Getting old in a Foreign Land: imaginaries and policies for ageing immigrants in an Italian urban context

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Contents

1 Ageing immigrants: a challenge for policy and research

Until a few decades ago, migrant families were studied from two perspectives. The first concerned their interaction with the final stages of a migratory process. The family, whether reunited or formed in migration, was the lens through which processes of integration and settlement in the arrival society were studied. The second area of concern examined the links between insertion paths and notions of identity.

Today, these research paths consider two new, interconnected elements. On the one hand there is transnationalism[1], one aspect of which is "less wished-for but more endured – the growing phenomenon of people and family units who make an effort to keep alive emotional and family ties in spite of the borders and distances that separate them" (Ltrrucea, in Ricucci 2019: 57). On the other, there is the caring strategies for elderly people and to what extent ICTs intervene in this specific field. Indeed, ICTs offer extraordinary opportunities in staying in touch, and have also generated challenges among migrants. The younger generation is especially adept at seamlessly navigating the Internet moving from one social network to another. By contrast, the elderly people are showing signs of being less versed in using the Internet and other digital technologies. As a result, an increasing gap has emerged between the younger generation (sometimes the second generation of immigrants) and their parents (usually first generation of immigrants). Recent studies of immigrant family relations focused attention on the critical role language gaps played in defining domestic affective relations, notions of ethnicity and belonging, but have only recently included the new digital languages. The lack of a common language is of course a crucial issue when discussing intra-family relations in various domains (from sharing rules and values to talking about feelings and emotions; from behavioural attitudes to intimate matters) because the digital divide is another distinguishing element between parents (and grandparents) and children (grandchildren). Language barriers are also a crucial issue outside intra-family relations. Focussing on elderly people with a

[1] For a literatrure review on this concept, we refer to Vertovec 2004; Pirkkalainen &Abdile 2009.

migratory background and fitting in the group of older labour migrants (Bolzman & Kaeser 2016)[2], language and ICTs opportunities[3] are becoming new topics to be taken into account in defining social policies and managing potential conflicts. Indeed, in contexts where the rate of elderly people is increasing challenging welfare systems, a competition between national citizens and 'the others', i.e. migrants, naturalized people and denizens, could become a potential social bomb (Allard & Danziger 2000; Banting et al. 2006; Brucker et al. 2002; Schierup et al. 2006). The so-called 'welfare shopping' phenomenon (i.e. the mobility across countries for benefitting of welfare opportunities due to the EU citizenship or long-rem residence) has emerged in the recent years as a side effect of the increasing human mobility (Borjas 1999; Guisselquist 2013; Ricucci 2017).

In this framework, our paper aimed at exploring the variety of social, cultural and institutional factors connected to aging processes in immigrants communities in Italy. In recent years, active ageing has been gaining attention in the welfare policies all around Europe. These policies have been designed and implemented within an oversimplifying approach that considers the target population as a homogeneous group of elderly people. A direct consequence of the adoption of this approach is neglecting the cultural and social specificity of the growing foreign population. The issue of aging of the population of foreign origin is assuming primary importance in the design of medium-term policies that, beyond the purely health and welfare aspect, are able to intercept even the underlying cultural and social needs of a phenomenon that refers to heterogeneous imaginaries and resulting from interaction between the different cultures of origins of the immigrant community and the local context.

2 Methodology

In order to address these topics, a case study has been carried out in the municipality of Turin, a medium-size city in the North West of Italy aimed at pursuing two objectives: providing methodologies and tools for the measurement of the phenomenon with attention paid at estimating the extent to which the settled communities can be considered as stable or if, on the contrary, they show a tendency to return to their country of origin after a certain age; exploring conceptions and imaginaries linked to aging considered not as a mere biological process but as a strongly culturally connoted product of diverse ethnic backgrounds. In order to reach these objectives, the research adopted a quali-quantitative methodology developed along four phases: first of all a wide literature review was carried out aimed at exploring the specific social and institutional contexts in which policies aimed at governing immigrants aging have been implemented; secondly a fieldwork was developed aimed at identifying the most relevant communities in the city area and at estimating the actual share of foreign population that decide to remain in the territory in old age (65 years or more); then, semi-structured interviews has been submitted to a wide sample of actors connected to the topic of interest (Italian and immigrant subjects over 65; caregivers; professional care workers; representatives of institutions); finally a subset of the above mentioned actors will be voluntary involved in a participatory activity (consisting in focus group and deliberative arenas) aimed at

[2] In this paper we focus our attention on those who arrived in Italy for work or family puroposes during the 80s and the 90s. We are aware that the scientific debate on migration for retirement, for specific health purposes or family support within a cross-border mobility (Horn 207a; 2017b; Liversage & Jakobsen 2016; King & Lulle 2016).

