A Normal Life: Reception of Asylum Seekers in an Italian and a Swedish Region

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1. Introduction

> There is two slaveries you know in this world, like, physical, some of us we do what we do by force, 'do this do this do this' and some are slaves from the mind, mentally. So sometimes you feel like [you are] a slave mentally, [the system is] fighting you mentally, they don't want you do good things, they push you to be a bad person, they isolate you … a lot of things! [crying] (Alfons, Somali asylum seeker, Città, deported to Italy after three years in the UK)

> The things they are trying to do is just to make you, you know, it's like the Ethiopian prime minister [during the ethnic cleansing between Ethiopia and Eritrea], he used to say 'don't tell them to go, just *make* them go!' (Oliver, Eritrean asylum seeker, Stad, twice rejected by the Swedish authorities)

> Why can't we ever be in peace? Why do we have to go from country to country to country … We can never relax! We have to go and to go to new countries all the time … I want to stay, to work, to build my life. But no, nothing, zero [claps hands], *go, go!* (Jean, Eritrean migrant, Città, homeless and unemployed mother of a three-year-old, holding a temporary residence permit in Italy after three years as an undocumented migrant in Italy and several years as an undocumented migrant in Sudan)

One day, towards the end of my fieldwork in Città, Italy, I was on my way to the accommodation centre. Due to my research, the bitter taste of the anxiety and desperation that composed the emotional baseline of migrants' daily lives marked my whole stay in Italy. It had affected me so much that I had been forced to interrupt my fieldwork for 14 days, during which I withdrew within the secure walls of the university, the walls of privilege and prestige. I tried to collect strength to go back, tried to find a way to cope with the feelings of self-contempt and guilt. Worst of all was facing the fact that I could move in and out of the environments and circumstances to which my research participants were chained.

I had just got off the bus and was about to cross the street and start walking the long road uphill towards the accommodation centre when I saw one of the residents walking towards the city centre on the opposite side of the street. It was a chilly day in December, but he was wearing sandals without socks and he was very lightly dressed. I recognized him as a tall young man from Ethiopia, an English teacher. When I had first met him a couple of days earlier, he had appeared to be confident and balanced in a way

that was uncommon among the residents. Of course he was new, both in Italy and as a participant in the reception programme. On this day he looked as if he were sleepwalking, although the cold should have been enough to wake him up. I did not call out to him, but just stood there and watched him walk between the two three-meter-high stone walls, topped with crushed pieces of glass, that kept the private villas along the street out of view and discouraged unwanted visitors. He disappeared around the corner.

For my part, I continued walking towards the place he had come from, the accommodation centre at the top of the hill. I felt disappointed. He had seemed so 'normal' when we had met before, and in my desperate, secure-white-Swedish-middle-class wish to find light in the darkness of others, I'd felt that he had reawakened my hope. Because … surely, a balanced and sensible person would eventually manage to leave the asylum seeker's inferno? But this was an act of madness, a bold demonstration of 'if no one else cares about me, then why should I?' Or perhaps, it was a way to shock the brain, to get it to stop thinking, I pondered, recalling a migrant interviewee who had described the thoughts churning his mind to madness: 'What's gonna happen with me, what's gonna happen with me, how am I gonna survive?' He controlled these thoughts with a different mantra: '*I must move on.*'

This non-event is iconic of the madness of my research project. Migrants and frontliners, they all moved on. The migrants could not turn back and not give up. The only option was to forge ahead, struggling with one obstacle after another, and spending time, unlimited time, in situations of impasse. In migrant camps, in asylum seekers' accommodations, the people waited, powerless to influence anything in the process. I believe that when the road of life is never, ever smooth, and when one meets with constant discouragement, life takes on a particular emotional flavour.

The frontliners, the people working with the migrants, moved on in their own way. Secure in their belonging to a European nation state, appalled at first by the situation of their clients, struck by sympathy and compassion, sooner or later they realized that they had not managed to 'save' anyone, as it were. There were numerous reasons for this (and this book explores some of them). So they moved on, either going to different jobs,

or staying and letting their work become routine, taking on a 'professional' relationship to suffering that allowed them to keep a distance.

1.1 The field of migration research

Migration theory and research is a large and still expanding field covering a range of disciplines, perspectives, and methodological approaches (Brettell and Hollifield 2000; Massey et al. 1993). It is linked to the fact that the phenomenon of transnational migration, intrinsically connected to current economic globalization, climatic change, famine, and political conflict, as well as to past processes of colonialism, challenges the meaning of human rights and the boundaries of the nation state and citizenship (Soysal 1994; Schiller 1995; Sassen 1999). European discourses and policies on migration signal ambivalence. On the one hand, the need for immigration in the face of a future population decline in most European countries is widely discussed. On the other hand, member state policies are coordinated mainly around strategies to keep non-European immigrant flows persistently 'illegalized' under nation state control, and 'integration' continues to be primarily a nation state concern in practice (Guiraudon 2000; Hansen and Weil 2001; Torpey 1998). 'Illegal migration' is a term that includes many labour migrants and the majority of asylum seekers (Jandl 2005), and it is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain asylum in the EU. In spite of unanimously accepted norms and values about universal human rights, techniques and strategies have been adopted to create spaces within and outside the EU where these rights do not apply – or where they apply only to a limited extent (Ellerman 2006; van der Leun 2006).

Migration research commonly takes *either* a post-colonial, critical 'from-below' perspective, *or* a social work/practitioner-oriented perspective aiming to improve processes and practices, *or* a political scientific/legal perspective looking at legislation and migration regimes (Bommes and Morawska 2005; Brettell and Hollifield 2000; Massey et al. 1993). Moreover, as noted in the state of the arts report by Penninx et al. (2008), empirical research in the area of migration tends to be confined within the parameters of the nation state and is often also published primarily in local languages. Comparative work tends to focus on discourses and legislation (e.g. Guiraudon 2000; Guiraudon and Lahav 2000; Hansen 2008). Some literature makes very valuable

contributions by compiling and comparing existing research from different nations, such as Schierup et al. (2006). On the whole, an overview of migration research in different countries identifies similar issues while also confirming the impression that policies and practices differ quite a lot between countries, notably between the EU member states.

One thing that is noteworthy in this context are the differences between member states in terms of their preparedness to receive asylum seekers. As we will see, Italy until recently did not even differentiate between labour migrants and asylum seekers, while Sweden has a long-standing reception programme oriented exclusively to asylum seekers. While Italy received labour migrants throughout the 1990s, Sweden stopped labour immigration in the late 1960s (cf. Johansson 2005). In Italy, migrants have been 'absorbed' by the informal labour market, or they have used Italy as a transit country, travelling through it on their way to Northern Europe. When the EU, in the late 1990s, began to be serious about harmonizing its migration policy vis-à-vis 'third-country nationals' (citizens from non-EU countries), migrants' ability to move on to other EU countries was severely restrained (cf. Aus 2006; Bertozzi 2002; Castles 2006; Guiraudon 2000; Guiraudon and Lahav 2000; Hansen 2008; Hansen and Weil 2001). With this move, Southern European countries that had previously served as transit countries were forced to increase border control, launch their own asylum reception programmes, and cooperate with the more experienced (in terms of receiving asylum seekers) Northern European countries by meeting their requirements to keep so-called 'asylum shoppers' away from their borders. As shown by Hansen (2008), while the EU institutions were largely passive at the onset of the harmonization process, which was instead initiated by agreements between member states, migration policy in the EU area has been, and still is, largely a matter of protecting nation states from the perceived 'threat' of uncontrolled immigration.

Meanwhile, it seems that the degree of institutionalization, and state control, of asylum seekers in terms of reception, transition, and integration also influences the emergence of institutionalized discourses (cf. Hansen Löfstrand 2009b) about the migrants. This is to say that, over the years, countries like Sweden have developed a common perception of the groups of people that arrive at their borders; it is a perception that prevails, with slight variations, in the popular imaginary, in the media,

and in political institutions. Migrants, in particular asylum seekers, are seen as a burden, a problem, and sometimes a threat, and debates revolve around how to help them, control them, employ them, and integrate them (Appelqvist 1999; Carlson 2002; Hansen 2008; Johansson 2005; Norström 2004).

Two Swedish studies are noteworthy in this context. Norström (2004) deals with the investigation of asylum applications in Sweden and the lived experiences of this process from the perspective of both officers and civil servants at various levels in the Migration Board, and from the perspective of the asylum seekers. Norström's analysis of the discrepancies between 'logos' and 'praxis' in the asylum process, confronting the asylum seekers with legal absurdities and mistrust, supports many of the conclusions concerning the Swedish system in my study. For instance, she finds that the fear of 'economic' migrants, illegal immigration, unknown itineraries, lack of passports, falsified documents, and unclear identities has come to characterize the entire institutionalized discourse on asylum in Sweden, and she points out that 'once the questioning [of the asylum seeker's trustworthiness] has become internalized, which is the case at all levels in the system, it cannot be undone' (Norström 2004: 264-5). Norström also touches on the role of emotions in the process, both for the decision-making of investigating officers,[1] and for the self-worth and dignity of the asylum seekers.

Johansson (2005) offers a compelling analysis of the discourses on migration policy in Sweden from the 1960s to the end of the 20th century. She identifies a continuously more restrictive policy marked by three decisive 'turning points': 1) restriction of labour immigration in the late 1960s, 2) restriction of asylum immigration in the late 1980s, and 3) introduction of a repatriation policy in the mid-1990s. Different groups of migrants have been identified as (ethnically and by 'influx' rates) problematic and therefore made the target of temporary or permanent policy changes within these periods. At the end of the 1960s, non-Nordic immigrants were considered problematic and were therefore restricted by harsher labour immigration policies. In 1989, the so-called 'Lucia Resolution' targeted in particular 'Bulgarians of Turkish descent' by narrowing the criteria for residence permits: 'The intention was that in the future,

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[1]Norström mentions the obscured role of emotions in decision-making that investigating officers refer to as 'gut feeling' or 'intuition' and that I analyse in depth in an article about the emotional regime of the Migration Board (Wettergren 2010b).

Sweden would mainly content itself with granting asylum to those migrants that complied with the Geneva Convention's criteria' (Johansson 2005:265). The repatriation policy of the 1990s was mainly meant to control the immigration of Bosnians and Somalis, as they were large migrant groups at the time. In addition, Somalis were identified as 'deviating and difficult to integrate' (Johansson 2005:266). Most importantly, Johansson shows how Swedish welfare policy combines with nation state discourse and nation state image both nationally and internationally to promote (both internally and externally) the image of the Swedish welfare state and its extensive solidarity and humanitarianism. This includes the image of Sweden as both ethnically and civically *homogeneous* and a country where there is *equality* between Swedes and immigrants. Through this move, harsher and more restrictive migration policies have become motivated by the intention to increase the effectiveness of Swedish integration and welfare policies.

The question then arises whether migrants are really better off in countries where they are generally perceived as a problematic and burdensome group and targeted by institutional interventions and measures, in spite of the alleged aim of such interventions being to 'help' them. Schierup et al. (2006), when comparing the situation of migrants in Southern and Northern Italy during the 1980s and 1990s, argue that:

> There are fewer and less varied job opportunities in the south than in the north, but at least in the 1980s and 1990s, migrants often regarded the conditions for integration into local society as being more favourable …: in the south there was less police control and less bureaucratic involvement with immigration and employment than in the north. Migrants regarded being irregular or clandestine in a less regulated socio-economic context as less problematic, and they shared this social situation with parts of the indigenous population. Moreover, … the informal social context offered migrants favourable opportunities for reconstructing (ethnic) social networks, temporarily broken as they left their home countries. Social life is harder in the metropolitan areas of the north, and problems of maladjustment and social isolation more common. (Schierup et al. 2006:181)

Corollary to these claims, migrants may have greater freedom to settle and create their own circumstances in a less regulated social context. In fact, Korac (2003), who compares the integration of asylum seekers to the Netherlands and Italy, finds some support for the claim that social isolation and structural barriers to inclusion and

integration are larger in the Netherlands, which, similar to Sweden, has a high degree of state control over the reception and integration processes. In contrast, in Italy, *some successful* migrants, who have managed to settle, are less isolated and more integrated in terms of contacts with Italians and participation in the 'native' social life. I will return to Korac's study in the concluding chapter. My purpose here is to raise the issue of dignity and self-respect; if and when migrants have the opportunity and resources to shape their own living conditions in the country of destination, this may affect their feelings about themselves and also their feelings towards their new country. It may be that state-controlled reception and integration programmes, carrying and reproducing institutionalized discourses (Hansen Löfstrand 2009a, Holgersson 2011) about migrants as a burden and a problem, corrode positive self- and other-oriented feelings.

1.2 Purpose and aims

The purpose of the study presented in this book is to compare two different cases of reception of asylum seekers, situated in two different EU countries. The study has taken an explorative approach, but broadly speaking, I was interested in whether and how differences in welfare and migration regimes may have an impact on the self-perceived life chances and dignity of the migrants. I also wanted to find out whether and how the experiences and approaches of frontline workers in relation to their jobs and their clients differed. My focus from the start has been on emotional processes in the interaction between migrants and frontliners, as these are key to mutual dignity and respect. Is it possible that one context may be more favourable to the migrants' self-respect and dignity than another? My aim in presenting the data and preliminary analysis in this book is to weave a structural and a micro perspective together, to highlight the complexity of action and interaction within structured settings that resulted from the analysis, and to examine the strategies, meaning-making, and conflicts involved, from both the perspective of receivers (whom I call frontliners) and migrants. The book ends by summarizing the differences and similarities found in the material, and discussing these in relation to their possible implications for the migrants.

1.3 Some key concepts

Sociologists – especially constructivists – continuously question and deconstruct popular and institutionalized categories, and, in so doing, invent new ones. Categories tend to become tropes that invoke a whole set of ideas and beliefs about those categorized. While I do not believe that renaming is enough to change established perceptions, it achieves the purpose of proposing other aspects of the subject and thus may open up for the development of alternative discourses, new approaches, and new practices. Even if most new categorizations eventually collapse into rigid categories, and even if no categorization is innocent or without potential negative connotations, when they are new, they may be loaded with less 'luggage'. Holgersson (2011) discusses her decision to rename the group of people that in Sweden is popularly called 'hidden migrants' (*gömda flyktingar*) as 'deportables' (*utvisningsbara*) in these terms:

> There is no neutral ground, which is why it is important for anyone who engages in the debate to think through the use of language. [---] The advantage of the expression 'deportables' is that, compared to established terms, it has no 'discursive luggage', that is, is not connected to specific perceptions about the group. (…) While asylum seekers are people who apply for asylum, 'deportables' refers to people who risk deportation at any time. (pp. 18-19)

In a similar vein, I decided to use the term 'unsolicited migration' to grasp the particular group of migrants that has been the focus of this study. By 'unsolicited migration' I understand what is popularly understood as the movements of *migrants, 'economic' migrants,* and *illegal migrants*. Migration researchers and frontliners also employ the terms 'asylum seekers', 'forced migration', and 'irregular migration'. None of these satisfactorily covers the migrants that are in focus in my study. Although all my migrant interviewees were or had been asylum seekers, 'asylum seeker' is the only institutionally established category of migrants open to them. They fled their countries to escape war, persecution, or poverty, but many also described the migratory project as an escape *to* something. Like people in all eras, they were on the move in search of better circumstances: greater security, and better opportunities for work and education – in search of 'a normal life', defined as a secure home and a family. 'Forced migration' is

the term that may come closest to this, but forced migration subsumes the dimension of agency, the fact that even if circumstances force one to take action, the decision to migrate is also an active – and *adventurous* – engagement with the future. Whether forced or not – and whether or not it matters for the decision to leave – migrants are also *travellers*, discovering new countries, new cultures, and new languages. During my fieldwork, I was often struck by the fact that the migrants spoke more languages and knew more places around the world than did the frontliners, or than I did for that matter. Many migrants possessed a 'cosmopolitan capital' that in itself may be a huge resource and an advantage (Hannerz 1990). This is the case, for instance, with the privileged group of migrants called 'expatriates' (e.g. international aid workers, diplomats, executives). Of course, unlike the expatriates, the migrants in this study could not travel freely around the world, could not return home if they liked, and could not freely choose which aspects and parts of the host country they wanted to engage with. In that sense they were 'forced'. But what characterized their situation – what forced them to submit to the process of asylum application and the rules and regulations of asylum reception and integration in the host country – was the fact that the host country had not invited them, did not want them, and routinely categorized them as a burdensome and problematic group of 'immigrants'.

The term 'unsolicited migration' turns the focus away from the common, but in my opinion misguided, interest in *the migrants'* possible motives and intentions and places it on the hosts and the fact that not all migration is considered problematic. Internal migration in the EU is positively embraced. So are the migratory movements undertaken by resourceful groups such as business executives, international aid staff, labour migrants with skills that are in demand, and international students. These migrants are often positively embraced both by the host country's migration legislation and by the general population. In contrast, unsolicited migration is something that nation states fear, reject, and bounce between them. Terms like 'burden sharing', 'reinforced border control', and 'increased regulation' express the unsolicited nature of this migration. In the established discourse, we use metaphors like 'flows' or 'streams' or 'influx' when referring to this group of migrants.

The two sides of asylum reception on which my research focuses are deliberately divided into two fairly rough categories: the *frontliners,* who are the people employed or engaged by various organizations and institutions to work with the unsolicited migrants and who interact with them regularly; and the *migrants,* who are, in my study, exclusively *unsolicited* migrants. The reader will notice that in the chapter on Italy (3), I consistently use the terms 'frontliner' and 'migrant', while in the chapter on Sweden (4), I also use the term 'asylum seeker'. This is because in Sweden most interviewed migrants were registered as asylum seekers, as opposed to the accepted (or rejected) migrants. There is quite a marked difference between the asylum seekers' situation and that of accepted migrants in Sweden, which was not the case in Italy, where migrants frequently move in and out of categories and legal/illegal statuses. In the chapter on Sweden I further differentiate between the frontliners in terms of workplace (Migration Board (MB)) and work task/position (assistant, officer, teacher). The highly organized and stratified system of asylum reception and integration in Sweden is the reason for this. Moreover, my fieldwork in Sweden involved more frontliners at different levels than was the case in Italy.

1.4 The theoretical perspective of the sociology of emotions

The overall theoretical point of departure is general sociological theory and the questions that eternally puzzle sociologists: How is society possible, how is it sustained, and how does it change? More specifically, however, my approach is influenced by the sociology of emotions, a perspective which has gained in importance over the last couple of decades. The theoretical purpose of the study has thus been to pinpoint the interplay of emotions in the meaning-making and interactions between frontliners and migrants, and to highlight the way that emotion links structural circumstances and individual/collective action. While the emotion sociological perspective has influenced my analysis all along, in this book the aim is not to take the analysis in terms of emotions and emotion work very far, nor is it the only aspect highlighted. The analysis presented here can rather be said to represent the groundwork for further development of the emotional dimension of asylum reception, which I undertake in separate articles (e.g.

Wettergren 2010b; Wettergren 2012a; Wettergren 2012b). Nevertheless, a brief introduction to the emotion sociological perspective is required.

The radical perspective in emotions theory and research (Barbalet 1998; Flam 2000; Williams 2000) holds that emotion and reason are not separate and opposed but continuous. Whereas the conventional perspective on emotion/reason considers that we act a-emotionally and rationally, the radical perspective holds that our actions are rather harmonious with what we feel, and our feelings, in turn, are 'backgrounded' (Barbalet 1998) – they are quiet and not the focus of our attention. But the backgrounded emotions still inform and energize the action. On the other end, emotions may be experienced and made the focus of attention when they are very intense or when they disrupt the action we are engaged in. In both cases they will be subject to (conscious or subliminal (cf. Barbalet 2009)) regulation in accordance with societal norms and values about appropriate feelings and their related expressions (Hochschild 1983). In the radical perspective emotions are not external 'forces of nature' but are just as malleable and socially constructed as other aspects of social life. Personal emotional structures, though premised on our biological bodies and their universal capacity to feel, are to a very large degree the product of socialization. We learn to adjust to rules about feeling and expression and we may eventually consider these rules to be natural and self-evident. Emotion is therefore fundamentally social. Moreover, emotions originate in social interaction; it is our interactions with other beings and objects that make us confident, afraid, happy, angry, and sad, and it is our actions and deeds that evoke emotions in others. While emotional responses and their corresponding actions may vary according to cultural emotional regimes (Reddy 2001), emotions are also structurally embedded and tied to universal dimensions of power and status/place. This means that certain emotional responses may be expected following changes – perceived or actual – in these dimensions. For instance, Kemper (2006) asserts that loss of power evokes fear. Loss of status evokes shame, humiliation, and resentment (Scheff 1990; Smith 2001). The actual outcome in a given situation is empirical, of course, but such theoretical 'predictions' may serve as a point of departure for empirical research.

The radical theory of emotions has framed my study from the very beginning, influencing the selection of cases and participants, the questions asked, and the focus of

observation. It is implicit in the analysis. However, the purpose of this book is *not* to present an analysis based primarily on the sociology of emotions, but to offer a broad and multifaceted picture of asylum reception where emotions comprise *one* of many facets. In order to show how emotional processes actually inform and orientate most of the interactions and action choices of frontliners and migrants, and to suggest possible consequences of this, a much deeper and more detailed analysis must be performed on select sections of the data. This task will be performed in separate articles.

1.5 The outline of this report

Chapter 1 introduces the research area, the relevant previous research, and the perspective of the sociology of emotions, which serves as a theoretical framework. Key concepts are also discussed. Chapter 2 deals with methods and methodological issues. Chapters 3 and 4 offer a basic analysis of the results from the Italian and Swedish regions respectively. The aim has been to structure the chapters in a similar way in order to ease comparison. Chapter 4 on the Swedish case is more extensive, however, and its components cover more areas and aspects of asylum reception in Sweden than does the chapter (3) on the Italian case. This is because the data were more comprehensive in Sweden than in Italy. Chapter 5 draws out the main tentative patterns identified in the comparison between the two cases and discusses these in relation to previous research and theory on transnational migration.

2. Method

2.1 Data collection

Data were collected using the methods of ethnographically inspired observations, shadowing observations and loosely structured in-depth interviews (Agar 1986; Burawoy 1998; Czarniawska 2007; Marcus 1995). 'Shadowing' here means following a person (in my case a professional frontliner) as they perform their daily work in the field (Czarniawska 2007), and it was sometimes the initial method of getting acquainted with the field, subsequently complemented with formal observations of meetings and less focused observations where I spent time in the field, without guidance. This method was chosen on the basis of the study's explorative character, its targeting of the emotional aspects of migration, and its focus on interaction. My intention was to study the two sides of asylum reception, from the perspectives of both the migrant and the frontliner, and the way that these groups produced meaning as an ongoing collective achievement (cf. Garfinkel 1984; Jonsson 2009). Access to the observed sites was given by frontliners, usually those responsible for the organization of, for example, the accommodation or introductory programmes, and these individuals have remained useful contact persons throughout the fieldwork. Observations – and informal interviews during these – were recorded in a field diary, and formal interviews were tape-recorded. An overview of the fieldwork in the cases of Italy and Sweden respectively is presented in Table 1 below.

The total time spent in the field was roughly one month in the case of Italy and one and half months in the case of Sweden. Interviews were conducted both within and outside of these periods. While in the Italian case, the collection of data was concentrated in one regional area, data collection in Sweden took place in three main areas due to the structure of the reception system there. Several formal documents and statistics pertaining to the relevant national and regional institutions, as well as local reports and evaluations, were also collected and analysed. Together with previous research and theory, document analysis allowed me to extend the cases to more general, regional and national, levels.

	Italy	Sweden
Time of fieldwork	2006	2007-2009
Sites	**Città:** Centre for reception of asylum seekers (accommodation and integration) + migrant-related sites in Città (municipal office police office, NGO centre offering legal advice for migrant women, hostel for homeless women)	**Xcity:** Migration Board application and investigation departments **Stad:** Introduction to Swedish society and labour market (SFI) **Province:** Accommodation of asylum seekers
Interviews	7 semi-structured interviews, 1 group interview (N=2)	23 semi-structured interviews, 2 group interviews (N=5, N=2)
Observation transcripts + estimated time in the field	18 transcripts (4 weeks)	19 transcripts (6 weeks)
Missing observations/interviews	Application and investigation (the police) Interviews with accommodation frontliners/Caritas	Swedish for immigrants (SFI) during waiting time

Table 1. Data collection overview

Due to practical circumstances and limited financial resources, as can be seen in Table 1, the data collection period in Sweden was longer than that in Italy, where it was more intensive. Partly as a consequence of this, and partly because it was difficult to get migrant interviews, some interviews and observations that ought to be included for the symmetry of the study are missing. I never got to interview employees of Caritas in Città, who were responsible for housing, cooking, and distributing clothing etc. to the residents. However, I did observe their interactions with the migrants in the accommodation space generally, as well as in meetings with new arrivals at the house.

The Caritas workers organized and took care of the groundwork, the daily routine of the accommodation, the rules regarding meals, the tidying up and cleaning of the common areas, the opening and closing hours, the distribution of personal-care items and clothing to the residents, and the cooking.

I did not have enough time and resources to search for contact persons and access among the migration police, to get insight into how they worked, nor to visit the migrant camps in Southern Italy. Another gap in the study concerns the limited participation of migrant women, which will be discussed below. These gaps in the study obviously warrant some caution. Conclusions drawn regarding, for example, the asylum assessment process in Italy are limited to experiences and impressions offered by interviewees, and for conclusions regarding the situation of women, I largely referred to the accounts of frontliners and to my field notes from the observations.

With respect to the contents of the data collection in the Swedish and Italian cases, I have strived to cover the same *phases* in the reception process, including arrival, bureaucratic encounters, accommodation, integration programmes, and labour market introduction. The Swedish principle of transparency pertaining to public institutions made it relatively easy also to gain access to a department of asylum investigation of the Swedish Migration Board. As I did not have the corresponding data from the Italian authorities, I have excluded this part from the Swedish case. Descriptions of the migrants' itineraries, from one country to another, as well as of their first meeting with the migration bureaucracy in the host country, rely on the migrants' accounts.

2.2 The observations

As already mentioned, in the sociology of emotions there are theories focusing on the way that emotions are embedded in and are evoked by structural relations (see, e.g. Barbalet 1998; Kemper 2006). Building on Goffman, Scheff (1990) writes about the 'deference-emotion system' through which vulnerable and touchy selves exchange respect and recognition as emotional gifts, as constitutive of social interactions. In other words, it is through continuous interactions with others that our sense of self and our self-worth are established and reproduced, or ruined. As a corollary to this, since I was interested in how the dignity of the migrant was affected by migratory transition, I

wanted to focus on the interactions between frontliners (as representatives of the host country) and migrants. These interactions are asymmetrical, power relations where the former have something – knowledge, resources, formal recognition – that the latter need for their continued existence in the new country. Yet a migrant, like all people, may try to assert his/her own importance to the frontliner, claiming to be more than 'just' another client. The stark vulnerability of the migrants, having broken with their past, leaving behind the group affiliations and social bonds through which they had asserted themselves in the past, made this quest even more acute: 'When you stand face to face with the one who has the power to make decisions about your continued existence, you are utterly vulnerable and the need for respect is never as great as in that moment' (Norström 2004:268). Thus, I wanted to observe interactions between frontliners and migrants as ongoing negotiations about meaning (Garfinkel 1984; Goffman 1967), positive/negative self-feelings (emotional energy) (Collins 2004), power (Kemper 2006), and status/place (Bloch 1996; Bloch 2007; Clark 1990). In concrete terms, this means staying attentive to how migrants and frontliners asserted themselves as 'somebodies' vis-à-vis one another; how, in their interactions, self-assertive feelings such as confidence and pride, and other-oriented feelings such as respect, sympathy, resentment, and shame, constituted a sort of currency that was given, taken, and exchanged.

Situations where this could be observed were formal meetings between frontliners and migrants, where they interacted directly around specific issues such as the rules of the accommodation and/or the introductory programme, and teaching situations. I specifically asked for permission to sit in on such meetings, whatever the character of the content. During informational or investigative meetings I was a silent observer, but in classroom situations I was sometimes involved as a discussion partner. I took field notes on what was said, how it was said, body language, and facial expressions. I noted the physical and spatial surroundings of the interactions and the placement of the participants in relation to one another. My own feelings were also a valuable source of information. Although there is no direct relationship between researcher emotion and emotions felt by those observed, researcher emotion can be used reflectively to generate ideas about what is going on, to be validated in interviews and by further observation

(Bergman-Blix 2010; Bloch 1996; Summers-Effler 2010). Furthermore, I observed spaces in a general sense, such as by strolling in the urban areas where migrants and asylum seekers move about, live, eat, go to school, etc. These observations supplied me with insights into the daily, mundane living of migrants in different situations. They also gave me a taste of the emotional tone of this daily life.

During shadowing observations I had the opportunity to follow specific frontliners/employees (I did not shadow migrants) in their daily routines. These observations provided immensely useful knowledge about the organizations, the reasoning and emotions of frontliners, and relationships between employees of the particular organization.

Although the interviews are the sources most cited in the analysis, the observations provided crucial background information that allowed me to contextualize the interview accounts. In the interviews, I was able to test and validate impressions and conclusions drawn from the observations. When a migrant interviewee complaining about the house he lived in said 'you have seen it, you know what it looks like', I really knew what he was talking about, and I could validate my own feelings and impressions about that place.

2.3 The interviews

2.3.1 Selection of interviewees

Interviewees were selected to represent both migrants and frontliners, but to a large extent the snowball method was employed, especially in the case of the migrants. In some cases the frontline contact person introduced the first contacts with potential migrant interviewees. In Stad, Sweden, where I observed the 'introduction for new arrivals' programme, the teachers suggested persons among the migrant students who might be interviewed. The ethical problems with this are discussed in the section on ethics below.

It was harder to find migrant interviewees than frontliners, and it was much harder to find female migrant interviewees than male ones. In Città, one reason for this was that in the Villa, the accommodation where I found most of my interviewees, very few women spoke either English or Italian. Although I searched for migrant women outside the

accommodation, at a shelter for homeless women and children, I failed to recruit them. A person in charge cut me off by saying, 'The African women do not want to be interviewed.' In Sweden, too, women migrants were generally more difficult to gain access to.

I was further restricted by my wish to interview only migrants from the Horn of Africa. I had hoped that, by limiting my selection of migrant interviewees, I would get a reliable basis for making comparisons between the Swedish and Italian cases. My initial plan was to interview only Somalis, because this group of migrants rate highest among the unemployed migrants in Sweden while continuing to be one of the largest groups of asylum seekers (Melander 2009). This makes them a rather stigmatized group of migrants. In Italy, Somalis are also a large group, due to the geographical and historical proximity of the countries (Somalia is a former colony of Italy). But in Italy, Somalis, like most migrant groups, work in the informal economy to make a living. I wanted to know if these different structural circumstances influenced the way that Somali migrants related emotionally to themselves and to the 'native' population of the host country, and if the frontliners in Italy viewed Somalis differently than did frontliners in Sweden. I had to abandon this plan because there were so few Somalis in the introduction programme in Città. My subsequent decision to limit the selection of migrant interviewees to Somalis, Eritreans, and Ethiopians was therefore a compromise between a too-narrow original plan and the availability of participants. In retrospect, it might have been a better strategy to drop the Horn of Africa criterion altogether. As it turned out, I declined offers from migrants of other origins who contacted me for an interview while continuing my search for Somalis, Eritreans, and Ethiopians who would be willing to participate.

The frontliners interviewed were the ones who were directly engaged with the migrants in one way or another. In Città this comprised the employees of the organizations engaged in the Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees (known as 'SPRAR') and the representative from the municipality that was ultimately responsible for the programme. In Sweden I interviewed officers of the Migration Board at various levels, as well as Migration Board assistants and teachers employed in a

municipal introduction programme. The tables on the following pages give an overview of the frontliner and migrant interviewees.

Table 2 Frontliner interviewees (followed by Table 3 Migrant interviewees)

Interviewee F/M	Application (main task)	Integration (main task)	Accommodation (main task)	Decision (main task)
Italy				
Male		x		
Male		x		
Male		x		
Female		x	x	
Sweden				
Male				x
Male				x
Male				x
Male				x
Male				x
Male		x		
Male			x	
Male			x	
Male			x	
Male			x	
Female	X			
Female			x	
Female			x	
Female		x		

Female		x		
Female			x	
Female				x
Female				x
Female				x
Female				x
Female				x

Interviewee F/M	Asylum seeker	Temporary residence permit	Permanent residence permit	Additional infomation
Italy				
Male "One man"	X			Newly arrived One child left behind
Male Steve	X			Newly arrived
Male John			x	Political refugee, religious persecution
Male Alfons	X			Migrating since 10 years back, deported to Italy after three years in the UK
Female Jean		x		One child, three years as undocumented migrant
Sweden				
Male Oliver	X			One child in Eritrea, twice rejected asylum seeker
Male Liam	X			Newly arrived
Male Ben			x	Three years in Sweden
Male Mark			x	Three years in Sweden
Female Dina			x	Three children plus one in Somalia, three years in Sweden

Female Johanna			x	One child plus two in Somalia, three years in Sweden

Table 3: Migrant interviews

2.3.2 Focus of the interviews

The interviews were loosely structured and lasted between one and two and a half hours. Migrant interviewees were asked about their migration history, their arrival in the country, their experiences of and feelings about their reception, their hopes and plans for the future, and their evaluation of the resources and assistance provided by the host country. They were also asked how they felt in relation to the 'native' population of the host country and if they had experienced racism. Frontliners were asked about their previous and present experiences working with migrants, what they hope to achieve in their work, positive and negative moments, and feedback on and results of the work. They invariably brought up their understandings and perceptions of the clients they worked with and of key terms such as 'integration'. Interviews with frontliners in Città were conducted in Italian. At the Swedish sites they were conducted in Swedish. Interviews with migrants were conducted in Italian or English (in Città), and in Swedish or English in Sweden. One interview in Sweden was done with the assistance of a professional interpreter.

I tried to encourage both frontliners and migrants to speak about their emotions. This is always a difficult topic. Emotions tend to slip in through the back door, so to speak, in talk about concrete actions, decisions, and thoughts about different matters. It also turned out that discrete emotion words could lack common referents. Asking about pride, for instance, could evoke defensive responses if the interviewee considered pride to be a 'bad' feeling. I also discovered that a primary concern of migrants was keeping their emotions under control. Although they often appeared emotionally volatile during the interviews – shifting quickly between crying and laughing, for instance – they avoided talking about emotions directly. As argued by Reddy (2001), emotion words are *emotives*: they shape and produce feelings the moment they are pronounced. For

someone who is struggling hard to keep an emotional balance, the statements 'I am sad' and 'I am afraid' may very easily overthrow that balance. Instead, the migrant interviewees tended to repeat statements such as 'I will be fine,' 'I will manage,' and 'I have to move on,' thus showing that their minds were set on the future, the next step, the bettering and development of their situation through concrete action. The frontliners, on the other hand, tended to associate emotions with failed professionalism. It was rather by carefully listening to the 'zest and zeal' with which they spoke about concrete interventions, events, and organizational processes that I was able to perceive their emotions coming through.[2]

2.3.3 Language and translation

The issue of the language of the interviews deserves special attention. Knowing that I would not be able to interview migrants in their native languages unless I used interpreters, I was initially open to the use of interpreters. However, there are a number of problems connected to the use of interpreters: They might affect the flow of the interviews and perhaps also the interviewees' feelings of trust and; professional interpreters are both hard to find when it comes to languages spoken in the Horn of Africa, and they cost money. In addition, quite often I was given the opportunity to interview a migrant on short notice. I learned from experience that postponing the interview to a time and place when it would be possible to get hold of an interpreter would risk losing the interviewee. As it turned out, I preferred to go ahead with the interviews. From the one interview I did conduct with an interpreter I learned that the introduction of a third party into the conversation between me and the interviewee confused the analysis: it became difficult to accurately take into account the *interviewee's* emotional expressions, tone, speaking volume, speed of talk, and choice of words. Instead, the *interpreter's* expressions imposed themselves, and a lot of valuable information was lost. The conclusion is that an interpreter may be useful if one is

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[2] For a discussion about the way that emotion is revealed in interviews, see, for instance, Bloch 1996; Kleres 2011; and Scheff 1990.

looking for plain information about a series of events or 'facts', but may be obstructive when the researcher is looking for the emotional and experiential tone of these events.[3]

This is not to say that non-interpreted interviews are necessarily to be preferred. First of all it constitutes a disadvantage to the migrants that they could not express themselves in their own language. It contributed to my difficulties in finding migrants willing to participate, especially female migrants. Language problems posed an obstacle in several migrant interviews, especially the ones conducted in Italy. At the time, my own Italian was good enough for asking questions and understanding the answers, and for engaging in rudimentary conversation. But it was not good enough to help migrants who spoke only *some* Italian to find the right words, or to formulate what they were trying to say, when they confused words or grammar. The interviews with migrants in English and Swedish went better due to my own skills in those languages. Again, the fact that these were not the migrant interviewees' native languages caused problems. I sometimes had to repeat and rephrase questions, sometimes skipped pointing out that my question was being misunderstood, and sometimes I had the feeling that I was almost literally placing words in the interviewee's mouth. The interviews conducted in Sweden, in Swedish, were generally of a better linguistic quality because interviewees were partly selected for their good knowledge of Swedish.

