration controls

are not neutral but *productive:* they produce and reinforce relations of dependency and power'

(2009, p. 9). These relations can be seen to shift and change as the young men make the

biographical and social policy transition from 'minors' to 'adult' men. The Chapter then details the

interaction between the migration regime and these young men. It unravels how they contest,

negotiate or escape the productivity of this border regime, and the results of their spatial and

temporal disobedience to construct ladders for their 'better future'. I conclude by providing an

assessment of how much the ladders they set up can assist them in countering their marginal socio-

economic position; a position that is very much shaped by the Italian racial landscape. I reinforce my

argument that examining the transition to adulthood is a useful analytic lens to unpick the binary

logics of migration governance and shed light on the transformation from vulnerable (deserving)

'child' to folk devil (undeserving) adult. In this way, the 'what next?' for these young men is

visibilised.

From New beginnings

The 'new start' is a strong theme in the narratives of all the young men, as evidenced by Amadou above. Giallo is portrayed as a space of conviviality and protection; a place for new beginnings. It represents a place of refuge and hospitality. The narrative of the new, can be understood as wiping out what went before; a form of redemptive 'hope'. Michael Jackson argues that stories 'transform our experience and bring us back to ourselves, changed' (2002, p.137), enabling a negotiation of what we can and cannot control in our lives, and offering 'glimpses into the process whereby control over one's destiny is recovered' (2002, p.102). This is the power of the narrative, the emplotment for the young people when speaking to me is a dialogic exchange (Bakhtin, 1981), where they construct the contours of their story. As Paul Ricoeur (1990) argues the possibility of redescription of the past offers us the possibility of re-imagining and reconstructing a future inspired by hope. This is reflected in Amadou's narrative when he describes feeling '*everything was new again'* and '*really feel[s] living, like, hope about the situation*'. He has returned, from the 'no life' experienced before in the spaces of nonexistence (Coutin, 2000) and non-being (Fanon, 2000).

Amadou also refers to '*start[ing] to see things working'*, so there is also a pragmatic understanding of the contrast between the camps in Verde, which function and where young people learn Italian and have access to education and training, to the centres in the South, where they do not. Thus, it is that he begins to feel he can achieve his migration aspirations. As Vacchiano notes, *'[c]rossing the sea holds all the features of a new beginning*' (2014, p.8). Young migrants' hopes for a better future are envisaged as re-terriorialisation in a new space (Mai, 2009). The notion of rebirth emerges through the language of migrating across the sea. Vacchiano has evidenced how a common word used to describe irregular migrants in the Maghreb comes from the Arabic verb 'burning' (*ħaraqa*): '*ħarrāga*' are 'those who burn' documents of identity, but, also, metaphorically, transgress the law and, therefore, borders (2014, p. 10). Alessandra Di Maio (2012) suggests that *ħaraqa* could also refer to burning the past. As Gabriele Proglio then contends, the Mediterranean, through this lens becomes the site of a symbolic death and subsequent rebirth (2018, p. 410). This is reflected in discussions that emerged in the art workshop, such as arose in response to Omar's picture of two sharks (see figure 12, below).
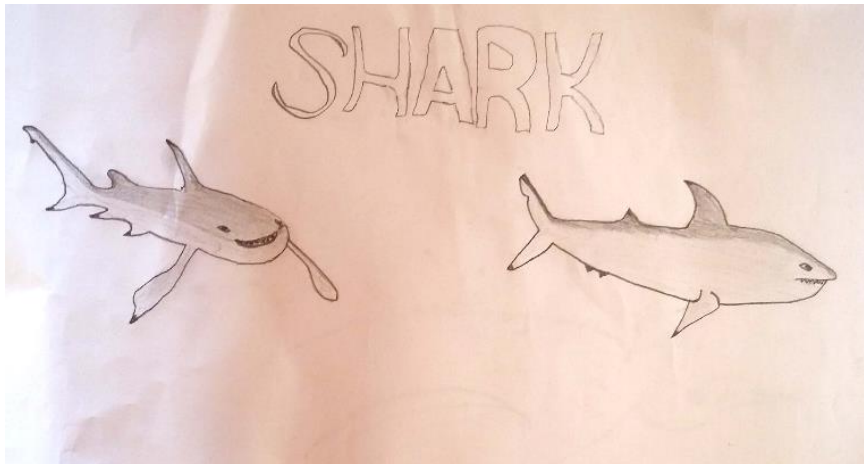
This picture, Omar tells me, represents the horrific journey across the Mediterranean Sea, where the boat fell apart and there were sharks in the water. One day he will have sharks tattooed upon his arm, he says: a symbol of strength and survival. A narrative of survival and winning, of staring death in the face and coming through. As Alice Rossi found in her work with young Moroccans, they also often self-defined as 'winners' as 'someone who has faced death time after time and emerged victorious' (2017, p. 152). This feat of 'heroism' of the 'wrestler' (Amadou, Chapter 3) or 'superman' (Edrisa, Chapter 6) playing into available scripts of masculinity.

The others agree about the journey, the rickety, overfull boats, the knowledge you may die, but Italy is the alternative. It is '*Italy or death*', Innocent explains. Being there, in the dark, in the sea, waiting. The difficulty of that journey stays with you for ever, they tell me. But then they are here, in Italy. Made it, all for the hope of a 'better future.' This notion is underpinned by the idea of migration as a 'rite of passage' (van Gennep, 1960). Victor Turner, who expands upon van Gennep's concept refers to the liminal space as 'a realm of pure possibility whence novel configurations of ideas and relations may arise' (1967, p. 97).

Thus the 'new start' narrative conveys the idea of crossing, new beginnings and altered states. A state that is commenced via the crossing of the Mediterranean Sea, a feat that Einashe (2018 np) calls 'an act not only of survival but of imagination'. An act revealing migration as a tactic of creating futures (Cole 2010 in Griffiths, Rogers and Anderson, 2013, np), of maintaining hope. The 'new start' then commences at the point of the return to hope – the new start means the 'not yet' (Bloch, 1995) of the future is still to be imagined and *can* be imagined. For the young men in my study, this new space was not found in the South of Italy, but in Verde, as Amadou's description

makes clear – it is a '*different world*'. Verde represents the 'elsewhere' of open possibilities and alternatives. Amadou's narrative can also be read as a kind of 'rebirth' through migration, leaving behind the past and escaping 'social death' (Ramsay, 2017).

This is the hope that is narrated and pinned to Verde, a space in which the rebirth is possible. A hope that is not found in the South of Italy, where futures cannot be imagined. Instead, it is in Giallo that room for manoeuvre to construct such ladders is found. However, hospitality over the threshold of childhood is still dependent upon deservingness, which, as the next section elaborates, shifts from the minor to the worker, as the young men become dependent on their labour power.

To false starts and the importance of being employed

'*Life is like a watch*' - Kwasi

I am sitting with Kwasi at the side of one the piazzas in Verde. It is a very pretty square, often filled with tourists milling around or sitting outside at one of the many café-bars adorning the square. As we sit, we are approached by a young African man who asks for money. Kwasi hands over a €5 note looking sad. I comment that it is sad to see a young African man like this, begging for money. Kwasi concurs. Then he reflects: '*That could be me; we have to help where we can and when we can'.* He continues:

'*anything can happen. Let's say now I am having job and then maybe I don't have it. Then maybe I will also be like this [a beggar]. Maybe, I don't know. It could happen, because life is like a watch, because any time you move you will not get things perfect. Life is running like a watch, you run this thing, you come to the place, you leave again.'*

Just as in *Snakes and Ladders,* life on the margins is precarious, always open to slippage back down a snake. This is recognised by Kwasi, who can literally see before him a potential physical manifestation of his future. He is currently working as an apprentice mechanic, but is conscious of the precarity of his position. You never know when the hands of the clock will slip back down again. As emerged right from the focus group discussion, employment and training is seen as the bastion against this future that has appeared before us in the piazza. A future that many of the young men, like Kwasi, feared; commenting when I asked them how they felt about seeing these older African men begging on street corners, outside bars, or supermarkets: '*it could be me'*. The young men in Giallo have taken action, engaging in spatio-temporal disobedience to contest this, but it is hard to

escape the snakes, even with the ladders provided by Giallo.

As Charles' one photo starkly highlighted in Chapter Six, work is central to their migratory aspirations. This is reinforced by the discourses of staff in Giallo. As Angela tells me: '*work is everything, especially for them because it is a legal requirement for their permit to stay*'.[63] She is referring to the fact that humanitarian protection, the status granted to most of the young men in Giallo, was granted for two years and could then be converted to a residence permit for employment. At the time of this research, unaccompanied minors could potentially convert their immigration status to a residence permit based on access to work or study. However, it was extremely difficult to do this for the purposes of study. As such, once their permit to stay expires, employment is the main mechanism to remain in Italy legally after turning eighteen (Accorinti, 2015). Indeed, Accorinti observes that job placement is fundamental in Italy for two reasons: one, it is necessary for a residence permit (as an adult); and two, to live independently (2015, p. 39).