[3] On this topic, Baldassar et al. (29016) have scrutinized the impact of ICTs in taking care of elderly people across countries thanks to the opportunieties of Skype, web communication, on-line pschological support.

deepening the analysis of the problem and facilitating the emerging of visions and scenarios for the future.

3 The research scenario: the need of an intergenerational investigation[4]

Perception of phenomena is always slower than their evolution, especially when it is a matter of epochal changes. Immigration has been one of those changes which still today – after 40 years – Italy finds it hard to metabolize. Yet more than 5,000,000 foreign residents and a growing proportion of naturalizations cannot shake off the sensation of being still at the beginning of the adventure of a new immigration country (Istat 2019). Naturally the image of dinghies in the Mediterranean is relevant, having a disruptive effect on public opinion, aggravated by the economic crisis. Perception becomes more confused as a result of growing unemployment, struggling social welfare services and a reduction in the benefits accruing from being citizens of one of the world's most industrialized countries. New terminology appears in free newspapers distributed by immigrants: "the working-class poor", "the impoverished middle class" (Kitson, Martin and Tyler 2011). When the going gets tough, the weakest pay the price. The finger of accusation is pointed at immigrants, guilty of not wishing to go away.

Since the 1970s, Italy has been telling a different story, a tale of an economically-developing country capable of attracting migrants and developing successful production which can hold its own in the global marketplace.

Nevertheless, attention is rarely focused on this. One of the neglected aspects is the increasing number of immigrant families and how this contributes to changing the scenario in various contexts. More families are putting down roots in Italy: buying houses, investing in their children's education, making plans for the future in this country. In this context of stable insertion, cities have begun to face up to the new challenges presented by managing civil cohabitation in the neighbourhoods, socio-assistential structures, social welfare procedures Work, both as employees and self-employed, continues to be the main reason for issuing residence permits, followed by family and religious reasons, as well as elective residence and student permits. The number of permits for family reasons in the past ten years has increased, which is a basic indicator of residence stability.

The immigration phenomenon is affecting the various regions of Italy in different ways. The greatest number of non-EU citizens live in the North or Centre of Italy. Large urban cenershost substantial numbers of immigrant populations.

Turin is one of the cities where foreign immigration began to be numerically significant at the beginning of the 1980s. Immigrants from North Africa were among the first to arrive and for some time have continued to be the most numerous group. From the beginning Moroccans have predominated: not only numerically but they also became emblematic of foreign immigration in Piedmont (and Turin). In a survey on a random sample to discover opinions and attitudes towards immigration of people living in Pedmont , carried out at the end of the 1990s, the first question asked interviewees to say who came into their minds when they heard talk about foreign immigrants. The spontaneous response of two-thirds was "Moroccans" (Ires 1992: 97). Since then

[4] The research was carried out in Turin, September 2016-18. Ten interviews with professionals (teachers, key informants among various ethnic communities, people working in juvenile centres and labour centres) were collected in order to define the socio-ethnic context both before and during the economic crisis in the city of Turin.

more than twenty-five years have passed and the situation is much more complex. Some Moroccan families are in trouble as a result of the economic crisis which has hit the sectors where the men were employed (Ricucci 2018). Often they are families with low cultural capital where the mothers don't speak Italian and so the children become valuable bridgeheads between them and the surrounding environment – when they leave their usual haunts (places of worship, ethnic shops, relatives' homes) in order to interact with public services (registry office, guidance centres, schools).

"*The women don't feel well: they speak little, their time passes between the house and the nursery or the school. Whenever I try to approach them outside the school where I work, they tell me that everything is all right, that they would like to learn Italian but cannot because they have no time or don't know where to leave the children….Then it comes out that the husbands are afraid, and they too are afraid, of Italy, of their children, their language and their culture, of not being like them any more. I try to explain to them that yes, their children will change to some extent because they were born and are growing up here, (but) that they can't stay locked up at home and come back to life when they are in Morocco*" (Cultural mediatrix).