All the interviews conducted in Italian and Swedish were also transcribed in these languages, but the excerpts used in the analysis have been translated into English.

2.4 Description, analysis, and interpretation

I find Wolcott's (1994) theoretical division of the process of analysing ethnographic data into three main phases – description, analysis, and interpretation – helpful for understanding the main phases of the qualitative research process. By typing up interviews or field notes from observations, descriptive accounts are created which remain close to the empirical data. Descriptions then become subject to analysis through which themes and categories are systematically identified (this is often called 'coding' in

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[3] The conclusions I draw from my experiences today, having observed a number of interpreted meetings between frontliners and migrants in the project, is that an interpreter does not necessarily improve the quality of the interviews. Even professional interpreters may accidentally distort information and make translation mistakes. In some cases the interpreted persons even feel that interpreters affect them negatively by being arrogant and commanding towards them.

the models of analysis building on grounded theory (see e.g. Strauss and Corbin 1990). In this 'analytical phase of the analysis', accounts are cut up and reorganized, compared and compiled. The researcher remains close to the data but now makes use of 'sensitizing concepts' (cf. Glaser 1978) which may be recovered from theory and previous research but may also be generated by the data, and which help to orientate the analytical gaze. In this study, examples of such concepts are emotion management; emotional display; shame, pride, and confidence; power and status 'moves' seen, for example, in attempts at self-assertion; restricted action; sense of belonging and exclusion; and professionalism. The final phase moves entirely into the realm of interpretation, where bits and pieces or entire theoretical frameworks are applied, and new theory, or developments of previous theory, are generated.

If this way of conceptualizing the research process gives us three neat phases, they remain abstract and only broadly apply to what is actually done. As argued by Agar (1986), ethnography is by its very character interpretive and hence the process of analysis begins already in the field, through what he calls *breakdowns, resolutions,* and *coherence.* Breakdowns are the result of 'differences' between, inter alia, the world of the researcher and his/her knowledge (*schema[4]),* and the world and knowledge (*schemas)* of the group of actors observed. As noted by Agar, the nature of these breakdowns will vary depending on who the researcher is and what knowledge he/she brings to the field. Put simply, breakdowns are obstacles to the production of meaning and understanding; they raise questions that need to be answered and incoherencies that must be resolved. The road from breakdown to understanding is what Agar calls resolution. Coherence is restored, resulting in a new understanding for the researcher – a new *schema* that he/she can apply to understand the actors observed. Eventually, through this process, the researcher becomes acquainted and familiar with the actors' views of the world and their schemas for action.

For example, during my fieldwork in Italy I noticed that the 'integration' frontliners were very preoccupied with the problem of how to get migrants to participate in the

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[4] A schema consists of frames, goals, and plans; the frame is the actor's knowledge horizon, the goal is the actor's intention with an action, and the plan is the actor's way to reach the goal given his/her knowledge (Agar 1986:23 ff.). Agar has produced several terms that are useful for talking about what ethnographers do when they do research.

integration trajectory set out for them. They wanted the migrants to be self-disciplined, and to be occupied with Italian classes, professional courses, and "work life practice"[5]. Yet, at the accommodation I saw women with children hanging around day after day as if they had nothing to do at all. I even saw women plead for their right to child care, so they could go out and look for a job. To me, a feminist academic from Sweden, where it is imperative to provide equal opportunities to women and men, it was a moment of breakdown. Why would the frontliners deny the women something they almost coerced the men to do? The way to find out was to ask the frontliners, which I did, mentioning this puzzle in both formal and informal interviews. In Agar's terminology, I applied my schema to a *strip* – 'any bounded phenomenon against which an ethnographer tests his or her understanding" (ibid.: 28) – in this case the observed phenomenon of the idle women. It resulted in breakdown, which made me seek resolution in interviews, which then resulted in a new schema.

Agar's model suggests that the process of analysis is continuous. Moreover, at least in my case, not all of the data were collected at once. I spent some days in the field, then I returned to my office and typed the notes and listened to the interviews and began reflecting on the various schemas involved. I also read theory and previous research which offered viable frameworks for interpreting what I had seen and heard. I adapted my interview guide, returned to the field, noticing new things through my new understanding, and so on. In this sense, even if concrete actions in the field can only be explained by the people who do them, I suggest that the process of resolution at the level of interpretation in Wolcott's use of the word – making sense *beyond* the schemas of the actors in the field –also involves previous research and theory. The continuous process of resolution that moves between the interpretive/theoretical, the analytical, and the descriptive/empirical levels (in Wolcott's terminology) may be referred to as '*abduction'* (Alvesson and Sköldberg 1994)**,** a term quite often used to conveniently dispose of the division between *induction* and *deduction*. Most qualitative research contains elements of both.

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[5] I use this term to denote the brief periods of participating in workplaces to practise job-specific skills and language that migrants were supposed to follow in both Sweden and Italy.

When Agar (1986) argues that the schemas and 'world' brought by the researcher into the field give rise to specific breakdowns that would not occur if the researcher's world were different, it means that we will ask different questions and learn different things depending on our backgrounds as researchers. At the same time, the researcher can be expected to *influence* the participants, either by his/her mere presence or by the very (abnormal) situation of the interview. In other words, the researcher is never a *tabula rasa* and he/she cannot be a fly on the wall. These circumstances have to be accepted and accounted for in the analysis. My way of doing so has been to strive for a critically reflective research, where my pre-existing 'schemas' and my influence on the participants, are continuously problematized, questioned, discussed, and argued by presenting my results in academic and non-academic contexts.

In my view, the division of the process of analysis into three phases does not mean that any one phase is more 'true' than any other. I rest on a post-structuralist conception of the world (Wettergren 2005) and therefore I am inclined to see the accounts resulting from the different phases as different types of *constructions* referring to different discourses (and discursive practices) through which the account is approved as making sense. The primary criterion of validity, therefore, is the degree of *significance* of each account, what Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) call *communicative* validity. The descriptive, and partly also the analytical, accounts are the ones most likely to be recognized and validated by the *research participants*, whereas the interpretive account tends to direct its claims of validity towards *academic peers*, the world of researchers and the theories and previous research that are already 'out there'.

> When we *describe*, we hope and intend that those in the setting will applaud our results or will, at the least, find them acceptable. When we *analyze,* we carefully select a few factors for scrutiny; we rely on the weight of evidence and the systematic nature of our procedures to be convincing. But when we *interpret*, it is our colleagues' presence we feel over our shoulders; our interpretive 'rightness' is judged within traditions, not in the correspondence between accounts and Truth or strict adherence to procedures. (Wolcott 1994:258)

Wolcott (1994) maintains that the interpretive account is the one that is most debatable in ethnographic research because it is most remote from the data, and he thereby seems to suggest some lower degree of validity at this level. That may be so if one departs from

a phenomenological, or perhaps even a realist paradigm. Burawoy (1998) on the other hand argues that the hallmark of the reflexive 'extended case study method' is precisely its reliance on theory in order to reach from the specific to the general.

The purpose of this research report is to present the data primarily at the descriptive and analytical levels. I want to present the accounts and understandings of migrants and frontliners in their respective contexts of national and regional circumstances and structures. What is presented is nevertheless a rather detailed analytical account, where data have been condensed and thematically organized. The analysis is oriented by a theoretical framework consisting primarily of previous research and the emotion sociological framework, but in this report I do not engage in very abstract interpretations.

2.5 Ethics – the humility of social research

The project has followed the ethical principles of the Swedish Research Council. According to these, social science must heed the requirements of *information, consent, confidentiality,* and *rights of use*. Unsolicited migrants are rightfully considered vulnerable research subjects. This warrants a high degree of ethical awareness. Participants were informed about the project and its ethical requirements in a written document available in Swedish, English, Italian, and eventually also Somali. I also opened interviews by repeating the contents of this document orally.

Social scientists build their research careers on the participation of other human beings, but there are rarely any immediate gains for the participants. Researchers are therefore rightfully and humbly indebted to everyone who consents to participate. I was made aware of this several times by the migrant interviewees, who explained to me that they participated exclusively out of kindness and because they wanted their stories to be known to a larger public. They wanted to tell their stories but they had no hope of changing anything. On one occasion I was made painfully aware of this when a scheduled migrant interview, which I had been very much looking forward to, was cancelled because the prospective interviewee changed his mind. He explained to me that his only interest was in reuniting with his wife and child, who were already settled in another country, and that he could not see how his participation would benefit him at all. His bluntness affected me more than I had expected. In fact, I had been waiting for

someone to tell me this. People were struggling with their lives, and here I was looking for interviewees! It was a humbling experience that made me doubt the value of the project. The upside of it was that my information about the ethical principles had apparently been successfully conveyed, as the right to change one's mind about participation had been put to use. On the whole, migrant interviewees paid rather scant attention to the contents of the information document. They knew that we would probably not meet again and they were content with the basic information that they would be anonymous and that their participation could not influence their situation in any way for better or for worse. In contrast, some of the frontliners expressed clear motives for participating. For instance, they wanted me to find out how and why some interventions worked or did not work. All frontliners expressed an interest in the results for the purpose of bettering their practice.

In the Italian case, I contacted migrant interviewees on my own, albeit sometimes at the suggestion of the frontliners. In the Swedish case, at the school where the introductory programme took place, the migrant interviewees were suggested and contacted by one of the teachers, because, she reasoned, she knew their level in Swedish. This happened before I had time to intervene. I was afraid that this would associate my project with the obligatory introductory programme and that migrants would feel coerced to show up for the interviews, which took place in an empty classroom during school hours. As it turned out, however, only about half of the people contacted by the teacher showed up. Among these, some may have felt obliged; they appeared impatient to be finished with the questions so they could leave. I didn't try to make them stay longer. Two of these arranged interviews were very successful (both with women). Having agreed to go ahead with the interview, they offered me long and detailed accounts.

It can sometimes be tricky to secure anonymity. In the process of transforming data from recorded interviews and field notes into electronic typed versions I have deleted all real names and used false names for both persons and places. However, even with the use of false names it is still possible to tie a series of interview excerpts to the same person. The migrant interviewees have surely moved on and will not be vulnerable to such identification any longer, but employees of the Swedish Migration Board and of the

organizations involved in the Italian region may still be around. The report will be distributed to the participant organizations and institutions. Therefore, while false names are used in migrant interview excerpts, no names are used in the frontliner interview excerpts. In the latter case I have kept the hierarchical position, but only in places where this information may be of importance.

As mentioned before, the researcher is bound to influence participants in one way or another. During observations, my presence was noticed all the time. Granted, I assumed that frontliners wanted to show me the most positive (from their perspective) side of their work and the organizations. This is important to remember, especially if the reader thinks that the image of asylum reception conveyed by this report is dark. During the fieldwork in Sweden, at times I was surprised by the fact that some participants seemed to use me as a channel for 'telling the truth' – the unofficial, 'not politically correct' story. For ethical reasons I have not included the most disturbing parts of these stories. They would not change the conclusions. Considering that participants want to make as good an impression as possible, the not-so-good impressions can be expected to be at least as bad when the researcher is not present.

2.6 Generalization

The type of claim to generalization open to qualitative science is the one some call *analytical* generalization (Kvale and Brinkman 2009). Analytical generalization builds on argumentative logic and well-poised judgement, for instance comparing the results with previous theories and research (cf. Burawoy 1998).

In ethnographic research, fieldwork tends to go on for months, even years (cf. Summers-Effler 2010). This is not the case with this study, which is why I have chosen to label it ethnographically *inspired.* Nevertheless there is a point with the time spent in the field: the longer one stays, the more likely one is to become part of the field, thus reducing researcher influence and possibly gaining more and 'deeper' knowledge about the schemas and processes at work. Since in Sweden I covered more aspects of the asylum reception process, my knowledge is broader in the Swedish case. I also did more interviews and may therefore have access to a more varied palette and a more nuanced understanding than in Italy. Last but not least, I am Swedish and I therefore have more prior knowledge about the Swedish *context*. However, I did not spend much more time,

in total, in the field in Sweden than in Italy, and though I know the whole process better, to say that I have 'deeper' knowledge about the Swedish than about the Italian case would not be true. But it is true that in the Italian case I rely more on interview accounts and various other sources such as previous research, official documents and reports, and journal articles to cover the previously discussed gaps in the data. It can also be seen in the fact that the Italian part of the report is shorter and less complex.

I have tried to avoid direct generalizing from the local cases to the national level, even if I argue that some of the differences between the cases derive precisely from the national contexts in which they are situated. The national context structures the local and situational interactions. However, it should be clear, particularly in Italy, that there may be great variations between regions, to the extent that some results from the Italian case may be strictly local. Regional autonomy is high, and important regional and municipal welfare services that influence the way the reception of asylum seekers is built up (if there is any reception at all), may vary greatly. In Sweden, the system of asylum reception is run by the state authority the Swedish Migration Board (MB). Even when the MB cooperates with the municipalities (as with the accommodation of asylum seekers), the latter follow national directives and laws, so it is relatively likely that whatever circumstances are observed as common in one place will be similar in another part of Sweden. Furthermore, in both Sweden and Italy factual circumstances (including national and regional laws and regulations) may change over time and from place to place. The entire organization of the reception and accommodation of asylum seekers in Sweden was being revised during my fieldwork – allegedly to adapt to a much "lower influx" than in the past, and in the process circumstances of importance in this study may change too. Much has happened also in Italian legislation regarding asylum seekers and 'illegal immigrants' in the last seven years; unfortunately, most of these changes appear to be towards harsher and more restrictive legislation that ultimately criminalizes the existence of undocumented migrants in Italy. It should also be noted that the Italian part of this report was finished in 2009 and the Swedish part in 2011. Since then, the Arab Spring has changed the political situation of the North African countries through which migrants from the Horn of Africa pass, and where they sometimes stay, on their way to Europe.

The most important and timeless outcome of the study lies neither in the descriptions of specific legislation and factual circumstances nor in the implications of the *national* policies and practices, but rather in what can be concluded from the comparison between two *extreme cases* of European asylum reception. I argue that, in spite of their huge differences, the similarities that emerged make it possible to make analytical generalizations about the way that European states deal with the issue of unsolicited migration from outside Europe (see chapter 5).

My method in this project has been in the spirit of what is known as 'multi-sited ethnography' (Marcus 1995). In multi-sited ethnography the researcher strives to be mobile and cover a multitude of interconnected sites of research where the object of study is not 'the conditions of a particular set of subjects' but rather 'the cultural formation, produced in several different locales' (Marcus 1995:99). The distinction between the local and global is collapsed and instead 'any ethnography of the cultural formation in the world system is also an ethnography of the system' (ibid.). 'The global', as argued by Marcus, 'is an emergent dimension of arguing about the connection among sites in a multi-sited ethnography' (ibid.).The selection of cases, chiefly an Italian and a Swedish case, is, in the European context, a strategic choice that enhances the potential to see the global in the local.

3. Italy: Città

3.1 Introduction

Until the mid-1970s Italy was an emigration country with large proportions of its population migrating to Northern Europe, North America, Australia, and the US. During the post-war period there was also a considerable amount of internal migration, as people moved from Southern to Northern Italy.[6] Emigration decreased throughout the 1970s while immigration began to increase, and in 1975 the net immigration superseded emigration (DelBoca and Venturini 2001; Schierup et al. 2006). In 2006 it was estimated that documented and undocumented migrants made up about 4.6% of the Italian population (Schierup et al. 2006). Immigrants to Italy come mainly from the African and Asian continent, Latin America, and the Eastern European countries. Schierup et al. emphasize in particular Italy's conservative-corporatist welfare regime, whose cornerstone is the family as a 'caretaking and redistributive unit' (see also Esping-Andersen 1990), as an important structural condition giving rise to certain characteristics. Two of these deserve particular emphasis here.

Firstly, the patriarchal family structure inherent in the conservative-corporatist welfare regime and the accompanying expectations about traditional labour division create high demands for cheap female domestic labour as Italian women increasingly enter the labour market. This 'emancipation', which is neither supported by the expansion of the public sector (e.g. providing elderly and child care) nor by Italian men in general (by taking on a larger share of the domestic labour), has led to increased outsourcing of private life to domestic service providers (Campani 2006; Hochschild 2003). 'A prevalent pattern for younger families is to hire migrant women to "live in" and take care of the needs of their elderly lone relatives. This latter practice is becoming increasingly important given a fast-ageing Italian population ...' (Schierup et al. 2006:171-2). 'Lavorofisso' ('fixed labour') is the peculiar Italian name for this type of work, where the employee lives and stays in the household she is taking care of. The employment conditions are passably regulated by Italian law; for instance, the employee

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[6] According to Schierup et al., 'between 1860 and 1970, an estimated 26 million people emigrated from Italy' (Schierup et al. 2006:163) and after the Second World War only about 20 million Italians migrated from Southern to Northern Italy. The total population of Italy today is about 58 million.

has the right to a minimum salary and one and a half days off per week.[7] However, many domestic workers are employed in the informal sector, and many of them are also undocumented migrants, which puts them in a vulnerable situation with respect to rights. In Italy there are help organizations orientated exclusively towards offering legal assistance to migrant women who have been sexually abused, thrown out of the house, and denied payment by their employers (see also Flam et al. 2007).

Secondly, the structural family orientation has contributed to the development of Italy's post-war 'dual economy', which is divided between, on the one hand, large industrial enterprises and, on the other hand, small family-run businesses in retail, catering and tourism. According to Schierup et al., the small family-business sector is protected by the ruling elites in a highly clientilistic political system, seen for instance in the fact that unions have no right to organize in businesses with less than 15 employees (Schierup et al 2006:177). The larger industries, on the other hand, were among the most thoroughly regulated and unionized in Europe before the post-Fordist crisis in the 1970s and 1980s. Following the crisis, large-scale industry declined or moved out to low-wage countries, while the small businesses bourgeoned and played a role in the overall deregulation and flexibilization of the Italian economy.[8] In this, the migrant labour force with its insecure regular/irregular status in the Italian society proved particularly useful: "As they entailed no social wage costs for their employers, and often worked for subliminal wages, migrants provided a cheap source of 'primitive accumulation' for the initial phase of the small-business revolution in the 1980s and 1990s' (ibid.:183). In other words, while migrant female labour has supported the reproductive sector and Italian women's emancipation, migrant male labour has supported the production sector.

The Italian labour market is thus divided along ethnic and gender lines, with, for instance, 'an overwhelming concentration of Filipina and South American women in domestic services' and of 'North African men in building and construction' (Schierup et al., 2006:180). The steep increase in 'atypical' employment such as part-time and

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[7] For Somali women in Città the day off was a day for getting out and socializing. One town square in particular that was selected by the informal community as a meeting place got crowded with Somalis on Thursday afternoon and Saturdays.

[8] Italian GNP rose by 50% between 1976-1991 (Schierup et al. 2006:179).

temporary employment common in post-Fordist economies in Italy are mainly occupied by women and migrants. This deregulation of the formal labour market means in practice that work conditions that used to be illegal are today legal.

Far from all migrants intend to stay in Italy. Many try to use Italy as a transit country to other European countries.[9] To the European Union such transit migration undermines the general effort to regulate immigration: Greece, Italy, and Spain represent the 'porous' southern borders of the EU. The increasingly supranational EU migration and asylum policy currently being developed thus focuses on common routines – such as those set out in the Dublin Regulation – and shared databases to support them – such as the Eurodac (Aus 2006).[10] While migration policies and reception practices vary immensely between EU countries, the aim is to 'harmonize' them. This ambition and its necessity are closely related to the effective realization of internal migration for EU citizens (Hansen 2008). Italy's first migration law thus appeared at about the same time as the country signed the Schengen Agreement in the 1980s. The legislation on migration has been fraught with ambiguities and subject to amendments ever since, with the first systematic law on immigration, the Turco-Napolitano Act, being passed in 1998 (Schierup et al. 2006; Zincone 2006). The law was amended and replaced by the Bossi-Fini Act, which became fully effective in 2005. The general trend is that the policy on immigration becomes more strict each time the law is amended. In this context it is also important to note that it is difficult to get a clear overview of Italian immigration and asylum law due to its continuous amendments and changes.

As pointed out by Dell'Olio (2004), the Italian migration regime identifies three legal visa schemes/categories of migrants: temporary (e.g. tourism and study, three months), guest worker (e.g. invited holders of temporary work permits, six months), and permanent migrants (e.g. family reunification, adoption). Asylum seekers are not

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[9]In 2002 it was estimated that up to 75% of the illegal immigrants who came to Italy continued to northern member states (Bertozzi 2002).

[10]Eurodac was launched in 2003 to support the Dublin Regulation. It is a shared database gathering all 10 fingerprints of asylum-seeking and irregular third-country nationals from the age of 14 in all the EU member and Schengen-associated states.

included in these categories. In general,[11] asylum seekers all over Europe, who are not subject to family reunification or quota migrant arrangements, come via smugglers, which puts them in the category of illegal or irregular migrants (Hansen 2008; Jandl 2005). Asylum requests in Italy must be presented to the border police or to the local police department. Decisions are taken by the 'territorial commission for recognition of international protection', consisting of delegates from the interior ministry, the municipality, and a consultant from the UNHCR. Asylum seekers are kept in detention centres for a limited period of time while their requests are processed and while their identity is investigated. Applicants are given temporary residence permits (generally for three months) if decisions are delayed, but they are not allowed to work. In reality, the waiting time prior to 2006, according to the Italian frontline workers, used to be more than one year, but there were continuous efforts to reduce turnover time to the ideal two months. In 2006 and still today, successful applicants are granted residence permits either on the basis of migrant status (according to the Geneva Convention) or as in need of 'humanitarian protection.'[12] Residence permits are temporary, that is, one year for humanitarian reasons and three to five years for migrant status. Rejected applicants must leave the country within 15 days.

The conditions presented here apply to the migrants who are in focus in my research, that is, those entering illegally via the Italian coastline and without identity documents. They have been and still are a very large part of the asylum seekers in Italy: in 2008 slightly more than 31 000 persons applied for asylum in Italy, 50% of these applications were filed by boat migrants. The same year, the acceptance rate (subject to either migrant status or subsidiary protection) of the boat migrants' applications was around 50%.[13] In the following sections I will introduce the migrants' own experiences of going

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[11] Here I try to give an overall picture of the procedure as it looked in 2006 and more or less still looks today. I avoid going into details because these will be rather complicated and confusing and have been subject to change since my fieldwork was carried out. For a detailed and up-to-date picture, see *GuidaPratica per ititolari di protezioneinternazionale* (also available in English) available at www.interno.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/assets/files/16/0104_SPRAR_Vademecum.pdf (Accessed 24 September 2009).

[12] *Rights of Asylum in Italy: Access to procedures and treatment of asylum seekers*, International Fact-finding Mission, International Federation for Human Rights, Report No 419/2, 2005.

[13] *L'UNHCR a Lampedusa e in Sicilia* www.unhcr.it/lunhcr-a-lampedusa-e-in-sicilia.html (Accessed 24 June 2009).

to Italy and their encounters with the Italian bureaucracy and Italian migration policy.

3.2 Getting there

> There were 50 persons in one car [laughs] – *five O*! And we had only water and some glucose … One of them had a baby. There in the Sahara desert! The baby survived. But it was a man around 26 years old who died and the other was a woman maybe 19 or 20 years old. They died of the heat. [---] It took around 10 days to pass the desert. You have to pay to get transport. The police do business with us. (…). All the time you think about Italy, about Lampedusa, Sicily. It's the only thing on the migrant's mind; how to reach Lampedusa or Sicily. And the money you need to pay for it. (…) I collected 1200 USD. I tried my chances. But some brokers are dishonest; when you give money to them sometimes you lose it. I know people who had tried four times, six times, they just took their money. They could as well kill you right away – 'please kill me man!' [laughs]. I got on a boat with 27 passengers, and I was lucky because there was another boat with around 47 passengers in it! You can't sit properly, you can't move properly. It is very dangerous. (John, Ethiopian migrant)

The most common itinerary for migrants from East Africa is to travel through Sudan (and across the Sahara Desert) to Libya and then find a smuggler that would take them by boat to the southernmost Italian island of Lampedusa. According to the Italian interior ministry the overwhelming majority of boat migrants to Lampedusa come from Eritrea or Somalia.[14] The number of migrants coming this way has been growing steadily, with an increase of almost 150% between 2007 and 2008.[15] The Italian government has long tried to reduce these numbers by negotiating with the Libyan government.[16] These negotiations are highly controversial since Libya has not signed the UN's International Migration Convention and there are reports about 'horrible conditions' and abuse in Libyan detention centres, as well as a serious risk that migrants

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[14]www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=29651&Cr=boat+people&Cr1= (Accessed 19 February 2009).

[15]31 000 people came via Lampedusa, which corresponded to more than 85% of the total number of boat migrants. *L'UNHCR a Lampedusa e in Sicilia.*

[16]www.dn.se/nyheter/varlden/ny-migrantstrom-mot-italien-1.477567 (Accessed 19 February 2009). In June 2009 these negotiations reached an interesting climax with Khadaffi's historical visit in Rome to seal an agreement between Libya and Italy concerning the boat migrants.

will be deported to their countries of origin where their lives will be in danger.[17] Officially the EU is also concerned about this development, but externalizing the migrant problem to developing countries with no or poor respect for human rights is a well-established strategy of the EU's migration policy (Hansen 2008).

Migrants describe the passage through Libya as a passage through hell, where their lives count for nothing except the money they carry. Being illegal and carrying all their savings, migrants are treated as fair game, routinely abused, robbed, and sometimes murdered. They are harassed and threatened by the Libyan police and military and must bribe them to avoid imprisonment and torture. Because of its strategic placement, the desert town of Kufra is a hub in the East African human trafficking network. The 'Kufra jail', one of the places where Libyan authorities detain illegal migrants, is 'a very, very bad place for migrants' according to an interviewee who also claimed that women were systematically submitted to sexual abuse and violence there (see also Grande 2008).

If they managed to get on a smuggler's boat in Libya, passing the Mediterranean was the next great survival test. The boats were much too crowded, badly equipped, and the food supplies – bread and water – never lasted the whole journey. The migrants feared for their lives and it was a well-grounded fear, since reports about shipwrecks and drowning are common.[18] Nobody knows how many migrants disappear on their way across the Mediterranean each year. As they were spotted drifting about the sea, the boats would be intercepted by the Italian coast guard, who would escort them to Sicily or the island of Lampedusa and a 'Centre of Temporary Permanence' (CPT) where the migrants were assembled.

The Lampedusa centre, and other similar centres around Italy, is a recurrent subject of debate and critique from human rights organizations both within Italy and in the EU (see e.g. Gatti 2005). The UNHCR recently expressed concern that the Lampedusa centre has become overcrowded due to a change in Italian policy. Previously, migrants were transferred to other Italian centres where their cases were tried, but at the beginning of 2009 the Italian government decided that all migrants must stay in Lampedusa until

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[17]*Unhcr: 'Libia non dà garanzie per i rifugiati'.* www.immigrazione.biz/2646.html (Accessed 24 September 2009).

[18]Migrants drowning in the Mediterranean rarely cause big headlines, but are recurrently reported in the main media. See, for example, *Dagens Nyheter,* 4 April 2009, 7 July 2008, and 14 August 2007.

their applications have been processed. It means that in January 2009 about 1400 persons were staying in the centre, which has places for only 800 (Loewe 2009). A toughening Italian policy can also be seen in the recent changes brought by the agreement between Libya and Italy in 2009 concerning the return of boat migrants to Libya. The agreement was considered to be in effect as of May 2009, when the Italian coast guard began intercepting boat migrants and returning them to Libya without investigating their individual needs for protection or asylum.[19]

Insofar as the application process is concerned, my interviewees confirmed that it was relatively quick, two to four months, but it was commonly criticized for not respecting the legal rights of the applicant. Some interviewees claimed that they were never heard by the commission, and another said that the interpreter did not speak his language. According to the interviewees, all residence permits were time-limited between one and two years depending on the categorization of the applicant as a Geneva Convention migrant (two years)[20] or subject to acceptance due to 'humanitarian reasons' (one year). Among the migrants, rumour had it that the country of origin determined the residence permit in a routine fashion, rather than the individual circumstances of the applicant.

> I applied for political asylum but they give me humanitarian not political. Now I am humanitarian. I need to talk to a lawyer but there is no time and I have to live; what am I supposed to do? […] The judge gave me one year. They didn't ask anything because they have so many foreigners [*stranieri*] to deal with. (Steve, Ethiopian refugee)

Migrants whose cases were rejected were told to leave Italy within three months. There was a formal right to appeal all decisions on asylum requests, but it was generally perceived as wise not to use it. Appeals would linger on in the bureaucratic system for years while the applicant's legal rights were suspended, with restricted residence and work permits. Hence, as one interviewee said, 'What they give, you have to take.'

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[19]Khadaffi promised to stop the smuggling of boat migrants from Libyan harbours in exchange for large-scale Italian investments in Libya (*Nylander SR* P1, June 9, 2009).

[20] Under current law, migrant status permits an individual to live in the country for five years. The interviewees may have mixed it up with the category of subsidiary protection (which today gives three years) or the time limit for Geneva Convention migrants, which has been expanded since 2006; see *Guida Pratica per ititolari di protezioneinternazionale.*

Whether they got a residence permit or not, the migrant informants said they received little or no help afterwards. Being left on your own, in some cases with a small one-off payment and directions to turn to the relief organizations for assistance, was the standard story.

3.2.1 Meeting bureaucracy

> You get an appointment with the *questura* [local police headquarters] like they gonna say to you to come the 26 of this month, but when you go there they don't even say 'sorry it was not right we can't do it today', no. They say 'Go go!' And I say why should I go? This is my appointment, this is the paper you gave me, but they said 'No, go, go! We don't have nothing, go!' (Alfons, Somali migrant)

In Italy it is the migration department of the police authorities that treats the asylum applications. In addition, moving between Italian regions entails a complicated process of applying for changed residential registration, which is also dealt with at the local police headquarters (the *questura*). Residential registration is necessary for the migrants' work permits and in the extension of their right to legally rent a home. Apart from the fact that many migrants feel uncomfortable with the police due to experiences in their home countries and/or during their journey to Italy, the bureaucracy of these institutions is overwhelming and degrading.

> In Città,[21] the *questura* was centrally placed, in an old, worn-out building with two entrances. On the front side, there were endless queues supervised by police officers, where foreigners waited to file their applications. Persons with appointments were entering at the back, let in by the police officers who watched the entrance. The interior of the building was shabby, with flaking walls and a few broken chairs. There were long queues to the different counters shielded by thick transparent plastic screens, each assisting a different residence permit category: 'Americas', 'Oceania', 'Students', or 'Asylum' were provisionally scribbled in black letters on a piece of cardboard above each counter. There was an information desk in a plastic booth, but it seemed to be mostly unstaffed. Apart from this there was no place to turn for information. The confused crowds of applicants gathered in the hall were occasionally urged to 'calm down' by the officers, but the predominant impression was chaotic.

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[21] The description of the *questura* in this section is from the field notes, taken on an occasion when I shadowed an Arci volunteer who was assisting two African women and their baby daughters.

The situation at the *questura* was clearly frustrating to officers and applicants alike. As indicated by the different queues, the applicants came from around the world and applied for residence permits for a variety of reasons. Resignation seemed to be the dominant mood of the applicants (Martìn-Perez 2010), while the case officers displayed irritation and arrogance and were sometimes very rude. According to the interviewees, they did not try to hide their personal like or dislike of a client, and clients were sometimes mocked or sneered at. Nevertheless, the *questura* was one of the first places migrants became familiar with upon arrival in Città. Unlike many other applicants with different degrees of status and dignity (such as migrating EU citizens), they were structurally tied up in a long-term relationship with the *questura* and its humiliating and confusing rituals. It was the place they had to go to transfer their residential registration as well as to renew their residence permits.[22] As frequent clients, they would get to know the different case officers they were dealing with and would also try to avoid meeting some of them: 'The others will say to you "oh tomorrow is *that* person there, *don't go,* that person is not a good person. THAT PERSON WILL DISAPPOINT YOU and you get headache problems. Go after tomorrow because then another person will come there and he is a good person."' (Alfons, Somali migrant)

3.3 The asylum reception programme in Città – context and contrasts

Starting in 2001 a national system for the reception of asylum seekers – Programmanazionaleasilo (PNA) – was introduced in Italy, financed by the interior ministry with support from the EU (Censis 2006). Following the Bossi-Fini Act (implemented in 2005), the PNA subsequently turned into the Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Migrants (SPRAR).[23] The purpose was to create a programme meeting minimum standards for reception, consistent with the EU norms and standards, whose aim would be not only to satisfy basic needs for food and shelter but also to 'ease integration of the beneficiary into Italian society' (ibid.:4). The regions and municipalities of Italy, traditionally granted a high degree of autonomy from the

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[22] The situation may have become even worse since 2006, with tougher demands on asylum seekers to regularly report their whereabouts at the *questura* for as long as their asylum application is treated. Failure to do so is equivalent to renouncing the asylum application (*Guida Pratica per ititolari di protezioneinternazionale*).

[23] Sistema di protezione per richiedenti asilo e rifugiati.

national government, entered the programme on a voluntary basis. In 2006 there were 100 regional projects running, offering about 2400 places nationwide. In 2005 it was decided that each participant could stay in the SPRAR for a maximum of six months. The time limit, which had not been in place before, granted a certain turnover and enabled the project to reach more people. Hence about 5000 persons would benefit from the SPRAR annually (ibid.: XVI).

The SPRAR depended on NGO participation. In Città the programme was co-managed by the Catholic social service and relief organization Caritas and the socialist social service organization Arci, financed and supervised by the municipality of Città. The accommodation centre, the Villa, was owned by Caritas. It was a large, square, three-storey building located in the rural outskirts of a very attractive mid-sized Italian tourist city. The rural landscape around the Villa was beautiful, but the location was not ideal from a commuter perspective. An average resident of the Villa (single male 20 to 40 years old) would need about 20 minutes to walk downhill from the Villa to the local bus stop, and by bus it would take another 20-30 minutes to reach the centre of Città and the local *questura.* Bus tickets were not automatically provided by the management, and most residents travelled illegally, without tickets.

There was room for 50 residents at the Villa, but there were almost twice as many people on the city's waiting list. Participants stayed for a maximum of six months, during which they had to follow an integration/reception programme, involving language classes and vocational training, arranged by Arci. Most residents were single males 20 to 40 years old, but there were also a few families including young women and children and a few single mothers. Children from the age of three went to school but younger children stayed with their mothers at the centre. Residents had to undergo medical examinations on arrival. The centre provided three free meals per day, clothing, and a small monthly allowance (60 euros).

New residents were invited to attend an individual interpreted registration meeting (*colloquiod'ingresso*).These meetings followed what appeared to be a standard formula: the newcomer was informed by Arci about the terms and conditions of the stay and the structure and goals of the reception programme. At the end of the meeting, the Caritas employee would provide information about medical examinations, health care facilities,

daily routines of the house, meals, etc. At the meetings it was carefully spelled out that a resident must cooperate with the goals of the programme, that the stay was limited to six months, and that no guests were allowed in the Villa after dinner. Residents were allowed to sleep out, but only for a limited number of nights, based on the logic that if they had another place to sleep they did not need to occupy a bed in the Villa. They were to appear on time for meals because food would not be saved for 'later'. Residents took turns sweeping the floors and the staircase according to a schedule posted on the wall in the entrance. When they left after six months they could apply for financial help – 'exit money' – for example, to cover the down payment on a rental flat. Most of the residents' relevant documents were kept by the management in the Villa's office, but residents would get photocopies if they wanted them. Sometimes employees and volunteers working at the Villa would accompany residents to the *questura*, to the hospital, etc.