The employment contract needs to have a minimum number of hours and level of income, revealing the productivity of the migration regime in constructing a certain kind of labour force (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2008). Additionally, this permit requires a passport or valid identity document, which can be problematic depending on people's reasons for leaving their country of citizenship and/or the possibility of that state to issue passports. They are also required to have an official rental contract, registered with the local council. As alluded to in Amadou's narrative at the beginning of this chapter alludes, this can be difficult for these young men owing to their precarious economic situation and the discrimination and racism they face in the housing market.

Unlike other studies with young migrants in Italy who chose not to stay in reception centres (Mai, 2011; Vacchiano and Jiménez-Alvarez, 2012; Vacchiano, 2014; Rossi, 2017), as the preceding chapters have evidenced, the young men in my study had all requested asylum and actively sought to stay *in* reception centres to access education and post-eighteen support. This was based on the belief that this would stand them in better stead for adulthood. Education and accessing these training opportunities as a minor is seen as the route to employment, as the initial discussion in the focus group revealed. Emmanuel explains it well during the focus group:

'*if you don't get a job it is like they never helped you. So, it's like, you help me… Like the rain is falling, you get me out of the rain and later, after the rain is stopped, you pour over me water. It's just like*

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[63] Fieldnotes June 2018

you never helped me. Yeah? You get it? So, taking someone here and not giving the person a job, for me it is just like you waste his time.'

The others agree. The notion of being supported just because you are 'underage' is revealed to be a form of temporal bubble, unhelpful in its limitation to the time of childhood. If it does not extend beyond and assist you to find employment, it is simply a '*waste of time'*. All in the focus group agree you need a job, any job, to 'stand by yourself'. Here, right from the outset of the research is the young men's focus on work, the recognition of the temporalities of the regime, and the desire to regain control of their own temporalities through accessing training and education. Something that Giallo aided them with.

As their experiences show, the concept of time is particularly elastic in the case of migrants (Griffiths, 2014; Back and Sinha, 2018). For these young men time is simultaneously 'wasted' and frenzied, as in the ticking clock of becoming documented and finding work or at least an apprenticeship before reaching eighteen years of age in order to manage independently once outside the reception system. Emblematic of the 'multiple temporalities' (Coutin, 2003) migrants may inhabit. They seek to regain control of their own time, to access productive time and keep moving forward, avoiding the snakes.

As Lalo explains during the Focus Group:

'*I have no choice. Any job I will do it, because I am only here. I have no family. Nothing, no brother. I am here alone. I don't have anybody here who will help me. So any job, I have no choice. Any job I have to do it. To have a better life. Because I believe that when I leave this project, I have to stand by myself. So when I stand by myself without job, how will I live, how will I survive*?'

Lalo replicates the system and the focus on work as an essential axis allowing a form of belonging. He presents an understanding that this depends on his ability to find employment and seeks to set up this future prior to becoming an adult. This is replicated in the language of the keyworkers, such as Cristina, who tells me *'they'll never make it without a job*!' Lalo is willing to take '*any job'* as it is necessary for '*survival'* and the '*better life'* that all are seeking. The recognition of being in a place 'alone' 'with no family', and thus having to 'stand by themselves'.

As Chapter Six set out, these young men do not fall into irregularity immediately upon turning

eighteen as their humanitarian protection (or refugee status, in the case of Emmanuel and Daaud) supersedes this boundary. Instead, this is a problem that can arise two or even ten years later as renewal of stay is dependent on employment (Dimitriadis, 2018). Work then '*is everything*' as Angela says. Work is also an essential part of becoming a man, part of their migratory trajectory and, for some, a need to support families and others in other places. As Daaud tells me **'***when you are in Italy if you don't work you are finished.'* Additionally, however, their stay is also dependent upon finding accommodation in the rental market and an official rental contract. A further transition whereby their status as 'men' (and thus racialised threat), no longer in the protective space of childhood (innocence) in the reception system, creates problems for them, as the next section discusses.

Rental racism and unknown endings

When the young men leave Giallo and the more protective space of childhood, encounters within Verde may become more hostile, as Amadou's experiences recount. This discrimination stems from the embedded racism still at the heart of Italian social space and ongoing weathering processes (Sharpe, 2016). Pugliese contends that 'colonial relations of biopolitical power effectively organise Italian social space, caucacentrically govern and delimit 'legitimate' cultural practices, and hierarchically mark and segregate targeted racialised bodies' (2008, p. 32). We can see this in the way in which bodies such as Amadou's are excluded from the home space of the private rental market. Heather Merrill observes that:

> 'African bodies are (re-)marked as iconic signifiers of illegitimate belonging, represented for instance in media images of packed fishing vessels entering the country clandestinely through southern maritime borders, and in tropes of itinerant street peddlers and prostitutes, suggesting that their very being in an Italian place threatens the moral purity of the nation state' (2015, p. 78).

The difficulty of finding accommodation post-reception centre was highlighted to me on my very first meeting with Giuseppe back in May 2017, so a long time before the 'ill wind'. When it came to finding a place to live, the 'otherness' of the African man came to the fore. This is racism, Giuseppe acknowledges, in the main. He does add a caveat that often there are also some concerns around the financial viability of young people on what are, inevitably, precarious employment contracts. Nonetheless, the rejection of young Africans seeking to find private rented accommodation, even when they have employment, is primarily due to racialised discourses and fears. Italians complain of

food smells they are not used to, or too many people hanging out in the flat (with little income, this becomes a meeting space for many people). Indeed, as Bruno Riccio (2011) has observed, such 'culturalist' readings of difference have led to residential segregation and discrimination in the housing market, a form of rental racism. Food again becomes a marker of difference, of exclusion from the national space.

Sara Ahmed examines how others are recognised as strangers, as 'bodies out of place', through economies of vision and touch (2013). To this we can add smell, as scholars have shown, olfactory borders can create spaces of differential belonging (Back, 1996; Rhys-Taylor, 2013). This can be seen in Verde, as the young men seek to enter spaces which until now have been fortified as 'Italian' where those who do not engage in the eating of 'pasta' are constructed as 'other' (see also Chapter 4). If food becomes the marker of a pure 'national identity' into which migrants should assimilate (Novak, 2017), then those who do not eat pasta, who produce different smells and flavours are marked out as culturally different, often with negative consequences (Rhys-Taylor, 2013).

Even the sympathetic Manager of a local social centre that works with migrants of all immigration statuses, seeking to provide shelter, food and legal advice, told me that many of her comrades had previously rented to African migrants but had 'found themselves hosting all their tenants' friends too', so that one person became ten, as the Africans sought to aid their fellow brothers. '*So they just couldn't continue*' she tells me, how could these (good, is the implication) people rent their properties when this was the outcome? This goodwill was undone by the 'culture' of the Africans.[64] The hospitality of the Africans leading to the lack of hospitality on the part of the Italian landlords. Heather Merrill reflects on an Italy:

> 'where repressed histories of Italian colonialism and the making of racial capitalism flow like a quiet groundwater stream into the contemporary racialization of newcomers and denial of their legal and cultural citizenship' (2015, p. 79).

Thus, Amadou, when in Giallo, finds Verde 'home and accepting', a place where 'the people like us'; yet this welcome becomes more discrete once he has left the protective space of Giallo and childhood. Once outside, the resulting mechanisms of exclusion become more visible. Amadou's experiences reveal how every day bordering acts as modes of differential inclusion (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013). Olfactory borders construct forms of culinary nationalism (Horowitz, 2019) and an

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[64] Fieldwork notes November 2018

exclusionary mechanism which draws boundaries around who can be included in the 'Community of Value' (Anderson, 2013). Thus, upon leaving the SPRAR system those construed as 'other', who do not eat the same [Italian] food as the [Italian] people, are not received hospitably, but rather risk rejection. Their 'othering' embedded within the postcolonial aftermath which continues to influence the political economy of race in Italy and the politics of belonging (Merrill, 2014a, 2014b; Woods and Saucier, 2015; Hawthorne, 2017; Proglio, 2018; Smythe, 2019).

Charles, too, is struggling with finding a place to live when I last speak to him. He is working and too busy to meet me, so we speak over the telephone. It is now October 2018 and Charles turned nineteen in June but is still in SPRAR Adulti, the adult reception system, and looking for a new place to live. It is not easy; this is his only problem he tells me. Similarly to Amadou, he says people are racist, and it is also hard to find a place he can afford. However, although he feels Giallo has helped him and many people like him, now he is in SPRAR Adulti he notices the difference in support between minors and adults in the reception system.

'Some people benefit and some don't. Some people don't have a job, they just sit here and do nothing and when the project finishes, they just have to go. It is very sad. I wish it would not be like that. […] Some of them go to Germany, or other countries. The difference is whether or not you have a job before you get into SPRAR Adulti. You need a job before, these are the lucky people. If you come without a job it is going to be difficult.'