Alongside these families, there are those which may be defined "middle class" (Allasino and Eve 2011), who are not bothered by this moment of economic crisis, who have good cultural capital and enjoy a wide social network consisting not only of compatriots. Then there are families who have Italian citizenship, those who are waiting for it and those who have only a residence permit. In short, a variety of socio-economic and legal conditions which affect both intra-family relationships and the results of the integration process (Ricucci 2011).

The first Moroccan and Egyptian immigrants were adult males alone, as often (but not always) it's the case at the beginning of a migratory movement. The reasons which explain the first arrivals lead back to the facility with which Maghrebis could obtain passports and the difficulty – after the mid-1970s – of gaining access to traditional European immigration countries. The relative success of the first pedlars – who sometimes managed to earn the equivalent of a salary, one of the reasons why they had little interest in being employed to do marginal work – persuaded others to follow in their footsteps (Premazzi & Scali 2011).

During the 1990s most Moroccans and Egyptians gradually entered the work market as employees in industry, construction, agriculture and services.

Little by little work guaranteed a steady income and families were reunited. The demographic profile of Moroccans and Egyptians thus became gradually more complicated. Couples were seen with their children, some born in their home-countries and some in Italy. The presence of minors became important and many-sided. There are also elderly immigrants, some who were young when they arrived here more than 30 years ago, others who rejoined relatives. They do not necessarily have any pension rights, and the family – if any – may not be in a position to supply all the needed assistance and economic support. It is possible that soon there will be unprecedented – albeit not unforeseeable – problems concerning interventions of support for this sector of the population.

As Allasino and Ricucci write: "*A migratory movement with large numbers such as those from the Maghreb cannot be pigeonholed in a few inclusive categories. If many elements confirm a stabilization process in progress, others indicate that flows of free-floating immigrants (Priore, 1979: 103-104) continue to arrive, taking their chances, not necessarily motivated by ties of family or friendship in Italy*" (2004: 13)

We are therefore in the presence of a stabilized group, as indicated by the number of families and citizenship acquisitions and the growing number of elderly people. They also belong to

communities which – considering the closeness of the country of origins – have maintained close contact with Morocco and Egypt (especially after the Arab Springs), where many people spend their annual holiday and, recently, part of the family return while waiting for better working conditions in Italy. And it is precisely investigation into how families overcame the effects of the economic crisis in the last ten years that throws into relief the question of intergenerational care activities.

4 New challenges for welfare in a multicultural context

Forty years of migrations have contributed to a structural transformation in Italy affecting neighbourhoods and cities, workplaces and educational environments New places and cultures of origin, norms and values deriving from often little-known socio-cultural systems found teachers, social workers, officials, volunteers and the general population unprepared.

Social workers and all those working in services addressed to migrants are looking for more support in order to overcome new challenges and requests presented by elderly migrants: i.e. more personnel, more training, more updated skills, more financial resources. As Ricucci states, *"Social services are now at the forefront in organising (hand in hand with NGOs) welcoming activities, supporting foreign families living in precarious conditions, both economically and legally, and managing – in agreement with the third sector – the refugee influx and especially unaccompanied minors"* (2013: 12).

New challenges emerge for those who are involved in social services, even though the multicultural environment is not a novelty in the Italian scenario (Sollors, 2005). Neither debating how to manage minority requests in the city nor how migrant families and elderly migrants challenge society is new. Comparing how Italian society addressed these issues in the past with what is happening today means bearing in mind two key turning points, 1) The 1970s when Italy shifted from being an emigration to an immigration country and, 2) The growing number of minorities (i.e. countries of origin, languages, religious affiliations, migratory projects) cohabiting in the same areas, requiring attention, demanding specific (exclusive) services and questioning local authorities.

The increase and development of immigration into Italy in recent years has placed, among others, the issues of intercultural skills and social workers' training at the heart of the debate (Zincone, 2015). Furthermore, the strong (negative) impact of the economic crisis and the constant arrivals of asylum seekers have drawn attention to the topics of vulnerability, precarious conditions, social-assistance and accommodation respecting human dignity and the rights of adults, and mainly of minors, whether they are with parents or not (Ricucci, 2014).
At the forefront in considering the latest developments in the migratory scenario, are the social workers and other civil servants (especially those who work in various welfare services) who have to continually cope with linguistic and cultural diversity, trying not to make the mistake of thinking that the characteristics of the first immigrants they meet identify an entire ethnic group. In other words, they run the serious risk of stereotypes and cultural reification (Cohen-Emerique, 2011)[5].
On the other hand, as Ricucci already pointed out, *"If immigrants, those who consider themselves society's 'foreign body', are expected to learn the society's language and rules (e.g. through*