Within the framework of the SPRAR, Arci also rented houses in two other suburbs of Città where they lodged clients who did not get a place at the Villa. These accommodations were even farther away from the city centre, with poor public transit connections, and the standard of the houses was considerably worse than that of the newly renovated Villa. My overall impression was of bad insulation, paint flaking off of façades, damp, and the smell of rot and mildew. In the wintertime residents complained about the cold: "[The farmhouse] is a god-damned house you know […] [laughing] It's not like a house, it's like a workshop or I don't know! It's very cold. But what can you do, that's where you have to live, you know' (Steve, Ethiopian migrant). In a city where the housing market had gone haywire due to factors such as deregulation and tourism, it was hard to find better places within the budget of the organization. Two persons shared a one-room flat, and a family with two children lived in a two-room flat. Six single men were living in a farmhouse. The residents in these houses got monthly food coupons plus extra supplies donated by supermarkets and distributed by an Arci employee. According to the Arci employees, the residents there were enrolled in the same reception programme as residents in the Villa.

3.3.1 Scarce resources for social work

> I think the basis and the number one rule if you are to do this job is that you can't save the world. The world is as it is [light laugh]. Given that prerequisite, you try to work on a tiny part. And then see what happens. But I *don't* have the ambition to save the world [laughs]. (Arci frontliner)

So far it should come as no surprise that the dominant impression of the SPRAR in Città was one of a financially strained organization. Only a minority of the Italian regions participated in the SPRAR, partly because the resources set aside for the programme at the state level in general were not enough to cover all the municipality's expenses. The local regions would thus have to co-finance the programme. However, as pointed out by an interviewee from the municipality, the long-term costs of not participating would be larger and more severe than the costs of co-financing an initiative that might prevent and forestall the social consequences of growing numbers of homeless and illegal residents in the region.

At the national level the programme clearly did not cover all the migrants in need residing in the country, and even at the regional level only a limited number of people would be enrolled. In Città, people entered the programme via the local municipal office advising immigrants. People could turn to the office to seek advice on all legal, social, and other matters, and some who no access to other resources would be put on the waiting list for the reception programme. Newcomers at the Villa were quickly introduced to the framework of scarcity by being told how *exclusive* the programme was and how lucky they were to get a place in it. At the registration meetings, which lasted two to three hours, this was repeatedly emphasized in order to motivate the migrants to cooperate with the programme. All of the migrant informants were thus aware that they were unusually well provided for, for a limited period of time, but, as we will see later, this knowledge motivated 'secondary adjustments'(Goffman 1961) rather than cooperation.

The fact that there were many more people in need of the programme than there were places available led to selection criteria based on a state of urgency that, in turn, may have opened up for arbitrariness. Each applicant's needs would be weighed against his/her access to alternatives. A municipal employee, for instance, suggested that based

on his knowledge about Somalis, they were more likely than other groups to have recourse to some sort of shelter. Somalis were known to have a strong sense of community and to help each other by sharing rooms and apartments. 'So, when a Somali comes to the municipal office and asks for a place in the programme and says "I sleep in the street", we generally know that he doesn't.' While the municipal employee was also concerned about the problem of such ethnic categorizations, he nevertheless admitted that selection *could* sometimes be based on them.

Furthermore, because of the comparatively poor social welfare provision in Italy on the whole, the issue of providing resources for homeless migrants was easily linked to a heated nationalist rhetoric and would be perceived by the public as competing with social improvements for destitute Italian citizens. The frontliners worked in an area where initiatives might be impeded and resources suddenly cut because they were politically too controversial. A project that would have provided special rent support to lower housing costs for migrant families was a debated case in point in Città, where tourism, in combination with a deregulated house rental market, had pushed housing costs to extremely high levels for all inhabitants. The fact that Italy had until relatively recently been a country of emigration did not increase Italians' tolerance, according to the Arci employees. On the contrary, immigration, and especially the phenomenon of asylum seekers, was so new that most people did not know much about it, and the little they did know shaped their negative attitudes. Migrants applying for asylum were popularly believed to be 'economic migrants', and if there were parallels drawn between Italian emigration and the current immigration to Italy, the different socio-historical contexts would be claimed incomparable: 'Some say that back then, times were different, there was a different economy and manual work had a different value' (Arci frontliner). The fact that Italian society, in the past and present, has gained from immigration in both direct and indirect ways was not recognized by the general public.

3.3.2 The project industry

> In Italy immigration is business, the immigrants are business. Do you remember
> at the meeting [the Arci frontliner] was saying that the newcomer is lucky to
> have an opportunity to participate in this project? NO! *They* [the employees in

the programme] are lucky! Because if the immigrants could get by on their own, these projects would be out of jobs! (Juliet, frontliner)

A slightly different perspective on the issue of resources for working with immigration was given by Juliet, herself a migrant once. Juliet was long engaged in social assistance work directed at asylum seekers. In her opinion many of the projects like the PNA/SPRAR were 'useless anyhow' because they asked too much of the participants, considering their physical and psychological state, their young age, and their level of education. It would be better to provide places for them to rest and recover, and then to help them consider the possibility of returning home, once their illusions about 'life in Europe' had been crushed by the harsh reality. But that was not to be. Juliet pointed out that, instead, following the increased political and social attention to the migration issue in Italy there was now an emerging project industry around immigration that mainly served the function of creating employment opportunities for native Italians. The project industry, she argued, further added to the big business of immigration that had already been established before the turn of the millennium, when the Italian economic boost had been built upon cheap migrant labour and migrant manpower reserves. Hence, for social, political, and economic reasons, no real efforts were being made to lift migrants out of social exclusion and marginalization so they could begin lives in which they could assume responsiblity for supporting themselves.

Believing that the project industry supported its own objectives first, and only then addressed the real needs of migrants, there was, according to Juliet, an increase in Italian classes and vocational courses directed towards migrant groups. The money earmarked for the PNA/SPRAR, she thought, would be far better used if it were not wasted on even more of the same.

> Ok, it is important to do the Italian class, but you know there is one in *every* group here, in every association. So it's useless; I mean you don't need it in the budget of the PNA. You can use that money for other things. There are many groups who do vocation courses too. Voluntary associations offer free courses so you don't have to include those in the budget! But you have to justify your expenses, you have workers to pay and so on, so …

Juliet thought it would be more efficient to give the migrants the money it would cost to put them in these courses, and let them decide how to use it. They all knew what they needed and how to get it, Juliet argued; the problem was that the requirements and framework of the PNA/SPRAR put obstacles in their way instead of really supporting them.

Juliet's definition of the situation is presented here because it suggests an aspect of asylum reception that is often overlooked. The issue of a project industry in the area of migration is not new to Swedish research of, for instance, state-financed integration projects and interventions in poor urban areas (Ålund 1997), but it may be a relatively new topic in Italy, where such initiatives seem to have burgeoned recently. There is money to spend and jobs to create, and in spite of good intentions the different objectives are easily mixed up. Seen from this perspective it is significant that the number of Italian classes offered by Arci in the SPRAR doubled towards the end of the year, because there was money left in the budget. Classes that were sometimes not attended by a single student, and that forced the frontliners to round up residents by knocking on doors, using persuasion, driving them to class in their own cars, now ran four times a week instead of twice a week. Juliet's point of view also illustrates the conflicting perspectives of the Arci employees and the migrant participants in the SPRAR.

3.4 The ideal and the possible – conflicting perspectives

> The objective of the programme must be to construct individualized and structured ways to enable the persons within their first months of arrival in Italy to successfully orientate in the best possible ways to the world in which they have arrived. They may have distorted information, they live in the trauma of lost families, of having left their countries, sometimes they have undergone traumatic experiences, so in this phase, for a moment they have to become aware of all this in the calmest way possible. But the six-months rule destabilizes this calmness of course [laughs lightly]. (Arci frontliner)

> The rule is like, look like they say to you, 'You are to stay six months here' … Well how about in six months if you don't got nothing? Even if you try to get another life, they ask you to stay with the programme. If you try to find a job today and you don't come to class and they find out they will ask you why. When six months have passed they will ask you to leave, but where are you gonna go? If you closed your eyes while staying here, you don't know where to go, and if you

> go to the classes you don't have time to look for another place to live and you don't find a job. (Alfons, Somali migrant)

Both frontliners and migrants were struggling with the discrepancy between their visions and the reality of things. Participation in the SPRAR programme was limited to six months. During this time the local implementation of the programme offered accommodation and free meals as well as services such as health care, legal assistance, and help with applying for residence permits or arranging documents and legal status, language courses, vocational training, and job practice. The objective was to help the participants get started in their new life and assist in their efforts to integrate into Italian society. While the frontliners admitted that six months was a short time to achieve these goals, they insisted upon trying, by motivating the residents to use the time efficiently. As argued by the frontliners, the six-months rule was linked to a structurally embedded ambition to speed up the process of asylum application turnover time, reception, and integration, which the migrant would ultimately benefit from by getting quicker decisions and quicker assistance. To the migrants, on the other hand, the six-month limit was a real cause of stress and anxiety. They pointed out that the limit made it impossible for them to comply with the rules that required their participation in language and vocation classes. Thereby it seemed that the time limit was counteracting the integrative goals of the programme. It made the participants orientate towards short-term goals that would quickly improve their situation in view of the pending exit from the programme. Profiting from the free meals and housing, it would be wiser to work and save money for the exit than to attend Italian classes, for instance.

The case of Jean and her family provides an illustration. Jean was a 27-year-old migrant from Eritrea, married to an Ethiopian man, and mother of boy who was about three years old and suffered from epilepsy. They had lived as illegal migrants in Italy for almost two years, travelling around in search of jobs and living in the street before getting help in a different project and later arriving at the SPRAR in the Villa. They were residing in the Villa but were threatened with eviction because they had exceeded the time limit, and Jean's husband was not cooperating with the programme. Instead, he took short-term non-contract jobs in the informal sector. Meanwhile, Arci had arranged

an apprenticeship for him that he had chosen to drop out of. One reason was that he earned twice as much (about 800 euros per month) in his informal-sector job than he would earn in the apprenticeship. From Arci's perspective, the husband did not realize what was good for him, and did not appreciate that, in the long run, he would be better off with the apprenticeship than with an informal-sector job.

> He is a smith. He got apprenticeship at this company. The idea was that he would go there and show them what he can do and what he needs to learn and then he can enter the labour market and say 'I have work experience in that company ...I know how to do this and this and this', so he can get employment. For the apprenticeships, we offer an allowance. The allowance reimburses you with 400 euros per month. I told him not to leave the apprenticeship – it will serve you well later. But he didn't want to do it. (Arci frontliner)

From the perspective of the family, however, the 'job' offered by Arci was ridiculous in terms of money and not enough to support a family. The claim that the apprenticeship would be a way to get a formal job contract was also dismissed: 'There are no jobs with a contract.' According to Schierup et al. (2006) an overwhelming majority of the immigrants in Italy are employed by the informal sector, or in legal but temporary and part-time labour. Thus in reality, the husband's assessment of his chances was probably more realistic. Nevertheless, given these circumstances and the fact that the family had already benefited from their share of the programme, they were now compelled to leave the Villa, without anywhere to go. Jean said the only place was the central station of Città, where 'there are so many people in our situation.' The frontliners suggested that she seek help from another social service accommodation for homeless women, but this would only accept women and children, so the husband would still be on the street. The reason that Jean and her husband had been forced to leave Eritrea in the first place was that mixed marriages such as Eritrean/Ethiopian were subject to harassment. Jean found it absurd that they would have to be separated in Italy, the country in which they had invested all their hopes for a new beginning: 'If we are going to be separated anyway, I could go back to Ethiopia and my husband could go to Eritrea. We came here hoping that it would be better for us. We didn't know it was like this.' Jean claimed that they had not got the right kind of assistance from the programme, although she was grateful for the legal and social assistance they had been given. But, instead of supporting her husband, and instead of helping her son to get a place in school, their

efforts were rejected or denied on the grounds that they were leaving anyway. And, since she was occupied with her son, she could not work and collect more money for the household. To Jean, the frontliners were resisting the family's efforts to get on their feet again, rather than helping them to do so, and her dreams about a better and more secure life in Italy were crumbling. Trapped in a situation where they could neither move forward nor turn back, Jean was getting increasingly desperate: 'I have neither father nor mother, they are both dead. I have a sister in Ethiopia but she can't help me. I have no country where I have a family to go to […]. This is my destiny. And for this child there is no school, nothing! [sobbing] My life is no good.'

From the perspective of the frontliners things looked different. Jean and Ben had got more help and assistance than most other residents, considering that they had also been in another project prior to the Villa. The employees were disappointed with Ben's failure to follow the programme. They also pointed out that the son was not yet three years old and could therefore not go to school. One of the employees said he also resented the fact that the son was 'running around all over the place'; Jean should take better care of him and keep him in the room because the frontliners were not babysitters. Although it was not stated directly, these things would seem to indicate that the family had used up their due share of resources, both concretely in terms of money spent on them and symbolically in terms of confidence and trust. Deceived trust evokes resentment and, coupled with power, the capacity to punish (Barbalet 1998). The family was no longer deemed worthy of the efforts to help them (see also Sahlin 1994).

The frontliners tried to balance the limited resources provided for an overwhelming task with the ideal of an efficient and structured integration trajectory. The ideal trajectory involved learning Italian, vocational training, and apprenticeship, and would be followed by a legal job contract as well as a legal housing contract. Legal job contracts could be temporary or part-time, but the frontliners still considered them better than the precarious job situation in the large informal sector. Yet, the frontliners also knew that the ideal trajectory was almost impossible to realize. In Jean's family's case, whether they had followed the rules or not, they would still be sent back to the street and to temporary social housing upon leaving the Villa. From Arci's perspective, the husband would have fulfilled the goals if he had finished his apprenticeship and

managed to get a temporary part-time contract. But he would probably have earned less money, and given that not even the salary he got from his informal-sector job was enough to support the family and pay rent, the equation did not add up. This was no secret:

> I think it is impossible! I don't know how they make it. [Pause] I don't know, to be honest. Not in Città. When they realize that it is impossible, they probably move on. [...] And to think that they think that once they get a job, things will change and they will manage. But they don't manage! They don't (Arci frontliner).

In spite of this insight the employees continued insisting that the residents submit to the ideal trajectory aimed at achieving the impossible. Of course, the programme as shaped by Arci was not altogether inflexible: it valued the idea of individually adapted initiatives and, ideally, everyone should get job training that suited their competencies and past work experience. But as occurred every so often in similar endeavours, the ambition to recognize and empower the individual was undermined by demands to increase the time- and cost-efficiency of the SPRAR.

Thus, on the one hand, the frontliners knew that the programme was unrealistic and, like the migrants, they realized, consciously or not, that the narrow time limit was an important reason for this. It is significant that the frontliners took pains to provide evidence of the programme's success, and that, when asked about a successful project, one Arci frontliner talked for a long time about a past project where the time limit was one year but the participants were allowed to stay on until they got their lives arranged somehow. It was a project with 'enough time' to make 'something extra', one in which 'Arci *strongly supported not only the legal cause but also the cause of the participants.'* It is important to note in this context that Arci's involvement in the PNA meant striking a balance between the Socialist ideals of the organization and the reality frames set by the project financing agents (the state and the local government). This area of social services was 'chaotic' to speak with the frontliners and unpredictable in terms of laws and financial support, and this insecurity put extra strain on the frontliners. Lurking beneath the employees' constantly renewed efforts to make a difference was the threat of resignation and hopelessness that often leads to cynicism.

3.5 Professionalism and emotional balance

> I think that in the beginning I got very strongly emotionally involved and then obviously I have tried to control that … and to work with clearly professional objectives. […] In my opinion it is very much about personal balance [laugh]. I mean one must succeed in upholding a personal balance. If you do it one way or the other … obviously we are always on the margins in this work.' (Arci frontliner)

> When you know your limitations you find the strength to work and focus on the positive aspects. If these positive aspects are sufficient, you can work. If you cannot find sufficient reasons to do this work, you quit. But personally I think I have found sufficient reasons. (Arci frontliner)

The Arci frontliners had long histories of professional engagement in social work. They also held university educations in law and social science. They had been working with both native groups of marginalized people and foreigners, in previous projects. While their experiences varied, they emphasized the importance of 'professionalism', meaning a 'balanced' and 'rational' view of one's own role, the clients, and the structural setting in which they worked. As we have already seen, the demands on the employees were many and came from many different directions: from the municipality/state to stay within the law and the budget; from the migrants to help them in a desperate situation; from their own personal ideals about making a difference; from the ideology of their organization according to which regulated employment was a key focus. In addition, they operated within a politically 'hot' area of migrant aid, which was controversial in popular opinion, and therefore also prone to sudden policy changes. Conflicting demands and the need to operate within simultaneous but conflicting frameworks may give rise to emotional dissonance, that is, the sense that one has to act against one's true feelings (see e.g. Hochschild 1983). This condition threatens the ideal of authenticity and subjective wholeness, the idea of essential subjectivity (Tracy and Trethewey 2005). With the Arci frontliners in the Villa, two strategies for overcoming emotional dissonance were observed. Firstly, personal emotion work, such as reframing a situation in order to change what one feels about it, may help restore the continuity between feeling and action, or between felt and expressed emotion. For instance, one frontliner had found himself caught between promises made to a migrant family, who had been evicted from

the Villa, the hierarchy of the SPRAR organization, which stipulated that the municipal representative was the one ultimately in charge, and the law. A situation that had at first seemed simple and clear ended up becoming a conflict around professional loyalties and disrespect of superiors, a dilemma which could have been solved most easily if the employee had sacrificed his promise to the migrant family. In other words, the organizational framing of the situation required cutting off feelings for the migrant family in order to repair an offence against organizational loyalty and against threatened social bonds (cf. Scheff 1990) between colleagues. The frontliner, however, chose to frame the situation as one of ethical and legal continuity: he had to keep his promise and he was in fact *not* acting against the law. This still made him 'feel bad' about his colleague/superior (the hierarchical relationship and the right to decide in this particular event was unclear) but, he said, 'From the ethical and political point of view I know I did the right thing. I said to [the municipal representative], "Listen, I am determined to confront you in this. I will defend this decision no matter the consequences."' It is important to note that the employee asserted that he kept a professional distance from the residents; his support for the family in this case was not an issue of sympathy but one of ethical and human rights. Thus, even if he sometimes sided with the migrants, the frontliner still upheld the belief that he was not *personally* involved – his self-image was of a man of moral principles, not of emotions.

Secondly, one can submit oneself to organizational emotion management, that is, to engage in one's bureaucratic/organizational identity and nurture collegial relationships while maintaining distance from the clients. For instance, another frontliner described himself as 'a very rational person', yet he had tended to become too emotionally engaged when he first started working with the migrants. He had developed 'a very strong relationship' with one of his clients; they became close friends, and he had done everything in his power to ensure that his friend could remain in Italy. Yet, the employee was powerless when the police took his friend and expelled him. He remembered the exact date and time when he was informed about the deportation, and the desperation with which he and the migrant's lawyer tried to stop it. He strongly emphasized this failure, the fact that he could not stop the deportation of a friend, but there was also another angle. In the aftermath it was revealed that the migrant friend had also failed

the frontliner; he had been telling him lies about his identity and his past. This event had apparently been formative for the frontliner's subsequent readjustment of his 'professional' self. Deceived trust is a fundamental blow to the self-feelings of the trusting part – it ruins the confidence in one's own judgemental capabilities (Barbalet 1998). It also gives rise to feelings of resentment, shame, and anger directed both at the trusted other and at oneself. As a consequence, the frontliner thereafter avoided getting too close to the residents. The orientation towards the professional self made him concentrate on the legal frameworks of the job. He chose organizational loyalty.

Ethical and procedural correctness and organizational loyalty are ways to deal with emotional dissonance (cf. Wettergren 2010). Both of these strategies in the Villa resulted in distance from the clients being a key ingredient in 'professional' behaviour, a distance that also prevented disturbing emotional involvement. Occupation with procedural correctness and organizational loyalty was seen in the fact that most of the strain and fatigue linked to working with the SPRAR programme was related to structural and organizational aspects, the chaotic social sector in Italy, and collegial conflicts or deceived trust between colleagues: 'I have never wanted to change jobs due to the residents. Never. But instead, there are frustrations among *us* [frontliners].' The emotional orientation towards colleagues and organization was also seen in the Arci employees' accounts of 'positive moments'. Examples would be national conferences with representatives for the different regions involved in the SPRAR work, or past projects where the cooperation between different parties worked well and where there had been some positive outcomes in terms of achieved objectives. Examples of positive feedback from the residents existed as well, but they were rather modest: it was 'positive' if 'a resident is grateful because he is satisfied with what we have done for him', or if, when meeting ex-residents 'outside', 'we greet each other heartily, they are happy to see me. They don't feel resentment even if things are difficult … but they have realized a few things. It's not little, if you ask me.' This answer implied that former residents could be expected to 'feel resentment' for not getting the results they had hoped for from the programme. The relief lay in the fact that former residents recognized that it was not the frontliners' fault, but rather due to the socio-structural context: 'When I meet a person and he does not think badly of me, for me that's enough.

When he does not think that we have cheated him or acted falsely towards him, it is very gratifying.' While there was a streak of energy in the reference to gratifying moments having to do with the organization, the example of positive feedback from the residents signalled a certain resignation. The relief evoked by the recognition that the frontliners were not responsible may indicate repressed feelings of guilt (Kemper 1990).

The balance between closeness and distance in relation to clients – often motivated by the fact that the distribution of limited resources requires a 'non-emotional' engagement with the needs of clients and, as a consequence, an orientation towards legalism and procedural correctness pertaining to 'professionalism' – seems to be common to most social work (Lipsky 1980; Sahlin 1994). To the frontliners at the Villa the risk of sympathizing too much with the vulnerability of the residents' situation did not seem to be a factor. On the other hand, the achieved distance risked appearing cynical or insensitive to the residents, reinforcing their often hardwired distrust of authorities and their doubts about the programme, and further undermining their compliance with it.

3.6 Staying sane and managing everyday life

> Happiness is like, you know what I mean, feeling normal, a human person like, get normal papers, be with normal people, enjoy us like people enjoy when they go out, be with a girlfriend whatever … *A normal life!* But now I am busy to get the paper like I can't think about anything else. I am down here [showing] you know what I mean, I'm in isolation now. So I can't do what the people do, you know. So happiness will be like when I get that paper, when I got time with myself as well, when I do whatever I want without relying on anyone else, so that's my ideal. I hope it will come one day. (Alfons, Somali migrant)

> Here in Italy it is only difficult. I had many friends who said that it is nice here, quite, come here. We came and we didn't have a clue. (Jean, Eritrean migrant)

Like the frontliners the migrants tried to keep a balance, but their challenge was of a different kind. There was an immediate threat of losing one's mind faced with never-ending hardships, the bureaucratic maze, and repeated humiliations. The migrants dreamt about a normal life defined as a family (or security for the family), a job, and a place to live, but these goals seemed to be unachievable. Some blamed Italy and were

convinced that if they moved on, the chances would be better. They considered giving up convinced that if they moved on, the chances would be better. They considered giving up the idea of ever becoming 'legal' and resorting to a clandestine existence in other EU countries where they could find a job or where they had family. The migrant's emotional 'career', so to speak, was tied to the achievement of goals and thus involved a firm orientation towards the future, which left no space for contemplation, self-pity, or therapeutic engagement with past traumas. To some new arrivals, the mere fact that they had reached Italy and Europe alive after months or years on the road was an immense success. They were high on energy, flushed with happiness and self-confidence, using expressions such as 'I won' and 'I survived'.

> I can't get this kind of chance again. I saw the desert, I saw the sea, I crossed the sea, and this I am proud of. And in the desert I saw that I am a good man to resist the heat. […] And I know myself. What is difficult to me and what is not difficult to me, I know myself. (John, Ethiopian migrant)

Others postponed their joy to the moment they would reunite with close family – wife, children – left behind. One man was tormented by the thought of his one-year-old son who had been left at an orphanage in Ethiopia when the mother was killed and he, the father, was forced to escape. He was unable to enjoy his own success and he was unable to find a way to get his son to Italy since he must first earn money and find a house. Stories of family members left behind were a recurring issue, and the mindset of the 'survivors' in this case was fixed on finding a way to bring them to Italy as soon as possible, an ambition that crumbled when faced with new challenges in Italy.

When the fact that 'life is difficult in Italy' dawned on them, in general soon after they were 'released' from the Lamepdusa camp with either a short-term permit or a rejection and an order to leave the country, the migrants struggled to survive as best they could. Typically they would move on to Rome, find that the city was crowded with destitute migrants already, and then go further to Northern Italy, where some ended up in Città. Under the difficult circumstances, informal networks and hearsay would guide them, with the result that different ethnic groups would end up in different cities. Città tended to attract migrants from the Horn of Africa. The migrants, who had been in Italy for years by the time they entered the programme, were no longer happy but disillusioned

and depressed. The situation in Italy was often described as worse than the one in the country of origin, in terms of poverty and misery. While living in the street was intolerable, the problem with the programme was the humiliation inherent in being subject to the rules and surveillance measures of the frontliners. On the one hand, some expressed understanding of the rules and respect for them, and in general it was recognized that the frontliners 'tried to help'. On the other hand, no one believed that the objectives of the programme could be reached in six months, and compliance with the rules, especially attending the Italian classes, was given low priority. The migrants either thought they knew enough Italian to do a simple job or they were dissatisfied with the progress of the classes offered in the programme.

Each week, two Italian lessons were held. The lessons were one and a half hours long, and men and women were taught separately. Men's classes were located at the suburban centre, whereas women's classes were offered in the Villa's canteen. The classes were free of charge, but had the disadvantage that they were open to a continuous intake of newcomers, which meant that the course would have to be wholly or partly repeated from the beginning each time new students joined in. A frequent criticism of the residents was therefore that the classes did not progress but tended to be repetitive and remain basic. Ambitious students could instead join a designated private language school in Città, but would then have to pay with their 60 euro monthly allowance. According to a resident who chose this option, the private class did not make much progress either, but he enjoyed going there because it gave him the opportunity to mingle with non-migrants, including students from Europe and the US. As it turned out, the residents would use the Italian classes as a pastime when they were not occupied with work (in the men's case) or attending to children (in the women's case). As a pastime, the classes provided an occasion to enjoy the teacher's enthusiastic efforts to pump up the students with energy and self-confidence.

Daily life at the Villa was marked by monotony and isolation for those who were not engaged in any activity or work. The mental and physical strain had been very long and hard for many of the residents, and suffering from various kinds of diffuse pain (back pain, stomach ache) was common in spite of their relatively young age. Depression was another problem. Temporary withdrawal and isolation were the automatic responses to

these symptoms, although they seemed to be most frequent among the women, who were not – unlike most of the men – busy looking for jobs. Going to class could then sometimes be a way to break with monotony, to be seen and recognized, one of many strategies to stay sane and keep going. Apart from this, and the regular daily gatherings in the canteen to eat, the Villa offered no organized opportunities to socialize, play, or divert the mind.

The house was divided into spatial zones, one which was used mainly by the frontliners and where the residents rarely ventured, and one which contained the residents' rooms (second and third floors) where the frontliners went only if they were forced for some reason to infringe upon the principle of 'respect for the residents' privacy'. On the ground floor there was a large empty space in a room that was never used. Instead, the residents socialized in groups in their rooms, sometimes playing music too, or they hung around in little groups on the large empty terrace at the back of the house. From the perspective of the residents, resignation and depression combined with impatience and desperation. On the one hand they were very conscious of the need to push through to enhance their chances, and on the other hand they now had time to rest. Whatever they chose to do, it seemed to clash with the rules of the programme. haunted

3.7 Autonomy and discipline

> You have the right to be here, eat here for free and so on. What do we require you to do? *The goal is to be able to take care of yourself.* What are the resources we have here? First of all you must learn Italian. You must resist the temptation to look for a job before anything else. You will not find a job, or you will find a bad informal-sector job and you won't know any Italian because you did not go to the class. So it is essential: *Italian first, then get a job.* (Registration meeting, field notes 1/5)

> Residents will be evicted if they refuse to follow the programme or if they behave aggressively and upset the others. (Arci frontliner)

> The instruments are there so that if you don't change you can get thrown out. In this sense, for me personally I … they take an Italian class and I *see* that they don't go there, I could write a letter and say that they should no longer stay here and the person would have to go. Likewise I could say that this person does not

> attend his courses and he should be expelled […] But in my opinion it serves none of our objectives to do this. (Arci frontliner)

The reception programme was entirely designed to offer social services and 'an integration trajectory' and did not have any decision-making function concerning the legal status of the participants. Yet, there were plenty of decisions that were within the range of the frontliners' discretionary power, such as the assessment of participants with regard to their cooperativeness, and thereby the allocation of more or fewer resources within the existing framework. It was often pointed out that the reception programme aimed to develop autonomy and independence of the participants, and the idea was to build on their existing competencies and educational and professional backgrounds. At the registration meetings these aspects were specifically asked about. These meetings were also used to settle the conditions of the programme with the newcomer. The exclusivity of the programme ('you are lucky to be here') was tied to the moral obligation on part of the resident to *follow the rules* of the programme. Limited time meant that participants must be goal-oriented and motivated. The fact that the accommodation was far from the city was tied to self-discipline; the (male) residents were expected to *overcome distance* and to plan their activities with distance in mind. 'For men, we have tried to locate activities *outside* of the centre because it could be seen as an occupation; "I have something to do today …" [laugh]' (Arci frontliner). Consequently, forcing the men to leave the Villa and take the bus to get to the Italian classes offered by Arci was intended to encourage them to 'straighten up and go and do something, go to an appointment, follow a schedule' and avoid falling into the passive monotony of the Villa where they would easily 'wear pyjamas' all day.

Assessing the cooperativeness of residents was not a straightforward task. For instance, according to an Arci frontliner, Caritas, which was in charge of the house and its daily routines, would be happy with residents who 'just come, sleep, eat, sleep, don't make a fuss and don't ask about anything', while Arci had decided that they needed to 'focus more on the autonomy of the residents'. They feared clientization and pacification of the residents, which would be counterproductive to the integrating objectives of the programme. Hence, as far as the integration programme was concerned, an 'autonomy principle' dominated. As could be expected, however, the autonomy principle was

fraught with ambivalence. The perfect autonomous person was harder to define than the perfect resident from the perspective of organizing accommodation. Encouraging active autonomy thus actualized the fleeting line between solicited and unsolicited independence; between a fussy or overly demanding resident on the one hand and one that actively assumed responsibility for his/her own fate on the other. This was seen, for instance, in the case with Jean's husband, described earlier. He had taken an independent decision to leave his apprenticeship. The Arci frontliners had advised against it, but also supported it because Jean's husband believed he would eventually get a contract with the employer he found: 'I said "Fine! But you can only stay here three more months, you know that. If this job has the hope of giving you a contract, however, I close my eyes to give you this chance"' (Arci frontliner). This meant that Jean must also be prepared to take the consequences if he was not offered a contract. Arci would not support him more than they had already; the responsibility was his own. Thus autonomy and independent initiative taking were demanded and encouraged, but preferably within the frameworks of the alternatives offered in the programme. If residents did not follow the programme, their misfortune was their own fault. But as we have seen, even if they followed the programme, there was still no guarantee that things would turn out better, and they would still be forced to leave after six months.

In several ways, the autonomy principle and the preferred integration trajectory of the programme were supported by the frontliners' use of discretionary power. Explicitly or implicitly, it could be used to punish residents who did not obey the rules. Such power included the decision to evict people before the six months had passed, which would only be done in severe cases, as well as the power to give or withhold extra financial resources, such as the 'exit allowance' that was used as a carrot to encourage residents to follow the trajectory of the programme, or the provision of bus cards (in addition to the monthly allowance) 'if motivated relative to the integration purposes'. Other resources that the residents claimed were arbitrarily provided were the rights of children to be registered in school, access to private Italian classes, and the right to individually adapted apprenticeships as opposed to 'collective' vocational classes. The fact that many 'bonuses' were tied to how cooperative participants were was made clear right away, at the registration meetings. At one such meeting the newcomer was even

told that he '*may* stay longer than six months if there are *good reasons*', but this would depend on a formal decision made at the interior ministry in Rome. A good reason might be, for example, that the resident had used the time well to improve his skills and competencies but had yet another course to finish before he could move out.

Newcomers at the registration meetings promised to cooperate, nodded and smiled, and asserted their sincere intentions and gratefulness for the chance to participate. 'Old' residents, however, responded to the pressure to comply with rules they did not believe in by resorting to passive protest techniques such as stalling (e.g. on agreed-upon exit dates), avoidance (e.g. contact with frontliners when skipping Italian classes), and giving evasive answers to questions regarding their whereabouts. In their efforts to counter these techniques, the frontliners envisaged the introduction of a written contract 'to ensure that the rules and conditions are received and understood by the residents'.

Previous research has shown that the asymmetric relationship between social workers and benefit recipients in general tend to be problematic in terms of the benefit recipients' freedom of action. Giving aid and resources is always connected to conditions in some way and often also to expected normative behaviour (see e.g. Sahlin 1994). With the Arci frontliners it was clear that when a participant in the project failed to discipline himself according to the 'solicited' autonomous person it was framed as a lack of knowledge and a failure to understand his own best interests—as if he were a child. The frontliners would thus put a lot of energy and efforts into explaining these interests to both newcomers and established residents. These efforts included the use of sticks and carrots, patient argumentation and downright scolding.

The power asymmetry between frontliners and migrants was particularly obvious in situations where the frontliners got angry. The micro-politics of emotions stipulates that the subordinate must control his/her emotional expressions whereas the superior can use a larger emotional register (Clark 1990; Clark 1997). Thus while aggressive behaviour by the residents could lead to eviction, I observed at least three occasions where anger was used by the frontliners as a disciplinary tool in much the same way that parents would use anger to shame their children. On one of these occasions a frontliner scolded a group of residents because they had been housing a non-resident (a

friend who was sleeping over). After the event he explained to me that he had only been pretending to be angry 'to make them understand that if they all brought people there, the situation would be unsustainable' (Field notes 1/2). If he didn't react angrily, they would not understand. On a second occasion another frontliner yelled at the residents for not attending the Italian class:

> This is your Italian class, it is important. You must learn Italian if you want to find a job. And also it is job training, it is like a job appointment. You must be on time. *This is your job appointment!* If you don't keep it, you lose your job. Do you understand? When you know you have to be here at ten, you must leave the Villa on time. You cannot sleep … it is as important as a job appointment. Why do you think that we have located the class here in town and not at the Villa? Because it is a job appointment and it teaches you to plan how to get here on time. Do you understand? (Field notes 1/4)

In both of these instances, frozen body postures, blank faces, looking away, mumbling, or just staying silent signalled the residents' containing of emotion.

Thus, although at first glance the autonomy principle seemed to be aimed at empowerment, sometimes it turned out to be coercive in practice. Moreover, the focus on autonomy and taking care of oneself implied that the migrants had no previous history of doing so, although they were men (mostly) who took pride in having survived crossing both the Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean Sea under very difficult circumstances. The skills, knowledge, and networks that brought them into the country were not highlighted as even potential resources in the new social context. Bits and pieces of the past, such as labour experience, formal education, and perhaps language skills, were instead brought in as bricks that the frontliners could use to build the new autonomous person. From this point of view the registration meeting symbolized the passage that stripped the migrants of their previously taken for granted adulthood and competencies and transformed them into burdens on Italian society, now lucky to be granted extraordinary resources, as illustrated in this concluding dialogue at the end of one registration meeting (which lasted three hours):

> Employee: What are your ambitions and what do you want to do in Italy?
> Migrant: I want to stay in Italy and work. I want to work.
> E: With what?
> M: Leather preparations, car mechanics.
> E: Right, you may go now, you passed the test!

They all laugh, but the migrant seems to be really exhausted.
(Field notes 1/5)

3.8 'It's not a gender issue …'

The phenomenon of the woman is connected to the whole family structure, so it's not because she is a woman but because the family is organized in a specific way. Consequently they have difficulty moving around, simply moving around, and since the reception programme envisages a certain type of approach … (Arci frontliner)

"You have seen yourself the problem with the women … they have children!'
(Frontliner)

It is often argued that in general, the type of political migrant envisaged in the Geneva Convention is a stereotypical male and that the reception of asylum seekers is built on this gendered image (see also Mahmud 1996; Spijkerboer 1994). My Italian case was astonishingly mainstream in this sense. In general, the frontliners said that there were far fewer female migrants than male ones, and the reasons were 'the hardship of the journey', crossing sub-Saharan Africa, staying in Libya, getting on the boat, crossing the Mediterranean, and so on. At the Villa they were also a minority, but they were all mothers, and the presence of women and children could not pass unnoticed. Yet they were practically invisible in the introduction programme. The only activity targeting the women was the Italian classes for women that (unlike the men's classes) were organized on location, in the Villa's canteen. Besides this deviation from the autonomy principle, the syllabus was different for men and women. The men's classes were orientated towards phrases and conversation, verbs and verb conjugation. Students would practise asking new acquaintances questions like "What's your name?' and so on. In the women's classes, the focus was on reading and writing nouns – notably nouns clustered in the categories of grocery and hygiene products. The reason for the difference, according to a teaching assistant, was that the women were 'almost always' illiterate. Unlike in the men's classes, in the women's classes no conversation training took place and there was almost no interaction between students.