He reiterates: '*I feel it is sad. It is not right; it is not supposed to be this way.*'

Again, we return to the notion that 'employment is everything'. Here, Charles acknowledges the failed aspirations of these people's migrancy, how they return to a state of marginality, of abjectivity (Ferguson, 2002), that they sought to contest through migrating. He is contemplative that you need a job before you get into the Adult system, indicating that it is the support as a minor that is needed to enable people to find work. This reflection that it is '*not supposed to be this way'*, indicative that something has gone wrong in this 'elsewhere'. The projected future and 'better life' being dismantled at the reality of life in Italy without a job. Many of the people in the Adult system will have arrived in Italy as adults, and thus, as discussed, have less access to training and support programmes. Some will have been transferred as minors, who were unable to find work, or disengaged with projects and left to their own devices, such as Malik. These people were unable to construct ladders.

Charles' reflections reveal the difference between the young men in Giallo, or at least those who play the game, and those who have not been able to access ladders, who are then left doing 'nothing'. He is contrasting himself to these people occupying the space of nontime (Bourdieu, 2000) that he and the other young men in Giallo purposefully contested through moving to Verde. This dialogue takes place towards the end of my stay in Verde and reveals some of the greater openness Charles now shares with me, following our sustained contact, as opposed to the more canonical narratives previously. The support, or ladders, provided in Giallo to those who play the game, can assist the young men avoid this fate. The difference in outcomes is stark.

When conversing informally to Marinella, who works as a legal consultant across varies reception centres in Verde, I ask her 'what next for these young men?' She replies that it is unknown; little is known about what happens to young people after they leave the reception system. She ruefully suggests that many may end up picking tomatoes in Calabria, in the exploitative conditions for workers in the South that have been picked up also in the British media (see for example Jones and Awokoya, 2019) (but that also occur in other regions, including that of Verde). However, when I asked her the same question again, but this time in a formal interview setting, her response was markedly different. She replied that she was not very sure, and then recounted only the case of a positive example of one young man who found a job in Verde as a store security guard. When I pressed her, she did say that Italy has a large irregular labour market - underpaid and under protected – so many could end up there.

This example reveals how the interview created a space in which, in her role as legal advisor within the reception system, Marinella did not want to admit what she had stated in an informal setting. In the role of legal consultant, providing assistance to young people who may then end up in conditions of squalor and exploitation, is not something she wishes to focus upon. Here, the ways in which ethnography can unpick some of the dialogues that may be constructed for interview purposes is clear. The temporal space of childhood with the support and protection it gives is visibilised; the 'what next' of the space of adulthood for former minors is invisibilised; outside the protective space of childhood the 'adult' must stand alone and the care is gone. A result of the implementation of rigid age binaries and support based on the vulnerability of the *child*.

Thus, in many ways, then, Giallo feels like a temporally suspended space, where responses to my questions to staff as to what happens after young people leave were invariably vague, expressing a lack of knowledge, or interest even. Once they have crossed over the threshold of the centre and

beyond childhood their visibility ends, they become absent. The artificially imposed border of adulthood – by which point the child is supposed to be able to 'stand by themself', irrespective of length of time in the country and language capability is normatively imposed in Giallo. This is also a result of resource and time limitations. And yet, as I have argued the hospitable practices for those who play the game can transcend this. As young adults, their support needs do not vanish overnight upon reaching eighteen; the support, or ladders, accessed in Giallo can help propel the young men forwards as independent adults outside the reception system.

One former manager of a reception centre for unaccompanied minors in Verde I met had resigned in frustration at what she saw as a limited 'protective bubble' for children, which ended once they became adults and left the centre. A support she felt was false in its portrayal of protection and support, in that it was too temporary, too limited and young people would be left once again in difficulty/ on the streets once leaving the centre as adults.[65] Something echoed by Emmanuel with his metaphor of young people being temporarily protected from the rain whilst they are under eighteen. As discussed in Chapter Four, SPRAR was subject to cuts and less support was available for minors in the system. I do not wish to portray a rosy picture of happy ever after here, rather but to show the limited room for manoeuvre that Giallo's post-eighteen support could provide to these young men once adults. It is, then, nonetheless, my contention that the ladders provided for by Giallo could grant better outcomes in the space of adulthood. Yet, this remains a space in which the ongoingness of racial regimes is still apparent. Ladders can only act as a buffer to protect against such weathering.

The false haven of the document

For these young men, as identified in Chapter Five, the focus on becoming visibilised, of gaining social and legal presence via obtaining their document is narrated as being 'life itself'. Yet in the racialised afterwards, there are limitations to this that young men may not have envisaged. Anderson, Sharma and Wright point out how the state itself produces illegality and migrants' vulnerabilities (2009, p. 8). In focusing on these young men's experience, I provide an example of how state-produced vulnerability shapes their futures towards certain kinds of labour market spaces and foregrounds their subject positions. Whilst the *child* is constructed as protected by the Italian (European) migration regime, once they transition to adulthood and must stand by themselves, the vulnerabilities produced *by* the state *to* these young men becomes apparent. The young men seek to

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[65] Interview, scoping study May 2017

contest this space of vulnerability, as discussed above, but, as Kwasi notes, the fear of dropping back down a snake again is with them often. The spectre of the African man, begging with cap in outstretched hand, is not far from their thoughts, and a visible presence in Verde.

As Bridget Anderson evidences, criminalizing people's mobility and denying access to resources, services, and rights to those deemed to be illegally migrating and residing in a place was an important part of how the modern proletariat was formed (Anderson, Sharma and Wright, 2009, p. 8). Today, it also serves as a method for the creation of 'cheap labour' (Anderson, Sharma, and Wright, 2009, p. 8). Raeymaekers refers to this as the 'political economy of illegality' in which Europe's border regime explicitly produces a clandestine cross border economy (2014, p. 165). Thus constructing 'a labour market with no rights, but which increasingly performs its task within the centre of Europe's formal economic growth' (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013 in Raeymaekers, 2014, p. 165). The legal production of 'illegality', as a distinctly spatialised and typically racialized social condition for undocumented migrants provides an apparatus for sustaining their vulnerability and tractability as workers (De Genova, 2002, p.439). De Genova stresses that this notion has been so well documented as to be *irrefutable* (2002, p. 440, my emphasis).

Ida Danewid confirms this view, that capitalism has *de facto* always been racial capitalism: '[c]apitalism relies upon the elaboration, reproduction and exploitation of racial difference: on the production of populations that are surplus, expandable and disposable' (2017, p. 9). Whilst Dawson and Palumbo argue that 'it is in the interests of the capitalist economy in general to maintain high levels of immigrant illegality' thus leading to a 'juridically non-existent labour force' (2005 in Pugliese, 2008, p. 24). Indeed, in Italy, irregular employment makes a significant contribution to the Italian economy (Dal Lago, 2010). Thus, the young men in my study who went to such lengths to escape non-existence in the South are at risk of again falling into invisibility and no legal presence if they fail to find appropriate employment.

I witnessed this myself during my scoping study in 2017, when I visited a squat run by a local left-wing organisation in Verde to assist migrants who had left the SPRAR system and had become homeless. Having failed to find accommodation in Verde, these adult migrants were then living in the freezing barn in the squat on the outskirts of the city. Mattresses with threadbare covers were spread across the dirt floor of the barn. Cooking was done over a gas camping stove, in the space next door. Yet, all there had the legal right to be in Italy, and were employed in large international logistics companies, on zero-hour contracts. As one young Ethiopian man told me, he had little

choice, as he needed work to stay in Italy.[66]

The false binary between illegal/legal is evident here, as all those housed in the squat were legally in Italy. Held in abject conditions, freezing in winter, and subject to the harsh heat of Verde in the summer; a further reminder of the ongoing weathering processes to which many migrants are subject (Sharpe, 2016). Julia O'Connell Davidson challenges the notion of the binary divisions between forced and voluntary, noting how many labour migrants' work permits are only temporary and impose a variety of further restrictions on their rights and freedoms (2013, p. 182). This can be seen in Italy, where the right to stay is dependent upon the employment contract held by the migrant. The 'regular' migrant may still be subject to exclusion and exploitative conditions of labour. Just as Foucault (1995), commenting on the productivity of the prison regime, identified, so this system produces illegal subjects and provides (sometimes) useless work for them in internships which provide cheap labour for the employer and little employment prospects for the intern.

The document as 'life itself' is then revealed as enough for geographical mobility, but not necessarily enough for a liveable life and belonging. Regular migrants can easily fall into irregularity again due to Italian structural constraints and the complicated requirements needed to be met in order to renew a residence permit. The restrictive Italian legislative framework makes things difficult and 'large numbers of migrants are at constant risk of slipping back into irregularity' (Dimitriadis, 2018, p. 275). This is a way to keep people as permanent 'unskilled labourers.' *Snakes and Ladders*, Kwasi's notion of life as a watch, or going 'back to square one', as Khosravi (2018) refers to it, all refer to the way in which the regime keeps people in suspended temporal stays and in circulation. The tactics of the young men are geared towards avoiding the fate of the 'unskilled labourer' and finding a future of their making in the space of the afterwards. The promise of the ladders is limited, but is there, and they can assist the young men avoid this fate.

A fate that is bound with the ongoingness of racial regimes. By way of example, Amadou tells me about his Christmas. He spent it with an Italian friend's family in Verde. He recounts how surprised they are that he, a 'boat migrant', as he puts it, is so lovely, educated, speaks such good Italian. He even has a job! They are kindly people he tells me, but it shows how much damage the portrayal of migrants does. Their surprise at his capabilities is palpable. A 'boat migrant' is almost non-human. Very much an 'other' who cannot speak your language or behave like you; a creature from the sea that is produced and sustained by the racialised migration landscape.