[5] Some polemical themes in the public-opinion debate are non-Italian citizens' access to public housing, to communal infant schools and social assistance.

language and civic integration courses), then it is reasonable to ask that those who manage services should also learn. This learning curve can by no means be taken for granted, asking people as it does to update their working methodology and rethink their concept of citizenship in a multicultural environment (Kazepov, 2009). The process directly affects all those who, in their professional activity, come into contact with end-users of foreign origin (from teachers to educators, from doctors to registry-office clerks) and therefore need operating tools for complex contexts and continuous updating on immigration-society relations. In a broader sense, it also concerns all citizenry, without forgetting that relational dynamics, in their cultural and economic aspects, are triggered not only between natives and foreigners but also among foreigners of different provenances (Gundara, 2000)" (2019: 27).

It is clear that the encounter between institutional services/offices and migrants is often fraught with difficulties and concerns, especially in those socio-economic environments characterised by the high rate of unemployment among youth, increasing numbers of families with a low monthly-wage, reducing public opportunities for social benefits and with scant social cohesion (Pastore & Ponzo, 2012). Being close together in the queue for demanding assistance and financial help, and being competitors (for jobs, public resources, elderly services), may lead to social fractures and the dangerous phenomena of closure, mistrust and exclusion of the weakest social layers.

Thus, the presence of foreigners, particularly those who are considered vulnerable (economically, socially, physically), generates needs and social tensions, which often solidify and are dealt with at local level. The assignation of responsibility and/or jurisdiction between the centralized state and local bodies on this matter is becoming increasingly complex because, whereas the governmental (tentatively) community structures handle entrance policies, many practical applications of such policies – especially those dealing with integration – are defined by regions and local bodies (Zincone 2010; Gargiulo 2015).

Local attention becomes meaningful and important because it represents the arena where policies are translated into initiatives, practices and concrete intervention. In this context, the role of those working in the world of services is crucial, especially with regard to social assistance where experts, civil servants and social workers meet first-hand the multiple vulnerabilities due to immigration.

In this respect, intercultural skills, profound understanding of the dynamics of interethnic relations, in-depth comprehension of welcoming legal mechanisms, educational and labour insertion, and access to housing and social inclusion, all become transversal knowledge, no longer the exclusive property of one profession or another.

Studies on public welfare have long focused on the complex relationship between supply and demand for services in contexts where the immigrant population is significant and diverse (Rossi & Boccacin 2014). In the specific case of Italy, although the role of social welfare and health services since the 1980s has been relevant to the dynamics of reception and integration, their internal reflection on challenges and new requirements has not always progressed hand in hand. The rapid evolution of the migratory scene and its transformation into a structural element of the socio-economic fabric, *first of all* in large urban centres such as Rome, Milan, Turin and Naples, other minor towns and cities, and territorially dispersed in mountain areas, have confronted local administrations with the need to overcome practices (that have become customary) dictated by emergency situations, and delegating to private social subjects, according to a distorted application of the concept of subsidiarity instead of that of substitution (Ricucci 2009; Merrill & Carter 2002).

In light of these considerations, the focus at local level is relevant and meaningful because it is the place where policies are translated into concrete initiatives, practices and interventions. Turin's experience qualifies as emblematic from many points of view. First of all, as it represents a paradigmatic city of the national scenario because from the early nineties it has experimented with innovative policies and solutions, some of which are incorporated in national legislation. Secondly, for the presence of a lively associative fabric that is attentive to transforming itself in the face of new needs. The subalpine context has been the scene of numerous experiments in the field of reception and integration, especially minors, consolidated in successive phases, also at national level (Galloni & Ricucci 2010). Last but not least, it is important to remember two important banking foundations on the territory whose investment in assistance and integration is well known and consolidated.

Today, Turin is a city deeply marked by the effects of the economic crisis, crossed by profound structural changes in its productive and social fabric (Davico, Debernardi & Staricco 2017). The foreign population, one third of which is made up of EU citizens (above all Romanians), presents elements of strong heterogeneity, ranging from families belonging to the uran middle class to situations of strong vulnerability and social precariousness. Intermediate situations are a corollary, with subjects (of first generations) exposed to the selective processes of expulsion from the labour market alongside children (reunited) who are confronted with an employment reality that is difficult to access, even for Italians. (Ricucci 2017).