The women's classes had a jerky rhythm because of the small children that accompanied their mothers. The women would come and go as the children demanded their attention. The children would demand attention from the teacher and ask for pens and papers to make drawings. Babies would cry and be breastfed. As with the men's classes, the women's classes were not very well attended, despite how easy they were to get to since they were located in the Villa. The teacher made it a habit to bring the newspaper so she would have something to do while she waited for an occasional student to show up. Some husbands would not allow their wives to participate. An Arci volunteer said she had once urged a female migrant to go to class, and as a result the woman was scolded by her husband afterwards. The volunteer was upset by the event and did not repeat the mistake.

The frontliners reasoned that because they had children, the women were exempt from the self-disciplining requirements of getting organized and actively pursuing integration. Only children aged three and up went to preschool; the younger children had to stay with their mothers at the Villa. There was a children's playroom, attended a couple of hours per day by a 'babysitter', but the purpose of this was to keep the school children occupied when they came home from school and not to provide day care for the younger ones. The problem of day care was a recurring one that gave rise to conflict between the Arci frontliners and a few female residents who wanted to work. The frontliners asserted that there was no day-care service. There was one *asilonido* (kindergarten) run by the municipal social services, but it was so far away from the Villa that the parent would have to spend almost an hour by bus to get there. Hence, while distance was a disciplinary tool shaping the autonomy of the men, it was a passively accepted major impediment to the autonomy of the women, keeping them inactive and isolated. There were single mothers with newborn babies who were neither able nor encouraged to attend vocational courses, nor to look for a job. For female migrants the autonomy principle imploded and turned their presence at the Villa into a vacuum-like existence during which there was little to do but eat, sleep, chat with the neighbours, and wait for the six months to pass. The women's difficult situation was recognized, but not improved.

> I: What do you think about the different needs of women and men?
> Frontliner: Now, it is not a question of 'being a woman'. According to me …

I: Not for you! [Laugh]

F: No no, no no! It is not a gender problem, the problem is that often we have not only women, we have *women with children*. So this modifies the frame a bit.

I: Are there only women with children?

F: Yes.

I: Why?

F: Well, women tend to have children [laughs]. As you have seen, some women have given birth here, others have done so while travelling. Then there are rare cases of women or girls without children, and for them we have arranged equivalent courses … I mean we have tried to make the same trajectories as for the men. Then the women are part of family structures that are often patriarchal and then there is the man, who often takes care of work and who can orientate his whereabouts in the new surroundings and transmit this to the wife, right? So this is the issue. […] For men we have tried to locate activities *outside* of the centre. […]With women, though, we have a hard time even thinking about making them take courses outside. *We have tried* with women who came here and had only one school-age child, which left them free for some hours each day. But either the kid was ill or there was a strike [laughs], or the school refused to take the kid!

Vocational courses offered to women (those not hindered by children) in the past had been in the area of *lavorodomestico* (housemaids). As seen in the excerpt, however, when women were not impeded by children they were nevertheless subject to a 'patriarchal family structure' that the frontliners in principle did not interfere with. Again it was argued that it was not the fact of *being a woman* that was the problem but the way *the family was organized.* To the frontliners at the Villa, the situation of the women was a fact that could not be changed, just as women's situation in Italian society could not be changed.

I ask why they cannot arrange some activities for the children while they go to the Italian class. The Arci frontliner now delivers a range of arguments: The children, he says, are the mothers' responsibility. The frontliners are not babysitters and they cannot occupy themselves with the children. It is not their job. Italian mothers have no child care for children under the age of three, and since these women have to be integrated into the Italian society they'd better live the way Italian women do, that is, with no child care. I object that if Italian women use the grandmothers [as babysitters] then they can at least attend a course without their children. But the migrant women have no relatives to help them out. 'Eh', he answers, 'this will be the situation also when they leave from here.' So they'd better get used to it. I answer that when they get out they are

supposed to speak Italian, but how can they if they must bring their children to class? A young female Arci volunteer agrees. Why not provide a babysitter during class? 'No!' the frontliner says, 'we provide a babysitter *to take care of the children when they come back from school, to avoid having them running all over the place.* She is not there to take care of the smaller ones, and her hours cannot be changed. Someone else would have to take care of the children during Italian class.' He makes a wide gesture: 'Åsa [me] or you [female Arci volunteer] for instance.' (Field notes 1/15)

The subject of a babysitter for the youngest kids was sensitive. The interviewees avoided direct answers and delivered confused excuses: the language was a problem; women were generally less motivated (to participate in the programme) and had different goals in life; employing a babysitter was too complicated in terms of logistics. In sum, the gender order of Italian society seems to have framed the frontliners' reflections (or lack thereof) on the migrant women. The children were the women's responsibility – *women* not men had children – and they should be kept out of sight. There was no reason to provide something at the Villa that was not provided in society at large. When pressed, the frontliners resorted to suggesting that the women could send their children to the municipally run *asilonido* (kindergarten), which would entail a couple of hours of daily communiting time. Like the migrant women in need of day care, the frontliners realized that combining the municipally run kindergarten with a job – for example, as a housemaid – would be a hopeless mission. Yet they also categorically rejected the idea of providing transport to and from the kindergarten.

Another issue linked to the fact that 'the women have children' was the way that it mystified and puzzled the frontliners: 'They must have been conceived in Libya or someplace else on the road to Italy. But how, and who is the father, since they have no companion?' (Arci frontliner). Considering the hardships and risks of migrant life, having children during transition was obviously a bad idea, but these cases were not unusual at all. One explanation suggested that migrant women intentionally got pregnant and gave birth in the erroneous belief that it would improve their situation by giving them priority in terms of access to residence permits and social benefits: 'Migrant women sometimes use their children as weapons' (Arci frontliner).

In conclusion, the autonomy principle so forcefully emphasized by the frontliners did not include the women at the Villa. They were prevented from participating because of a taken for granted framework of a patriarchal family structure that postulated the woman's responsibility as a mother as well as her submission to and her dependency on her husband's success or failure both as a participant in the programme and in society at large. Integration of the man was assumed to lead to integration of the wife: 'The man, who often takes care of work and who can orientate his whereabouts in the new surroundings, can transmit this to the wife.' For the single mothers with small children there was no integrative solution at all. These women, as well as married women, who wanted to work and perhaps also to actively participate in vocational training had only themselves to blame for having children in their vulnerable situation. Thus Arci's policy towards the labour market was proactive and progressive, but their policy towards patriarchy was passive and accepting.

3.9 Summary and conclusions

The Italian migration regime is relatively young, struggling with issues ranging from how to come to terms with the large number of illegal and unregistered immigrants, to issues of how to assist and integrate immigrants into Italian society. Of course, countries with longer histories of immigration experience these problems as well. In Italy the main issue seems to be the limited resources set aside to deal with these problems, related to a general lack of a national social welfare regime. At the same time, both legal and illegal immigration have benefited the Italian economy and society in the past. Migrant labour has provided an important labour reserve for large-scale industries as well as small-scale businesses. Today there is a large demand for migrant female labour in households, filling in the 'care gap' that emerged as Italian women entered the labour market. Thus, even if the Italian government is developing an increasingly harsh policy, especially on illegal immigration, a policy that is debatable from the human-rights perspective, the question is whether immigration can be stopped as long as there is a high demand for migrant labour in the large informal sector.

The European Union plays an essential role in shaping Italian immigration policy. Pressure and financial resources from the EU is one of the reasons that Italy in 2001

initiated a reception policy for migrants – the Programmanationaleasilo (PNA) – which was subsequently turned into the protection System for Asylum Seekers and Migrants (SPRAR). Participation in the programme was voluntary for the Italian municipalities, and in 2006 there were 100 regional projects running, covering only a minority of the places needed. The aim of the programme was to create a minimum standard reception programme that provided basic social services as well as an introduction to Italian society. The migrants' participation in the programme was limited to six months, with a view to reaching more people and ensuring a certain turnover rate. However, a higher turnover rate is not associated with a higher success rate. Successful intervention here should be understood as satisfying both urgent needs and long-term integration goals – helping the beneficiary to find a home and a job, and to speak Italian. The six-month limit appeared, however, as a forceful structuring principle that worked against the programme's long-term integration objectives. From the perspective of the migrants, the high-profile ambitions of the programme in practice had been reduced to a six-month respite from homelessness and misery. The SPRAR was also criticized as being part of the migrant 'project industry', where money was routinely spent and jobs created in various projects, but without achieving its purpose of helping the migrants.

The results of my fieldwork at the Villa in Città highlight in particular the difficulties facing both frontliners and migrants in their respective efforts to create the basis for an integrated and self-supporting migrant existence – 'a normal life'. The frontliners struggled with structural pressures connected to the political debates around migration and migrants in Italy and the resources allocated to the SPRAR, and they were subject to conflicting demands coming simultaneously from the public, the politicians, and the migrants. There seemed to be an obvious risk of their developing feelings of resignation, although it was asserted that it was not the migrants per se that were the source of frustration, but rather the structural and organizational conditions surrounding the project. Nevertheless, the interactions with the migrant participants appeared as a series of frustrated attempts by the frontliners to find ways to control and discipline the participants so that they would follow the integrative trajectories that were thought to be best in the long run. I suggest that the frontliners dealt with the emotional dissonance inherent in the conflicting demands and frustration by developing a professional ideal

orientated towards organizational loyalty and/or loyalty to general ethical principles, which allowed them to uphold a sense of belief in their work and a balance between closeness and distance with regard to the migrants. For its part, Arci placed a strong focus on what I have called the autonomy principle, which may perhaps also be seen as a strategy to empower the migrants to assume responsibility for their own lives, but this effort sometimes went against the migrants' own assessments of the best way to use the programme. Hence, there emerged the categories of solicited and unsolicited autonomy, and the line between them was blurred; indeed sometimes it could only be drawn post-factum, when the success or failure of a migrant's independent decisions was obvious. The process involved trusting the migrant, and success would therefore prove him/her trustworthy, while failure would prove the opposite.

As for the migrants, their situation could be well described as miserable, although the project provided a temporary respite from having to satisfy basic needs for food and shelter. Those who had arrived in Italy recently tended to feel victorious and also to express some hope in the programme, while those who had been in Italy for some time before entering the programme expressed resignation, desperation, crushed hopes, and distrust in the programme. As it were, the experiences of being a migrant in Italy were saturated with feelings of humiliation and degradation, especially with regard to the forced long-term relationship with the migration department of the police headquarters (the *questura)*. It was recognized that the frontliners were trying to help, but there was little or no trust in the success of these efforts. It was also clear to the migrants – and this insight was explicitly reinforced by the frontliners – that life in Italy was 'hard'. Hence, migrants who had been in the programme for a while tended to resort to secondary adjustments and try to use the programme to improve their situation in the ways *they* thought would be best, ways that often turned out *not* to be in agreement with the autonomy principle.

For women involved in the programme the situation was even more difficult. Women were excluded from the autonomy principle on the grounds that they had children. Seen as subjected to a patriarchal family structure, they were expected to integrate 'by proxy' – that is, as a result of their husbands' integration. Mothers with infants got virtually no support in their efforts to become self-supporting, something that put single mothers in

a particularly hopeless situation. In other words, there seemed to be a smooth continuity between the migrants' patriarchal social order and that of Italian society. This stance contrasted starkly with the programme's stance vis-à-vis the labour market, which aimed to introduce the (male) migrants to a reality that did not yet exist, an ideal world of uniquely formal labour contracts.

4. Sweden – Yby and Province

4.1 Introduction

Sweden has a longer official history of immigration[24] than Italy, starting in the 1950s with labour immigration from Finland and later from Greece, former Yugoslavia, Turkey, and Italy.[25] This import of labour played a seminal role in boosting Sweden's post-war economy and prompting the emergence of the welfare state. In the early 1970s, labour immigration came to a halt due to the world economic crisis. Sweden began to adjust to the post-industrial economy. In this climate the powerful Swedish labour unions called for a ban on further labour immigration.[26] Immigration continued instead in the form of asylum seekers and quota refugees, and family reunification. Sweden's asylum policy remained among the 'least restrictive' (Schierup et al., 2006) in Europe through the following decades, reflected for instance in the fact that Sweden accepted more migrants from the former Yugoslavia than most other countries, peaking in 1994 with almost 80 000 residence permits (ibid.). Since the beginning of the 21st century, the number of migrants accepted by the country has steadily decreased while Sweden's asylum policy is being adjusted to fit the EU common migration policy (Schierup et al. 2006; Hansen 2008).[27]

Dahlström (2007) categorizes the Swedish migration regime as 'multicultural'. In contrast to the assimilation model (e.g. France) or the segregation model (e.g. Italy and Germany), the multicultural model encourages the display and recognition of ethnic identity and cultural diversity. Ethnic cultural groups and organizations are positively embraced by the state, and children have the right to home-language education in

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[24]*Emigration* from Sweden took place mainly around the turn of the 20th century up to the 1930s, when about one fourth of the Swedish population migrated to the USA (Ehn et al. 1993).

[25] People migrated to Sweden before the 1950s as well, but the migration policy was highly restrictive, as pointed out by Norström (Norström 2004).

[26]In 2009 Sweden again opened its borders to labour immigrants.

[27]Norström (2004:30-31) argues that the historical perspective shows that Sweden's 'humanitarian' self-image concerning immigration and asylum is somewhat doctored and that, from the perspective of the entire 20th century, the story is rather that Sweden was exceptional in the Nordic context for its organized racism and early popular protests against immigration.

school. It is relatively easy to become a Swedish citizen[28] and as a consequence most persons with immigrant backgrounds hold Swedish citizenship (ibid.). Today about 15% of the Swedish population are persons with foreign backgrounds. In spite of multicultural policies, however, Swedish society is highly segregated, and the Swedish self-image remains one of cultural homogeneity (Johansson 2005; Schierup et al. 2006). The expansion of marginalized and excluded suburbs around the main Swedish cities (Stockholm, Göteborg, and Malmö), the disproportionately high unemployment rates among immigrant groups (especially Somalis, see e.g. Melander 2009), and the number of highly educated migrants doing low-salaried, low-status, temporary and part-time labour, testify to the failure of social integration involving all ethnic backgrounds (Kamali 2005).

Closely connected to the Swedish migration regime is the Swedish social democratic welfare regime[29] (Esping-Andersen 1990). In stark contrast to Italy, its emergence and consolidation through the 1950s, 60s, and 70s has supported and strengthened the individual rather than the family. The expansion of the public sector both alleviated some of women's traditional caring duties (for children and the elderly) in the family and created job opportunities for women (notably within the area of public care). Taxes were high, but was the citizens' access to welfare services, the idea being that 'all benefit; all are dependent; and all will presumably feel obliged to pay' (Esping-Andersen 1990: 28). These solidarity-based and universalistic features of the social democratic welfare model laid the foundation for inclusion of minorities but also for a high degree of union control and organization in the labour market. 'The Swedish model' was a

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[28] According to Dahlström, jus soli is the principle for citizenship commonly applied by states characterized by the multicultural model. It means that residency on a state's territory for some time is more or less enough to apply for citizenship. The alternative model is jus sanguinis, which is the principle of descent, granting access to citizenship to all members of a nation whether residing on its territory or not. This principle is applied by Italy (e.g. children born to Italian parents within and outside of Italy, Italian descendants in, for example, Latin American countries etc., have access to Italian citizenship). Sweden in the post-war period has moved away from jus sanguinis as the principle for citizenship towards jus soli (Dahlström 2007).

[29] Swedish immigration policies have been changing over the years, but as shown by Johansson (2005), for instance, while laws and target groups change there is remarkable stability in the way that the Swedish migration regime aims at reproducing the international image of Sweden as a humanitarian and open welfare society. Johansson shows that the discursive construction of the migration regime is closely intertwined with the welfare regime discourse and thereby, paradoxically, harsher and more restrictive migration policies have become motivated by the idea of the humanitarian society where welfare builds on extensive solidarity (to keep it that way, immigration must be restricted).

method reputed to reach consensus between labour market parties and to make sure that the system remained robust, predictable, and thoroughly organized.[30] One of the consequences worth noting here is that the informal economy of the Swedish labour market was very small, and remains small today, compared to Italy's (cf. Schierup et al. 2006).

In the early 1990s Sweden went through an economic crisis that punctured the Swedish model and brought about important changes in the welfare system. The reasons for the crisis are commonly taken to be the effects of globalization and the difficulties of upholding the Swedish model when faced with international competition, although there are also other explanations (see Schierup et al. 2006:203). The adjustments to the crisis had serious consequences for the migrant population. The Swedish unemployment rate rocketed from virtually none (1.5% in 1990) to 8% (in 1993), but for groups of foreign origin it rose during the same three years from 3.5% to 24% (ibid.: 207). Meanwhile, there was a change in political ideology and climate, influenced by the global neoliberal trends, moving away from the idea that the redistribution of income and welfare benefits was a means for economic growth and stability and towards the perception that the expansive public sector had really been one of the main causes of the crisis. The social security system came to be seen as a burden, and the general argument was that it needed severe cutbacks and restrictions. In very broad terms there was a move from the provision of welfare services, such as social welfare, as a *general* right, to the provision of social welfare subject to conditions, such as means tests (De los Reyes 2006b; Kamali 2005). In addition, the individual was increasingly to be held responsible for his/her own fate – for succeeding, or not, to realize his/her inherent capacities and competencies in the labour market. Another noteworthy effect of the restructuring of the welfare state was the reversal of the trend to diminish income inequality, with Sweden instead becoming one of the OECD countries with the fastest growing income inequality (Schierup et al. 2006).

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[30]See Schierup et al. 2006:200-203 for an overview of the rise and decline of the Swedish model.

The general Swedish unemployment rate has remained between 6 and 7%,[31] which is relatively high compared to before the crisis, and although there is still a broad political consensus on the principle of the welfare state, there continue to be restrictions and cutbacks.[32] While the main idea has always been that people should be gainfully employed rather than relying on support, the ideological shift means that the unemployed and those receiving social benefits are increasingly held personally responsible (Starrin and Jönsson 2006; Wettergren 2010a). Restrictions and cutbacks are assumed to force the 'lazy' part of the workforce back to work. 'While the work strategy of the [old Swedish model] was premised chiefly on *rights and* (working-class) *self-help*, the [new Swedish model] promotes an ideology and discourse more focused on *control and discipline*' (Schierup et al. 2006:206). In all respects, increasing inequality, and along with it, marginalization and social exclusion, the restriction of social rights and the neoliberal work strategy, have had the most severe effects upon socially vulnerable groups such as those of migrant origin (ibid.).

Migrants also tend to rely on employment in low-wage, short-term, part-time, and temporary work, a segment of the labour market that has been growing steadily. These conditions give rise to what Schierup et al. (2006) call the 'new self-employed proletariat'. Immigrants set up their own small businesses, and are generally encouraged to do so, as a way out of unemployment.[33] However, these initiatives rarely lead to higher incomes but rather to 'social insecurity, exorbitant working hours, low income, and numerous bankruptcies, combined with a lack of unemployment insurance' (ibid.:212). Schierup et al. suggest that migrant entrepreneurship is less successful in Sweden than, for example, in the USA because, in the welfare state, the labour market is

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[31] 6.9%, October 2011, http://www.scb.se/Pages/Product___23262.aspx (Accessed 1 Dec 2011). It should be mentioned, however, that the way to calculate the general unemployment rate has changed over time, so these numbers (before and after the Swedish crisis) may not be fully comparable.

[32] The elections in 2006 brought a centre-right coalition to power, partly because the largest party among these, Moderaterna, successfully campaigned for a neoliberal work strategy under the slogan of 'the New Labour Party'.

[33] The idea prevalent in the integration discourse, that migrants might be the key to increased entrepreneurship among the Swedish population and, the reverse, that entrepreneurship might solve the unemployment of migrants, is discussed and problematized by Schierup et al. I came upon the real-life version of this discourse when I followed the introduction program in Stad, where indeed the issue was brought up by invited guest lecturers on several occasions. Various 'integration experts' advised on how to start one's own enterprise, and Almi – an investment company that supports innovative entrepreneurship – was involved in various integration projects in the region.

highly protected. The thoroughly controlled, protected, and organized labour market works for those who are included in it, but it is very hard to enter for those on the outside,[34] and its various regulations work against small enterprises. Migrant self-employment and entrepreneurship is concentrated in less regulated niches such as restaurants and retail businesses, where the level of competition is high (ibid.).

Sweden has a relatively long history of migration laws and policies, and the institutions implementing these have been organized and reorganized several times since the 1960s (Andersson 2010; Appelqvist 2006; Sarstrand 2007).[35] According to Sarstrand (2007) labour immigration in the 1950s and 60s was not politically considered to warrant any particular migration policy. As elsewhere in Europe (see e.g. Castles 2006), labour immigration was considered unproblematic and the migrants were expected to return to their home countries after some time. As far as integration was concerned, for those who chose to stay, 'the social democrat government was convinced that the welfare political programme that had incorporated the working class would work as well for the immigrants' (Dahlström 2007:39). Equality of social rights for immigrants was formulated in a government proposition in 1968 when it became clear that many migrants would stay. 'The principle of equality for immigrants in terms of housing, health, education, and all other dimensions of social citizenship was now emphasized as an explicit concern of Swedish immigrant policy, together with the necessity of positive action to secure equality in the labour market' (Schierup et al., 2006:218). In 1969 the state Immigration Board [Statensinvandrarverk] was created in order to regulate immigration and unite three previously separate functions into one authority: residence and work permits, citizenship issues, and integration or adaptation issues.

As noted by Schierup et al. (2006), there has emerged a growing tension between the issue of immigration and the issue of integration – the two are often juxtaposed, while they are mutually dependent and policies around immigration influence integration policies and vice versa. For instance, dissatisfaction with the level of integration has led

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[34] This was also seen in Italy, where the regulated, formal labour market tended to exclude migrant labour.
[35] The tendency towards permanent organizational change in the institutions governing migration policy is also seen in the present Migration Board, which was running at least three different evaluation and reorganization projects during the time of my fieldwork there, in 2007-2008.

to amendments and adjustments as well as various state-financed initiatives oriented towards improving the conditions of immigrant groups while simultaneously tightening and restricting the immigration and asylum policy (Appelqvist 1999; Johansson 2005). In 1997 the immigration and integration issues were institutionally separated and the latter were given their own state authority – the Integration Board. In 2007 the Integration Board was closed and the issues of integration were transferred from the state to the municipalities.

In July 2000 the state authority of the Migration Board (MB) was instituted to deal exclusively with the administration and implementation of Swedish immigration and asylum policy. From the outset, one of the board's tasks was to work with the harmonization between the EU member states in the areas of migration and asylum policy. Unfortunately, this harmonization process has in many ways led to increased restrictions and ambiguity in Sweden's migration policy (cf. Hansen 2008).

Virtually all asylum seekers in Sweden are enrolled in the organized reception system. Individuals exist outside the system only if they do not apply for asylum or if they have absconded in order to avoid deportation upon a rejection decision. The Migration Board is in many ways a 'total' state institution in terms of immigration. It dominates the process from the beginning to the end (accept/rejection); processing asylum applications as well as organizing the reception and accommodation of asylum seekers (accommodation is partly organized in cooperation with the municipalities). Registration, fingerprinting, appointment of lawyers, investigation, and decision-making are all undertaken at a few central MB offices in or around the main Swedish cities. Accommodations during the application process are dispersed to the municipalities but organized by the local MB reception department where the asylum seekers are appointed a personal reception case officer.

In 2008 roughly 24 000 persons applied for asylum; 65% of them were men. The largest groups came from Iraq and Somalia. Since 1992 the number of asylum seekers has dropped sharply from a peak of more than 80 000 (during the Balkan war) down to less than 10 000 in the late 1990s and then rising again at the turn of the millennium. Since 2001 the number of applications has hovered between about 34 000 and 20 000. The number of residence permits issued to asylum seekers during the period 1992-2008

fluctuated between about 46 000 (1994) and 5 000 (1996), with higher numbers in the early 1990s (during the Balkan war) and the first decade after the millennium shift (due to the war in Iraq, with the largest number since 1994 being about 21 500 in 2006).[36] Generally, the granting of permits lags behind the applications since the average turnover time used to be about two to three years. Although the MB has put lots of reorganizing efforts and resources into reducing turnaround times,[37] the fact that almost all negative decisions are appealed in the migration court, and sometimes also in the superior court, prolongs the waiting time for applicants (cf. Norström 2004).

Thus, in contrast to Italy, Sweden's asylum reception programme includes virtually all asylum seekers. Asylum seekers are kept separate from accepted migrants, and they are offered separate activities and have different duties. In the following I will concentrate on data covering the sections of the Swedish reception system that compare to my data collection on the Italian reception programme: the accommodation and living conditions of the asylum seekers, and the introduction courses given to those who are accepted. But first we will take a look at the ways migrants get into Sweden and their encounters with the Swedish bureaucracy.

4.2 Getting there

> For instance someone comes from the UK or Germany, someone from Europe. Sometimes they come to Egypt and they sell passports and tickets. They say: 'Who wants to go to Europe?' It's not the same countries every time and the prices vary. For instance if I want to go to Germany it costs that much, if I want to go to Sweden it's more expensive. (…) Sometimes they say 'Where do you want to go?' 'I want to go to Germany.' 'We don't have Germany, do you want the UK?' 'No, no, no, I don't want the UK.' 'Ok, where do you want to go?' 'I want to go to Finland.' 'Sorry, we don't have that.' Sometimes they say: 'We have that, how much can you pay?' 'It's expensive.' You can bargain like that. If they say: 'Ok, we'll take that,' you pay and they give you for instance a Swedish passport with a photo that looks like yours. Then you can go even if it's not your passport. The ones who check the passports don't look very closely, they [shows quick disinterested gaze] ok that's you, here you are. They are busy and many people

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[36] Quota migrants are not included in these numbers (about 1000 to 2000 such permits were issued each year, with higher numbers issued in 1992 and 1994), and neither are 'de facto migrants' (a category that ceased to exist in 1997) nor migrants arriving for humanitarian reasons and family reunifications.
[37] In 2007, the MB set a target of a maximum of six months (in reality, about eight months) to reach a decision, but in 2009 the target was reduced to three months. If the MB decision is negative, the applicant may appeal to the migration court, which in any case prolongs the waiting time.

> want to fly, so they just check quickly 'yes, it's ok'. Sometimes it's trickier, sometimes it's easy. It's all about luck. [...] You have to give [the passport] back to *him*, the guy you bought it from. He also travels with you, he shows you [where to go] but you can't talk to him. Sometimes he is behind you, sometimes in front of you. He shows you what to do and where to go. He knows. When you reach the destination you must give the passport back to him. (Mark, Somali migrant)

The journey to Sweden from the Horn of Africa differs from the one to Italy in that the migrant travels by air. It often means that the migrant has fled first, for example, from Somalia to neighbouring Kenya or even farther, to Egypt, in order to get to the 'market' where passports and tickets are sold. Although this may not include crossing the Sahara Desert in overcrowded cars, or the Mediterranean Sea in overcrowded boats, the journey is not without risk. But the migrant interviewees in Sweden appeared less preoccupied with the escape routes than some interviewees in Italy, perhaps an indication that it was less of a 'near-death experience'. The interviewees gave generally similar descriptions of the process. They bought a passport and the smuggler accompanied them on the flight. In Sweden, the smuggler took the passport back and instructed them on where to go to apply for asylum. Thus, although, like in Italy, there are few alternatives to the 'irregular' way to get to Sweden,[38] applying for asylum when crossing the border is an act that legalizes the applicant, making sure that he/she is embraced by the national reception programme for asylum seekers. In contrast, in Italy, an unknown number of the irregular immigrants remain inside the country with their irregular status, while the majority of those carrying some sort of residence permit are still not enrolled in a reception programme.

After arriving in Sweden, the smuggler would collect the passport and leave, having explained to his or her client where the migration board office was located. As a rule, asylum seekers' right to legal assistance is guaranteed by the Geneva Convention. The interviewed migrants in Città claimed that this rule was not always respected. Moreover,

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[38] Sweden, like Italy, accepts quota migrants. About 1900 quota migrants were accepted in 2008 and about the same number was expected in 2009 (www.migrationsverket.se). Quota migrants by definition get their acknowledged status as migrants and their residence permits before they are brought to Sweden, and thus avoid the reception and application process of asylum seekers. Like in Italy, however, virtually all *asylum seekers* come to Sweden 'illegally'.

the right to appeal was nonexistent in practice because of the long turnover time (up to three years) which, in combination with the precarious situation of the migrant, made it almost impossible. In Sweden, appeal tends to be the rule and a prolonged turnover time does not put the applicant out on the street, although resources have been cut back and some privileges (like language classes and job training) have been withdrawn. Asylum seekers in Sweden are appointed a lawyer but, as also appeared to be the case in Italy, the crucial problem has to do with the interpreters. A migrant cannot be sure that an interpreter is translating correctly, nor can he/she always anticipate the magnitude of the problem that a very minor mistake can create in such a bureaucratic legal process, where the applicant's trustworthiness is paramount (Norström 2004; Wettergren 2010b).

> You have an interpreter, you will tell them everything in your language [but] you don't know what he's saying! Maybe he will change it, maybe he don't understand what you're saying, maybe he can't translate it, you don't know […]. For example, I give them my ID, my driving licence. They took it. In court they had translated it. My name is XXXX but they wrote it XXYY. And they say it's not his, his name is XX and it says XY. So I give [the original ID] to the interpreter and I said 'it says XXXX'. And then it's also written from 1990 to 2001 in the Ethiopian calendar. But the interpreter wrote it to 2001 in the European calendar. And they say it's expired! (…) So then who will be the liar? You! (Oliver, Eritrean rejected asylum seeker)

Swedish lawyers constitute a considerable part of the MB expenses for the migrants and, consequently, efforts have been made to cut or minimize these expenses.[39]

> At the office quite a few of us feel that [the MB] is pedantic about the cost calculations, *everything* should be within the norm, *nothing* beyond that not even in *obvious* cases where there *is* a lot of work. (…) And that's not good because it sends a signal that says 'don't put in more work than the *norm* because you aren't going to get paid for it!' And that counteracts the *incentive* to find out how things really are if it is a complicated case. (Lawyer)

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[39] Since 2010 the new organization of reception of asylum seekers has denied lawyer assistance to all cases that can either be easily rejected (because their applications are not well-founded or because they are subject to the Dublin Regulation) or easily accepted without further investigation. The decision has to be taken by the MB within three months from the application date. If further investigation is required the applicant will get a lawyer.

The process from application to acceptance/rejection begins with registration at one of the three main MB offices in Sweden. After registration and fingerprinting, an applicant who is not staying with friends or relatives is temporarily housed at the MB premises while waiting for accommodation placement in a Swedish municipality. The applicant will later meet his/ her lawyer and investigation officer at the department of asylum investigations. After an oral hearing, the MB takes its decision. This whole process, from application to decision, would take about eight months in 2009.

4.2.1 Meeting bureaucracy

> The door was locked and it was Sunday. When I approach the door I see it opening by itself, I've never seen that before! Wow! [laugh] And I thought I was going to knock it! There are maybe one or two automatic doors in Addis. Wow! Is this Sweden? It must be heaven! I was afraid that they will keep me in the police station or … it's not like that. I go to the reception and they just told me to write my name and my birthday. Ok, I write it and they gave me a blanket and something and I go 'Wow! Is this Europe?' [laugh] 'This must be heaven!' They gave me a bed and they even asked me if I was hungry. It was not dinnertime, but they asked me anyway. It's good, they are good at the reception. They are responsible, they are good persons. I felt at home. For the first time after six months I felt safe. (Liam, Ethiopian asylum seeker)

Swedish public institutions must submit to the principles of transparency and citizen accessibility. Lately, state authorities like the MB have also increasingly aimed to become more service-oriented, although this effort remains ambiguous (cf. Wettergren 2010). Compared to the immigration bureaucracy in Città, a considerable effort has been made to gloss over some of the aspects that tend to give bureaucracies a bad reputation. In Italy migrants' applications were dealt with by a special department of the regional police headquarters. In Sweden the migration issues were removed from the police and given to the Swedish Immigration Board established in 1984 (Sarstrand 2007). Today's Migration Board is represented by a variety of local offices and four main headquarters. In the Swedish city Y, where I made my observations, the board headquarters had, in 2007, split its functions into two different offices. One office, which was placed in the city centre, dealt with residence permits to EU citizens, migrant workers, and students. The other office, which remained at the original location in a suburban area, dealt with

the reception of asylum seekers. Here, both the area and the buildings in several respects compared to the *questura* in Città, in terms of neglect. In Città, however, the office was centrally located and *all* migrants (regardless of category or country of origin) were – at least initially – submitted to the same degrading treatment of endless queues, hostile civil servants and police officers, and arbitrary routines. In Y, the mere fact that *only* the departments that dealt with asylum seekers were located in a remote area and in these worn-out and neglected buildings appeared significant – as if these migrants and the process of dealing with them had to be kept out of the public eye. The following description is a compilation of my field notes from an observation in 2007.

> In one of the buildings new arrivals registered as asylum seekers. The reception room was small, not too crowded, with wooden benches and a counter with glass screens that were pulled to the side. They were rhythmically opened and closed as the officials received clients or called for clients who had appointments. On the walls there were posters in Swedish and English. Entitled 'ARE YOU SATISFIED OR DISCONTENTED?' they presented information about the rights of asylum seekers. The posters were issued by 'the application ombudsman of the Migration Board'. Apart from the counter and the benches there was a small room next door which was meant to be a children's playroom. There was a small chair and a table but no toys, and the children did not seem attracted to it. The reception room was also equipped with a large mirror and a WC. The clientele was exclusively non-EU (third-country nationals), all asylum seekers, most of them men. There were also a few families with children. Three officials were working behind the counter. They switched between English and Swedish when they talked to the applicants, and I also heard one of them call out for assistance among the other applicants ('Arabic-English?!').
>
> New arrivals would register, be fingerprinted and photographed, and get appointments for the first meeting, where they would be briefly interviewed about their grounds for seeking asylum. A special identity card for asylum seekers would also be issued, with the person's name and a photo on it, and a preliminary social security number (personal code number), a number which is absolutely necessary for a social identity in the Swedish society. The officials would also ask new arrivals about their general situation, if they had a place to stay or if they wanted a place in the transit quarters of the Migration Board. From the transit housing they would later be transferred to an accommodation centre in a Swedish municipality. If they had relatives in Sweden they could also stay with them.
>
> While the applicants at the Swedish Migration Board hardly seemed happy, the atmosphere was more relaxed, a lot more orderly, and somewhat more respectful than the one I had experienced in the *questura*. I found out that the reason why not everyone was crowding in front of the counter was that they had

all been given a coloured paper; a yellow paper meant that you were waiting to register your application, a blue paper meant that you were waiting for fingerprinting and photographing, and a green paper meant that you were waiting for a place in the transit quarters. The officials would call your name when it was your turn. Others carried just the paper with the date and time of the appointment for the first interview.

Inside the premises, which was separated from the reception entrance by a locked door, there was a fingerprinting and photographing room, and offices where officials held the first interviews with the applicants. In the fingerprint/photo room the atmosphere was kind and efficient. Two men took care of the fingerprinting and photographing in a routine fashion without much interaction with the client, but touching them gently and instructing them politely. The 'fingerprinter' wore plastic gloves, however, and he told me about 'tricky' cases where fingertips had been destroyed – cut or burnt by acid or fire – as if they were mere obstructing technicalities. He printed all ten fingers of each applicant, holding his/her hand, carefully rolling the fingertips, one by one, on some sort of scanner and then checking the results on the computer screen to see if they looked okay. Sometimes the process had to be repeated. Fingerprints and photos were kept in the applicant's dossier, which would later be sent to the investigation unit.

The dossier would also provide the protocol from an initial interview, undertaken at the application unit. The applicant was seated opposite the official at his/her desk and the interview was carried out with the help of a telephone-mediated interpreter. It lasted between 15 and 30 minutes and provided the basic information of the applicant's identity, origin, family, and reasons for seeking asylum. The official also informed the applicant about what would happen next in the process, and answered his/her questions.