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[66] Fieldnotes, May 2017

Here we can see how some strangers are stranger than others (Ahmed, 2000), and may remain so, particularly through the ascription of 'whiteness' to Europeanness through the persistence of coloniality (El Tayeb, 1999; El-Tayeb, 2011; Lentin, 2014, 2014; Merrill, 2014b; Danewid, 2017; Hawthorne, 2017; Proglio, 2018; Agbamu, 2019; Smythe, 2019). This is what Tudor refers to as 'migratisation': '(the ascription of migration) as performative practice that repeatedly re-stages a sending-off to an elsewhere and works in close interaction with racialisation'(2018, p. 1064). In this way, Europeanness as Blackness becomes an impossibility (El-Tayeb, 2011). Amadou remains othered through this lens and the hostile political landscape where 'the logics of colonialism are [deeply] embedded in contemporary Italian national identity' (Smythe, 2019, p. 12). Youth who are 'migrantised' (Dahinden, 2016) or 'migratised' (Tudor, 2017; 2018), are then at risk of constantly being relegated to an 'elsewhere', whether normatively or legally, and thus temporized belonging. This is the racial landscape facing the young men despite the ladders.

Creating stable ground: Futures and aspirations

Metaphors of stability and being able to 'stand on your feet' abounded in the young men's discussions of adulthood. Again, replicated by keyworkers, as Angela tells me: '*if you've managed to create stable ground beneath your feet, you can manage after you leave the SPRAR system, otherwise you're in trouble'*. Stability, a 'stable life' is a key and recurring word in discussions around future projects. Edrisa explains the importance of education as providing:

'*A stable life. At least to see chances, to have opportunities to go to school. Just to go to school. Because I have faith in that process, the documents, the diplomas, because in Europe that's all you need, and you are safe'*
I ask him: '*what is a stable life? How would you describe it?'*
He replies: '*to have a normal family, to have a job, to have a document. Have a stable life, to be able to take care of yourself and your family. That is what I mean by a stable life*.'

Again, the notion of care – and heteronormative tropes of 'being able to take care of yourself and your family' are key to feeling independent and having a stable life. Having regular immigration status is also key, this, together with employment, can provide 'stable ground', or ontological security (Giddens, 2013). Edrisa's narrative reveals how his sense of self is bound within normative ideas about heterosexual family life that are tied to ideals relating to life course and time (Freeman 2010 in Back and Sinha, 2018, p. 82). Indeed, as Yasmin Gunaratnam observes, what is most at stake in contemporary contestations of intimate citizenship is the body and how certain bodies 'live and

get to live time' (Puar, 2009 in Gunaratnam, 2013).

Les Back and Shamser Sinha use the 'terms of belonging' as a conceptualization of the ways in which migration and citizenship status limit not only what a young person can do in the present but what they can imagine in the future (2018, p. 77). For the young men in this study, the ladders they access can assist them to (attempt to) live their own time and to have hope, to '*see chances*' as Edrisa says. Stability is found in their ability to escape the suspended temporality of immigration controls, or being trapped in the game of *Snakes and Ladders*. However, this is a stability that is a struggle for many young people, irrespective of immigration status. For example, in Jennifer Silva's study of working-class men and women's transition to adulthood in the US in an 'age of uncertainty', she describes a young person as 'desperately seek[ing] solid ground' (Silva, 2013, p. 31). Such instability here too derives from access to increasingly precarious forms of employment (if available at all) (Silva, 2013). Edrisa's stated belief in 'the process' in Europe leading to a 'stable life' reveals his optimism and some naivety in the options available to marginalised youth in global capitalist regimes.

For marginalized youth, migrants or not, stable ground is difficult to achieve. Indeed, youth in the South of Italy also face huge unemployment risks, one of the reasons for their large movement towards to Northern Italy or other parts of Europe where employment is better, and as replicated in the young men's movements to Verde. The region in which Verde is located is one of the richest in Italy, with high levels of employment relative to other areas. Data from Eurostat for 2018 reveals that Southern Italy and the islands (Sicily and Sardinia) have some of the lowest employment rates in Europe, particularly for young people under 25. The European average of youth unemployment is 15.2% and in North Italy, the unemployment rate for under 25s is 21.7%, whereas for the South and Sicily, the unemployment rate is 50.75% - more than double; a significant divide and evidence of the ongoing inequality between North and South Italy and internal racisms (Ginsborg, 2003; Pugliese, 2008). [67] When I ask Daaud about his future aspirations he sighs sadly:

'*you mean the future project that I would like? Or the future that Italy would like? [laughs ironically]. The future I would like is to do many things. I wanted to study. I always wanted to study, and when I was in Somalia I was studying. I love studying. […] but now in Italy I have lost my future, because*

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[67] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/9746862/1-29042019-BP-EN.pdf/329a9132-20c0-485b-aa22-b34864c22fde

when you are in Italy, if you don't work you are finished.'

Daaud feels he has '*lost [his] future'* because he wished to go to university, and in the over focus on finding employment, of any type, these aspirations can be lost. Instead, he is engaged in menial labour, doing a variety of jobs including cleaning, as the temporalities of the regime meant he lost out on being able to study the course he wished to. Nonetheless, Giallo's hospitality and the Zampa Law offered some of the young men a chance at gaining employment and skills. For example, Charles (cook), Justice and Adama (hotel and catering industry), Kwasi (mechanic), Ekku and Edrisa (construction and building trade) and Saaki (plumber). Such opportunities derive from the ladders in Giallo. These forms of support and grounding allow the young men greater possibilities to move forward with their lives to access a future. Ladders that can assist the young men better prepare for the 'what next'.

Amadou initially expresses his desire to be a keyworker when I first talk to him in May.

'*I would really like to continue to study in university. And I hope one day that I will go back to my country and all that I learn here I can teach the people there. All the experience I have here I can share with the people there. So, this is my future plan. So, it is to learn and teach*.'

He tells me his plan is to study to be a keyworker and he will start a course in September, at an evening class. He will keep his job at Burger King and study at evening classes for three years. He has a plan to make work work for him in other ways, to keep his dream of further study going and use his Burger King employment to achieve this and maintain his residence permit in Italy.

I ask him*: 'So one day you might be working here [Giallo]?!'*
Amadou replies*: Yeah! [laughs] Let's hope so! [...] I would really like to work in Giallo*'

As the opening vignette reveals, his narrative is strongly one of redemption. The support and assistance he received from Giallo clearly meant a great deal to him; his narrative is one of transformation from 'alone' and suffering' to a 'calm' person due to the 'help' he has received, from Giallo and others in Verde. This for him was a kind of lifeline, and he is recognizant of this fact, and often expresses a desire to help others in the same way. He is still receiving psychological support when I first met him. He has already worked at Burger King for nearly a year on an internship funded by the Cooperative that runs Giallo, which has its own funding streams for work placements and

training courses, enabling more young people housed there to study than in other reception centres.

Unfortunately, by the time I have my final conversation in person with Amadou in December, the course he was planning to do has been cancelled. There is not enough demand for places in the SPRAR system, and with the changes implemented by the Decreto-Salvini, less requirement for specialist workers. We can see here how the support provided for by Giallo for these young men remains constrained by the socio-legal landscape once outside childhood. Amadou is ambivalent about this. He is disappointed, but now says he will refocus, perhaps education is not the way forward. He is once again re-imagining his future and redescribing his hopes (Ricoeur, 1990). His document is valid for another year and a half, he has an employment contract and a place to live, so these three essential ladders enabling him to 'stand by himself' are in place. He can, for now, relax a little. Ansell et al. argue that future orientation, is only one part of the picture, itself constructing a linear mode of understanding, instead 'it is more useful to see transitions as perpetually stretched across boundaries, spanning time, space and relationships, drawing constantly on pasts and futures in constituting the present' (2014, p.400). Amadou is re-constituting his present on the basis of options open to him.

Emmanuel too exemplifies the notion of re-constituting one's future. He has already left Giallo when I meet him again during my fieldwork and is living in a privately rented flat. He replies vaguely to my WhatsApp messages asking to meet for our final conversation, stating he will let me know when he has time and is planning a trip to Austria. He often told me he did not wish to stay in Italy, that this was not the place for him, despite his professed love of Verde. I do not hear from him for some time. Eventually, he agrees to meet me and when we meet over a drink in the centre tells me he has been 'uptown', meaning northern Europe. He says he tried to make a life for himself in Austria and was thinking of leaving Italy, but then realised he is better off in Italy, as he would have to start all over again; learn German, make a new life. It would be too hard he says, so he decided to try and make a go of it in Italy where he has refugee status, and a home. Now his plan, he tells me, is to make a life for himself in Verde. It is his '*city of choice,*' he tells me. Whether on the basis of failed attempts at new lives uptown, or on the basis of pure pragmatic assessment of where he can best set himself up, perhaps a combination of the two, who knows. The point being for Emmanuel that he has this choice, or form of choice. He can stay (still) in Verde owing to the support he was given in Giallo to achieve refugee status and find a home for himself.