In this scenario, immigrants are still perceived mainly as *'workers'* and rarely as already *'retired'* or *'elderly'* persons: the feeling, also fuelled by the arrival of young asylum seekers, is that migrants, even though they have been in Italy for decades or are already Italian citizens, remain crystallised at the time of their first arrival. Among the most experienced operators, the theme is beginning to emerge, even if in terms of the analysis of the characteristics of demand. The reflections collected concern the difficulties faced by elderly immigrants in the face of services: these are difficulties that can be summarised using the scheme developed by Geraci and El Hamad (2011; see also Tognetti Bordogna 2004), which concern various types of barriers:

1) *jiuridical-legal*, which refer to the formal definition of those who have the right of access and those who have not
2) *economic*, i.e. with the identification of categories that are exempt from or eligible for the payment of services (e.g. healthcare services)
3) *bureaucratic-administrative*, relative to obligations provided for by the procedures and may *"dissuade"* immigrants from exercising their rights because they perceive them as inspection or control strategies
4) *organizational*, i.e. the widespread lack of flexibility of services in terms of opening hours, geographical location, specialisation of operators

Analysis of the literature adds two other issues to these matters. The first concerns the role (necessary) of intercultural mediation, both linguistic and above all cultural, in the meaning of *'being old'* and *'care models'*, which are culturally defined and grasped (Blakemore 1999; Hoksma 2004). The second issue calls into question the role of communities and ethnic associations. As experience with Italian communities in Australia and Switzerland have shown, in the case of users

with a migrant background, public services for the elderly are intertwined with practices and activities carried out by private organisations of ethnic or religious origin (Warners etal. 2004). Common language, culture and traditions represent important variables in the helping relationship, playing an important role within a strategy of welfare mix (public-private) (Ascoli-Ranci 2003) and integrated welfare (European Migration Network 2014; Westin 2015).

5 Preliminary results: an old migrants typology

The case study on Moroccan and Egyptian communities carried out in Torino shows that the common perception of the immigrant continues to be associated with a young adult and, to a lesser extent, a young woman with a veil. Yet, the second generations, thoroughly investigated by research and presented in seminars and conferences, are a group little perceived by citizens, outside all experts. However, the age structure of the two communities is changing – the younger classes more quickly than the older ones – where, albeit slowly, there are already the first signs of a phenomenon, which operators and services will have to deal with in a few years (Coffano, Del Savio, Mondo 2012; Fantini 2012). What does this mean? What are the effects of an elderly population of immigrant origin on care services?

The elderly people we are dealing with here are a heterogeneous group.
First of all, there is a group of pioneers who have aged in Italy. They are the avant-garde of the elderly immigrant population, which brings to light problems that are not new, as one interviewee remembers.

"Even if you are old, you have to show that you work or that you have someone to support you. Then, if the father has always been supported by his son, if the son loses his job he is able to renew his permit once, with unemployment, for one year, and after, in the second year, his documents are taken away and he becomes irregular, with the decree of law of expulsion. Therefore, the father, the wife, the children and so on, also become irregular; it is a chain. That's what the State should see; that's what you, the young people, have to say to your government, until this process may serve. The problem with these elderly people, who can no longer work and who have been here for many years, is that they are now in difficulty, because in order to have social assistance, they must be residents for at least ten years, but most of them, as I said before, did not think about residency. The important thing was to have a residence permit, but they moved about from here and there, and therefore did not have a place of residence, and could not even ask for social support, neither the man nor his wife, and they were forced to leave, or they stayed here as irregulars.
There are many irregular elderly people. This is an important phenomenon to be studied. It's all a chain: either you have a job or you lose your permit. If you lose your permit, you can't even move to other countries because you don't have European citizenship" (Latifa, 51, Morocco).

The elderly people who have not been able to obtain citizenship or a residence card may find themselves, after perhaps twenty or thirty years of life in Italy, as irregular, tied to the economic and working situation of their children. A paradox, which finds an explanation in the path that periodically sees, paraphrasing Primo Levi, "The Drowned and The Saved", that is, those who are irregular or become irregular to those who manage to emerge, to find a new working resource that guarantees a period of tranquillity before the dark clouds thicken on the horizon.