So far we have already begun to see some interesting differences in the reception of asylum seekers entering Italy and Sweden. Firstly, in Sweden all asylum seekers are enrolled in the reception programme, which includes providing housing and daily means for subsistence for as long as the application process requires. In Italy, most asylum seekers were left without assistance, relying on migrant networks and relief organizations, and the few who were registered in the reception programme were under the six-month time limit pressure. Secondly, as a consequence, in Sweden the asylum seekers experience a sense of safety and some relief from anxiety. In Italy the period of relative relaxation was limited, perhaps even nonexistent, since the migrant would have to immediately start looking for a place to live and a means to obtain food and earn an income. Thirdly, migrants may have to wait longer for a decision in Sweden (from eight months up to three years, including appeals to the migration court) and the chances to

obtain a residence permit are smaller, but the permits are in most cases permanent. During the waiting time they are sometimes entitled to work (though, as we will see, finding a job was almost impossible), attend Swedish language classes (though only the ones exclusively offered to asylum seekers by the municipality), and move, depending on different situational circumstances. In Italy, permits appeared to be provided more quickly (within three to six months) and to be more 'generously' issued, but the permits were only temporary – one or two years, with no guarantees for prolongation. During the waiting time the applicants were detained in temporary camps. Those not living in the camps depended for their living on finding a job as well as on local charities.

So is Sweden a more luxurious option, for those who can afford the ticket and a passport? Given the risks and dangers associated with the route via the Mediterranean, it is not at all certain that it is a much cheaper alternative in the end. Moreover, while flying generally means a possibility to go to a mid- or Northern European country, not all of my interviewees actually *wanted* to go to Sweden. There are many situational circumstance that are more likely than money and personal preferences to govern the migrant's 'choice' of journey and the country where he/she ends up (Havinga and Böcker 1999). These include urgency, help from others, access to contacts and networks, and available supply of alternatives, to mention only a few.

4.3 Organizing accommodation during the application process: Yby and Lillbacken

The MB-organized accommodation for asylum seekers is dispersed, mostly located away from Sweden's urban areas. From the central departments of application and investigation, the asylum seekers are transferred to local offices. They spend up to three years waiting for the final result of the application process, including appeals. Asylum seekers can also choose to live outside of organized accommodation, for example,. with family or friends already in Sweden, but this option is not encouraged as it diminishes the financial support to which the migrants are entitled (cf. Andersson et al. 2010b).[40]

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[40] Living 'on your own' (EBO) for instance with friends or family was compensated by a small economic subsidy until 2005, when it was withdrawn (see Andersson et al. 2010b). It was explained to me by MB officers that it was taken away in order to prevent overcrowding of migrant homes and to stimulate dispersal of the asylum seekers away from the urban centres to less populated areas.

Local municipalities are never forced to accept asylum accommodation, but those that are willing are appointed responsibility for organizing language classes and other activities, while provision for the migrants' social needs and daily subsistence remains the responsibility of the Migration Board. The state/MB rents apartment blocks from the municipality to house the asylum seekers during the waiting time. One of the ideas of the current Swedish migration policy is to begin 'integration' at this early stage – even though the overwhelming majority of the asylum seekers are rejected (Eastmond 2010).[41] Part of the integration plan seeks to 'mix' asylum seekers with local Swedes.

Designated accommodation centres, where only migrants live, used to be a model used in the 1980s and early 1990s. This old model was recalled by some experienced MB employees in Yby in rather rosy terms. There used to be blocks of flats where only asylum seekers lived and an MB office in a nearby building staffed by both assistants and officers. At the accommodation site there were services like preschools, health care, sports (ping pong, tennis), and libraries. Lawyers, interpreters, and police officers were available on call. The assistants were assigned a variety of tasks, from delivering mail to paying out cash allowances[42] and sewing curtains: 'We made house calls, all the flats were provided with curtains ... before we opened the accommodation we sewed curtains and furnished the flats to make them cosy!' (MB officer). They arranged social activities: 'We arranged football tournaments and went around to different accommodation centres and arranged matches' (MB officer). 'We had women's and men's evenings and we went on shopping tours. [...] We threw parties and there were lots of youngsters and we celebrated just about everything, with their help of course, and we invited the locals to food exhibitions with food from different countries' (MB assistant).

Around 1995 this type of accommodation centre was abandoned, officially because it was criticized as too 'care-taking', making the migrants seem 'institutionalized':

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[41] Eastmond (2010) writes that this dual ambition – to both prepare asylum seekers for integration and to prepare them for repatriation – creates a tension that is difficult to handle for both frontliners and migrants. In reality, asylum seekers are treated *as if* they will be accepted 'and as if it is meaningful to learn the rules of the game, while they are simultaneously expected to be prepared to be ordered off the ground' (p. 91).

[42] Nowadays the allowances are paid out via the bank. The asylum seeker gets a bank card which can be used to withdraw the amount from specific supermarkets or cash machines.

> [Back then] we *denied* them a lot, like they were seen as *poor* asylum seekers that come here and we pity them so much and we take care of them and help them with everything. And I think they ran into trouble afterwards when they got residence permits and got out in Sweden and didn't have a clue how things worked. (MB officer)

In 1995 the asylum seekers' allowance was also disconnected from the cost-of-living index. Today, the social welfare support, which is determined by the Swedish poverty level (90 SEK/day for a single adult in 2009), is therefore higher than the allowances provided to asylum seekers (71 SEK/day per single adult in 2009).[43] Hence, while the official and rational explanation of the change in accommodation policy was to support the autonomy of the asylum seeker (we recognize the ambivalent autonomy principle applied in Città), it can also clearly be seen as part of a general withdrawal of resources from asylum reception. Cutbacks in the asylum seekers' allowance correspond to the wider societal transformations in the post-1990s crisis, where individuals are increasingly ascribed responsibility for their own misfortune and for their 'failure' to transcend unfavourable positions in the structural hierarchy (Starrin 2004; Starrin et al. 2003). When this ideological outlook on people is applied to non-citizens, a division of rights between citizens and non-citizens is the outcome (Fassin 2005; Gibson 2003; Tazreiter 2010).

Thus the 'new' policy officially was to encourage integration right from the beginning by letting asylum seekers live 'like anyone else' in normal flats and take responsibility for their own daily needs, activities, and contacts with authorities. The allowance is to cover all expenses except housing, and the asylum seeker is required to travel to the nearest MB office to meet with case officers. One accommodation assistant claimed, however, that in the old model 'the residents were active in a completely different way', referring to the lack of joint activities in the present system, leading to passive waiting and inertia among the residents. Moreover, the assistants' job was more fun and more socially creative before. Now, it is reduced to a caretaker's job; it is more mechanical and governed by more rules that restrict the assistants' initiative.

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[43] 61 SEK/day for each parent and 37-50 SEK/day per child between 0 and 17 years old and for a maximum of three children. For the fourth and subsequent children, the allowance was only half of the original amount per child. The numbers should be compared to the social benefits for Swedish citizens, which were (in 2009) 92 SEK/day for single adults, 83 SEK each for couple, and 50-89 SEK per child 0 to 17 years old, with no limit set on the number of children.

The county to which Yby municipality belongs had in total about 1500 places for asylum seekers in 2009. The MB accommodation office in the town of Yby was running slightly more than 800 of these places, dispersed within the municipality of Yby and in smaller neighbouring municipalities. The number of places was to be reduced to 500-600 due to falling numbers of asylum seekers nationally (2009). The municipality of Yby covers an area of 1543 square kilometres and it has a population of less than 11 000. Like many Swedish provincial municipalities, Yby faces depopulation due to low birth rates and high numbers of inhabitants moving out to key urban areas within Sweden. Depopulation is part of a general negative trend; jobs are hard to find, the employment rate among 20- to 24-year-olds is only about 55%, and the level of education is generally low. Provincial towns such as Yby are generally marked by a past (1950s and 60s) where there was such strong belief in growth and expansion that traditional architecture and city centres were erased and replaced by the monotonous landscape of square one- or two-storey buildings, large apartment blocks, and straight streets. The city centres look more or less the same in every town, with the same standard selection of shops and services (e.g. the standard food chain supermarket, the liquor store, the pharmacy, the local health-care centre).

Yby is a very typical Swedish town in that sense. The city centre looks like any other small-town centre. Interestingly, while the MB offices dealing with asylum seekers in larger cities tend to be away from city centres and off the main roads, the local office in Yby was in a place of honour; in the same building as the 'People's House'[44] next to the central square. Visitors entered the building in two steps: once they were through the first door there was a space with a reception area where the visitor would check in with a staff member before an officer would come and unlock the second door.

During the time I was observing in Yby, the MB office in Yby had 15 employees – including one manager, three administrators, one decision maker, five officers, and five assistants, who dispersed in the area. The office belonged to the MB department of accommodation, so the staff did not process asylum applications but were in charge of accommodation and everyday social issues concerning the asylum seekers. The

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[44] 'People's houses' and 'people's parks' are remnants of the social democratic vision of the nation state as the 'people's home'. They were built in the 1950s and 60s and were centres of cultural life, political demonstrations, labour union events, music events, public dances, and so on.

accommodation of Lillbacken, with 180 places in a village of 1100 inhabitants, was about 35 kilometres from the town of Yby, yet still within the municipality. A less remote accommodation was the one in Forsbo municipality, 25 kilometres from Yby. The Yby MB was responsible for administrating and servicing the accommodations in neighbouring municipalities, like Forsbo, and the asylum seekers living there had to go to Yby to meet their accommodation case officers. At the beginning of 2009, the staff at the Yby MB were concerned about impending organizational changes and cutbacks, believing that they were likely to be shut down and some of the educated staff to be moved to the county town of Stad, while the rest believed they might be laid off. [45]

While the employees at the local MB spoke with determination about the policy of 'mixing' Swedes and asylum seekers, it appeared to be an ambivalent strategy in practice. Firstly, asylum seekers were placed in condemned apartment blocks that were rented by the MB from the public housing landlords of the municipalities. Thus the apartments rented by the MB for the purpose of housing asylum seekers were already mostly deserted buildings. There were few or no Swedes living in them. Secondly, most people with an income can afford their own house in these rural Swedish areas, where real estate is relatively inexpensive. These groups of people would not choose to live in a condemned apartment block. And thirdly, consequently, to the extent that Swedes do live in or around these apartment blocks, they tend to be poor and marginalized, on social welfare, and unemployed. Hence, the Swedes that the asylum seekers mix with are not likely to be the average middle-class Swedes that set the norms of society (Goffman 1963).

Moreover, ethnic Swedes tend to avoid settling in areas where migrants are 'placed' by the social services or migration authorities (Kamali 2006). In most cases, therefore, 'mixing' is limited to isolated blocks where only asylum seekers live. Paradoxically, this was to be preferred, according to the accommodation assistants, because when asylum seekers and Swedes lived in the same building, there were almost always conflicts, notably in connection with the shared laundry rooms. Laundry rooms constitute a space

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[45] At the time of my fieldwork and right after it, the national reorganization of the MB and its adjustment to the decreased influx of asylum seekers brought about great changes in Yby. The total number of housing places was reduced by several hundred, and staff were either laid off or moved to the larger MB unit in Stad, 63 kilometres away from Yby.

where neighbours in an apartment block are forced to meet sometimes, and sometimes to interact around matters of booking, cleaning, etc. Any habit or routine deemed to deviate from the norms and regulations is bound to give rise to fierce resentment from other users. Laundry rooms are frequent spaces of conflict among Swedes as well.

4.3.1 The housing situation

> Asylum seeker: [rapid upset talk] You must understand ... it ... is this flat is completely horrible, it's like a hovel, it's nothing you can live in. The bathroom is finished! You might as well bring a water hose and have a shower in there ... And it was like that already when we moved in, we haven't made it that way. We would like you to come and look at it with us.
> Assistant: I know it is bad and I have ... another flat which ... is not much better but the toilet is renovated so you can change to that if you like.
> AS: If only you could come with us and have a look at it ...
> A: Yeah I will [clears his throat] will do that. We will come this afternoon. But I have been there so I know what it looks like. (Tape-recorded observation 2M7)

Compared to Italy, the Swedish welfare state model has developed a relatively large and stable public sector with plenty of resources for social provision. It is interesting therefore that the allocation of resources to the asylum seekers is deliberately kept at a lower level than for permanent residents (cf. Morris 2009). One example already mentioned is the economic allowance for asylum seekers, which in 2009 was about two euros less per day for single adult asylum seekers than for single adult Swedes.

Housing is another example. In spite of the abundance of empty flats in receiving municipalities, the MB enforces the norm that two single adults should share a room – hence six single adults may be required to share a three-room flat. Families are usually accommodated in two- to three-room flats depending on the number of children, and smaller families share flats with another family. This, together with the fact that there is a constant turnover in residents, puts pressure on the construction of the buildings in the Yby accommodation. The flats quickly deteriorated due to heavy overuse with no renovation or freshening up in between leaving and incoming residents. The accommodation assistants checked the flats when residents moved out, but their job was limited to taking care of objects forgotten or left behind and to taking an inventory of standard equipment such as kitchen utensils and basic furniture (beds, tables, chairs).

Substantial cleaning was left to the residents, and repairs and renovations were done only in serious cases. One such case was a flat that had been destroyed by fire because the resident migrant set herself on fire when her application was rejected.

Following an assistant during an inspection of some of the flats, I observed both the 'mixing policy' in practice and the decay of the buildings. As part of this tour, the assistant had to visit a group of single men whose door had been kicked in by a local. He wanted to check the replacement door (which, according to the residents, wouldn't close properly) and he had promised the migrants that he would file a report about the event to the police.

> Approaching the building [Assistant] observes: 'There aren't many Swedes living here.' None at all, as a matter of fact. Apart from the asylum seekers the authorities have decided to house quota migrants from Burma in the same worn-out building. The neighbouring building belongs to the government-owned company Samhall [an organization that provides employment for people with disabilities]. We walk to the third floor and knock on the 'new' door of the flat, where five young men from Afghanistan and Iraq are living together. There are only three of them there right now, the same men who had come to the MB in Yby to explain the door incident earlier today. They bring us in and immediately begin showing us the holes in the walls, layers of black mildew in the bathroom, broken kitchen cupboards. The plastic carpets are full of stains and can be easily pulled up from the floor at the edges; the wallpaper is ripped off in places and is sagging in other places. The storage closet is dirty and crowded with broken stuff, like a broken wooden bed. (Field notes 2M10)

Other flats in both Yby and Forsbo that I visited with the assistants that day were either in similar states or in a slightly better condition, with only traces of damp and mildew in the bathrooms. I followed an assistant who was moving two single mothers and their children to different buildings, as part of an ongoing evacuation of the 'worst' buildings. One of them moved with her baby into the renovated (previously burnt) studio, and the other moved with her 7-year-old daughter to another studio that was 'not too bad' according to the assistant.

> The woman [the child is in school] is moved to a worn out one-room flat where the laundry rooms in the cellar smell of mildew and damp. The flat is dirty. There are bread crumbs and food leftovers on the floor in the kitchen and a pool of liquid which could be water. The bathroom is dirty too. The accommodation assistant checks that the lamps and the cooker work alright, telling me that 'this

is not too bad, comparatively speaking ….' He shows the woman a deserted playground outside, between the apartment blocks, where there is a broken swing, a sandbox, and a discoloured slide and says that her daughter will be so happy when she comes home from school and discovers that there is a playground in the courtyard. (Field notes 2M10)

Later, the assistant told me that the woman had 'spent all day' cleaning. This was brought up in a conversation initiated by me, where the MB employees in Yby discussed what they considered to be the residents' bad cleaning habits.

> Both the decision maker and the assistant try to play down my concern about the miserable condition of the flats I have seen today. The assistant blames the residents: 'The flats were newly renovated when we got them nine years ago!' (He has been telling me this repeatedly during the day.) 'They don't clean and they don't care.' (Field notes 2M10)

The fact that the asylum seekers lived in such poor-quality housing was quietly accepted by the local MB staff, attributing the problem to the negligence of the residents. The same discourse was enacted again in a meeting that I attended between the manager of the Yby MB and one of the local public housing landlords. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss which flats to keep and which to evacuate in the wake of the cutbacks. In the following passage it also clearly appears that the public landlord will not consider renovation and that she would rather not house any asylum seekers at all.

> The purpose of the meeting is to get rid of 30 places in this particular village and the manager (M) wants to know which apartments the public landlord is most keen on withdrawing. The landlord (LL) interrupts his talking with a sweet voice and a smile full of meaning: 'Can't you move all of them, then? Can't you move them all to Lillbacken?' Ignoring the serious joke, M says that the reduction of places is to be proportionally made in all the villages. LL retorts that three months' notice is required with these flats, as with the ordinary rental flats. […] LL checks her computer and begins listing the flats 'where there are problems'. 'Problems' appear to be problems with neighbours; either the asylum seekers or some Swedish residents have complained. She describes one incident with an asylum-seeking family that is terrorized by a mentally ill Swedish neighbour. M says that even if they now get rid of the worst places, 'our selection of flats is still of a very poor standard'. He talks in general terms about renovation or 'freshening up' the buildings and apartments. I suspect he does so because I am present. LL appears sceptical. M and LL then agree that the flats are ill suited for 'six young men sharing a three-room flat and having a shower every day.' The asylum seekers don't take care of the flats, they do not clean them and they take

too long showers. Is it possible to hold them responsible in any way? Like cutting allowances if they use too much water or electricity? The problem they identify is that consumption does not cost. It will be a shocking experience for the residents [if they get residence permits] when they move to their own flats after one or two years in MB housing: 'Imagine that, when they have to bear the cost themselves!' Making a remark about the living conditions of the asylum seekers, M observes, however, 'I would not be able to live like that myself, not even for two days.' (Field notes 2M10)

The residents' lack of care and cleaning, and their heavy over-use of utilities, are identified as the key reasons behind the destruction of the flats. Over-use is defined as having too long showers every day. The conversation then shifts into the discourse we've seen earlier about the necessity for migrants to learn to live 'like Swedes' for their own good. It won't be a good thing *for them* if they think that they can continue to not care, not clean, and use water in abundance.[46]

The accommodation in Lillbacken, which was also run by the Yby office, was new in comparison to the ones in Forsbro and Yby. The MB officer in Yby suggested that I go there to see what a 'nice' accommodation was like.

4.3.2 The Lillbacken accommodation

Lillbacken is a small village, and the accommodation unit housing almost 200 asylum seekers (20% of the population) was concentrated in three neighbouring blocks of houses that would otherwise have been demolished. The assistants had a local office, located in one of the basements, which was open three days a week, during which residents could drop in and see them. Apart from checking the apartments between residents leaving and moving in, the assistants had a few more work tasks than the Yby assistants because Lillbacken was so far away from the MB office in Yby. These tasks included providing help and advice about local public transit, sometimes driving residents to and from the train station, helping with important phone calls, reading and/or translating letters from authorities. Although the assistants were perfectly aware of their limitations (what they were 'not allowed to do'), they thought they had a friendly relationship and a good sense of almost all of the residents. Occasionally residents

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[46] As discussed also by Johansson (2005), it is quite often the case that moral judgements about the migrants, and impairment of their conditions and circumstances brought about by policy change, are accompanied by the paternalistic articulation that 'it is better for *them'.*

would stop by to chat, and previous residents, who had got permits and moved would sometimes call to say hello. The assistants in Lillbacken said they were like 'a mum and dad' to the asylum seekers.

The accommodation unit was less than two years old at the beginning of 2009. The two local assistants were proud of it, keeping it in better condition than the ones in Yby and Forsbo. The flats were neater and cleaner, partly because the accommodation had not been in use for long, but also because the assistants wanted it to stay that way. 'We decided when we saw the accommodation in Yby that it was not going to be like that here' (Assistant). The assistants had concluded that the state of the apartments in Yby and Forsbo did not encourage cleaning and caretaking, so the important thing was to do just that by giving a welcoming first impression.

> A1: We clean out the *worst*. It depends on the first seconds when someone enters the flats that are decisive. So we don't exactly scrub the floors but we get rid of all the dirt. And we sometimes use spray cans too, so it smells nice.
> A2: Yes and we usually *give* them, if they think it is bad, then we give them cleaning supplies so they can clean up themselves. Normally they have to go and buy that themselves.

They also sought to prevent rapid deterioration by instructing the residents. For example, they introduced their residents to the use of *Svinto* –steel wool pads soaked in detergent which are used to scrub cookers and kitchen utensils like pots and pans. They wanted the residents to use it because they were not cleaning their cookers well enough.

> We had courses in [Svinto] … No one used it, so after the first six months every cooker was coal-black! But then we brought almost all of them here and showed them because they didn't know what Svinto was. We showed them that cookers and pans can be cleaned [with Svinto] and now generally the cookers are *acceptably* clean … (Assistant)

As part of this local policy, the Lillbacken assistants arranged 'cleaning days' when all residents helped to tidy up the common ground around and between the blocks. They used their right to make announced as well as surprise visits a couple of times per year to check on the condition of the flats. Officially they were checking fire alarms, balconies (residents were not allowed to keep 'junk' on the balconies 'because it may cause fire'), refrigerators ('so they aren't full of ice'), cookers, and bathrooms, but they would also

notice the tidiness of the flats. 'It's to help them really 'cause we are not acting as police or anything but we are there because … then they know that if they have to move from one flat to another it will also look nice!' (Assistant) If the residents knew they were coming, the assistants would find that 'it's really clean and it smells [good] because they have scrubbed the floors.'

The way that the Lillbacken assistants worked stood out in sharp contrast to Yby and Forsbo, where the assistants were not concerned with fire security, let alone icy refrigerators or black cookers. The flats that I visited in Lillbacken were indeed in much better condition; no rot and mildew in the ceilings or bathrooms, no sagging wallpaper, and no destroyed carpets. Overall, however, though admitting that they had not reached the seniority of the accommodations in Yby and Forsbo, the assistants in Lillbacken shared the general assumption that cleaning, rather than restricted space and heavy usage, was key to avoiding the deterioration of the flats. Men (but not Somali men, who were described by the Lillbacken assistants as very hard working, servicing their spoiled and lofty women) in general were less likely to clean and tidy up, so therefore it was generally agreed (in Yby and Lillbacken) that the 'bachelor flats' were the worst. The Lillbacken assistants said they had so far been 'lucky' to have relatively few bachelor flats.

It is possible, just from the data about the state of the accommodations run by Yby municipality, to discern the Swedish version of what I have called the autonomy principle in Italy. Firstly, the dispersal of the asylum seekers into condemned buildings was justified by the discourse of autonomy and integration. The residents were themselves to be responsible for their own living (within the limitations of total social welfare dependency) during the waiting time. Secondly, and as a consequence, the state of the flats, whether 'not too bad' or so bad that no one would actually like to live that way, was related to the individual resident's own tidiness and propensity to clean. Together, these two explanatory frames transfer responsibility from the organization (the MB) to the individual (cf. Carlson and Jacobsson 2007), and from the structural inequality inherent in exclusionary mechanisms (asylum seekers are in the waiting hall, they do *not yet belong* to those included in the ordinary welfare system of this nation) to the individual asylum seeker's personal characteristics. This way, a disgusting home

signals low personal morals and a bad attitude. This in turn says something about the *worthiness* of the migrant's claims on asylum. As we will see later, the institutionalized discourse (Hansen Löfstrand 2009a) takes it for granted that the majority of the asylum seekers are not 'real' asylum seekers.

The following section will illuminate some aspects of the way that a local economy *gains* from the reception of asylum seekers. Although, as in the case of Città, my data here are sparse, this is an almost entirely silenced side of asylum reception that is never highlighted by the institutionalized discourse. According to this, the reception of asylum seekers is *a burden* on the host society (cf. Hansen 2008; Johansson 2005) and on its municipalities, and not something that integrates with regional politics or economy. Therefore it needs to be emphasized.

4.3.3 Asylum reception as regional maintenance

Similar to the critique directed against the asylum reception in Città, claiming that it was a business providing employment to locals rather than an efficient way to help migrants, a Yby accommodation officer claimed that the Swedish asylum system was 'huge business'.

> Officer: Think of the municipalities and the MB employees, I think there are 3000 or something, the courts, the lawyers. My God! Now we get into that and I don't want to talk about *them* [the lawyers] because then I'll get upset, but it's a *huge* business and a *process* that keeps … well yes and after all my years here [at the MB] this is the only logical reason, [the asylum system] exists only because of that.
> I: The employment and business?
> Officer: It sounds *completely crazy.* But it's my … that's what I think. It's nothing else. It *can't* be anything else.

Although some sort of reception of asylum seekers/migrants on the whole is clearly warranted, the debate tends to focus on the *costs*, while very few refer to the economic *gains* of maintaining a reception programme in the receiving country. Carlson (2002) shows that critical perspectives on 'the service sector' and the 'plurality of specialized professions' emerging around the institutionalization of 'the immigrant', made attempts to break into the public debate back in the early 1980s. Still, in the early 21st century the issue is hardly on the agenda.

There are clearly economic gains for relatively poor Swedish provincial municipalities that are involved with the reception of asylum seekers. As we have seen, public landlords can continue raising rents for apartment blocks that have been deserted and condemned while having very limited responsibilities for renovating them or otherwise keeping them in good shape. Accommodation further provides job opportunities for local inhabitants, including both skilled (officers) and low-skilled employees (assistants). Moreover, municipalities that accommodate asylum seekers get state subsidies to offer basic SFI (Swedish for immigrants)[47] classes, thus creating teaching jobs. Reception of asylum seekers can therefore be said to integrate, in a broad sense, with other strategies to rescue the region. Seen from this perspective, asylum seekers constitute part of the political *solution* to the problem of depopulation. From the 'common sense' perspective, however, reception of asylum seekers was constructed as a *either* a burden *or* a purely altruistic activity; that is, as simply tolerating the presence of potential welfare abusers (villains) or as helping people in need (victims) (Eastmond 2010; Sahlin 1994).

In Lillbacken, which, being a rural village, was especially severely hit by depopulation and unemployment, examples of the way that the accommodation contributed to the local economy were spontaneously brought up by the assistants. The accommodation created jobs (the assistants and the local SFI, plus related services such as garbage collection and cleaning). The local nine-year school, which was threatened by shutdown, benefited from subsidies brought by the asylum seekers' children. Unfortunately, there was a drop in large families with school children.

> Toddlers and babies we have, but the school is suffering a loss. They want more children and we beg [the MB] to give us families, give us families, but almost no families come – I mean these large families [with many children] that we used to have. […] It's a pity because we need *children* and we need a school here in Lillbacken. (Assistant)

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[47] As part of the integration plan, 'organized activities' were to be offered to asylum seekers during their waiting time, and basic Swedish classes were part of this. They were run by the municipal Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) programme. The quality and scope of the classes varied between municipalities. Some interviewed asylum seekers said the classes were 'a laugh'. Andersson et al. (2010b:17) refers to an evaluation of the reception system from 2009, where it is stated that the organized activities do not work as intended.

The local shops and mini-markets benefited from the presence of the asylum seekers, who could not afford to do their shopping in the hypermarkets and shopping centres far away from Lillbacken. There was a Lidl store in the vicinity of Yby, but the bus ticket for a round trip from Lillbacken would cost almost 30 euros. The migrants would have to save money for days to afford the tickets, let alone to be able to buy anything. Meanwhile, since the local mini-markets did not sell clothes or other items that might be needed, such as radios, televisions, and prams, the local flea markets boomed.

> Assistant 1: There are no clothes for sale around here or anything so [the asylum seekers] turn to the flea markets …
> Assistant 2: I have to admit that the locals are really good at doing that!
> I: They collect stuff?
> A2: Yes, yes and arrange flea markets; there was one here the day before yesterday.
> A1: And they have so many customers. It's crowded. Out of 180 immigrants there's at least 120 there [laugh].

Thus, apart from providing children for the school, customers for the local food stores, and jobs for the two assistants, the migrants invigorated the second-hand economy. In conclusion, when asked if the reception of asylum seekers had been positive for Lillbacken, both assistants agreed enthusiastically, pointing out the *economic* gains, but adding also that 'You rarely hear anything negative. It's more about immigrants in general that [the locals] make comments about, but in the community here you rarely hear complaints.' Openly racist expressions did exist, however.

4.3.4 Everyday racism in and around accommodations

The image of the nation (cf. Anderson 1991) is intimately bound to taken for granted perceptions and expressions of the nation and its inhabitants that, in turn, produce instances of what we may call banal racism (Essed 1991) or banal nationalism (Billig 1995; Flam and Beauzamy 2008). The notion of 'banal' points to racism or nationalism as inherent to mundane everyday situations and interactions, where differences between 'us', who belong, and 'them', who don't, are routinely reproduced. In Sweden the tendency has been to avoid open expressions of racism and/or to displace racism as a phenomenon limited to the extreme right wing (cf. Pred 2000). Hence concepts such as

'bogus asylum seekers' and 'social tourism' are widespread and commonly accepted as (not racist expressions but) 'real' potential threats to the welfare state.[48] Although racist discourse and discrimination generally may have stronger *explicit* and *political* representation in Italy (cf. Flam and Beauzamy 2008; Sigona 2005), the asylum seekers interviewed in Città did not describe racist assaults or provocations. On the contrary, it was claimed that since Italians 'know we have nothing' they rather *ignored* the migrants, just as the frontliners in Città asserted that Italians 'were not aware' of the concept of asylum seekers.[49] In contrast, in Sweden migrants said they were confronted with everything from suspicious gazes, to parents forbidding their children to go near the areas where they lived, to open violence. Oliver, an Eritrean asylum seeker, once tried the local nightlife in the small town where he was accommodated. There was an incident on the dance floor, a group of local men tried to stop him from dancing, so he pulled out and tried to go home:

> They followed me [when I went out] so I came back and I go inside again. So they
> went down and they started waiting for me. So I don't want to go out [laugh].[…]
> I stayed until the end, at two o' clock … and when they started walking I go out
> and I turned at the back and I go home. From that day I don't dare to go to disco.

Similarly, Liam, an Ethiopian asylum seeker, said that people stared and were afraid of him and when he tried to talk to people they went away. He also had experiences at a night club when a group of men had snatched his beer and he had to ask the guard to give it back to him.

> So I told the guard and he bring it for me but I didn't drink it … you feel shame
> about yourself when you go out on a place like this. […] Because no one will want
> to play with you. You are there to enjoy but no one want to enjoy with you. So I
> don't know why these people are so afraid of me.

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[48] This assumption led the former Swedish prime minister Göran Persson to adopt the term 'social tourism' and stir up popular anticipation of the hordes of people who would be moving to Sweden and claiming access to Swedish welfare benefits upon the addition of 10 new EU member states in 2004.

[49] This is of course also an expression of racism in a way, as is the treatment of asylum seekers in the reception camps. Previous research has shown that, for instance, Roma people are submitted to violent expressions of racism by Italians (Sigona 2005). Moreover, as reported by Flam and Beauzamy (2008), racism is expressed, for example, as disdain for and humiliation of domestic labourers.

When the new accommodation in Lillbacken first opened, there were complaints from locals regarding the asylum seekers, notably about stealing. In one of the buildings, where there also lived a few locals, the laundry room constituted a source of complaints; the locals accused the migrants of stealing laundry time. The problem was solved by giving the locals their own private washing machines. After this, things settled and these days, the assistants said, 'you hardly notice [the asylum seekers] at all.' They kept to themselves and did not venture far from the premises of the accommodation, so apparently contacts between locals and migrants were reduced to a minimum. Yet, when taking me on a sight-seeing tour around the accommodation, the assistants told me that for awhile the cleaning lady refused to clean the staircase where only asylum seekers lived 'because she thought it smelled of piss', and the garbage collector effectuated his own continuous statement of disapproval:

> The assistant says that he had a row with [the garbage collector] because he creates more litter than he collects. Assistant knows because once he went to the garbage room and tidied up before the collector arrived and after he left there was garbage all over the floor. Whatever falls out from the bins when he empties them, he just leaves it there. 'He probably doesn't want to touch their shit,' Assistant says, and tells me that the garbage collector usually goes on about how the foreigners don't have the sense to throw their garbage in the bins, how they make a mess and misbehave. (Field notes 2M11)

I was also told that in the local school there were quite frequent conflicts between local children and asylum-seeking children, although they were kept apart, in separate classes. However, according to the assistants, 'it's more about immigrants in general that [the locals] make comments'.[50] Because the asylum seekers kept apart and did not cause

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[50] A somewhat more explicit indication of local feelings was their reception of Polish guest workers. In an adjacent apartment block a foresting company was housing Poles to do forestry work in the area. In contrast to the asylum seekers, the assistants said, the complaints about the Poles were outspoken and fierce. The locals began to mobilize to have them sent home again, but they were there under the protection of the free EU labour migration and could not be touched. The assistants were divided here, one of them arguing that the Poles took local jobs and destroyed the local labour market, while the other one said that the locals refused to do the work the Poles did under the same conditions: bad pay, working around the clock, 'pure drudgery.' The Poles were accused of storing gasoline for their machines on the balconies (fire risk), of boozing and shouting when they were off work, of being dirty and wearing dirty clothes, and of using the tumble dryers in the laundry room to dry up their sweaty work clothes. The example of the Poles adds to the impression that there was an atmosphere of suspicion and a disposition towards racist outbursts among locals. The Poles were openly rejected because they could be seen as a

any fuss, they were tolerated. But the accommodation assistants worried about the impending reorganization; apart from the fact that they might lose their jobs, they thought of themselves as mediators between the locals and the asylum seekers. If their jobs disappeared, 180 migrants would be 'let loose in the community, drifting about aimlessly, then anything can happen ....'

The assistants in Yby expressed a similar ambivalent pattern of feelings towards the asylum seekers. According to them, locals were not happy about having the asylum seekers around: 'Let me put it this way: if I say that 100 [asylum seekers] are to be removed from here I think 90% of the locals would say "Thank God!"' (Assistant) One assistant said he was frequently asked 'why I brought these people here, as if it was *my* fault'. He had worked at the Yby office for almost 10 years and was also worried about the downsizing. Unemployment forced people to move, and he had been living his whole life there. In spite of this, and unlike the other assistants, he did not even try to mitigate the resentment felt by locals against the migrants. Over the years and due to everything he had seen, he told me, he had moved from whole-hearted sympathy for the residents to the conclusion that 'they all lie'. In my company he frequently expressed slight contempt or semi-racist 'truths', adding that 'of course I am not allowed to say these things, but ...'.

When he said that he 'was not allowed' to express the opinion that they all lie, the Yby assistant referred to the officially established, balanced but ambivalent, discourse on the asylum seekers, embraced by the Migration Board (cf. Pred 2000; Pripp 2004). According to this discourse the Board (and Sweden) is a champion of human rights, particularly the right to protection and asylum (Wettergren 2010). Balancing between the opposed political stances *in favour of* and *against* a 'generous' Swedish asylum policy, and manifesting the right of the nation state to control its borders, the organizational discourse is strongly ambivalent. It tends to negotiate the national fantasies about social tourism and bogus-asylum seekers with an understanding of the motives of people who come here. As we will see in section 4.5, a typical such

threat to the local economy, while the asylum seekers were all but tolerated because they contributed to the local economy.

organizationally sanctioned statement would be to say: *'They all lie, but who would not lie in their situation.'*

In the following section we will go on to look at the integration programme of the accepted migrants in the case of the Swedish town Stad. In contrast to reception and accommodation, this part was entirely organized by the municipality, although the principal contents and elements of the introduction, as well as the social conditions and benefits to the migrants, were regulated at the national level.

4.4 The ideal and the resignation – introduction for 'new arrivals' in Stad

> The only time you feel that 'now I have everything' is when you work. It doesn't matter how much you get, when you work, when you go to work it is 10 times better [than benefits]. (…) The problem here is that I have no education and it is required for the smallest little job that you have an education. But I have no education. (Dina, Somali migrant, permanent residence permit)

> I've seen one gentleman, one of the students, who was really discouraged because he was [laughs lightly] working in a restaurant and, ah, like he had studied hotel management but he hadn't finished it in his country. So he went and he was *really* excited about this [job practice] going twice a week. And he was good at his work and he kind of believed that yes they are going to give me like a summer job or *something* [laugh]. So they said 'no we can't give you a job here because you don't have [laugh] you don't have any [certificate].' But he's *doing* the work [laugh], he knows how to do it! (Johanna, Somali migrant, permanent residence permit)

The reception of asylum seekers is structurally separated from the introduction for 'new arrivals', the ones who get residence permits and are officially recognized as migrants or 'persons in need of protection'. At this point, the 'new arrivals' leave the temporary accommodations and move into permanent housing. The rental housing market in the Swedish cities is restricted to persons who cannot afford to buy their own houses or flats. Access to rental apartments is controlled by private as well as public landlords, who can select tenants according to their own criteria. This means that the choice available to people without money or permanent employment tends to be limited to unattractive neighbourhoods. Unemployed individuals receiving social benefits and

'new arrivals' living on the so-called 'introduction allowance' are referred to a municipality's social housing programme. Meanwhile, not all municipalities agree to receive migrants who depend on social assistance. Hence a migrant with a permanent residence permit but without family or relatives and without a job will have a limited choice of places to live. Accommodation officers at the MB encouraged them to move to less urbanized municipalities where the housing situation might be better, but where chances of finding a job smaller.