When I asked Emmanuel, why Austria? What did he think to find there? He replied simply: '*when*

you don't like the way things are you try to move elsewhere – to have hope.' Hope is in the journey, in this mobility. As I argued in Chapter Five, mobility as freedom is a problematic notion. Yet, rather than a binary between im/mobility and the falsehood of mobility as freedom, what is important here is a level of choice of mobility. Ghassan Hage critiques the enduring assumption that home represents 'security *in the form of immobility as well as in the form of an enclosure.* Such homeliness is perceived to stand in opposition to openness and movement, which are somehow associated with homelessness' (2003, p. 28). For Hage, this is incomplete, as he queries:

> '[f]or what is security if it isn't the capacity to move confidently? And what is 'home' if not the ground that allows such a confident form of mobility, i.e. that allows us to contemplate the possibilities that the world offers confidently and move to take them on. A home has to be both closed enough to offer shelter and open enough to allow for this capacity to perceive what the world has to offer and to provide us with enough energy to go and seek it' (2003, p. 28).

These young men engage in tactics to seek a place, a home that provides this 'stable ground', as reflected in Emmanuel's account above.

Conclusion

In visibilising the transition to adulthood and the 'what next' for these young men once they have crossed the threshold of childhood, this Chapter interrogates what happens *after* the unaccompanied minor, who has actually managed to survive the perilous journey across land and sea and made it to Europe, turns eighteen and is legally considered 'adult. In focusing on the space of the afterwards, it sheds light on the vulnerabilities caused by the regime and the productive nature of borders in producing particular subjects via binary and racialised logics. The young men's experiences illustrate how the body of the child migrant, now a 'man' is perceived as racially different and a 'threat' as the shift from 'innocent' child is accordingly made to its binary opposite. This subject is 'out of place', a 'space invader' (Puwar, 2004) in the racialised landscape of the afterwards. However, for the young men who play the game housed there, Giallo provides a hospitality that can exceed this border, providing ladders which enable them to construct a more stable future. The ladders allow them chances, as Edrisa puts it, to avoid never finishing, to stay still (Gill, 2009; Van Hear, 2017). The ladders provide greater possibilities to escape the game of *Snakes and Ladders*. It is here that the difference in the migration regime of Italy at the time of my research

and other EU countries, such as the UK (still in the EU at the time of writing), where this is not the case, is revealed. These young men were granted a status that overrode the biographical border, providing minimal leeway for a future in Europe. They are living in time; occupying a temporal space that they feel they have some control over, time that has not been 'seized' or 'stolen' by the migration regime.

Amadou's narrative as he describes his arrival to Verde is very much couched in the language of redemption, peppered with words such as 'new' and 'peace' and 'hope'. Feeling like he was in '*a different world*', he reflects the notion of the imagined 'elsewhere'; a separate and distinct space from that of the past, which is thus imbued with new hope and possibilities. As a 'child' under the age of eighteen he is accepted and welcomed into the protective space of Giallo and experiences Verde as '*home, safe and accepting*'. Yet, later, as an over eighteen and thus no longer a 'child', he receives a very different welcome when trying to find an apartment in the private rental market. Spaces that are open to the seemingly Italian voice are closed again upon the encounter with his racialised Black body. The racialisation of his body as 'other' precludes him from accessing this space. The hospitality he was afforded previously transformed to hostility, exemplifying the Derridean notion of hostipitality. The vulnerabilised subject of the 'child migrant' becomes the folk devil male adult migrant, a 'man' and a threat. Thus, this chapter shows how the borders of race continue to create problems for these young men as they seek to make a 'new start' and claims to space and belonging in Verde as 'adults'.

Amadou's narrative, when contrasted with Chapter Seven and his desire to flee following Salvini's election, reveals how feelings of belonging can shift and change. When I meet Amadou on the bus in December 2018, he is smiling and happy that he has found a home, feeling that he has hope again. Temporalities of belonging are then dependent upon multiple and complex factors; not solely regular immigration status, but also simply feeling home and accepted. Amadou now feels sufficient belonging to ignore some of the racism he encounters. It is '*how it is'*, a resigned weariness yet cognizant that it is only part of the reality of Verde, thus, not reducing him to the space of nonbeing (Fanon, 2000).

Whilst, as Vacchiano concludes, the reality of global power relations 'push[es] the subject back to its historical marginal place' (2014, p. 10), for the young men in my study, the possibilities of avoiding marginality, are greater than those who are less fortunate. These young men successfully crossed to Italy for a 'new start', and through their spatial disobedience, accessed training and apprenticeships

via the protective space of Giallo and its post-eighteen support. Their experiences reveal how the spaces of resistance or hospitality, such as Giallo, that they negotiate and tactically engage with, can aid and assist in creating more liveable lives. All the young men in this study who played the game were able to secure a form of training or employment going forward post-eighteen.

It is also important here to remember the level of precariousness that may also face those with citizenship. Consider, for example, the fate of Southern Italian youth and the huge disparity in unemployment levels creating movements from South to North Italy, as evidenced in this Chapter. Or the large volume of labour migration between East and West Europe. In this way, I am attentive to how the young men's experiences are set within the wider difficulty of the search for 'stable ground' that all seek within a globalised regime of racial capitalism. Once they leave the protection of the reception system, the young men are reinscribed within hierarchical forms of inclusion. The young men's openness to transience is then a reflection of the way mobility is portrayed as 'hope' and stable ground is not necessarily rooted in fixity but rather a metaphorical reference to ontological security. We can think of stable ground as the platform for allowing escape from 'stuckedness' (Hage, 2009) or a lack of existential mobility, and thus a platform allowing the ability to move forward in life. We can connect with Hage's notion of 'home' as 'the ground that allows [for] a confident form of mobility' (2003, p. 28).

In making visible the *afterwards* for former 'unaccompanied minors' the centrality of race in migration discourses is brought to light and the ongoing difficulties these young men face are highlighted. Amadou, and the other young men I met in Giallo, sought to contest their marginality and the spatio-temporal controls of the migration regime; to find a way of becoming still through accessing those training and education courses available to them as minors. The ladders that can help them move forward in life. Amadou has a contract, albeit with Burger King, when he many times expressed a desire to study and go to university, and is clearly a very intelligent young man. Giallo found him an evening class to study to start the path towards university, but this was overturned by the socio-legal landscape. Nonetheless, his stable work and accommodation allows him to remain more in the present, to think of things in the here and now like 'having fun' 'a girlfriend'; things he found difficult to focus on previously as he was always projected ahead to the future. Now he is hopeful that having this contract and his accommodation will enable him to renew his residence permit. He has, at least temporarily, found stable ground as an adult.

Chapter 9. Conclusion. Of presence and absence: contesting invisibility

An analysis of the afterwards: looking beyond the border of childhood

This concluding Chapter critically reflects on the material presented in the thesis by first identifying how I have addressed the main research questions posed, and second, highlighting my original contributions to methodological and theoretical scholarship on child and youth migrants. I set out how I answered the : What happens *after* the unaccompanied minor turns eighteen and is legally considered 'adult'? That is, what happens *after* he crosses the protective threshold of childhood? In capturing transitions across the border of childhood, this thesis draws attention to the lacuna of knowledge about the 'what next' for these former 'children'. In doing so, it reveals the invisibilised and racialized space of the *afterwards* which awaits former unaccompanied minors. A space which, to date, has been little explored in the literature.

Research question one: How does the Italian migration regime shape the relation between young people and their sense of future possibilities, including the production of new configurations of young people's subjectivity?

I examined how the Italian migration regime shapes the relation between young people and their sense of future possibilities, and how this can produce new forms of subjectivity for these young men as they adopt tactics to counteract constraints on their being. I demonstrated how the incongruousness between the 'minor', as produced by the reception system, and the subjectivity of the young men is most starkly evident in relation to employment and notions of care. Through their tactics of resistance, I reveal how the young men reject this pathologizing of their subjectivity and its notions of victimhood.

The preceding chapters evidence how masculinity, place, race and understandings of work and the European construct of adulthood intersect, to create particular experiences for these young men, experiences that are shaped by the spatio-temporal controls they are subject to. I recognise that the space for manoeuvre is very limited. However, my thesis presents how, in the particular space of Giallo, the combination of the implementation of the Zampa law and resultant post-eighteen support and accommodation, together with the young men's ongoing immigration statuses, meant the biographical border could be overridden. I then theorise Giallo as a temporally productive space;

a space in which, crucially, the young men were able to hold on to hope, where the 'not yet' (Bloch, 1995) of the future envisaged in their migrancy aspirations can be imagined.

As scholars have argued, for many young migrants, their future orientations are shaped and constricted by the temporalities of the migration regime. The ethnographic evidence illustrates how the subject position of the 'minor' is imposed upon, and simultaneously resisted or negotiated by the young men. I unravel how the young men engage in 'unruly' mobility to challenge spatio-temporal controls and abjection and find a place where they can stay, perhaps without wanting to leave (Bhatt, 1995). In examining the tactics they use to become protagonists, to leave abject spaces, and the decision-making processes behind their flight to Verde from camps in the South of Italy where they were held in nontime, I reveal the subjective dynamics of their mobilities and the more complex political identities of these young men bureaucratically labelled as 'unaccompanied minors'.