Despite the general solidity of the two groups, situations of particular vulnerability emerge. More

among Moroccans, where elderly people are more numerous.

Even among those who have citizenship, and are therefore sheltered from the fluctuations of the labour market and its repercussions, life as an old person cannot be simple and the option of returning home may be the only viable one.

"Most Moroccan immigrants in Italy who have citizenship, or who are waiting for citizenship, are leaving, because here there is nothing more to do and there is no social assistance. If a husband loses his job and goes to social assistance, they simply tell him that there are no funds. If, on the other hand, there is the possibility of helping them, they must nevertheless enrol in a course… imagine an old man in this situation, one of those who arrived earlier.
How do you ask a 70- or 80-year-old man to attend a course? Also, to get a financial subsidy, there's no need to have to have a car, a mobile phone, or a computer at home, because they come to check at your home, eh? And, according to them, a mobile phone, a computer, a satellite dish are luxuries. The conclusion is that they don't give him the subsidy. In any case, as long as they throw these spanners in the works, no one will stay" (Latifa, 51, Morocco).

Then, there is a second group, that of *"elderly immigrants"*, men and women reunited with their children, who arrived mainly for health reasons.

"I have also brought up my two daughters, who are minors, besides looking after my mother, who is very ill. I have two sisters in Holland and a brother here, in Turin, who emigrated before me. In all, there are seven of us: two in Holland, two here (my brother and I) and three more in Morocco. My mother, who is now in Italy with me, sent my brother here, who is now an Italian citizen. Since she is very ill and I am the daughter, I am the one who has to take care of her, because in our country it is the women who take care of the elderly or sick parents. My brother is an Italian citizen because he has been here for almost thirty years" (Zahra, 53, Morocco).

In other migratory contexts, the reunification – even de facto – of parents is a growing reality to make up for the shortcomings in the state offer of childcare. This aspect, which is not yet so visible and perceived within the Moroccan community, is a surprising element. The above interview focused on the young age of migration (and therefore parents). This could really be an element to strengthen a migration of parents, of grandparents, with the task of looking after the grandchildren while the young adult sons and daughters work. Expectations of rational behaviour seem to come up against the effects of the crisis, which have forced some to rethink the family organisation, perhaps by returning part of the family to their countries of origin, and others to plan new migrations. In fact, according to the perception of the interviewees, the arrival to offer support to sons and daughters, with the care of their grandchildren, does not seem so widespread.

Finally, there are those who "perceive themselves as elderly", but who from a statistical point of view would not fall into this category as they are still under 60. The issue of self-perception recalls the cultural aspect of the question. In fact, if conventionally for aging we usually mean the final phase of a life cycle, the biological threshold of entry into this phase is not defined unequivocally, but varies from individual to individual. In addition to the physical factor, there is also the cultural factor, which considers ageing as a stage that follows the achievement of other previous stages, regardless of age, physical condition, or working career. This is what a Moroccan woman called to

mind in front of an astonished interviewer of how, at 53, she considered herself old: who became a wife, mother and, above all, a grandmother, who "legitimately" entered the group of the elderly. The difference of this way of understanding the stages of life can be the harbinger of what Cohen Emerique (2011) called "cultural incidents", or incomprehension and decoding of behaviour based on the point of view, of Italian cultural assumptions, Western, in which one affirms the rhetoric of the "young elderly" to emphasise how, in several respects, the category of elderly should be reconsidered.

"If I am in Italy it will be easier to be looked after in case of illness. I will be taken care of even if there is a crisis. From the point of view of Italians perhaps the public health service does not work, but from the Egyptians' perspective, yes, it does. For Italy, from the Egyptians' standpoint, the glass is half full. Do you know people who have been here all their working lives and then returned to Egypt? In my opinion, people repent when they return to Egypt. To date, I haven't seen anyone who was happy to be back in Egypt. Those who went to Egypt or were disappointed or returned to Italy" (Babti, 53, Egypt).

However, the best opportunities in terms of welfare and healthcare sometimes do not seem sufficient for people to decide to spend their old age in Italy. There are also those who raise more general questions, which relate to the relationship between Italy and the socio-cultural characteristics of immigration, as recalled by a Moroccan interviewee underlining the issue of true protection of religious freedom in daily life, protection that – beyond the constitutional text – continues to clash with the mistrust, fears and prejudices of many Italians.