> The municipalities we chose said no, they would not receive migrants, and Stad was the only municipality that accepted us. That's why we came. […] I was not particular at all, I just picked a few places. We wanted to live more south, but they wouldn't accept us there. That's how we came to Stad. (Dina, Somali migrant)

Once the residence issue is solved, the 'new arrival' is enrolled in an introduction program. The programme 'introduction for new arrivals' was made statutory by a government act in 1997/98 and the nationally proclaimed goal is to 'provide the basis for self-support, education and participation in social life'[51]. The task of concretizing and organizing this objective is delegated to the municipalities, and broken down into a triangular structure embracing social life, labour market, and language, the so-called three pillars of integration. The idea of the introduction also envisages that the migrant gets support to 'strengthen self-determination, self-worth, own agency, own problem-solving, participation and responsibility' (ibid.).

The introduction programme in Stad was organized by the local SFI school[52] and required between 500 and 600 hours of participation, usually running over two semesters and parallel to language classes, vocational training, and job practice. The introduction classes as well as the language classes offered by the SFI are organized into different levels and oriented towards different groups, for example, ranging from the 'analphabetic' (illiterate) level to the 'academic' level. After the introduction class and the SFI language classes, a student may continue with the standard selection of

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[51] www.lanstyrelsen.se Accessed 2010-04-13

[52] In some other towns the introduction course was organized by private actors. In 2007 the municipality in Stad was discussing the possibility of inviting private tenders for the introduction classes.

preparatory classes offered by the municipal adult education school, which issues degrees in Swedish (and other core subjects) corresponding to the senior level of the nine-year compulsory school, and to upper secondary school for those who want to qualify for university studies. The latter requires a selection of upper secondary school degrees in other core subjects as well, classes that are offered to students of all nationalities (including Swedes).

The introduction classes, the job practice, and the SFI language classes are compulsory if the migrant wishes to receive economic support – the 'introduction allowance'[53] – which is reduced in case of absence. The whole programme – introduction, language, and job practice – requires most of the migrant's waking time. The activities and the economic benefits are supposed to socialize the participant into the routines of the Swedish labour market and the 40 hour workweek. In this way, and since the programme may stretch out for years, depending on the individual migrant's studying speed, the introduction programme can be said to function as a labour market intervention, concealing the fact that, unlike the Italian migrants, very few of the 'new arrivals' in Sweden are likely to find even temporary part-time jobs to support themselves within a reasonable amount of time. The Swedish labour market is thoroughly regulated and formalized, and in this way also highly protective. Contacts and networks are important for gaining access to jobs, and hiring of new employees in most organizations follow the logic of bounded communities where group conformity and consensus are highly valued. Swedish employees tend to avoid calling applicants who are suspected to have different cultural, religious, or language backgrounds (Neergaard 2006; De los Reyes 2006a).

Migrants recognized this problem early on, during the waiting time before they even got a permit, when trying to find any kind of job to make the allowance last longer: 'It is hard to find a job. If you go somewhere and look for jobs they ask are you Swedish? No I

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[53] This allowance was, until 2010, offered to migrants who were enrolled in the introduction classes in the municipality where they lived. It was sometimes tied to an individual 'introduction plan', but always tied to compulsory participation in the municipality's introduction program on a 7-8 h/day basis. The amount of the introductory allowance was set by the municipalities. In 2008 in Stad it was 7500 SEK/month for single adults under the age of 29 with no children. It was 8500 SEK/month for adults older than 29 (because this group no longer has the right to rent support), and higher for parents/caretakers depending on the age and number of children.

am not Swedish. Have you got a personal number?[54] No I haven't. Then you can't work here' (Mark, asylum seeker). Discourses about the selective and inaccessible Swedish labour market were also widespread among migrant networks: 'A lot of people are discouraged […] really depressed about their whole situation' (Johanna, accepted migrant). At the introduction for new arrivals, however, the migrants were encouraged to be patient and diligent students, to think positively and to plan carefully. If they used their resources at the school well, building up their individual skills and qualifications, full membership in Swedish society awaited at the end of the road. The introduction class was divided into a theoretical part (about Swedish laws, rights and duties, values and norms, etc.) and a practical part (targeting employment). The next section describes aspects of the practical part.

4.4.1 Preparing to get a job – the practical part of introduction

The practical part of the introduction contained workshops and exercises such as learning to use computers, writing a curriculum vitae, and (learning to) concretize dreams and ambitions for the future by planning ahead. According to the teacher, systematic planning as well as documenting job experience and competencies were entirely new to most of the students 'coming from a collectivist clan society' (cf. Carlson 2006) In their countries you might just 'go to the lorry driver and ask if there is any job today'. The practical part also included educational visits to workplaces and preparation for work life practice. Several periods of job practice were also administered alongside the programme (by a different agency than the SFI) and were supposed to help the migrants to get contacts in the labour market.

The teachers took an optimistic approach to the well-known problems of labour market access. As part of this approach, however, they also looked for pragmatic solutions, opting for safe alternatives, for instance, in offering advice to students prior to work life practice. I observed one of these advice sessions where students met one of the

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[54] Every resident in Sweden has a personal identification number that is used in all contacts with authorities and required for employment contracts, housing contracts, telephone contracts, etc., as well as in interactions with the health care system and other welfare services. Asylum seekers and temporary residents get temporary numbers that allow limited access, for instance, to health care.

teachers to discuss their CVs and career plans. The following conversation is taken from the field notes (this session included two girls who wanted to do practice together):

> [Two girls] want to practise in a kitchen. Preferably at a kindergarten or a school. They say they also want to practise cleaning, for instance, at a hospital.
> Teacher: 'What's good about a school? Why not a restaurant?'
> The girls don't know.
> 'Let's take a look', Teacher says, and begins writing on the whiteboard [trying to structure the girls' motives]. 'At school they cook food from many countries. The customers are children, not lots of adults as in restaurants.'
> 'It feels better with children,' the girls say.
> 'Why?' Teacher asks.
> 'It's easier,' they answer, 'easier to cook. Easier than in the restaurant.'
> '*The cooking is more complicated in the restaurant',* Teacher concludes. She then asks them in which other professions one may work with children.
> 'As teachers …?' the girls suggest.
> 'You can clean in schools,' Teacher says and the girls laugh and agree.
> 'Now you understand!' Teacher exclaims.
> 'To sum up: You can do your practice at a school and try two vocations at once: kitchen work and cleaning.'
> Teacher erases 'restaurant' from the whiteboard. They now reiterate the girls' future plan: The introduction class ends in May, then they take summer classes in SFI and advance to Swedish classes level 2C or D beginning in September or December. [Teacher thinks it will be 'difficult' to do job practice and study Swedish at the same time and advises the girls to do one after the other.] In September they do their job practice in kitchen work and cleaning. Eventually they will also advance to preparatory Swedish classes and qualify for vocational training to become cleaners or kitchen staff.
> 'Does this feel good to you?' Teacher asks.
> The girls agree [but Teacher insists, turning to each of them]:
> 'Is this your plan, N?' N answers yes.
> 'Is this also your plan, H?' H answers yes.
> Teacher: 'You have the same plan. That's interesting. But it is not certain that you will do everything at the same time.'
> (Field notes 2/2)

It was important, the teacher subsequently explained to me, that the girls understood the meaning of *individual* plans, and therefore she emphasized that they might progress at different speeds. The teacher also advised the girls on how they should go about formulating their wishes to the person in charge of job practice placements. She

reminded them that plans can be changed but *the target must always be a job*. As we see, the teacher's advice goes beyond the concrete issue of finding a job. She also works on the girls' mindset and goal orientation, literally calling forth the self-monitoring, ambition-driven, and future-oriented subject, reminiscent of the autonomy principle in the case of Città (see further section 4.5).[55]

We have seen in the case of Città how the incompatibility of the programme with reality led to secondary arrangements where the migrants tried to secure their future survival by dropping out of the programme and working in the informal sector. In Sweden the corresponding strategy was instead to resign and accept. Compared to Italy, 'waiting for a job' was structurally and existentially possible because the migrants would not become homeless, starve, or die if they submitted to the trajectory suggested by the programme. Following the programme was necessary to gain a minimum income when there were no alternatives, so following the programme became the job. The strategy of resignation entailed *the display* of cheerfulness and optimism in class. 'I am waiting. I have registered everywhere, the unemployment agency, I spoke to the municipality. I wait. You've got to do your practice first. I am used to working all the time but now I study. I am unemployed [laugh]' (Ben).

Those who struggled against resignation instead ran into the problem that the goal-oriented mindset of the student did not coincide with the trajectory of the programme. Here too we can make a comparison with the situation in Città, where realizing autonomy entailed rejecting the introduction programme. In Stad, the programme could not be rejected, so remaining determined to 'go ahead' *in spite* of the programme, became the key issue.

> When you see that there is a person who wants to *go ahead*, who wants to *move* ahead, who doesn't want to sit around and wait for something. When a person tells you 'I need a job' I believe that person should be helped to find a job. But when you see nobody is taking the step to help you, everybody tells you 'You can't get any job, you have to know the language, you can't get a job you have to study the language, you can't …' (Johanna, Somali migrant)

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[55] The current strategy of the centre-right coalition government (2006-) is generally to 'encourage' people on sick leave, unemployment benefits, or social benefits to find employment. It is called 'the work strategy' (*arbetslinjen*) and involves a combination of lower benefits and generous subsidies to employers for hiring the long-term unemployed.

When signing up at the unemployment agency Johanna was told there were lots of *unemployed Swedes.* She fiercely contested this remark: 'I believe that if *you* don't have a job it doesn't necessarily mean *I* should not have a job.'

The problem with ambitious and educated students was that they tended to question things. In spite of the teachers' assurances that they took all kinds of individual needs and wishes into account, they seemed to be more at ease with the less demanding students. 'The academics', for instance, were seen as complicated students because they were more headstrong and 'carried more baggage', that is, they were less accepting of the teachers' propositions and examples (cf. Carlson 2006).

> Teacher: The academics are more dissociated. '*This* is not how we did things in *our* country, nooo ....'
> I: It is connected to their status and education ...?
> T: *Absolutely.* And they *know* that God I might become a pizza baker here in Sweden, or a cleaner, while in my own country I was a teacher or an engineer, but there are *no jobs!* So I understand their frustration.
> I: But you try to support them to get into their professions ...?
> T: Oh yes, and now it is getting better because the unemployment agency has begun validating their [degrees from the country of origin] and telling them what complementary studies they need. If they have the certificate, that is, otherwise they may do the relevant classes again. *That's* good! Then they can rise one level and ... *If* they manage the Swedish language well enough, that is. (Interview with introduction teacher)

The teacher's reasoning in the excerpt echoes Johanna's experience of a series of obstacles to ambition. In this context it may be experienced as more difficult to support a student with high expectations than one with low or moderate expectations.

Gaining familiarity with working life and visiting potential workplaces was also part of the programme. Here, too, it was easier to promote access to low-skilled workplaces, such as the building industry, elderly care, hairdressers, and car sales. When asked if she could also arrange study visits at hospitals (e.g. for doctors and nurses), one teacher answered hypothetically: 'Of course I can! If not at one ward I'll try the next. Or at a primary health care centre. You should never give up.' In reality, it was difficult enough to find low-skilled workplaces interested in having the new arrivals visit, let alone set up places for them to do their work life practice. In this climate, the teacher might emphasize other positive outcomes:

> [The work life visit project] was *kind of* good in a way. But it was a *huge step*! It was like as if I kicked them out almost. But they were *so proud* when they had *made it* and all went *well* and people had been *kind to them* and [faking astonished/happy voice:]'Oh! She answered our questions!'

Reminiscent of the frontliner in Città, who expressed satisfaction if the participants in the programme did not blame him for their lack of success, this teacher in Stad projected childlike happiness onto students who managed to exchange a few lines in Swedish with an employer. Consequently, the less complicated and demanding, and the more 'childlike' and malleable, the students were, the more the teachers experienced positive feedback.

> Some [analphabets] get all these insights like, they just twinkle like *oh!* They advance quickly beginning in level A and then B and then already with C and there's no stopping them! Just encourage them. I clap my hands and yes, continue!

Carlson (2002), in her study of Swedish language classes for migrants, argues that migrants are seen as 'weak' students by the teachers. In my material (which does not cover the language courses but does cover the introductory course and is less comprehensive than Carlson's), the teachers seem to make a conscious effort to focus on the students as competent and fast learners. However, this *explicit* focus seems to reveal that the opposite is or might be expected. If the ambivalence expressed vis-à-vis the 'academics' is also taken into account, there seems to be some struggling involved in seeing the migrants as a resource rather than a problem. It may have to do with the teacher's identification with the role as *helper* and *educator* and with being invested with (gatekeeping) authority (ibid.). This authority is questioned or threatened when the migrant demonstrates the possession of symbolic capital that the teacher does not possess. Therefore, unintentionally, it may be more convenient for the teacher to consider the students as the 'weak' party in terms of education, making an effort to 'raise' the status of the students by emphasizing their marvellous progress, than to simply accept equal or even (in educational terms) inferior status in relation to the student (cf. Graham 2003).

4.4.2 Knowledge and determination – the theoretical part

The theoretical part was organized as lectures in virtually all relevant topics regarding the structure and institutions of Swedish society, including the labour market, workers' unions and workers' rights, the police, the legal system, how to file suits on racism and discrimination, family life and family law, democracy, how and why to vote, the political parties and the parliament, and the unemployment agency and social services. The teacher would typically start out with an overview and an introduction to the topic of the day and then she would have invited guests come in to present their work (the police, the municipality's integration officer, a local politician). Again, these so-called meetings between Swedes in different positions and the class of migrants fulfilled two purposes; the official one was informational, the unofficial one was to break isolation and to 'get Swedes to meet the migrants'. The teacher in charge of the theoretical part believed in meetings between individuals beyond the structural and cultural divisions, and she believed that most Swedes working with integration issues had no idea of who their clients really were. She thus invited people to present, and encouraged the students to make the presenters answer all their questions.

> I see the meeting with the guests in this class as a very exciting reflection. I listen to how you present, what do you say? And then I interfere when I think that, gee, now we are heading in the wrong direction, you see some guests can get like [bass voice]: 'You must learn the language! It's the key to everything!' Then you must rewind, and I do that by asking questions. Eh and then I *feel* the atmosphere in the class. In some cases I *let* [the students] get upset because it … If I have a guest who needs to be taught a lesson I do that.

In this theoretical part of the introduction course, students were sitting in groups around an interpreter, and the teacher literally orchestrated active participation, questions, and discussions by directing the turn-taking between different groups and their interpreters. Classes were information-dense and intensive. During a break, one interpreter exclaimed that 'We, the interpreters, learn a lot during these classes!' Not all the students – those who were unemployed and 'waiting' – seemed to find the sessions as useful as the (already established and employed) interpreters did. Dina, a 50-year-old

single mother looking for an unskilled job to support her children, appreciated the energy of the teachers but considered herself too old to truly benefit from studies.

> Dina: They really try to make us understand things, the teachers. They have put so much energy into it. But my brain is closed, but they really try.
> I: Why is your brain closed?
> D: [Laughing heartily] You can't open it when you are 50 years old, it has been closed for 50 years! [---]
> I: Do you think you have learnt anything important?
> D: They try, they even 'blow it in' [interpreter's translation from Somali expression] to make us understand. Some things stick I guess …
> I: Do they try in a good way, you think?
> D: They do it well, they never get tired with us. They try and they …, we are here from 8 am to 5 pm and they have the same level of energy all day. I guess they faint when they come home [laughs].

Some interviewees thought it was inappropriate to send 'old' people back to school (cf. Carlson 2002; Carlson 2006). Overall, the positive and energy-inducing attitude of the teachers clashed with the resignation of the students. The more resigned the students were, the more the teachers became firm in their conviction that it was all a matter of the right mindset. Students must be pushed ahead, not given time to 'rest'.

> We commit a cardinal error in Sweden. Because what *happens* when you *have* the need [to rest and recover], eh, you have lived under conditions of maximum strain and you come to Sweden where we are so *totally* care-taking, then you lose speed! You get *empty*, the engine *dies*. And I think *this* we must counteract by saying 'Come on, you can keep going just a little bit! Stay in there because now you must get a job! *Then* you may relax. *Now* is the toughest time of your migration, because, you see, now you have a residence permit! Now you must get *out there* and find a job, support yourself and become an *autonomous* individual, become a *person,* with, eh, the competencies that you've got! (Teacher)

In this excerpt, the source of resignation is defined partly as the 'care-taking' system and partly as the (wrong) individual mindset, but manifestly *not* the very real structural obstacles to labour market inclusion (cf. Pripp 2004). Nor does the teacher identify the obstacles to rapid advancement in this respect that are inherent in the fact that her students are not really 'new arrivals' but have already spent one to three years of forced

'resting' while waiting for their permits. Neither the asylum investigation nor the introduction courses were fast or flexible enough to support the individual needs of the migrants. On the contrary, both during the waiting time and after having received a permit, structural circumstances raised major obstacles to ambition. In other words, *migrants were asked to act independently within a structural and organizational framework that severely restricted their freedom of choice.*

Moreover, in both the Italian and the Swedish introduction programmes, this ultimate restriction of choice in practice appeared to be more or less subconsciously compensated for by the frontliners' ideological projections of 'society as it should be' – attempting to mould the client subjectivities into that ideal. In Città, migrants were told to accept nothing less than formal work contracts, but there were only informal and precarious jobs available. In Stad, migrants were told to learn the language fluently and to study all the necessary courses and to submit to work life practice before even thinking of applying for a real job (cf. Kamali 2005; De los Reyes 2006a).

The theoretical part of the introduction course also included the discussion of values and attitudes, in accordance with the 'fundamental values' articulated in the official curriculum of education in Swedish schools (see e.g. Carlson 2002:104-5). We will return to this below in discussing the fostering of the democratic subject. In general, although the introduction programme in Stad had access to better organization and a lot more resources than did its counterpart in Città, it seemed to run into a similar paradox: the goal – stable employment – was simply not that easy to achieve. Resolving this institutional paradox became a problem for the migrants at the level of the individual. In Città, they resorted to precarious labour; in Stad, they resorted to resignation. These different outcomes were directly related to contextual and structural factors, such as the organization of the labour market and welfare regime.

Meanwhile, due to the stretched-out time that a migrant in Stad spent in the introduction and affiliated courses, the integration trajectory brought forth a lot more issues here than in Città. There was both time and resources enough to work on the migrant subject in accordance with ethnocentric ideals and cultural projections, a process by which the integrating mission went beyond the informative purpose and

became a transformative one. In Stad the introduction was not only about work and language, but about social skills, codes, and emotional orientation.

4.5 Autonomy, discipline, and integration – fostering the democratic subject

> I work with the concepts modern and traditional. Right, it's a dichotomy that I don't like because it kind of gives the impression you're backwards and we are developed. So I am very careful when I use these concepts to explain that in Iraq there is traditional *and* modern and in Somalia there is traditional *and* modern. And then I compare with the fact that *I* was born [in Sweden] in [the 1950s]. [...] And then when we get the picture I ask, 'Well, how does this work for you who come from Afghanistan? You have not travelled *48 years* like I've done but you have travelled *48 hours* to get [to the modern Sweden of today]. How do *you* have time *to cope* emotionally and cognitively? (Teacher)

The orientation to Swedish work life and society focuses on aspects that are supposed to ease integration. The main teacher in Stad thought 'integration' was a murky word, one that could only be dealt with at the individual 'micro' level, thus, she introduced the idea that Swedes must also meet the migrants. In practice, since the course did not have any Swedes, this ambition was not easy to realize. The subject of the integration courses is migrants, not Swedes, and the objective of the course is to orientate migrants in the process of adaptation to Swedish society. As it were, this objective ended up in something similar to the case of Città, only in a much more elaborated way. Much more organization, time, and money were spent on it: there was a much more comprehensive *transformative* objective – an ambition to create the new person – out of people that were conceived as culturally determined to be pre-modern, collectivist, intolerant, authoritarian, and patriarchal (cf. Carlson 2002). These cultural traits were contrasted with Sweden's individualism, gender equality, modernity, diversity, tolerance, and openness (ibid.). In order to function in Swedish society, the migrants must learn everything from acting and thinking in terms of individualism, to greeting ceremonies and tolerance of diversity, to how to live democratically in their own households. Autonomy in the Swedish case was expressed more in terms of individualism, and although the goal was self-support, permanent and full-time *employment* seemed to be less in focus, while personal transformation, *learning, finding (legal) creative ways to*

support oneself (like entrepreneurship), low-skilled, temporary or part-time jobs, and studies, appeared as the concretely discussed alternatives. This policy of self-activation and a life of hidden unemployment is a common way to deal with the situation of marginalized groups in Sweden (De los Reyes 2006a). The migrants were categorized as belonging to such problematic groups right from the start. One teacher said that the experience of having worked with 'mentally retarded [sic!] and mentally ill persons' in her previous jobs was a real asset in working with the migrants, thus implying that these groups have similar characteristics.

In the Italian case we saw the pervasiveness of the idea that the migrants, in order to become integrated, needed to learn to think individually and autonomously, meaning that they also must leave the collectivist/clan identity behind. This idea was also found in the Swedish case, but the introductory programme here was longer, more structured and organized, and directly tied to benefits such as the introductory allowance. This gave the teachers very clear and effective means to coerce participation in the programme; class attendance was 100% because absence was immediately recorded by the teachers and it led to disciplinary measures such as reductions in the allowance.

> If you are not in class [on time] we report you as absent! There is *no* negotiation there. We are very insistent on this. You *absolutely must be punctual* otherwise [there will be consequences] because , uh, this is, the perception of time is embodied! But it's also in the head. It is a cognitive structure, time, and you must understand what message you give when you are late. Who do *you* want the employer to think that you are? And that is clear, too, that you are welcome to put me up as a reference person when you apply for a job, but don't do it if you aren't punctual because I will tell them that you aren't punctual. (Teacher)

Similar to the case of Città, being on time was motivated by the purpose of socialization into the labour market. Migrants must (collectively) learn to be punctual as if they were never concerned with time before. Time emerges here as a critical issue for people who are dependent; others control their time through the access to resources that the dependants need (power), and in their capacity as important allies whose sympathy/antipathy makes a difference (status). As such, the requirement to demonstrate punctuality is a symbolic straight-jacket worn by low-status individuals

and dependants. It is required as a sign of moral character and integrity to signal that the misery of poverty and/or dependency is *not* the subject's own fault (as a result of laziness and poor self-discipline)(cf. Clark 1987). Keeping track of time becomes a way to distinguish between those worthy of help and those who are not. As in Città, teachers possessed both soft and hard means to reward or punish students, as they exercised power over their allowance and chances to find employment. In the main teacher's case, the latter was seen in the examples where she would go to great lengths to back up her students. If needed, she would be directly involved when students did their job practice and felt badly treated or isolated, or when they applied for jobs. She once accompanied a student to an employment interview (to be hired as a cleaner) in order to personally vouch for the student's reliability and trustworthiness as a future employee.

The idea that the introductory programme must be seen as a type of employment also entailed the students 'learning' to arrange sick leave and parental leave (to care for sick children), thereby becoming socialized into the Swedish welfare system. Specifically, the students would have to first call the teachers and then call the migrant department at the municipality (which administered the allowance) if they could not come for any legitimate reason.[56] However, this arrangement was confusing, and in one case an interviewed female migrant (Johanna) clearly ended up feeling she had been wrongfully punished.

> Now we have a situation if I stay at home and my child is sick and I call them [and say] my child is sick [then they will] cut off 20% of my money. [---] They tell you 'Oh you're like a working person, the money we're giving you is like a working person'– fine! But when *my* child is sick I have to have some money coming in from somewhere else! I don't! So why do you cut it off? You understand what I'm telling you? (…) So I'm a 'working person' when *they* want me to be.

Like the frontliners in Città, the Stad teachers were concerned with the urgency of the migrants 'learning' to become autonomous and self-supporting, and to think individually rather than as members of 'a collective' (a clan system). Students must be encouraged – for their survival in the new society – to break with the 'clan mentality' and instead to act and think *for* themselves, *about* themselves, in a systematic, strategic, goal-oriented

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[56] The parental leave for the care of a sick child guarantees 80% of the salary from the first day.

manner. *Resistance* against the programme, or criticism or misunderstanding, was seen as a consequence of ethnic behavioural structures.

> Many [XX ethnic origin] they stick to this collective level that we are supposed to think and talk this way, we are *supposed* to be that way and we are supposed to be angry with each other and we must be *opposed to each other* (…) When I worked as organizer of the job practice placements I met primarily [XX] men but also many women who said 'I don't want job practice'. They opposed it even though they *wanted* it! And I was fascinated because when we talked for a while they became *so* enthusiastic and they thought, 'Gee, it's gonna be great to go out and practice and meet some Swedes and see some Swedish workplaces,' and they were *full* of anticipation, and I was really fascinated because this attitude 'I don't want practice' was really pervasive, but it's the *collective* attitude. (Teacher)

The resistance put up by some students was obviously challenging the authority of the teachers. The challenge of a person's or a group's status, according to Kemper (2006) is likely to give rise to resentment and anger. According to the interviewed teachers there were also many frustrated and angry persons in the teaching team. But the professional attitude was to reframe resistance as working against the migrant's own best interests and instead to patiently manipulate him/her to get around this 'collective' attitude. One way to do that, according to the above teacher, was to 'ask how the family is, how did they react to moving [immigrating], and then move inwards and so how are *you?* How are things going with *you?* And *then* all of a sudden things start to happen.'

The remoulding of the 'clan-oriented' mind into an 'individualistic' one was further tied to the theme of democratic values (Carlson 2002). Apparently, the truly democratic subject must be performed as living democracy in practice, so to speak. The teachers thought that the students, although they would have ideas and knowledge about democracy as a political system, needed to learn how to incorporate those ideas into their lives and their relations with others: 'They have not yet found their democratic identity. They have acquired the *concept* of democracy but they have not transformed it into the human values' (Teacher). To this end, provocative topics were brought up during class and discussed, and small challenges were 'smuggled' in, such as when talking about marriage, mentioning in passing that, in Sweden, men can be married to men and women to women, or that, indeed, religions may be changed like jackets.

Teacher: It's true right? I choose whether to be a Muslim or a Christian. In Sweden. But I could come from a different culture or country where *I have no choice.* (…) For instance from Iran, there I am a Muslim if I am Iranian, but I can't be something else, then I am no Iranian.
You cannot choose. *But* in Sweden we *have* democracy, right, we have *freedom of religion.* I can *choose* to be Muslim this week and Buddhist the next. (Tape-recorded observation 2/4)

When discussions got heated the teacher called for patience and asked the students to wait for their turn to speak, framing this as a *democratic* way of discussing. While the values referred to were mainly those of mutual tolerance, respect, and consensus in relations between people, these values were simultaneously described as *the core of Swedishness*, the Swedish way of being.[57] Hence, acquiring a democratic identity would further the migrants' integrative chances in Swedish society. In a class on 'culture clashes' the teacher ended the session by saying, 'Remember the *Swedish Model* in which you can agree to disagree *but still* have a nice time together.' In addition to tolerance, respect, and consensus, *equality* was discussed and encouraged as a core Swedish *democratic* value. In this focus on learning 'respect for women and children' and the necessity of gender equality in Sweden, the introductory mission in Stad diverged remarkably from the one in Città.

4.5.1 'You must negotiate' – gender equality as key to Swedishness

We have students who live in the world of democracy who have become truly equal … and then we have those who, like, *thought* they were equal and who get more like, Hah, you see? That's the way to do it. Hah! You hear that's what you are supposed to do [laughs]. And yet we are not moralistically telling them this is how it is and this is what to do, but we say *you must negotiate* … it is constant … negotiation. And then: Big sigh, Must I *negotiate* again!? What am I supposed to

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[57] Carlson (2002) shows how this discourse originates in the core values of the Swedish school system generally in the curriculum of 1994; Lpf 94. She cites the curriculum: 'The sanctity of human life, the freedom and integrity of individuals, equality between men and women and solidarity with the weak and exposed are the values that the school shall perform and transmit. In accordance with the ethic administered by a Christian tradition and Western Humanism this is to take place through the fostering of the individual to a sense of justice, generosity, tolerance, and responsibility taking.' The curriculum is an organizing document also of the SFI education, but as noted by Carlson, the teachers felt 'a certain unease' at the prospect of 'fostering' adults. However, if the adults are seen as 'childlike' because they are 'not modern', the fostering ambition may be seen as a necessary tool in assisting 'integration'.

negotiate about?! Well, it's like those frustrations. And that is an ordinary family tiff, like, and then we say welcome to the world of the Svenssons! (Teacher)

[Women] who never had any self-confidence outside of the home now they get to *study,* and we talk about like when someone talks [I ask] do you both study? Well, then you must share the house chores! *What?!* Of course, you live in a *flat*! You are *two* adults, then you *must* help to pick up children [from the day care] and, and … even if you can't cook, you can heat things up … ready-cooked food! And if you can't do that, you can do the dishes. And above all: take away your own dish when you have eaten! [laughs loudly] It's like *every time!!!* But *many* of them have started like, 'Oh yeah, it's like that! In Sweden you take away your own dish when you have eaten!' (Teacher)

As argued by De los Reyes, 'equality between women and men has become an increasingly important mark of Swedishness' (see also Carlson 2006; De los Reyes 2002:172). Within this general framework, in contrast to Città, gender equality was a prominent theme throughout the whole integration course. In fact, it was *the measure* of a truly democratic mind. At first sight, to be a female migrant and mother was easier in Sweden generally than it was in the region of Città. The Swedish welfare regime buffers the (still presumed) primary parental responsibilities of women, and it builds on the expectations and requirements that women are engaged at least part-time in salaried labour. The lack of extended family to help out (e.g. by babysitting), pointed out in Città, was thereby a smaller obstacle in Sweden due to the all-encompassing system of child-care services. That is, at least if the children were younger than three years old. After that age, children in Città were enrolled in pre-school on a more or less full-time basis, while in Sweden access to child care is conditional on the employment status of the parents: children of unemployed persons are allowed only 15 hours per week in day care, which of course affects the ability of an unemployed person to actively seek employment on a full-time basis.[58] However, the temporary permits issued by the Italian authorities are likely to hamper the continuity and security of migrant children's participation in school. In addition, in contrast to Città, the children of migrants in Sweden do not (at least not to the same extent) face the threat of starvation or

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[58] The application of this rule may vary between municipalities and is probably most strictly applied in times of long queues to child day care or after-school recreational activities offered by the primary school. Private schools and child-care centres may also be more flexible.

homelessness if their parents are unemployed, and the parent (mother) will have at least a limited amount of weekly time for activities without children.

The problem that occurred in Stad was the clash between some women's wishes and expectations for their future lives and the expectation that the frontliners had for them. For Dina, everything was fine when, during the asylum application process, she could see her elder children off to school. She did not participate in the local language classes offered to asylum seekers (these are not obligatory) because she could not fit them in with the hours her youngest child was allowed in day care, and because she wanted to be at home when her children returned from school.[59]

> The waiting time [to receive a residence permit] was long, but I thought my children are going to school [now]. They can come home and I know they will come home. And I didn't think of anything else. The most important thing was that they were well and went to school and that I was there at home and then I had no other problems.

In Sweden, Dina got access to basic resources that enabled her to mother her children peacefully and in accordance with her own ideals of motherhood (cf. Björnberg 2010; Fangen 2006). However, these ambitions did not quite live up to the aims of the introduction programme, where she was required to 'get *out there* and find a job, support yourself and become an *autonomous* individual, become a *person*'. As we saw earlier, Dina's aim was to find low-skilled but preferably full-time employment. She did not think she would ever be able to learn Swedish well, let alone to get into the Swedish culture, which was profoundly strange to her.[60] On the other hand, Johanna, who had high ambitions, found herself being slowed down and frustrated by the programme. Neither of the women corresponded to the discourse of 'the migrant woman' commonly employed by the teachers. According to Carlson (2002) the SFI teachers tend to victimize the migrant woman and consider her an object of fostering into values of

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[59] Normally children in the first to the third grades finish at around 1 or 2 p.m., unless the children are enrolled in the after-school recreation centre for junior children, to which access is limited or closed off to unemployed parents.

[60] Björnberg (2010) writes about migrant mothers: 'Their social identity is strongly tied to mothering and the role of motherhood offers a stable identity throughout the ambivalence of the transition period' (p. 127).

equality between the sexes. This is partly true for my material as well. In the opinion of the interviewed teachers, the migrant women experienced a huge change in social status when they arrived in Sweden. Paralleling the 'time-travel' discourse (see the previous section) – according to which a person coming from Afghanistan travelled the equivalent of 40 years in one day – on crossing the border women who had been 'cowering under the tyranny of patriarchy' (in clan societies) magically turned into human beings of equal worth (cf. Carlson 2006).

> A woman who crosses the border … [before that], she *has* no status in society but she has her status through the man. Not only does she get *her own* status but she is put on pedestal as a Madonna who has lived in oppression. […] What happens when you *come* to Sweden, well then you have all these projects directed to women, we *defend* the women. (Teacher)

As the teachers viewed it, then, the women began to be empowered simply by entering Sweden, where their legal rights were equal to men's and where allowances were paid to the individual and not given to the head of the family. As expressed by one of the teachers, 'Some *women* when they get their first 100 krona note or something, they have never had *money* before, right? What can I buy with *this?* What can I *do?* But you can buy milk and bread!'

Hence, using reasoning similar to that of the frontliners in Città, migrant women were seen as a priori engulfed by the family, as shadows of their men, but in contrast to Città, in Stad this situation was made a problem of major concern. Men lost their status as heads of their families, women gained status as equals – and according to the teachers, both parties needed guidance to cope with and adapt to these changes.[61] Yet, the ways to

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[61]Carlson (2002) discusses the issue of migrant women's management of and relationship to the 'Swedish' norm of gender equality. The Turkish women interviewed in her study hold to the idea that Swedish couples live according to the norm and that Swedish women consequently have more time for themselves. This is also the image that is transmitted to them by the SFI material (for instance, pictures of men vacuuming, doing the dishes, cooking, etc). They also negotiate more everyday power for themselves, as argued by Carlson, but simultaneously defend their own 'culture', where the man decides and the woman is responsible for the household and children. The main part of the problem here, I believe, is the silencing of the gap between norm and practice – the fact that most Swedish women reason like the Turkish women do in Carlson's material. They juxtapose their own needs with the socially and culturally constructed needs of children, postpone their own career dreams and plans, and feel frustrated and disappointed about their husband's lack of support and initiative in making the family project run smoothly (see e.g. Bekkengen 2002; Holmberg 2001). Articulating the gap narrows the divide between Swedish and migrant women, whereas silencing the gap widens this divide for the purpose of strengthening the imagery of 'cultural differences'. The role of gender in the construction of 'us', the civilized and the good, and 'them'

approach the problem – orienting attention to the women through different projects – was also problematized and considered an ambivalent strategy. In the reflections of one of the teachers, the 'integration by proxy' philosophy applied by the frontliners in Città reappeared, but this time as a potential strategy used to teach equality:

> The man is the key to the family in clan societies, so it makes you wonder whether we have directed our resources a bit strangely. Because it is much easier to influence the men since then you indirectly influence the women and children also. You can never do projects directed at women … you can convert – I mean make them adopt other values – the women and the children as much as you want, but when they come home it stops immediately.

Such male-oriented projects, however, the teacher continued, must be headed by 'older men' (not women and certainly not younger women), in accordance with the values of a 'clan society'. Alternatively, discussion groups with Swedish men could also be arranged. Following this reasoning, talks with democratic/equal ethnic Swedish men would have a beneficial and cooling influence on the status anxiety of migrant men in Sweden.

The 'fostering of Christian and Swedish values' as we have seen was inscribed into the state-approved and sanctioned curriculum for Swedish schools. Carlson (2002) argues that teaching values connected to 'family, sexuality, and married life' is also sometimes emphasized at the municipal level. Because the equality issue was supposedly completely overwhelming to the migrants, the teachers in Stad consistently tried to bring it onto the migrants' agenda. These efforts were seen as conducive to integration; to become a democratic subject and to better integrate into *Swedish* culture, migrants had to confront and adapt to basic standards of gender equality. Male migrants must not only stop abusing their wives and children (it was stated by the teachers as a common practice) because it was a crime in Sweden, but they also ought to 'help' at home. The fact that male migrants were thought to have problems with respecting women motivated a particular firmness on the part of the (female) teachers. As teachers, they relied on the formal authority invested in them, and thereby the power to grant or

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the pre-modern and the bad, are highlighted by post-colonial theory and research (Mernissi 2001; Mohanty 1997; Spivak 1988). Studies also suggest that in-group violence and oppression of women is silenced in favour of establishing internal homogeneity and solidarity in relation to the other, onto whom these phenomena are instead projected as inherent in *their* ethnic and cultural traditions (Flam et al. 2010; Martin 2005).

withdraw resources. They also thought of themselves as serving as models of the democratic subject, demonstrating patience, tolerance, and humour as tools to parry provocative and even insulting remarks from the students.