In claiming their own subjectivities, I evidence the young men's narrativization of the desire to make the 'elsewhere' work, having made the long journey from Africa and ending up by happenstance or design in Italy. Analysing their temporal strategies from the perspective of the life course, I present the key argument that the productive future oriented time granted in Giallo, which superseded the 'biographical border' (Mai, 2014), enabled the young men to engage in temporal thinking, to dream of a future. Dreams which, for many young migrants held in an 'eternal present' (Anderson, Sharma and Wright, 2009, p. 7) are curtailed. I illustrate how it is for this reason that Giallo is considered 'the place', where the young men '*can start [their] life'* and fulfil their migrancy aspirations. I argue that this enables them to contest the game of *Snakes and Ladders* in which many migrants are trapped. Instead, this interaction created space and hope for these young migrants to follow their own trajectory and become independent post-eighteen.

Similarly to those with citizenship, for the young men in this study, turning eighteen was, importantly, unlike for many other minors in Europe, not a moment of fear or ontological insecurity. Instead, it was a symbol of freedom – a recovering of control over their own time and mobility that as 'minors' within the reception system they had to surrender to 'adults'. This is deeply relevant for understandings of the protection and care of unaccompanied minors, most of whom face deportation and irregularity upon turning eighteen in Europe. The support and protection provided in Giallo, within the more protective Italian legislative landscape in place at that time, what I have called 'ladders', allows for movement forward, towards the future without fear. Ladders that reflect Ghassan Hage's (2009) concept of 'symbolic mobility' or the feeling of 'going places' in life and that

the young men purposefully sought out and found in Giallo.

As this thesis observes, this hospitable framework has now been undone by changes to immigration law that were implemented by the populist far-right government when in power. This leaves unaccompanied minors in Italy exposed to greater levels of vulnerability and insecurity and reveals some of the dissonance between the slow temporality of academic research and the fast-moving immigration legislative landscape. As I set out in Chapter Seven, this change reveals some of the fissures in black belonging and how fragile future possibilities can easily be destabilized. Whilst the legislative changes did not impact directly upon the young men in my study, the changes, and the rise of the far-right political party, the Lega, did have material and emotional impacts. These impacts, as I argue, can be understood via Christina Sharpe's (2016) notion of weathering. Weathering roots the rise of such political parties in the ongoing climate of anti-blackness, deriving from repeat weather conditions and processes of exclusion via nationalist harnessing of them/us discourses. My research is then attentive to how the future of the young men remains embedded within the raced landscape. It is not simply the migration regime, but the ongoingness of racial regimes that underpin it, that shape young migrant subjectivities. Deep histories of colonial exploitation infuse 'the politics of belonging' (Smythe, 2018), as the young men's experiences reveal.

Research question two: How do the laws and structures at play in Italy produce and sustain differing categories of deserving migrants in relation to young people as they transition from 'deserving' child to an undeserving and potentially 'illegal' adult? How do young people resist or negotiate such imposed categories?

I addressed the manner in which the laws and structures at play in Italy produce and sustain differing categories of deserving migrants in relation to young people as they transition from 'deserving' child to an undeserving and potentially 'illegal' adult. I present my argument that the construct of the 'unaccompanied minor' is premised upon the intersection of 'sedentarist' (Malkki, 1992) migration policies and Western idealised concepts of childhood, leading to fixed categories of age as a border control mechanism. I identify how the category of the unaccompanied minor is then steeped in particular understandings of children and migration stemming from colonial and capitalist histories based on a racial logic.

Under this framing, childhood is produced as a bounded time and space of innocence, crystallised and perpetuated globally via the ratification of the UNCRC. As a result, I evidence how the threshold between children and adults, by now overturned in childhood studies (Alanen and Mayall, 2001), is

still present in the policies and practices of border controls in the European reception system. As such, I chart how the figure of the child migrant produced in the debate is part of the problem itself (Sinha and Back, 2014). I present how this leads to a fixed and bounded identity of the 'vulnerabilised' 'child' migrant which does not fit with the reality of many of these young people, as the young men in this study reveal.

The manner in which the 'problem' (Bacchi, 2009) of the 'unaccompanied minor' is constructed is a key point of investigation in the study. Giallo itself remains an ambivalent space; part of a system in which residents become 'unaccompanied minors', subject to normative and legal constructs of childhood. I discuss how this imposed vulnerability of the dependent child subject can be experienced as emasculating for the young men, demanding a loss of autonomy, at odds with their migration experiences and biographies. The empirical chapters illustrate how this framing is woven through the experiences of the young men as they navigate through the reception system. As such, even in Giallo, a centre positioned within the wider migration regime, the hospitality received by the young men is dependent upon them performing an appropriate role as a deserving 'minor', adopting the language of the host (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000; Derrida, 2005). Nonetheless, as I illustrate, the young men engage in tactics to resist and negotiate these imposed categories. As Venn asserts: 'visible power or power lived as imposition sets up resistances and tactics of evasion that undermine normalization and challenge normative principles' (2020, p. 23).

I present how the bordering effect of childhood within the European migration regime leads to moralistic temporally limited support for child migrants as *children*. Yet in Giallo, the ongoing post-eighteen support can transcend the temporal conditionality of this hospitality. The ethnographic evidence illustrates how the young men are able to maintain a level of deservingness through 'playing the game', utilising the subject position of the minor to their advantage to access the best level of support, or 'ladders' as I call the education, training and support they are given in Giallo. In this way, they contest the conditional hospitality of the European migration regime and its morally limited support to the 'deserving child'.

Nonetheless, the dominant discursive regime of childhood is present in Giallo, the border of age is apparent, revealing how normative constructs of the 'passive minor' are instead discussed in contrast to the freedom of adulthood. Freedom is construed as the ability to work, something I critique in the final empirical chapter, revealing the risk of limited marginal spaces for young migrantised men in the labour market. However, the ladders accessed in Giallo do give them some

hope of contesting the marginalisation into which racialized migrants are reinscribed. They can then make the transition to adulthood across the deservingness divide without losing the rights and entitlements they were granted as children.

Research question 3: How are notions of hostipitality played out in this space and time of transition for unaccompanied minors? And what can this tell us about wider configurations of the nation state/ Europe

I unravel how Derridean notions of hostipitality are played out in this space and time of transition for unaccompanied minors. I contend that this biographical transition to adulthood offers a unique empirical opportunity to examine the limits of hospitality, as the (uninvited) Black child guest crosses the threshold into being an unwanted, potentially deportable, 'adult'. Within what I have termed the 'hospitable space' of Giallo, a form of hospitality is created that can exceed the threshold of childhood and endure. A form of hospitality that gives time, where the young men could exchange in hope (Hage, 2003), and that supersedes the temporal contradiction inherent in Derrida's critique of hospitality. The threshold of childhood for the young men in my study was then no longer a biographical border. Rather, more in keeping with 'adulthood' for citizen children, it was experienced as a border of greater autonomy.

As I show, the young men make the assessment that the centres they were first placed in in the South of Italy are not 'decent' in Margalit's terms. They are spaces of wasted nontime, and not the productive spaces they seek. They challenge the notions of 'bare life' they are subject to in centres referred to as a 'hell', where there is 'no future' and 'no life', reflecting the need for these young men to achieve their migrancy aspirations and not be held idle. Their narratives are framed within notions of justice and rights to access the support they maintain they are entitled to. In this we also see a reflection of the ambivalence of care. For these 'children' care is limited to meeting basic needs in the camps in the South, something which for the citizen child would not be acceptable. This is revealing of the ways in which the migrant child is left lacking in the level of care afforded to them, remaining first a migrant and second a child. The ladders available in Giallo, in their unusual level of support, draw further attention to the harmful policies at work in many other parts of the European migration regime, revealing its inhospitable nature. Social relations are essential to constructs of place (Massey, 2001). Within Giallo, the social relations are such that, for the young men that 'play the game', room can be created for a form of hospitality that can exceed the border of childhood and can endure. These enduring modes of hospitality create bonds that can provide the young men with temporary ontological security and hope for their future.

The thesis presents how this is informative for understandings about wider configurations of the nation state/ Europe. Indeed, attention to the lived realities of these young men reveals how notions of belonging shift and change as they become adults. They fought hard to become documented, both for pragmatic reasons of greater security and mobility, but also to gain recognition of their presence. Yet, as they reach adulthood, my research reveals that being documented is not enough. The politics of nationalism and exclusion that has created 'hostile environments' (Jones *et al.*, 2017; Goodfellow, 2019), suggests that the 'what next' that awaits these young men is far from secure. The risk of invisibility and lack of presence they have tried hard to escape still looms large, despite their documentation. The Italo-Somalian writer, Igiaba Scego, cited in a recent interview, describes being 'torn apart by the lack of recognition of [Black] bodies, and of their contribution to Italy'. She speaks of constantly being identified as a 'second generation immigrant' despite having been born in Italy and lived there for many years, and of remaining always 'invisible' in a country which 'still considers us strange/other' (my translation) (El Houssi and Scego, 2020). The young men's experiences too speak to the ways in which 'European'-ness itself is (re-)articulated precisely as a racial formation of postcolonial whiteness (De Genova, 2016).