"In any case, I will not stay in Italy; instead, I will go to France or Belgium, but not in Italy, because my religion demands that I stay in a place where I can pray freely five times a day. After the age of 65 you have to live well, in a way that conforms to your religion, because you don't know how long you still have to live. That's how I think; I don't think of money, I think of the life that will come next, and it's important to get there by doing good and not evil" (Seddik, 61, Morocco).

This voice appears isolated within the framework of our interviewees, but it is useful because it helps to remind us that migration projects can have unexpected implications, which are only partly attributable to economic or family reasons.

Sometimes religion can come to the fore and orient behaviour, other times links and feelings of attachment to the country of origin, which recall the nostalgia of someone's roots, which becomes a need for identity, a need to find a space in which to feel authentic (Baldassar & Merla 2015).

"My daughters will be grown up and living on their own. The problem of my future return to Morocco does not arise because when it happens my daughters will be adults and responsible for themselves, and they will decide freely what to do with their lives. When they finish high school, they will be 19-20 years old and, at that point, they will choose what to do, whether to continue studying, where to go. Surely, healthcare is much better here – there are many problems in Morocco from this point of view. But that won't stop me from coming back when I'm old, because I'll have Italian citizenship and therefore if I get sick, I'll come straight back to Italy to be treated. Moreover, the situation in Morocco is improving considerably, for everyone – old people, women, children – for example, there is much more assistance than before for sick people, who no longer have to pay as in the past if they don't have the chance." (Zoubida, 43, Morocco)

The look is disenchanted. Nostalgia, the call of one's origin does not obscure the sight. Difficulties are grasped, one perceives the limits of the current socio-political conditions of the countries of origin, the slow awareness of how, according to the analysis of an interviewee:

"There will be nobody who will stay here until they die, or go there to live until they die, they will stay in the two countries because both are their countries." (Funsani, 53, Egypt)

Even after ten years of crisis, Turin is still attractive for the availability of an efficient public welfare system. This resource is not only accessible to long-term residents but also to elderly relatives who remained in Morocco or Egypt. Many of these people enter Italy with tourist visas and stay here for the time necessary for treatment, which they access through the hospital's A&E department (Accident & Emergency). The geographies of mobility between the two Mediterranean shores have therefore been enriched with the appearance of these new social players who make short stays in Italy.

Mr. Larbi, who emigrated from Morocco in 1990, periodically hosts his elderly mother, who assists his grandchildren and carries out routine health checks:

"My mother came here four or five times, and once stayed here with me for a year. She took the children with my wife to kindergarten. She was also here for healthcare, to do tests, because the National Health System here is better." (Larbi, 55, Morocco)

These elderly relatives therefore benefit from their transnational ties, without any definitive stabilisation plan. Differences in lifestyle and estrangement created by the lack of a common language with the majority create insurmountable barriers:

"There are no parents who like to live here. They come and stay at most for two or three months, but then they prefer to remain in Egypt because they are used to it – they go out more and like it better." (Rabia, 29, Egypt)

6 Conclusions

Migrant presence in Italy has been evolving for the past 40 years from being a quite homogeneous group of young males to be a higly heterogenous population of households belonging to diverse ethnic communities and composed of individuals of almost every age, form childhood to old age. This evolution challenges both the research, that need to update conpetual framewroks and methodologies to investigate such a complex phenomenon, as well as welfare system, that needs to adapt to this changed landscape and to the raising competition in accessing the welfare services between migrants and native people, with particular attention to be paid at the needs of elderly population. Thus, policies should be developed in order to face the socioeconomic transformations resulting from both the immigration and demographic processes. In managing these processes, one of the most important characteristics of the city of Turin emerges: the strong collaboration between institutions and associations, both ethnic and interethnic, cultural and religious, working in taking care of the various societal challenges dealing with migrants, including offering welfare support to those who are more socially vulnerable as unemployed, working poor, elderly people with a poor

social capital. Up to now, the most important lesson emerging from the Turin experience is the importance of a network of associations and institutions working together to define and implement integration in an intercultural way. As an educator said, "We don't have a specific intercultural policy: we are intercultural in our way of working, in our activities, in our mentality. […] The main characteristic of our job is to 'work with', not 'work for'[6]". This way of acting is precious and has been positively evaluated in several reports and studies. However, integration programmes are not one-time projects but a continuous, dynamic process open to address other issues as they become important. In this way, projects addressing the challenges of elderly people with a migratory background represent a willingness to think beyond current problems and aim towards the future.

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