For instance, the class on cultural clashes (with the purpose of promoting tolerance) was managed with equal parts authority (the teacher directing the turn-taking and level of discussion of the students) and humour – making it possible to disarm highly controversial issues (Fine and de Soucey 2005; Wettergren 2009). The teacher presented the view that everyone should be judged individually and neither by their gender nor by their cultural or religious background. In addition, even in democracies, 'where there is so much freedom', 'I must follow the laws, the norms of society. If I want friends in life and someone to talk to, then I should function somewhat well together with others in this country' (Tape-recorded observation 2/4). The class ended in intense discussion about the differences between women and men, where some (male) students suggested that women think differently, and are physically weaker and less courageous than men, and that reasoning in terms of gender equality might be anti-religious. These suggestions were clearly provocative in the eyes of the teacher, who nevertheless headed them and put them up for discussion in a good-humoured way. Perhaps feeling the need to reassert herself, in the very last minutes of the class she exclaimed in a laughing tone: 'Women, listen! God created the man with muscles and the woman with brains.' Immediately, a student picked up on it and retorted: 'By saying this you confirm that there is no equality between women and men.' The teacher answered, now serious: 'We *strive* towards equality but we are not there yet.' People got up to leave but one student shouted: 'If woman is made of a rib she cannot have a brain!'

Obviously, repeated interactions through which the teachers were positioned as *primarily* gendered and only secondarily as teachers was a challenge to *their* (cultural) beliefs and expectations. It challenged the teachers' status, evoking feelings of resentment (cf. Wettergren 2010). From an emotion-sociological perspective, framing the other as a 'clan-oriented' and 'patriarchal' pre-modern and non-democratic object of interventions can be understood as a way to manage resentment, feelings of anger, and vengeance. According to the main teacher, the best strategy was to accept that 'you cannot like all the students' but to refrain from considering the disliked person as

representative of his or her culture. On the other hand, the cultural categorizing of the students worked as a way to displace problems, relieving the individual from responsibility, and thus it helped the teacher to sustain a professional helper role, as seen above in the example of resistance to work life practice (p. 117). Cultural categories, and belief in the way that they structure identities, allowed the teacher to treat the individual students' provocations as mere expressions of ideological distortions rather than as their own opinions. In other words, 'culturalizing' the other serves not *only* as a way to displace responsibility from the Swedish system to the individual migrant, as much previous research suggests (Pripp 2004), but *also* as a way to manage frontliners' emotions of resentment against individual migrants who challenge their authority.

However, in some cases the teacher did not stop at this symbolic reframing of an event but used her discretionary power to reinforce a lesson. One such event the teacher recalled was the situation with a Muslim man who refused to shake her hand: 'I met that person who avoided meeting my gaze and literally put his hand behind his back and said "no"!' At first she tried to reframe the event in terms of 'freedom of religion', but this did not help her come to terms with the situation and her own feelings: 'I felt *offended,* I felt *rejected* and *turned down* in spite of my own open and welcoming attitude! And this was a pure cultural clash even if it has to do with religion. And even though I knew this, I felt that way.' In response to this event, she shifted into an assumed ethnic Swedish interpretive frame, imagining herself as any other Swede who would not understand, and who would read the refusal to shake hands as a pure expression of contempt *cum* refusal to integrate: 'And I tried to think, what if I didn't *know* that this was a Muslim ... *custom* that some chose to endorse, then how would I react as a *Swede?* I think I would be mad! And I would in fact think 'hrm, hrm what are they *here* for? They have no right to be here!' Having analysed the situation this way, turning it into an issue that may turn out to be harmful *for the migrant himself,* the teacher decided to make it clear to the person in question what his refusal to shake her hands could mean to her and to other Swedes.

> I thought, now it's time to deliver the truth! So I picked two guys, one is a
> practising Muslim – eh orthodox Muslim you might even call him – eh, still ... and

the other was more like a secular Muslim if you can call it like that [light laughter]. And I said, 'This is what I experienced when you did that.' The orthodox Muslim reacted really strongly, he was *dismayed* by … that *his* conduct that, from his perspective then, is to show respect to a woman, could be interpreted in the completely opposite way. While the secular Muslim thought, 'Well, that doesn't mean anything.' *That* was fascinating! And I explained to him, how do you *want* people to *feel* when you meet them in Sweden? *You* chose that reaction! *You* can direct and influence that. And it was so interesting because this [swallows] orthodox Muslim, he began practising on all of us in school, shaking hands with us. Every day when I saw him in the corridor he came like 'Hi!' and he gave me his hand, because this was really difficult for him. Eeeeh, he felt *anguished,* I noticed, when he was to shake our hands! […] And still, today when I see him in town … he wants to shake hands [laughs] and … He got this epiphany of an insight. And then I feel that, then I have done something good! Instead of … it's easy to say 'We don't do that in Sweden.' But that doesn't *explain* anything ….

As we have seen, the introduction for 'new arrivals' in Stad dealt with problems similar to those in the introduction programme in Città, problems that pertain to the status of unsolicited migrants in European countries: discrimination in the labour market, potential marginalization and otherization by the dominant ethnic culture, and so forth. But in Stad, more money and resources and stricter rules allowed the programme to get a more comprehensive grip on the migrant. The most striking difference between the Swedish and the Italian cases was the approach to female migrants. What we see here, however, is compatible with the Italian case, where the frontliners attempted to meet their own ideals about just and fair labour relations in their work with the migrants. Similarly, the female teachers in Stad blended ideals about just and fair private/family relations into their work with the migrants. In both cases, the society to which the 'integration' is oriented is reduced in its complexity in accordance with values and ideals held by the frontliners. In many ways the migrants were held hostage by these values, whether they actually adhered to them or not. Their ability to make the best of the programme, and perhaps to get some extra help from the teachers, was conditioned by their ability to at least *demonstrate* the correct values.

4.6 Professionalism – working with 'survival experts'

They begin talking about 'the pregnant woman in flat number [X]', and the landlord says that the Red Cross had called her and said the woman needed help

doing the shopping 'because she was pregnant'. The landlord struggled with her conscience and, though it was not her business, she went there. 'And then [the pregnant woman] stood there, it was cold outside and she did not even wear socks on her feet, so I said 'get in the car and let's go shopping'! And then later the Red Cross wanted me to take her to the maternity ward and so I did. That's how I am! I couldn't live with myself if I had not done it.' The [Migration Board] manager laughs kindly and says 'it's honourable of you, but have you heard the expression 'If you give them a finger they take the whole hand'? As a matter of fact these people are *negotiators.* They have learnt [negotiation] as a survival strategy.' (MB accommodation manager meeting with local landlord. Field notes 2M10.)

In Città we saw the frontliners carving out their own 'professional' attitude towards the job. The experiences and emotions of employees could describe a trajectory from sympathy (being friends with) to disappointment, to a professional, distanced attitude, where feelings were instead invested in organizational aspects and in the relative success or failure of projects. Another employee followed personal ethics as a measure of standards and as a source of emotional satisfaction or frustration. I suggest that, in contrast to the case of Città, the frontliners in Sweden were socialized into a broadly institutionalized discourse about the migrants, and about what *the* required 'professional attitude' of the frontliners in various positions ought to look like. Elsewhere (Wettergren 2010b) I have described the Migration Board department of investigation (which decides about residence permits) as firmly focused on correct procedure and professional behaviour with 'a friendly face'. Offering an interpretive framework as well as an emotional and behavioural script (cf. Fineman 2000; Fineman 2008), this understanding of professionalism reappears also in the other departments (e.g., accommodation) and can probably be said to saturate the bureaucratic organization of the Migration Board on the whole. The difference between the cases of Città and Sweden is thus that while the Italian regions may organize the reception and integration of migrants through various constellations of cooperation between the municipality and the civil society, the Swedish way of organizing is tied to the state institution of the Migration Board, in all parts except the introduction of new arrivals. Thereby the Swedish frontliners had access to a shared discourse about

professionalism,[62] while the frontliners in Città in this respect referred to more heterogeneous and fragmented discourses of the different organizations where they were employed. As we will see, elements of the discourse seem to go beyond the MB, as it also embraces the reasoning of the teachers in the introduction course, thereby suggesting that it is a discourse pertaining to Sweden's national self-image – the welfare state and the terms and conditions of sharing welfare with foreigners (Andersson 2010; Eastmond 2010; Johansson 2005). Who deserves to be included and who does not?

To begin with, as in Città, the frontliners in the Swedish case described a downward sympathy curve (cf. Clark 1987) – from feeling sympathetic to 'everyone' to feeling that 'they all lied'. This trajectory is most explicitly described by one of the teachers in the introduction course:

> Some people (…) feel extreme empathy; they become so culturally relativistic, they love everything that has the 'migrant' stamp on it, like. (…) I think most of the SFI teachers in Sweden are like that, to be honest. They are so in favour of the group of migrants and immigrants in general, so empathetic that they burst, but they are naïve … [---] It's easy to see migrants and immigrants like whales to be saved, but they are not, they are *humans*, quite often much stronger than us and they have much stronger *motives* than us.[---]
>   I was like that myself, like 'oh, let's take care of migrants' until I realized that 'but I don't like you, I don't want to take care of you.' And then I felt this way like 'rent an airplane [and send them all back]!' But then I thought 'no, there must be another way!' And then I reached the attitude I have *now,* and it is really difficult … (Teacher, introduction course)

The teacher was concerned about whether the students deserved the compassion (leading to) time and engagement that teachers put in to help them learn the language and to 'integrate'. Similar trajectories were described by employees of the Migration Board, but here the issue was whether the migrants deserved to stay or not. Since the primary task of the MB is to decide about the applications, empathetic employees are bound to experience conflicts of conscience:

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[62]Of course, as shown by Sarstrand (2007) and Appelqvist (1999), the discourse is not entirely homogeneous and the connection between institutionalized discourses and local discourses is neither necessarily direct nor frictionless. But local variations and even alternative or challenging discourses also need to position themselves *in relation to* the institutionalized discourse because of the way it tends to permeate the entire system of asylum reception. Moreover, the discourse that I claim is institutionalized in Sweden connects in direct and indirect ways to a European discourse, ideas, and perceptions of the migrant other that are prevalent in other European states as well (Hansen 2008).

> I remember one occasion when I felt quite *uncomfortable*. There was a general amnesty in the mid 90s saying that everyone who had been in Sweden for a certain number of years and who had children before January 1 the year before would get residence permits. Then there was a family coming to me saying 'Why is *my* child worth less being born the day after?' … It is a bit difficult … It was a bit difficult to explain. (MB accommodation officer)

I argue that the continuity between the private and professional selves demands emotion work (Hochschild 1983) and an explanatory framework that makes it possible to embrace the decisions and actions of the employer as inherently rational and just (Ashforth and Tomiuk 2006; Wettergren 2010b). The discomfort reported by the officer quoted above thus has to be balanced in order to avoid cognitive and emotive dissonance.[63] And, as it were (the quote continues):

> Then I was surprised because suddenly it started … we kind of thought that everyone coming here they really *want to stay,* but suddenly people began withdrawing their asylum applications and they wanted to go home! And I thought, what is this all *about* and I understood *nothing* and then that was a big problem like 'Right, *how* do we go about *this?'* [laugh]

Jumping from the *discomfort* instigated by the arbitrariness of the legislation to the *surprise* when realizing that some asylum seekers in fact could and would return home, the officer expressed the sudden insight that not all asylum seekers are helpless victims without alternatives to staying in Sweden. This 'insight' fits well with the discourse of the MB saying that its rejection rate reflects the fact that most applicants are *not real* asylum seekers. In its more vulgar expression:

> Assistant sighs and says, 'I've seen lots of sad and horrible things in nine years.' He says that in the beginning he felt attached to every single one of them and he was deeply moved by their fates. That was primarily with the people from ex-Yugoslavia. But this has changed. 'Almost everyone lies, you see,' he says, and gives me an innocent look. (Field notes 2M10)

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[63]The MB officially standing up for the right to asylum, even claiming to *protect* this right (Wettergren 2010) required a cosmopolitan and liberal view – one that ideologically supported the asylum seekers' right to protection and their sincere motivation *while also* supporting the authority's main task – its raison d'être – the practice of selecting out the 'worthy' few who would get permits, from the 'unworthy' majority who would be deported (cf. Hansen 2008).

The 'horrible things' in the excerpt refers to three suicide attempts[64] and several unexplained deaths that the assistant had witnessed during his many years on the job. Seeing these things was tough, he said, but it also 'hardened' him. Like the officer, the assistant had come to realize that not everyone was a victim without alternatives. His explanation – that they all lie – is a bit too blunt for the officer, however, who quickly corrects him (Field notes 2M10 above continue):

> The officer quickly adds: 'You should think of what you would have done yourself in their situation.' The assistant answers: 'Yes, of course you would probably have done anything to be allowed to stay.' (Field notes 2M10).

I argue that this assumption – that most asylum seekers are not *really* in need of protection, but nevertheless are people who would do *anything* to stay – is pervasive among MB employees. This is because the process of acquiring professional distance while working with unsolicited migrants carries with it a particular 'other-image', the sort of client that the professional is assumed to interact with. Eastmond (2010) argues that, similar to the categorization of welfare-receiving citizens (cf. Sahlin 1994), there are two basic images of migrants at work: one of them ascribes to migrants the role of victim, another ascribes to them the role of sponge or parasite. 'The first were passive victims, without their own agency, the others were full of enterprise, but with illegitimate agency' (Eastmond 2010:90). If the elements of the discourse that pertain to the moral worthiness of the recipients of welfare resources is not exclusive to the area of asylum reception, asylum seekers are nevertheless in a vulnerable position because they are not citizens; their *right* to claim assistance is therefore conditional on the 'goodness' of the host state (Fassin 2001; Fassin 2005). The deliberate withholding of resources, seen in the accommodation of asylum seekers in the Swedish region, hereby acquires the meaning of *deterrence policy*, a practice that is becoming increasingly common

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[64]One man had locked himself in the bathroom and cut his own throat. The assistant broke the door open and saved him. Another man cut up his belly, also in front of the eyes of the assistant. A woman had set herself on fire: '[The police] had to drag the hag out because she didn't want to [be saved]', according to the assistant. 'God knows how many crazy ones there have been' he sighs.

among prosperous Western nations (Brekke and Söholt 2005; Gibson 2003; Goodman 2009; Tazreiter 2010).

The idea of the migrant as *manipulative* and as a *survival expert* alluded to in the excerpt from the meeting between the MB manager and the landlord in the vignette at the beginning of this section pertains to the category of illegitimate agency. This image in particular was drawn on by the teachers in Stad to make sense of the passive resistance put up by some students against the introduction course and the job practice.

> Once I tried, I say *tried* because it is not possible to put yourself in the [X ethnicity] perspective … How, eh, how does Sweden look with my [X] glasses on? It's not possible [to really know], but I tried anyway! And it was so exciting because then I discovered the *resistance* and the way that you are fuelled by *resistance* all the time, and then I definitely left the care-taking role, because then I *saw* and I *felt* how I became manipulative. In *Swedish* we'd say 'manipulative', in [the X language] it's more like *normal:* 'This is the way I go forward in life. It's the character trait I need to manage and to survive.' That gave me a real epiphany.

The concept of manipulation here casts the migrants as culturally different but also tougher, more cunning, more used to struggle and to adopting flexible strategies for their survival. As in the vignette, it suggests that frontline staff must be vigilant about their own care-taking 'naïveté'. The teacher argued that manipulation was not only a cultural trait but also an acquired skill of migrants because *'If they didn't have it they wouldn't have made it here.'* Thus, like the manager of the Yby MB, the teacher was convinced that the migrants must acquire manipulative skills as a survival strategy. In Sweden, they used these skills to get care-taking, 'mothering' Swedish civil servants, teachers, and others, to sympathize with them, to see them as victims and thereby to go far beyond their duties in helping them, the same way that the pregnant woman got the landlord to help her buy groceries and to go to the maternity ward. Moreover, the teacher asserted that this easily manipulated naïveté was a Swedish problem: 'It is in our whole society; it's in our Swedish self-image – we *are* [a] care-taking and safe and secure [people].'

The image of illegitimate agency, I argue, is a way to cope with sympathy burnout (cf. Clark 1987) when the victim image is no longer tenable, and to assume professional distance. Its politically correct version goes something like the argumentation of the officer above: We can understand *why* (almost all of them) lie. Whether it is because manipulation and survival skills lie in 'their' culture, or have been acquired due to circumstances, or both, the result is a highly ambivalent understanding of the migrant subject (cf. Pripp 2004). It tries to balance a humanitarian outlook with vigilance against abuse. As we saw in the case with the assistant who had witnessed 'horrible things', sometimes the balance may tip into ascribing monstrous instrumental capabilities to the illegitimate agent, such as the ability to inflict harm and huge amounts of pain on the self (and on their children; see Tazreiter 2010) in order to reach the desired goal (a residence permit).[65]

4.7 Security and hope, grief and frustration

> Everything is fine! Very good. I wait [to get a job]. I am registered everywhere: the unemployment agency, I talked to the municipality. I wait. (Ben, Somali migrant permanent residence permit)

> I think in Sweden, people … it's good. Like at the beginning how you are helped out, and the situation is very good, many people say it's good. I mean, you get an apartment and they help you out with those kind of things. But fine, you've given me all that, you've started me off … *don't just leave me there!* You understand what I'm telling you? I have a *life ahead.* I'm not going to sit and wait for you all the time. (Johanna, Somali migrant, permanent residence permit)

Strategies to cope with the situation as a migrant in Sweden were directly tied to before and after the residence permit. The application and appeal process challenged endurance and coping in an abstract sense, and as we have seen, during this time the migrants were almost literally kept at the margins of Swedish society (cf. Bunar 1998), albeit with an imperative to begin integrating (by having to orientate on their own in the new country). But it was not, as in Italy both before and after the permit, a daily struggle to find food and shelter and means of subsistence. In my material, most migrant

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[65] This was seen on a larger political scale in the debate about the apathetic children in Sweden around 2006 (Tamas 2009).

interviewees had received their permits and were occupied with the integration courses, but there was also Oliver, who was twice rejected and who witnessed a gradual phasing out of his benefits, as he had now more or less used up his chances to stay.

Oliver had no intention of leaving and was still hoping for the migration superior court to try his case (the court tries only potential precedence cases). Otherwise he would rather go underground than return to the country he had fled from. He suffered from being kept idle and waiting but he was proudly determined not to give in. In the municipality where he lived, in a Migration Board accommodation, asylum seekers were offered language courses and activities such as learning computers or working as (unpaid) assistants to the language teachers. They were also allowed to do apprenticeships. Oliver had worked as a teaching assistant and he had found a place to do an apprenticeship, but when his application was rejected such privileges were withdrawn. This and other restrictions, such as a reduction in his daily allowance or the threat of detention prior to deportation, were, according to Oliver, mere strategies to scare him and force him to give up: 'The things they are trying to do is just make you, you know, it's like the Ethiopian prime minister [during the ethnic cleansing between Ethiopia and Eritrea], he used to say, 'Don't tell them to go, just *make* them go!'

Earlier, I described Oliver's experiences of racist assaults from locals in the area where he lived (p. 100). Although he had thus experienced both structural and micro-interactional rejection and humiliation, he still claimed to appreciate Sweden as a country; that he indeed belonged there: 'I love Sweden, even when I was a kid. When there was a World Cup or something, I used to be on Sweden's side. I don't want to live anywhere else.' Mark, one of the accepted migrants interviewed in the context of the introductory programme in Stad, had also dreamt about Sweden since he was a child and had heard 'that there is a beautiful country in Europe called Sweden'. Though stating in the interview that he still sustained this image, the fact was that he had been three years in Sweden but had so far failed to find a job, and that his family was still in Somalia. Because he first fled to Egypt (where he worked as an illegal migrant) from Somalia, he had not seen his wife and children for seven years and he hoped that 'in the future' he would earn enough money to bring them here. Satisfaction was thus punctuated with ambivalence: 'My uncle's children live in USA. Sometimes I talk to them

and we talk about how things are in Europe and in USA. Sometimes I joke with them because they live in USA, they earn a lot of money every month, and there is lots of work there. But I don't want to move there, I want to be in Sweden.'

Unlike Italy, Sweden is not a place one passes through on the way to somewhere else. Sweden has more the character of a terminus. It is therefore neither surprising that some of the migrants interviewed claimed that they *wanted* to go to Sweden,[66] nor that they sustained exotic images of the country throughout the challenging process of asylum application (Havinga and Böcker 1999; Rousseau et al. 1998). The mere time spent in the asylum process, from the perspective of the individual, must be seen as an investment that, together with the efforts to learn Swedish, makes it harder to change one's mind. As Mark put it, if he eventually changed his mind about Sweden the only alternative he could think of was returning to Somalia (which was not an option) because 'it is hard to move to a new country. It takes a lot of time to learn the language and understand people and how things work.'

Two of the interviewees expressed a different view, maintaining that they manifestly did *not* want to come to Sweden or a country like Sweden. Johanna said that she 'had wanted to go to England [because] that's an English-speaking country since I could speak the language.' Liam, who was also good at English, said that friends in the political party where he was working (in Ethiopia) had arranged his papers and tickets.

> Until I came here [to Sweden] I didn't know where I was going. They told me that's your chance to go to Europe. I didn't know I was going to Sweden, it was not my choice. It was not even my choice to leave my country. No one wants to leave his country. Especially in these white people's places. It is very hard to integrate with them and to live with them. Whether you are living even a hundred years you are [still] a foreigner, forever. It's very difficult.

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[66] The 'dreams about Sweden' may well be connected to the institutionalized international self-image with 'welfare being made into a symbol for Sweden and the Swedish image' (Johansson 2005:167) and Sweden's 'generous' and 'humanitarian' asylum policy (Hansen 2008; Schierup et al. 2006). However, as argued by Johansson (2005), while Sweden wants to keep this image, it has increasingly become tied to a nationalist discourse paving the way for a migration policy that, step by step, became more restrictive during the second half of the 20th century. 'When this image is combined with the argument that this welfare is only designed for Swedish people, there is justification for speaking of a kind of welfare nationalism' (ibid:167).

Liam had been forced to flee due to his political activities, and Johanna had been forced to flee because of the war in Somalia. Both said Sweden had been their one chance to get away. Liam was still waiting for a decision on his application and he felt extremely distressed about the enforced idleness of waiting and the lack of a job. He said that the language class offered was 'a joke' and that he felt hostility from the locals because he was 'black'. He hoped to be able to go back to Ethiopia in the future, but until then he thought that once he got his permit in Sweden he would try to move to the USA or Canada where 'there are many black people'. He 'did not feel comfortable' in Sweden he said, because people stared and nobody wanted to talk to him.

Like Oliver and Liam, the accepted migrants with a residence permit also talked about the drabness of the waiting time during the past application process, the repetitive submissions to bureaucratic encounters, multiple questionings and repetitions of the same story. Having received their permits they seemed to be infused with new hope (cf. Eastmond 2010) and displayed gratitude and satisfaction, in some ways similar to the victorious feelings displayed by the migrants in Italy who had succeeded in reaching Italian soil. The feeling that one has achieved something of great value that others are denied is bound to be connected with an (unsolicited) migrant's success story.

Johanna offered a more nuanced picture; in the interview she offered her reflections on the pros and cons of being a migrant in Sweden. She was relatively well educated – nine years of primary school was the highest possible education in Somalia – she had high ambitions and was eager to use the opportunities to study at the university in Sweden. She reasoned about the rules and requirements of the programme, of the employment agency, of potential employers – all those things that made it hard for her to 'move forward' – and tried to separate the pertinent requirements from the ones she could not accept, such as the often repeated advice to *wait until* ....[67] As we see in the vignette introducing this section, other interviewees expressed resigned acceptance of the advice to wait. This resignation, however, may also mean that in practice they were submitting to a continued life on the margins of society, where feelings of resentment and shame crowded up underneath the surface display of gratitude and contentment.

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[67] Until she knew enough Swedish, until she had the certificates from school, even until the labour market had absorbed all the unemployed Swedes...

Johanna explained that she had chosen to stay out of the Somali *as well as other migrant* networks in Sweden because they depressed her: 'They have that mentality where, like, here in Sweden you are not going to get any job, here in Sweden you have to stay doing the language you know for *how many years,* and they all have that kind of thing in their mind where they … so they don't go. These people don't move ahead.'

As in Italy, the subject of children left behind in the escape gave rise to grief and frustration. The female interviewees wept when they talked about their lost children. Dina had separated from one of her daughters when the war in Somalia forced her to flee to a neighbouring country nine years earlier, on the occasion when Dina's husband was killed. She believed that her sister had taken care of the child but she didn't know where they lived, and today the daughter would be too old to be subject to family reunification according to Swedish law. Dina was not sure where she was now, but according to rumour she had been spotted by other Somali migrants on the border to Ethiopia.

> These are the things that are not … I mean I can't even bring my own daughter. [We talk about the family reunification rules.] The problem is that she must be under 18 to reunite with the family. But my children are my children. Age is something you count. She is my daughter even if she is 21 years old.

The implicit critique of the laws in this quote was made explicit by Johanna, who had left two younger children behind with her own mother. She was now trying to obtain a permit for them to reunite with her in Sweden.

> [T]hey're small children, they haven't seen their mother for a very long time and their father has passed away, and ah [starts crying] […] Like this is a system we have to go through, they are small children, they've been interviewed, and I don't think that's right! [upset, voice muffled] To ask small children questions like 'who's your mother, who's your father' and it kind of affects them, I think, psychologically. I personally [confirm that] that's my child and the only way you can find out whether I'm the mother is by just a tip of blood test and it's, it's finished instead of for me to have that prolonged waiting and they have that prolonged …

Unlike Johanna, Dina sought the company of other Somalis, but she never wanted to return to Somalia again, saying that the country where she grew up was now occupied by Ethiopia and no longer existed. She followed the news about Somalia on the Internet.

> I have no relatives left, they have killed lots of people. This war is worse than the one we had for 16 years. The worst I have ever seen. I cried all night yesterday, my heart was aching, because I watched the news on the Internet and I saw that young Somali men were pinioned and sent back to the sea in a wrecked boat that would not last long. They had come to Yemen and when they saw that they were illegal they tied them to the boat and sent it back to the sea. They could not swim.

So even if Dina had not chosen Sweden either, and in spite of having extremely painful and humiliating memories from the first meeting with the MB, she emphasized that 'we have got food and clothes and a place to live and that is not *a small thing*. That's a lot. We could have been outdoors freezing to death. [The Swedish authorities] did that very well.'

Generally, the emotion work of all the interviewed migrants (Sweden and Italy) appears to be oriented towards protecting the self against the most serious sources of shame and lost dignity. Interestingly, this prompted interviewed migrants in Città to compare themselves with Italian locals – to reach the conclusions that, *like the migrants*, Italians too were suffering from scarcity of social resources in Italy. In Sweden, the strategies went both ways. Dina preserved her dignity by comparing her situation to that of other Somali migrants, and by simply *not comparing* herself to Swedes. She said that *Swedes* were too culturally different and alien to her, and the integration issue was not primarily about her but about her children. She spoke proudly of the children's Swedish friends, but she also emphasized that she wanted to raise her children in the Somali and Muslim cultural traditions. Johanna, on the other hand, managed her dignity by distancing herself from migrant groups and networks, rejecting their discourses about migrants' (lack of) possibilities in Sweden. It was not an issue of 'becoming Swedish', more about claiming that she was *equal* to the Swedes and that Swedes should not take precedence, for instance on the labour market. Johanna claimed *her rights to Swedish society*, her right to *take her place*. While other interviewees claimed that 'being

black' in Sweden was a problem, and that racism was outspoken and common, I had the following conversation with Johanna:

> I: Have you had any experiences of racism?
>
> J: No. It's all fine.
>
> I: No, ok. That's good.
>
> J: I haven't, maybe that's because ah I don't have a paranoid character, I don't like that kind of [paranoid] people. If something happen [I don't say] they did it because of …
>
> I: Racism
>
> J: No I don't have that mentality. I don't take it too far. Maybe it *has* happened, I wouldn't know, but the only time I would realize it is when it's kind of *exaggerated* so you kind of really show it to me and you say 'Hey *you*! This is what you are' – that's when I'd notice. But I don't, I'm not ah … when somebody is racist too I'd say there is a reason why he is, but I don't know.
>
> I: No racism is […] in the way you interpret the act.
>
> J: Exactly!
>
> I: But it can also be sometimes it's also clearly racist.
>
> J: *Clearly*, exactly. So it's because I am … most people will have, you know, the people [where] I live, I'm black, this [paranoid type of] person when they have this thing maybe you'd look at me, maybe you're passing by and you'd look and this person would say 'oooh why the hell do you look at me you stupid racist', you know? You understand what I'm saying [laugh]?
>
> I: Yeah yeah, that's always difficult to tell, you know, are they looking at you because they think you look nice or … you can interpret it in different ways.
>
> J: You can interpret it the way you want, so that's the thing. I don't interpret anything because I don't know what it is. So I will *know* [that] you are being racist when you come right ahead to me and you say 'hey! This is what you are' or maybe [unheard] 'I will give it to you' like … it has to be obvious to me. But I don't look for it and I don't dig into it.
>
> I: So when you walk on the street here, for instance, do you feel like everybody else or you feel that people look at you more or …?
>
> J: I feel like everybody else; I don't think … no, I don't take notice or …
>
> I: Okay, good.
>
> J: I make sure I'm inside [the head] you know, I kind of don't look around myself and say 'Hey, who's looking at me?' – no, I don't do that.

While Johanna's attitude may appear easy-going and carefree, from an emotion sociological perspective she had to perform emotion work to reach this point of detachment. By reframing situations, avoiding the negative influence (as she saw it) of migrant networks, and 'staying inside her head' (not looking for gazes), she protected her self-feelings. Johanna also kept a distance from the Swedes, by laughing at the funny

language, laughing at the fact that she was 'the only black person in her neighbourhood', and so on. We also saw that Dina laughed at the zest and zeal of the teachers in the programme. Laughing and making fun of something/somebody – depending on which way the joke goes – is a way to cope with unequal status, reducing the importance of oneself *or* the other, thus (for a moment) narrowing *or* widening the distance between the self and the other (cf. Fine and de Soucey 2005; Wettergren 2009).

The emotion work of the migrants in the Swedish case involved feelings of gratitude and a sense of calm/security and hope, countered with frustration and anger at bureaucratic processes. As in the Italian case there was grief related to children left behind and anxiety about how to reunite with them, but there was not the sense of desperation and hopelessness, nor open lament at the acute situation, seen in Città. The firm focus on 'moving on' appeared more diluted for migrants who had residence permits, with some of the interviewees apparently set to passively submit to the ideal integration trajectory whereas others protested its inefficiency. Contrary to the migrant interviewees in Città, migrants interviewed in Sweden described how they performed emotion work in response to expressions of racism in interactions with locals. While in Città, migrants dreamt about continuing to other European countries where they would have better opportunities to find stable employment, the interviewees in Sweden seemed to consider Sweden the final destination[68] – whether it was an original and conscious choice or not.

4.8 Summary and conclusions

The reception of asylum seekers at the Migration Board offices in Y, the accommodation in the region of Yby, and the integration of 'new arrivals' by the commune in Stad were all embedded in and regulated by the Swedish welfare state. Basic differences as compared to the case of Città may thus be attributed to factors such as this welfare state's thorough organization and the comparatively large tax resources allocated to it.

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[68] The reasons for this were several. Johanna said she might consider moving to an Anglophone country one day, but at present it was impossible. Dina considered the family settled, and her children's future was in Sweden, and the same goes for Mark. Oliver 'loved Sweden', and Ben had 'always dreamt about Sweden'. Only Liam says 'I am not comfortable living in Sweden. If I get my permit I think they will allow me to go to US or Canada, or another country. I would like to go there.'

However, listening to the stories of the interviewed MB employees, it appears that much of the difference in organizing is also due to longer experience and more time for experimenting with various models of reception and integration (Sarstrand 2007; Johansson 2005). Sweden began to receive asylum seekers in the 1970s, and migration brought valuable labour to Swedish industries throughout the post-war period. Italy, in contrast, has been a country of *emigration* as well as a country dealing with the phenomenon of large *internal* migration from the agrarian South to the industrial North. Immigration from poorer countries began late and then was seen as exclusively *labour* migration, while the concept of *asylum seeker*, according to the interviewed Italian frontliners, is relatively new in the Italian migration discourse. In many ways the Italian reception of asylum seekers has been commanded into existence by EU harmonization in the area of migration (Schierup et al. 2006), while the Swedish reception is currently undergoing changes in order to adapt to the norms and regulations of the EU system. In the Swedish case we may discern an established official discourse concerning the migrants and their motives, according to which most asylum seekers are seen as 'in fact' seeking to take advantage of the Swedish welfare system. They are thus primarily seen as abusing the system, although the politically correct version of the discourse also offers an explanation of how difficult circumstances forced them to become 'liars'. Migrants are seen by the frontliners as – in contrast to Swedes who do not know war or poverty – oriented towards survival, and this orientation, they reason, makes the migrants' ways somehow disturbing and alien, not to mention a poor fit for the peaceful and secure Swedish society. Thus in the Swedish case the perception of the task of the frontliners, and how to go about it in a professional way, was tied to a relatively established discourse on 'us and them'. The perception of who *they* are was relatively explicit while, interestingly, the teachers in Stad seemed to implicitly struggle more with grasping the meaning of integration and what the migrants were supposed to be integrated into; thus struggling with the concrete meaning of 'we'. Similar to the Italian case, the frontliners' interventions and ways of working were shaped by their personal ideological convictions and visions of the society into which the migrants were to be integrated. In Stad, democratic values and gender equality were, again following an institutionalized discourse about the teaching of 'Swedish values' in Swedish schools,

high on the agenda, and the teachers also saw the introduction course as an opportunity to 'educate' Swedish civil servants. In Città, most likely because the organization responsible for the programme was one with a socialist agenda, a fair and secure labour market was the highest priority and the migrants were advised to reject precarious labour and distrust the employers. In both cases, however, the migrants were considered as subjects who must develop their *individualistic*, *rational,* time- and goal-oriented capabilities. It appears as a likely general trait that migrants, at least from Muslim countries, are seen by Europeans as governed by pre-modern collectivist and rather irrational ways of being and acting (Hansen 2008; Johansson 2005). The art of punctuality and time-keeping, if we may call it that, appears as the key instrument used to shape submission to these 'European' values. Ironically, it was the six-month time limit that, in the Italian case, pushed the migrants to make secondary arrangements, considered irrational by the frontliners, and in the Swedish case it was the unlimited time designated as 'waiting' that made some migrants completely give up the idea of ever getting into the Swedish labour market. The sanctions available in the Swedish case were more severe and more consistently applied than in the Italian case, where the rights and duties of the residents were relatively blurred and therefore more tied to the discretionary power of the frontliner. Interestingly, the opposition drawn by the Swedish frontliners between interventions and attitudes that were 'too much care-taking' and those that encouraged the migrant's 'autonomy' were glimpsed again in the Italian case when the frontliners organizing the integration courses described the Caritas frontliners as satisfied with *passive* residents. According to the Arci frontliners, Caritas was only interested in offering food and shelter. In the Swedish case the line was drawn by MB employees as before and after the change in the accommodation organization, while the teachers in Stad described a difference between their own professional stance and the 'whale-saving' helping attitude of other teachers.

While the migrants in Sweden did not find themselves in the situation of acute deprivation that threatened the residents of the Villa in Città, they were kept on the margins of Swedish society in ways that clearly marked their 'otherness'. The concrete effects of this were already evident during in the process of application, when the migrants were allocated allowances and living conditions that in some cases were far

below Swedish standards. Some of the changes and cutbacks in resources seen in Sweden over the past decades (Johansson 2005) can most likely be referred to as the 'race to the bottom' following the introduction of Schengen and EU harmonization of migration policies (Hansen 2008). Member states tend to be afraid that the freedom of internal EU migration will lead to an increase in immigration by third-country nationals if the rights and living conditions of asylum seekers are too 'attractive' in any one member state (Hansen 2008; Schierup et al. 2006).