I interrogate in this thesis how the experience of invisibility that Scego describes is doubled for the young men in my study. They arrive as undocumented migrants, are socio- legally constituted as helpless 'minors' and additionally racialised as Black and other, which makes invisible their humanity. Christina Sharpe advocates practices of Black annotation and redaction, to access the multiple registers of Black life within dominant discourses and semiotics of Black life, and thus working with different registers of visibility in order to find ways to counter abandonment, to 'try to look, to try to really see' (2016, p. 117). This notion of visibility is formulated to counteract the ongoing violence of colonialism, suggesting methods that aim to 'make present' (Sharpe, 2016). The employment of visual methods in this research, including the art show, is an attempt to create space to try to look, and to really see something different. A means of presenting different configurations of Europe as unravelled by the young men's lived experiences.

Ideas of visibility and presence have a long history in sociology. The original French title (maintained in the Italian version) of Abdelmayek Sayad's (2004) ethnographic study of Algerian migrants in France is '*The double absence: the suffering of the immigrant*'. The notion of this double absence is lost in the English title where it does not appear. I refer back to it here, as this duality is embedded in the young men's experiences, and presence, its opposite, is central to this thesis and woven through the narratives, actions and histories of the young (Black) men it focuses upon. In seeking presence,

the young men acknowledge absence, an absence imposed upon them by the migration regime and racialised connotations of belonging.

Their situation is compounded by the weathering processes of the antiblack climate to which they are continuously exposed (Sharpe, 2016). The 'hostile environment' towards migrants builds upon and expands the pre-existing antiblack climate of the past. Indeed, this research builds on other scholarship which reveals how, for those who are racially 'othered', even when they are with papers, or even have citizenship itself, this may not rectify their unworthiness or exclusion. Just as being 'documented' is not quite enough for belonging, and deportability can seep into bodies not quite accepted and othered, so citizenship itself, as Igiaba Scego laments, is revealed as insufficient. Indeed, Italy has deeply restrictive citizenship laws (see Table 1). Since law 91/1992, citizenship has been granted on the basis of *ius sanguinis*, children with one Italian citizen parent are automatically granted citizenship. Without *ius solis*, children born in Italy to parents without Italian citizenship are not Italian citizens. They can only apply for citizenship within one year following their eighteenth birthday, and must prove uninterrupted, legal residence in Italy since birth. Yet, for those for claiming Italian citizenship by descent, there is no generational limit irrespective of the fact that they may have never set foot in Italy.

In illustrating the space of the afterwards, I situate the young men's experiences within the wider racial landscape of Italy/ Europe. I present how the young men's experiences speak directly to the concept of the Black Mediterranean and shed light on what SA Smythe refers to as the 'conditions that proliferate doubt and excess, the conditions that uphold the machinery of racial marginalization and dispossession' which are 'essential to understanding Black life, its survival and its aesthetic possibilities in Italy' (2019, p. 18). Conditions that emerge through the experiences of these young men as they seek to negotiate the temporal governance of migration regimes to escape the game of *Snakes and Ladders* and make a home and future for themselves. A home which is not necessarily rooted in fixity. I turn now to how, in answering these questions, my thesis contributes to scholarship on child and youth migration.

Contribution to knowledge:

The overall contribution to knowledge of this thesis rests on the premise that 'good childhood' and race have a bordering effect on young migrants, as evidenced by the transition to adulthood. In visibilising the space of the afterwards for former unaccompanied minors, I address a significant area of neglect in migration scholarship providing crucial insights into the lives of these young people. As

Galli (2019b) has shown, important theoretical implications that nuance our understanding of how states exercise power on immigrants can be gained through examination of the lived experiences of unaccompanied minors. The advance I make in this thesis is to draw out the complexities of the *interaction* between the (Italian) migration regime and my participants. I set out below five key areas in which I make a specific contribution to understandings of child and youth migration from a methodological and theoretical perspective.

A hopeful methodology for research as 'hospitable space'

In Chapter Three, I set out my 'hopeful methodology' inspired by Linda Tuhiwai Smith's assertion that research is 'an activity of hope' (2012). This approach can assist future researchers in thinking through more inclusive ways to conduct research with young migrants. I argue that following 'live sociology' (Back, 2007) and adopting a multimodal ethnographic approach could create space, what I have called 'hospitable space', within the research process itself, for counter narratives to emerge. The methods adopted provided for a means of destabilizing patterns of enforced narratives (Steedman, 2002), particularly problematic in working with young people subject to immigration control. As I argue in Chapter Two, the space for migrants to story themselves is highly politicised and limited to certain 'parameters of legitimacy', as Watters and Fassin (2001) have evidenced. This then becomes problematic in research seeking to gather more complex stories from migrants. To counteract this, I introduce Kohli's (2006) notion of 'thick' narratives and evidence how the methods I deployed enabled multiple entry points for narratives, providing greater space for such narratives to emerge.

I found the interview could be a useful methodological tool for engaging with the young men's lifeworlds, as it was combined with other methods. Repeat interviews carried out over sustained periods of contact created a space that was less 'interview-like' and could counteract practices of surveillance. I was able to elicit different fragments of the young men's lives allowing for more rich and complex narratives to emerge. Ethnographic observation, which can get at more of the 'doing', enabled insights beyond the narrative accounts. It was through observation that I have been able to understand how not just the term 'minor', but the very subject position constructed both legally and normatively by the label was imposed upon the young men upon entering Italy. The word entered their dialogue and sense-making practices as a vital part of their immigration experience.

I raise the importance of language and multilingualism in research. The ways in which language represents displacement, class positions and colonialism (S. Hall, 2012) and frames our specific

relationship to the world (Thiongo'o, 1986) is often lost in the language choices that researchers use to portray their participants (Temple, 2005). Instead, as this research evidences, linguistic capability can impact upon both access to support and inclusion in research, meaning that those who are less linguistically able are at risk of being excluded from both.

This is something that merits greater attention in future research, so that not only the linguistically capable but those who struggle, who have 'less voice', for various reasons, may also be included in appropriate ways. This would assist research not to replicate the reception system, where, due to a combination of the bordering effect of good childhood and resource issues those who do not/ cannot play the game risk being left by the wayside. In working with multi-modal methods, I was able to create space for sociological understandings to emerge through more inclusive pathways. The use of photographs and art allowed the young men who chose to use them to focus in on themes of importance to them; to share some glimpses of their life worlds in nonverbal ways. A means of, and a call for, creating research as 'hospitable space'. This methodological innovation allowed for multiple identities to emerge, contributing to more complex portrayals of child and youth migrants.

Capturing multiple temporalities through longitudinal research

In drawing attention to the importance of longitudinal research as a means of creating space for participants to disclose difficult emotional experiences and opinions, as evidenced by Lee (1993) and Khosravi (2009), I make a further contribution to research methodologies. Addressing temporality was central to the research design, both due to the research focus on a transition moment, and as participants accounts change over time due to issues of trust and security (Khosravi, 2009). As such, I found that sustaining research with the same participants over time can both lessen a sense of jeopardy and enable greater methodological 'care' that is attentive to the ongoing trauma in their lives. I consider these practices to be part of the 'hospitable space' I aimed to create in the research. It is significant that the research itself moved at a pace which was at odds with the fast-moving policy context (see Table 1), which creates challenges in capturing the lived realities of these young men. As discussed, the legislative landscape changed during the process of this research. Whilst not affecting the young men directly, it had material and emotional impacts and makes the findings ever more specific to time and place.

Ethnographic research within Giallo for seven months during 2018, plus the previous scoping study visit the year earlier, created a longer time frame in which the research was embedded. In this way, the methods could also capture the multiple temporalities in the young men's lives, the temporal continuities and rupture, and particularly the biographical transition that is at the heart of this thesis. The main focus of this project was the transition itself, which was captured within this research timeframe. However, owing to the invisibilised nature of 'new' adult migrants, a longer longitudinal approach which could capture more of the 'what next?' for the young men would aid greater understanding of these processes. Further research on the outcomes of former unaccompanied minors would be beneficial in tracing such processes and practices over time.

Racing child and youth migration

The deeply detrimental impact of racism and processes of racialisation for the young men in my study emerged strongly, as did the rental racism they incurred once outside the protective space of the reception system and 'childhood'. This is an important facet of the *afterwards* for former unaccompanied minors and contributes to wider sociological understandings of the ongoing prescience of race within migration discourses. As the child grows up, this discourse becomes more apparent and the way in which young men are dehumanised, not just as 'numbers' but as something other than human emerging from the sea, is deeply disturbing, and destabilising to them in terms of ontological security. The thesis evidences how temporal governance intersects with racialised borders, which enhance migrant precarity and how (un)belonging is experienced in inhospitable climates. The ill wind is clear evidence of the racism and moralistic constructs of deservingness at the heart of the European and Italy's, migration regime, which reveals how the effects of age as a rigid border are worsened by race.