As in Città, female migrants were surrounded by some of the most rigid stereotypes. In Città they were considered as indisputably subordinate to their men and tied to their children, and it was even suggested that some got pregnant as a way to increase their chances of securing a residence permit. In the Swedish case they were also seen as subordinate, but the teachers in Stad considered it an important aspect of integration to introduce gender equality to the migrants. Women were not only required to participate in the programme on the same terms as their men, but they were expected to feel empowered by the new 'status' enjoyed as equal human beings. In general, while women migrants may suffer less than in Città, because they are presented with the same educational and work life practice opportunities as the men, they are also given more attention *as victims* to a greater extent than in Città.

It is also worth noting that the time aspect in the Swedish case enabled prolonged processes of interventions aiming at behavioural change that may be experienced as humiliating and offensive by the migrants. Moreover, the provision of basic needs such as food and shelter requires gratitude in return while making it hard for the migrants to formulate demands or ideas about how they would like to best use available resources to achieve their own personal goals. This ambivalence was also seen at the Villa in Città, but to a lesser extent since enrolment in the programme was merely provisional and to be seen as a short break from the daily struggle for survival that marked the migrants' lives. In Città the interviewed migrants considered that they shared these tough living conditions with destitute Italians, while in the Swedish case the *difference* between Swedes and migrants (deriving from institutionalized discourses and practices) accompanied the migrant from arrival to labour market introduction. Hence migrants had to work emotionally with what this difference meant for their self-worth. In the

examples discussed, one woman chose to consider Swedes an alien culture with nothing to do with her (but with her children). Another woman, however, insisted on the equality of rights and contested the suggestion that Swedes would have priority to these rights. Migrants in the Swedish case also had to deal with racism in daily interactions in a way that did not seem to be the case in Città. Staring, comments, and incidents of harassment were managed, using strategies such as withdrawal (as in avoiding contact with Swedes and/or going to clubs) or reframing (as in ignoring or reinterpreting the meaning of staring).

5. Conclusion

The purpose of the study presented in this book was to compare two different cases of reception of asylum seekers, situated in two different EU countries. In what way do differences in welfare and migration regimes have an impact on the self-perceived life chances and dignity of the migrants? And in what way do the experiences and approaches of frontline workers in relation to their job and their clients differ? Some answers to these questions are discussed in the conclusions to chapters 3 and 4. Here I will discuss the results – differences and similarities – with a focus on the comparison between the two cases/countries on a more abstract and structural level.

5.1 Down and out in Città and Yby/Stad

> There are fewer and less varied job opportunities in the south than in the north, but at least in the 1980s and 1990s, migrants often regarded the conditions for integration into local society as being more favourable (…): in the south there was less police control and less bureaucratic involvement with immigration and employment than in the north. Migrants regarded being irregular or clandestine in a less regulated socio-economic context as less problematic, and they shared this social situation with parts of the indigenous population. Moreover (…) the informal social context offered migrants favourable opportunities for reconstructing (ethnic) social networks, temporarily broken as they left their home countries. Social life is harder in the metropolitan areas of the north, and problems of maladjustment and social isolation more common. (Schierup et al., 2006:181)

This quote briefly summarizes some assumptions that I brought with me into the fieldwork, but thinking in terms of the North and South of Europe. I thought that the fact that Italian society was more 'messy' and the informal economy larger would provide migrants with more 'loopholes' in the labour market. They would thus have more opportunities generally to establish themselves as semi-legal residents in Italian society and from there, via, for instance, the regularizations undertaken every now and then (Dell'Olio 2004), subsequently become accepted members of society. Although life would be tougher, migrants would still preserve their sense of dignity in managing to survive on their own account, and perhaps they might feel more included in the end. However, as I found out, migrants do *not* manage to survive on their own account, at

least not any longer. They thereby depend on the (limited) help that they can get, and the search for means to survive day by day governs their lives in such an extreme way that they hardly have time to think about more abstract processes of social exclusion/inclusion. At the accommodation centre I met migrants that had arrived recently, migrants that had been several years in Italy, and migrants that had continued to other European countries but had been sent back in accordance with the Dublin Regulation. So it seems that the unsolicited migrant's precarious situation in Italy may stretch out for a very long time. Table 4 below gives an overview of some structural differences between Italy and Sweden, having repercussions for the situation of migrants.

	ITALY (Città)	SWEDEN
Welfare regime	• Conservative-corporativist • Family-orientation	• Social democratic • Individual-orientation
Geography	• Migrants come via Sudan, Libya, and Mediterranean Sea to Lampedusa	• Migrants come by air
Number of asylum applicants in 2008	• 30 000 (boat migrants; tip of the iceberg)	• 28 000 (includes virtually all)
Work opportunities for migrants	• Exist primarily in the informal sector • Temporary and precarious • Salaries too low to cover expenses	• Very high threshold to enter labour market
Living conditions of migrants	• Temporary housing • Squatting • Hostels • Low or no social benefits	• Organized accommodation • Social housing • Various benefits and allowances
Reception of asylum seekers	• Since 2001 • Includes minority of applicants, limited time • Both accepted and paperless • Run by regional governments in cooperation with relief organizations • *Emergency intervention.*	• Since the 1970s • Includes all applicants, during the whole period of investigation (+ appeal) • Run by state Migration Board in cooperation with municipalities
Residence permits	• Issued relatively quickly (more generously?), but *temporary* (1-2 years)	• Majority rejected, turnover time in 2008 2-3 years, permits are *permanent*
Migrant women	• In Città: Integration was *gender-blind* (in effect only for men)	• Women and men are obliged to follow the same trajectory • Children are offered day care

		• In Stad, the integration was rather *gender-focused,* but also gender-stereotyped; gender-equality was seen as part of integration
Effects of EU harmonization	• Economic support but also pressure and increased costs • No more transit	• Mainly benefits – 20-25% of applicants are dismissed as Dublin cases

Table 4. Overview of differences

The conservative-corporativist welfare regime in Italy directly or indirectly gives rise to effects such as non-existent or limited social assistance and institutional support to the migrants. Together with the fact that an unknown proportion of the migrants in Italy are not recorded by the migration authorities, this amounts to a situation of struggle for the daily means of subsistence. The experiences of acute homelessness and misery of the migrants reported in chapter 4 are corroborated by one of the few studies similar to this one, Korac's comparative study on refugees and integration in Italy and the Netherlands (Korac 2003).[69] According to Korac, who interviewed migrants from former Yugoslavia in Rome, the situation was 'particularly difficult for those with small children and the elderly […]. They had either moved to other parts of Italy where it was easier to find work or resettled in a third country' (p. 59). The situation of the majority of those who had stayed remained precarious years after arrival as they had 'not succeeded in settling in Italy in a way that gave them a sense of security in planning their future' (ibid.).

Although few or none of the migrants interviewed by Korac had received any organized help to settle in the country (the regional asylum reception programmes were initialized only in 2005), there is no reason to believe that an integration programme such as the one in Città would be able to significantly alter her result. As we have seen, the programme offered temporary relief, but the six-month time limit rather pushed migrants away from the planned integration trajectory and its strategies to help migrants achieve better employment options. A small proportion of the migrants that Korac interviewed in Rome had successfully integrated in terms of building 'bridging

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[69]Korac interviewed 60 refugees from the former Yugoslavia with residence permits in the Netherlands or in Italy.

social capital' with Italians and finding work suited to their level of education. Some of these had married Italians, and Korac characterizes their ties to the network of ethnic compatriots, which had initially provided necessary support for survival, as weak. For this minority group, Korac concludes that they developed relatively strong ties to Italian society, feeling 'at home' there, even though they continued to face the humiliating procedures of renewing their short-term residence permits.

Smith defines *humiliation* as 'the forced ejection and/or exclusion of individuals or groups from social roles and/or social categories with which they subjectively identify in a way that conveys the message that they are fundamentally inadequate to fill those roles or belong to those categories' (Smith 2001:542). He differentiates between four types of humiliation, of which *expulsion-humiliation* and *reinforcement-humiliation* are the most interesting here. Expulsion-humiliation is the ejection of an individual or group from 'a society to which they previously [believed that they] belonged', for instance, through banishment; reinforcement-humiliation is the 'routine abuse of inferiors in order to maintain the perception that they are, indeed, inferior' (Smith 2001:543). Unsolicited migrants experience both types of humiliation intertwined. They experience expulsion-humiliation when they realize that their claims to the right to international protection is dependent on the host nation's willingness to guarantee it (Derrida 2001; Derrida and Dufourmentelle 2000; Rosello 2001). They are literally expelled through the practice of forced deportation, which often involves both mental and physical violence of the kind that not only denies the migrant access to recognition as a potential member of a national community but also deliberately ignores his/her human rights (Castles and Davidson 2000; Ellerman 2006; Guiraudon and Lahav 2000; Hansen 2008; Khosravi 2006). Migrants experience reinforcement-humiliation as they are deliberately kept on the margins of the welfare state, its intrinsic rights and standards, during the transition period, and – as is the case in Sweden – also after the transition period in terms of being left outside the labour market. After the migrant has received his/her residence permit the intertwined processes of reinforcement and expulsion-humiliation continue, now *within* the perimeters of the nation state (Flam and Beauzamy 2008). The migrant, now turned into a recipient of a state's social welfare, becomes involved with the

institutionalized discourses that make 'dependency' a shameful condition pertaining to personal failure and deficient character (Fraser and Gordon 1994).

In Italy, we see how the Italian migration regime, issuing short-term residence permits relatively quickly but offering limited possibilities for long-term or permanent permits, creates a situation where even well-integrated migrants are repeatedly reminded of their status as non-citizens. Nevertheless, it might be argued that the humiliating experiences brought by contacts with Italian bureaucracy *generally*, as well as the lack of social assistance resources, is a situation of national deficit deplored by Italians and migrants alike. In other words, the feeling of alienation with regard to these particular structural circumstances does not necessarily contribute to making migrants feel fundamentally different from Italians.

The all but hopeless situation of the migrant women in Città, I argue, is also linked to the Italian welfare regime in the sense that this regime relies on a conservative patriarchal family ideology, where women are dependent caregivers and housekeepers. As we saw, frontliners tended to consider women as, at best, secondary subjects in the integration programme, and they were not prepared to offer extra support such as child care. The finding is also supported by Korac (2003) who, although she does not develop a gender perspective, states that the 'migrants with children' were forced to leave the country or at least to leave Rome. The support offered to single (as well as to married) migrant women with infants may vary across regions in Italy, but it is indeed hard to imagine how the single mothers at the accommodation in Città would be able to support themselves and their babies.

In contrast to Italy, Sweden has a rather comprehensive institutional 'grip' on its unsolicited migrants from the very beginning, facilitated by the fact that Sweden has a relatively strong (welfare) state and it neither borders a non-EU country nor is it easily accessed from such a country by foot, train, or boat. Most migrants arrive by air in the company of a smuggler and are brought to one of the bigger cities and given more or less detailed instructions on how to apply for asylum. This institutional grip and the social democratic welfare state both guarantee basic security in terms of housing and daily means of subsistence but also a rather extensive 'state-controlled settlement process' (Korac 2003:55). In particular, the threshold to entering the labour market in Sweden is

higher than in Italy due to its smaller informal sector. However, entering the Italian *formal and secure* labour market appears to be at least as difficult.

Interestingly, one of the starkest contrasts to the migrant's situation in Italy is seen in the time dimension, where time in the case of the migrants in Sweden appeared to be endlessly stretched out, first waiting for a residence permit, and then waiting for the appropriate moment to seek employment. Sweden issues mainly permanent residence permits, but a majority of all the applicants are rejected. The effects of EU harmonization benefits Sweden in this respect (but not countries like Italy) as 20-25% of the applicants are returned to the first country of asylum, with no further investigation into their reasons for asylum in Sweden, in accordance with the Dublin Regulation. These differences between the Swedish and Italian migration regimes may also be related to their different migration histories, where Sweden has more years of experience with immigration – in particular with the reception of asylum seekers.

Another important difference is that there can be no doubt that the situation of migrant women is markedly better in Sweden than in Italy, which again can be referred to the Swedish welfare state regime, which tends to support the individual and has formulated clear goals concerning gender equality (De los Reyes 2002). The provision of child care enables women to participate in the compulsory integration trajectories set up by the municipalities on more or less the same terms and conditions as migrant men; indeed, they are *required* to do so, whether they want to or not.

The findings from the Swedish case are supported by a good number of previous studies on migrants' situation in Sweden (e.g. SOU 2005:56; Andersson et al. 2010a; Bevelander 2004; Carlson 2002; Carlson 2006; Kamali 2005). It appears to share some general features with other countries where the reception and integration of migrants involve long-term state control and assistance, as also argued by Korac (2003) regarding the situation of refugees in the Netherlands. Here as well, the state is mainly responsible for reception and integration, and the migrants face 'structural barriers' to labour market introduction, which is accordingly delayed by several years as compared to Italy. Korac also argues that refugees in the Netherlands, as opposed to the refugees in Italy, suffer from social isolation, feeling that in spite of settling successfully, in the end they have little or no contact with the Dutch. These experiences echo those of the migrant

interviewees in Sweden, who all tried to position themselves in relation to the fact they were constantly, in various settings, reminded about *not being Swedish* (cf. Björnberg 2010). They responded by either rejecting Swedes as racist or by rejecting the racist framework, adopting instead a view of the Swede as unfamiliar with strangers. Korac's study suggests that to the 'successful migrants' (those who managed to establish themselves in terms of work and living conditions) in the Italian or Dutch society, the most important difference between the two countries is the closeness or distance felt towards its people; the level of social inclusion/exclusion. In the Dutch part of the study, even well-off migrants appear to feel some degree of resentment towards the Dutch society for the reinforcement-humiliation of the long-term institutionalized transition and 'integration' period, and for the difficulties with making friends with Dutch people. Korac concludes that the 'bridging social capital' that migrants built to Italians in Rome compensated somewhat for the lack of social assistance and institutionalized help. It also put emphasis on the migrants' own agency, as opposed to the Dutch state's organized reception and integration, which rather undermined it. She writes, 'the way in which refugees are "helped" may itself undermine their personal coping strategies. This may threaten not only their individual life prospects, but also the use of the potential they bring to receiving societies' (Korac 2003:62). This is not to say that help and assistance should be withdrawn, but that we must be aware of 'the structural limitations inherent in the currently prevailing state-controlled and phased approaches to assisting and integrating refugees in receiving societies' (ibid.). This is especially important in view of the EU harmonization of refugee reception and integration.

In my study there is no example of a 'successfully integrated' migrant, mainly because I interviewed people who were still in the process of transition. Here it becomes clear that the road to establishing 'a normal life' is not linear but rather cyclic, repetitive and, from the point of view of the migrant, sometimes endless. The migrants primarily strive for social inclusion in terms of material security, including employment, and – in the case of families – education for the children. Migrants in my material also feel isolated from, or rejected by, the Swedes, something that is unfortunately a general finding in Swedish migration research (cf. SOU 2005:56; Björnberg 2010; Kamali 2005). Evaluating the provision of the key elements of the normal life migrants strive for, Italy may offer

work, but it is precarious and low-salaried and therefore not enough to provide material security. As Korac points out, even this type of precarious labour situation may entail social contacts with Italians. However, even if Korac's results in terms of 'bridging social capital' seem to support my findings that racism was not a primary issue among the migrants in Italy, it is important to keep in mind that racist thinking and racist attacks on foreigners – especially Roma people – are common in Italy (e.g. Sigona 2003; Sigona 2005). Sweden, on the other hand, provides basic material security and schools for the children, but almost no employment, and migrants feel avoided or even threatened by some Swedes; some migrants also chose to avoid Swedes. In Sweden, social inclusion becomes an issue when social *exclusion* is felt and is seen to have profound consequences, such as when migrants experience that they are indeed treated and seen as *less* than full members of the receiving society, even after the period of transition ends with a permanent residence permit.

It is interesting that parts of my study, although I have focused more on the transition than on the integration aspect, take over where Korac left off. In 2006, when the fieldwork in Italy was conducted, the programme for the reception of refugees, required by the EU, had existed for almost two years. Although on the whole, compared to the Swedish system, it was too fragmented and limited to cover even a fraction of the need, and although it was applied ad hoc to those migrants who were lucky enough to get into it, some key features and issues mentioned by Korac and – not surprisingly – seen also in the Swedish part of my study, could already be identified. These features, or what I call 'the pattern of similarities' observed in the comparison between the two systems, indicate that while state and/or municipal interventions to assist migrants during transition and integration are necessary, they also institutionalize imaginaries and discourses that are counterproductive to successful integration. Turning now to the similarities, it is important to note that they pertain to the interactions between frontliners and migrants in the transition/integration programme phase. Similarities thus pertain to the partial institutionalization of the reception and integration processes that has occurred in Italy after 2005.

5.2 The pattern of similarities

In the comparison between the Italian and the Swedish cases four main themes appear that I argue are to be seen as *shared* characteristics of the institutionalized reception and integration of unsolicited migrants. These are:

1) **Visibility/location.** The business of dealing with migrants is located in remote areas, and in worn-out and abandoned buildings.

2) **Relative poverty.** Resources put into reception are relative to the resources available to natives. They are consistently kept lower.

3) **Otherization.** Migrants are generally seen as culturally different in ways that warrant disciplining and fostering in order to fit into the host society.

4) **The costs of reception are weighed against the benefits for the region.** When municipalities decide to engage in the reception of asylum seekers, there are financial gains to be made.

5.2.1 Low visibility and relative poverty

The theme of low visibility pertains to the observation that in Città (Italy), in XCity (Sweden), and in Yby (Sweden), dealings with the migrants were literally kept invisible and as far away as possible from the flows and fluxes of the everyday lives of 'ordinary' citizens. In Città the main accommodation was remotely located and difficult to reach by public transport. The smaller 'satellite' accommodations were even farther away, more difficult to reach, and isolated from neighbouring houses. The main accommodation, belonging to Caritas, was renovated but far from cosy, emphasizing the feeling that residents were only passing through and should not make themselves at home. The satellite accommodations, rented by Arci, were worn-out buildings with problems such as damp, mildew, draughts, and insufficient heating. In XCity, the division of the Migration Board dealing with asylum applications was located in a suburb far from the city in buildings that have an institutional history dating back to the 1950s. The accommodations in Yby, allegedly targeting 'integration from day one' by 'mixing migrants with Swedes' was located in abandoned or semi-abandoned apartment blocks

in areas of the town where few Swedes lived. Migrants were required to share according to the principle of two adults per room, and the maintenance of the flats was minimal, to the extent that many flats were unhealthy by average Swedish standards, the most serious problem being mildew in the bathrooms. In Lillbacken, which was a small village, the accommodations in abandoned buildings were admittedly not far away from the rest of the village, but, in keeping with the low visibility theme, migrants tended to stay close to the accommodations and they were 'hardly ever seen' in the village. The only actual exception to the rule was the Migration Board office in Yby, which was placed right in the centre. I will return to this.

The practice of keeping unsolicited migrants out of sight is likely to be primarily an effect of keeping the costs of reception low, but it can also be interpreted as analogous to a shame marker (Bloch 1996; Scheff 1990). One usually hides things away (in micro-interactions, the body, the face) because revealing them would be shameful. As argued by, among others, Hansen (2008), Castles (2006), Schierup et al. (2006), Johansson (2005), and Guiraudon (2000) and Guiraudon and Lahav (2000), the issue of migration threatens to destabilize the democratic, free, and humanitarian self-image of European states and is therefore to some extent embarrassing, in particular if and when they are highlighted by the mass media and brought into public view (van der Leun 2006). The theme of low visibility thus highlights the symbolic and emotional sides of unsolicited migration (cf. Herzfeld 2007; Smith 2006). Unsolicited migrants, by their very presence, bring key ambivalences to the fore, showing that it is explicitly denied but implicitly taken for granted that universal human rights are *guaranteed* only to citizens of democratic states (Fassin 2001; Fassin 2005; Khosravi 2006; Rosello 2001).

The economic side of keeping migrants away from sight and the housing of migrants in low-cost buildings brings us to the theme of relative poverty. In both the Italian and Swedish cases there was a tendency to measure the resources put into reception against the resources put into the social welfare available to citizens. In other words, assistance to migrants is kept consistently lower than assistance offered to permanent residents. This was particularly obvious in Sweden, where costs had been cut during the past decade, in line with the argument that migrants must learn to manage on their own. The daily allowance was disconnected from the cost of living index and thereby unchanged

since the mid-1990s. Excursions, festivities, and football games that could be arranged at low cost by the accommodation assistants in the past were cut; cleaning and caretaking of the flats were cut; and so on. In Italy, the issue of relatively restricted resources was brought up in discussing 'exemplary projects' in the past, where the frontliners had felt that both time and money actually enabled them to make a difference for some individuals. It was also brought up in a discussion about the regulation of rents in Città, where the municipality representative explained that it was impossible to establish such a scheme for migrants since it did not exist for Italians.

Barbalet (1998) asserts that resentment between social groups is evoked by shifts in collective power and status. Thus, if a group experiences a downward movement in terms of resources, privileges, and social esteem, it is likely to become – collectively – predisposed to feelings of resentment, anger, and vengeance. The object of resentment, Barbalet argues, tends to be the group that is perceived as rising in status and power relative to one's own group. In other words, the political management of the relative poverty dimension is a way to manoeuvre and direct collective resentment and to avert social unrest deriving from groups that may feel threatened by the presence and status of migrants. Relative poverty in this sense is a signal directed *inwards* towards the national population, although in essence it is an effect of the same principle as the low visibility theme; welfare services and resources are first and foremost the right of citizens.

However, both the theme of low visibility and the theme of relative poverty are also *outward*-going 'signals', directed at the sending countries and potential new migrants. It is well known that migration may have a 'contaminating' effect in the area of origin and that the migrants' networks and contacts with friends and family back home may play an important role for *their* decision to migrate (Massey et al. 1993). Receiving countries tend to over-emphasize the effects of their own 'open' immigration and asylum policies, as well as the attractiveness of their welfare services, for the 'choice' of host country of unsolicited migrants (Hansen 2008; Johansson 2005).[70] Furthermore, Hansen (2008)

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[70] An illustration of this reasoning is offered by Andersson et al (2010:15) regarding a case of two boys with haemophilia who had applied for asylum in Sweden: 'The government argued that if it were to grant residence permits to people in need of hospital care for haemophilia, that would, considering the large

shows how this nervousness of EU member states has contributed to a 'race to the bottom' in terms of restrictive national policies, as the EU develops its common migration and asylum policies. The 'signals' directed outwards thereby aim to deter potential migrants (Brekke and Söholt 2005; Gibson 2003; Goodman 2009; Johansson 2005; Tazreiter 2010). Low visibility and relative poverty become useful deterrence instruments. The practice of locating migrants in unfriendly surroundings, and showing them – as is the case in Sweden – that their use of welfare services is restricted and conditional, is a way to communicate to the migrant's networks of friends and family in the country of origin that life is not rosy in the host country (Brekke and Söholt 2005).

Brekke and Söholt (2005) evaluate consequences of a decision taken in Norway that denied continued economic and housing support to rejected asylum seekers who refused to repatriate voluntarily. The rejected migrants linger on in spite of homelessness and misery. There is bewilderment and confusion at the level of the municipalities whose social offices are the ones that ultimately have to do something about it. As the situation in their home countries is insecure, the police cannot carry out the decision to deport the rejected. Brekke and Söholt write:

> It was still an issue of the politics of signals. A signal should be sent. While there was agreement that the Somali applicants did not qualify for residence permits, one may say that the rejections were also made for preventive reasons; to dam up against new arrivals. Knowing that return was not possible it was not directed at the individuals that actually had come. It was known that they would not be able to nor would they want to return. The policy to [withdraw accommodation] put these people in a limbo in the system. Seen from a cynical perspective, this is not entirely negative from a signal point of view. They find themselves in limbo and send signals to the home country that applying for asylum in Norway is not that good. (Brekke and Söholt 2005:183)

Deterrence strategies are also discussed by Gibson, in the context of Britain's policy of keeping asylum seekers in detention centres. She argues that in Britain …

> deterrence has been privileged as the primary principle, rather than human rights, of New Labour's asylum policy [...]. The deterrent measures involve the introduction of 'visa regimes' and the 'detention' of asylum seekers [...]. The

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number of people in the world with this disease, generate a very high economic responsibility for Sweden.'

> politics of asylum, or hospitality, thus is geared towards prevention of abuse of the system, discouragement for potential asylum seekers, rather than providing protection for those seeking asylum … (Gibson 2003:371).

In a similar vein, Tazreiter (2010) reports on Australia's practice of using detention centres, how increasingly harsh policy measures directed at asylum seekers arriving 'spontaneously' by boat led to flagrant denial of human rights. Boat refugees to Australia are either denied access to the shore, or they are detained in remote places and deported to the country of origin, or a third country, without proper regard to their asylum claims. Tazreiter discusses these policy measures mainly in relation to the national population and the 'politics of identity' of the Howard government, but it is clear that they also serve as deterrence strategies, sending signals to the sender countries that unwanted asylum seekers (non-quota refugees) are not welcome.

The policy of keeping unsolicited migrants away from the borders is a strategy increasingly employed by Italy after 2006 (the time of my fieldwork in Città). This was achieved, until the fall of Khaddafi, by a bilateral agreement between Libya and Italy according to which the Libyan coast guard would intercept and return the refugee boats to Libyan harbours. No one knew what happened to these migrants afterwards, but the probability the probability that their rights were respected in Libya is not very high. Sweden cannot really hinder unsolicited migrants from arriving and seeking asylum, but the Dublin Regulation is routinely used instead. In Sweden, the reasoning of Migration Board officers on the theme of the Dublin Regulation draws on the institutionalized discourse of bogus asylum seekers.

> Many prefer to go back to the misery in [their countries of origin], maybe because they think it is a different and better misery than the one in Italy, Greece, or Malta. It is hard for us to understand, seen from *our* perspective or how *we* reason and think. […] You'd think that at least they are *safe!* If you think of what *the concept asylum* means, you flee for your life and your political conviction or religion or such things …. But perhaps there are not that many who do that *in reality.* Many run away also from socially and economically miserable situations. That's it. (Officer at the Swedish MB department of Dublin cases)

While relative poverty in Italy relates to a potentially overwhelming debate about the all-but-nonexistent social security and assistance in Italy generally, in Sweden it relates

to a widespread (and politically sanctioned) fear of (external) welfare abuse, seen also in other wealthy EU states. This fear has prompted cuts in the Swedish reception programme, and a 'levelling down' in the process of EU harmonization (cf. Hansen 2008). As we see, the figure of the stranger as threatening, a bogus asylum seeker, and the policy of keeping the unsolicited migrants on the fringes of society, detained or at least located to remote places, and keeping the costs of maintaining their daily survival as low as possible, walk hand in hand and reinforce each other. The positive effect is twofold: on the one hand, showing the national population that strangers are not pampered, on the other, showing populations in the country of origin that they are not welcome. What is overlooked in this strategy is the emotional and psychological effects on the people who have actually come, and who become used as instruments in the signal game.

5.2.2 Otherization

Entering a new society as an unsolicited migrant means entering at the lowest possible level on the power/status nexus; a position of total or near-total dependency (cf. Fraser and Gordon 1994). In Italy, dependency assumes multifaceted and complex forms; migrants have rather random access to municipal reception programmes, but on the whole depend on the informal economy and on relief organizations for their survival. Because of the Italian tradition of issuing short-term residence permits and the somewhat ceremonious process required to register movement from one region to another, migrants in Italy are frequent and recurrent clients of police authorities responsible for permits and residential registration. As soon as one cycle of application, investigation, and issuing of the much-coveted permit has ended the next one begins (cf. Martìn-Perez 2010; Schuster 2005). In Sweden the form of dependency is instead characterized by a rather static and unidimensional relationship of dependency on the state during the period of transition and subsequently (if accepted) on the municipality to which the migrant is transferred upon acceptance. These conditions lock the migrant into the subordinate position of the one receiving help, often for unspecified but long periods of time (Graham 2003; Wettergren 2012a).

In spite of these differences between the two countries, I argue that any type of fixed, institutionalized and long-term helper interaction is likely to develop a similar pattern in terms of interactions between the helpers and the helped. The *meaning* and *function* of the helper interaction to society at large may vary. In Italy, the helper interaction is structured by the different ideologies (religious and political) of the relief organization that is responsible for it. In Sweden, details of the organization may vary between regions, but the key part of the helper interaction is framed by an ideology embraced by the state, an institutionalized discourse (Hansen Löfstrand 2009b). The institutionalization of the helper interaction per se tends to release processes of humiliation and shaming embedded in the asymmetric relationship between helper and helped (Wettergren 2012a; Wettergren 2012b). However, while nationals in need of welfare services can (at least in theory) raise legitimate claims because they are citizens and therefore basically entitled to receive help from the state, migrants' rights vis-à-vis the receiving state are conditioned by the discretion of the state and its willingness to offer help and hospitality (Derrida 2001; Derrida and Dufourmentelle 2000; Rosello 2001) to non-citizens.[71] If institutionalized helper interactions generally require submissiveness and dependency on the receiver's part, migrants thus have to be even more *grateful* and submissive and even less demanding (Simmel 1971). In combination with the theme of low visibility and relative poverty, the migrants are constructed as others, and – as we have seen – as threatening and deceitful others at that.

The theme of otherization follows themes of low visibility (which keeps the other out of social sight) and relative poverty (which keeps the other on the social margins), but also feeds back into these in a self-fulfilling prophecy loop. In the situated interactions, otherization is a sine qua non of the helper-helped relationship. As we have seen, the professional discourse tends to work with the polarization between help that victimizes and help that empowers. To avoid the former, help is withheld or denied, but when migrants take initiative and show autonomy and empowerment, they are all too often positioned as difficult and help-resisting instead of being recognized positively. In both

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[71] In Sweden there is a difference in the access to various types of welfare insurance. While migrants have access to benefits – albeit benefits set lower than for natives during the transition period – they have no access to unemployment insurance or pensions. These build up over time if and when a migrant is accepted and gainfully employed.

the Swedish and the Italian cases, the frontliners' efforts to help migrants integrate operated with specific other images of the object of education, notably the 'clan-oriented' other (an image present in both cases) who needed to be taught individualism (cf. Carlson 2002; Carlson 2006); the childlike other (the Italian case) who needed to be shamed (by angry outbursts) in order to understand his/her own best interests; and the 'survival expert' other (the Swedish case) who needed to be denied help in order to learn not to manipulate helpers. In essence, long-term institutionalized helper interactions promote these kinds of other images (cf. Simmel 1971) because they deprive the subject/ help recipient of autonomy and agency by making him/her dependent. On the other side, the helper/frontliner is restricted by rules and regulations, organizational budgets and goals, and is also – unwittingly or not – made a carrier of the institutionalized 'othering' discourse. Thus it can be argued that the integration objectives that served as the framework of teachers in the Swedish case were, *from the outset,* formulated in a way that positioned the helped according to established other-images.

As part of the institutionalized helper interaction, the help comes with the requirement that the subject submits to the helping agent's terms and conditions and 'rescue' plan. Here, help-givers in Sweden shape plans for integration with an eye to institutionally defined 'Swedishness' – as being, for example, gender equal, democratic, tolerant, and consensus-oriented – while help givers in the Italian region shaped the pre-planned integration trajectory according to political ideals holding that the large informal economy of Italy must be resisted, while it was argued that the lack of child-care provision was part of Italian society and something that mothers must learn to cope with. From the point of view of the help-givers, the fact that the migrants opposed these plans and/or resorted to secondary adjustments corroborated the assumption that they were somehow 'immature' or 'incomplete' in terms of a modern individualized (and autonomous) self-actualization project. Migrants who expressed opposition were at risk of being viewed as 'bogus asylum seekers', or at least ungrateful and difficult clients. Interestingly, migrants' reliance on compatriot networks (primarily formed *after* emigration has taken place and as a buffer and a response to acute misery and/or isolation in the host country) to build social capital, reinforces the image of the 'clan

mentality'. The often reluctant submission to the terms and conditions of help, without which they will be refuted as help recipients, produce them as dependent, non-autonomous individuals in need of discipline and guidance to 'build themselves'. Images and perceptions of the help recipient generally tend to be sorted along the dichotomous categories of 'good' and 'bad' clients (Löfstrand 2005; Sahlin 1994). In the case of migrant clients, these images also become entangled with, and reinforce, cultural stereotypes.

In sum, migrants are generally seen as culturally different in ways that warrant disciplining and fostering in order to fit into the host society. What is seen in the integration programmes in the study is a tendency to construct the subject target and the society target simultaneously. In other words, the society into which the migrant is to be integrated is in many ways an ideal society as imagined/desired by the frontliners, who may then also assess what the migrants need to learn in order to perform well in that society.

5.2.3 Reception of asylum seekers benefits the region

In both Città and Province the reception of asylum seekers created job opportunities. I would say that a most remarkable sign of the importance of this was the placement of the Migration Board in Yby – right in the centre of the town and in the same building as the 'People's House'. This shows that to Yby, the presence of the MB, which was dedicated to the reception and accommodation of asylum seekers, was a proud affair for the municipality – not because people there appreciated the foreigners, but because a state authority had decided to open an office there, and that generated some jobs in a local economy that was otherwise in decline. In Lillbacken, migrant children kept the local school from closing, and migrant customers sustained the local shops. In addition, the local second-hand market boomed. In Città, some of the frontliners working for both Arci and Caritas were employed because of the SPRAR programme, and so forth. Although these circumstances do not provide any evidence for a de facto local or large-scale economic gain associated with the reception of migrants, it is nevertheless interesting because it suggests an area for further research. And perhaps a sociology of economy perspective would contribute to existing economic research on the topic of

migration and economy. American economic research on the effects of immigration on the economy of a host society tends to focus on the effects on the labour market, and to measure the degree to which immigrant labour generally increases economic growth (e.g. Borjas 1994; Simon 1999). Concluding that labour immigration benefits the nation state under some specific conditions, the research advocates regulated immigration in order to control the effects. Refugees, it is argued, are not expected to have the same effects on the economy as 'economic migrants' (here meaning labour migrants) because they have access to social welfare programmes from day one, which, in the US, is not the case for other migrants. This implies that refugees are somewhat more of a 'burden' to the host economy. This research generally considers social welfare a drain factor and does not consider the number of people employed in social welfare offices, integration programmes, and special interventions/projects targeting particular groups of welfare recipients, and so on. Suffice it to say that a more holistic perspective on the issue of migration and its pros and cons for the economy of the host nation seems to be missing. Instead, the economic aspects of migration are socially constructed so as to feed into the popular imaginary and the otherization processes described above; to make unsolicited immigrants appear almost uniquely as a burden to society and a threat to social stability. Unsolicited migrants are unsolicited because they are perceived as takers, not givers. In Città we saw that this issue was not so much on the agenda in 2006. It appeared that people generally did not know that there were 'refugees' as opposed to 'economic migrants', nor were they aware of the increasing demand (from the EU) that the state and the municipalities provide for the basic needs of these migrants. But in Sweden the presence of migrants, in remote and depopulating places with high unemployment rates, were clearly resented by some.

5.3 Final remarks

During fieldwork my motto has been to 'follow the problem', or rather 'follow the practice of coping with the problem'. The overall problem as it emerged in this study is that migrants run away from hopeless and violent situations in their home countries with the hope of establishing a new life in a European country. At the receiving end, this movement of people becomes a problem because nation states want immigration to be regulated and kept at manageable levels in terms of society remaining unaffected

(Castles 2006; Hansen 2008; Johansson 2005). Societies, some argue, should 'absorb' newcomers, and when this is no longer possible, newcomers ought to stop coming (e.g. Borjas 1994; Simon 1999). But the origin of migration is essentially structural and global; it is highly unlikely that people will stop migrating, or that the numbers of people fleeing their countries of origin will decline, considering that we may expect in the future increased climate catastrophes, increasing cleavages between rich and poor countries, and at least a continued level of war and conflict in the world – factors that force people away from their homes (Castles 2003; Massey et al. 1993). This is of course a contradiction in terms, and the paradoxes and ad hoc solutions that it produces are seen in the everyday struggle to uphold at least some sort of surface consistency and logical meaning in the organization of the reception of asylum seekers. Another aspect of coping with the problem is expressed in the migrants' production of meaning. This production is fragmented and repeatedly torn apart as they engage with each new situation of structural subordination.

Considering, and granting, the differences between Sweden and Italy, the pattern of similarities found is hardly coincidental. While post-colonial research has already suggested this pattern as one that follows the logics of the racialized discourses of domination undergirding colonialism and contemporary economic globalization (e.g. Eriksson et al. 1999), I show that the processes involved in the concrete situated interaction reproducing the pattern are not straightforward. Frontliners, while limited by the structural and organizational preconditions of their work, fumble for fragments of meaning that break with racial domination. Migrants, while acknowledging these efforts, struggle to defend their self-feelings, to uphold hope, and to achieve the dream of 'a normal life' *in spite of* the various integration programmes in which they are expected to participate.

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