In placing the research within the framework of the Black Mediterranean (Di Maio, 2012), I align myself with scholars calling for greater historical connectivity within migration discourses, to depart from the ahistorical framing of crisis narratives. Instead, I am attentive to the larger scale and longer historical time frame (Back and Puwar, 2012), which can enhance sociological understandings of child and youth migrancy. In this way, I was able to capture both multiple temporalities and perspectives to provide a more complex portrayal of child and youth migrants. In examining biographical transitions and the intersection of race and childhood and building upon the scholarship of the autonomy of migration (Casas-Cortes *et al.*, 2015; New Keywords Collective, 2016; De Genova, 2017), my research makes an important contribution to understandings of the temporality of immigration controls, and the interaction between young people and the migration regime. I present

the young men's conscious placing of themselves as postcolonial subjects; how they acknowledge these ongoing connections and their active resistance to subjugation.

Further, drawing attention to the connections between human mobilities across time and space serves to normalise the young men's mobility, rather than construing it as a 'problematic' threat (Anderson, 2013). As Adama (Chapter 7) puts it, the young men *'take the back way because Europe has closed the front door…'* Additionally, in recognising that *'these are the routes that were made by Europe from Africa for the slaves'*, Adama historicises his own movement, his recognition of the connective pathways, yet not quite capturing the whole. For, as discussed in the Introduction, these were also journeys made in the opposite direction by Italians, who themselves have occupied positions of subalternity in relation to European imaginaries and constructs of whiteness.

The young men's counternarratives, embedded with the postcolonial and feminist questioning of this thesis, allow for 'a questioning from the underside of modernity, its unspoken or hidden history' (Venn, 2020, p.37). This can then visibilise some of what is hidden. The thesis is then attentive to how racialised discourses premised upon historical colonial frames of reference and cultural norms feed into the construction of the 'unaccompanied minor'. In this way, I foreground race as constitutive of migration discourse, where it is so often silenced (Lentin, 2008, 2014; Anderson, 2013; Sharma, 2015). In its attention to the racialisation of the young men as Black bodies in Libya, the thesis also explicates that, rather than being tied to Europe, racial regimes are extensive, embedded in colonial legacies that cross boundaries between Global North and South.

Agency and the minor

In re-centring the focus on this group of overlooked young people in discourses on migration, my research enhances theories of childhood, belonging and migration in more nuanced and complex ways. Whilst the minor is clearly a wholly Europeanised imposed identity for these young men, who have been engaging in employment and 'looking after themselves' and others in a variety of ways prior to crossing the border of Italy (Europe), they nonetheless adopt some of its characteristics. They replicate the language of the 'host' and 'play the game', to access the best support. They are both constrained within, and resisting against, the regime; neither wholly subjugated by it, nor free of its constraints. Care in Giallo can be perceived as a positive form of being 'looked after'. Giallo is not a space of 'nontime' (Bourdieu, 2000), nor of temporal uncertainty, such as in Libya. Instead, its temporality is seen as stable and productive. Their actions can be understood then as *both* a tactic *and* a reciprocal response to the care received in Giallo; mirroring the tensions between care and

control in the reception system.

I situate the research within a mobility framework, and advance notions of mobility as (un)freedom through the risk to these young men of being held in constant mobility, of never arriving and thus never becoming. Van Hear's (2017) notion of moving power and Hage's (2003) concept of home as not rooted in fixity inform this conceptualisation. I draw upon these ideas to reveal the young men's place making and temporal strategies to contest and work with the migration regime to construct a place they can stay still, where they can have some hope to achieve their aspirations. I illustrate how the young men see themselves as 'wrestlers', struggling with the migration regime to achieve their aspirations and have a better chance at the future they are seeking. Their very need to 'wrestle' produced by the migration regime itself and the policies of abandonment, where migrant bodies are held immobile in spaces of 'nontime', subject to a humanitarian politics of care that fails to provide for the fullness of the subject and the politics of life.

The absence of a biographical border and its implications

A key point I wish to highlight, as Chapter Six draws out, is that Giallo can be considered a 'hospitable space'. This, together with the young men's own temporal strategies, meant that the turning of eighteen for these young men was, unlike many other unaccompanied minors in Europe, not a moment of fear or ontological insecurity. Nor was it a transition into illegality (Gonzalez, 2011). In fact, it was a symbol of freedom – to reclaim control over their own time and mobility that as 'minors' within the reception system they had had to surrender to 'adults'. In this way, the transition moment provides a lens through which to examine alternative forms of support for former unaccompanied minors and their future survival. This is something disregarded in the 'crisis' narrative (Ahmed, 2013). These findings reflect the wider possibilities of support that can challenge the rigid age binaries and temporal governance which, as I evidence, enhances the precarity and vulnerability of the very subjects it purports to be 'protecting'.

Additionally, I connect with life course approaches and childhood studies to show how the young men's understandings of adulthood are deeply connected with masculinity and 'being a man'. I position masculinity as a heterogeneous subject position but note the ongoing importance of the hegemonic 'male breadwinner' trope which dominates their narratives. Adulthood and masculinity are intertwined with work and earning a wage in a heteronormative framework. Connecting in with critical race scholars, I suggest that this in part may be a replication of the way in which wage-

earning is constructed as 'responsible manhood' (hooks, 2003), reducing the space available to young men racialised as Black to engage with more complex forms of masculinity. Further, in the global capitalist regime the neoliberal rational subject is the dominant form of personhood. These two figures intersect to limit space for masculinities and constrict opportunities for the young men to embody wider forms of masculinity.

There was not space within the thesis to examine masculinities fully, and this is an area that requires greater exploration, in relation to young male migrants and, in particular, how they are racialised. Indeed, the ways in which gender plays a role in migrancy aspirations and adulthood would be a topic of much salience. The voices of women migrants remain hidden in this thesis. The intersections of gendered and racialised identities with migrantised subject positions is an area that requires greater research, and could build upon the important work queer migration scholarship is already contributing to the field (see for example Luibheid, 2008; Mai and King, 2009; Asencio, 2011; Ocampo, 2012). Nonetheless, my work contributes to enhancing understandings of the gendered and racialised nature of the transition to adulthood for young Black male migrants.

Finally, in its focus on a unique empirical moment, the research contributes to hospitality debates, evidencing the possibilities that can emerge for Derrida's notion of *hostipitality* to be transcended. The thesis charts how for young men with access to ladders, or post-eighteen support, greater possibilities exist for future orientations to match their aspirations. In their tactical interactions with the particular space of Giallo, the young men were able to form bonds and create opportunities for hospitality to exceed the threshold of childhood. Through the legal statutes that transcend the threshold of childhood and post-eighteen support, I evidence how the space within Giallo is conducive to a more enduring hospitality (see Dikeç *et al.*, 2009). As I illustrate, many of the young men in my study were able to access vocational training courses and apprenticeships, which gave them a better chance of finding employment in the future, as well as maintaining an on-going legal status. At the same time, as emerges through the young men's lived experiences, citizenship and residency rights are not a protection from racism nor are they necessarily sufficient for belonging.

In conclusion: Understanding the tension between control and care in young migrants' lives

Finally, I argue that contesting binary logics and placing attention on the multiplicities in the tensions between care and control, enables an greater understanding of the young men's lived experiences of the reception space of Giallo. I return to Ghassan Hage's assertion that the meaning of hospitality in

relation to 'asylum seekers […] [is] *the availability, the circulation and the exchange of hope'* (2003, p.9)*.* The young men's temporal strategies, together with the space of hospitality afforded by Giallo, provides room for manoeuvre for them to construct a future as adults, to hold on to hope. Hope that, as I have shown, is in the main not available to young migrants once within the European migration regime, despite Europe's purported hospitality towards children.

Throughout the preceding discussion, I have problematised the category of unaccompanied minors as a category that emerges through the social construction of time and biographical transition. I conclude by presenting the need to undo the neglect of the experiences of children and young people as they become 'adult'. There is an urgent need to shed light on and visibilise the multiplicities of young migrants' experiences to enhance knowledge of youth migrancy, and to challenge overly polarised concepts of age. As well as sociological contributions to new knowledge, I have shown the need for research to inform better support for migrant youth seeking a better future; support that is not temporally limited within childhood as a bounded space, but that may supersede this border and provide ongoing support: a hospitality that can endure. The young men in this study were able to construct ladders to contest the game of *Snakes and Ladders* with which they are faced. Many others do not have this support and are left facing constant snakes, without hope for the future.

In making visible the *afterwards* for former 'unaccompanied minors', the ongoing difficulties these young men face in the racial landscape of Europe are brought to light. The trap of the now or of the 'moment' of hospitality, the aporia that Derrida evidences (2000) in conditional hospitality, towards child migrants is laid bare. For this to be overcome, more tailoured post-eighteen support for migrant youth is needed. Evidence from my research findings shows how the ladders the young men were able to access, through their own purposeful spatial disobedience and by playing the game in performing the 'good child', can provide mechanisms which bridge the child/ adult divide. This, together with the legislation in place at that time which superseded the biographical border (Mai, 2014), created in Giallo a hospitable space within a hostile environment.

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