

Developing future scenarios of demographic, migratory and labour market processes in Italy:

Foresight findings

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Executive Summary

The foresight exercise carried out in Trento within the SEEMIG project represented an important and innovative chance to gather people from different professional backgrounds and with different personal histories and to get them to imagine the possible future of Trentino with reference to migrations and the labour market.

Experts, decision makers and migrants/civil society representatives were invited to separate brainstorming sessions aimed at discussing and identifying the main key factors which they considered crucial in the future of the region. The outcomes of the debate in the three groups were then presented in an open session which shed light on the different meanings that each group attributed to the factors labelled with the same terms. Certainly the economic aspects, and in particular the labour market trends, were common factors in all three groups as well as elements connected with the Italian law on immigration. The groups also remarked the importance of the cultural factor and this aspect opened a double debate: a semantic one (what is meant by culture?), and a hierarchic one (does culture influence all the other factors? Or are the various factors intertwined?). In this respect, the debate showed (at least as far as the present stakeholders were concerned) the very profound questions, also concerning the presence of foreigners, standing before Trentino, in particular questions about the identity and the type of social relations desired for the future. Thanks to this exchange it was possible to select the drivers considered relevant by the participants, thus creating a matrix of binary opposing future scenarios (positive and negative) containing these drivers. In particular, the matrix contained three factors: the social and cultural context, the economic development and the political and legal context.

Later two mixed groups equally formed by experts, decision makers and migrants were asked to imagine the migration and labour market trends from now until 2025 with reference to the factors in the matrix in the positive or negative scenario.

As the following pages will illustrate, in an imaginary *positive scenario*, also thanks to the alleviation of the impact of the economic crisis, unemployment would decrease and migrants would have more chances to see their professional competences fully recognised on the labour market. As a consequence, the existing gap between qualifications (and previous competences) and type of occupation characterizing the foreign labour would be reduced with a subsequent reduction of the occupational segregation of immigrants. A social and cultural context more open to diversity and recognising equality would foster social cohesion and the mutual cultural enrichment. The effect of this would be a greater well-being of the community and the reduction of social inequalities. Also from a legal point of view relevant changes would be triggered, for instance the Italian laws on citizenship could become less restrictive.

In the *negative scenario*, instead, the economic conjuncture would still be unfavourable and would bring a reduction of the work opportunities for migrants who would be forced to leave Italy. This would cause a direct loss for the enterprises which would be compelled to call highly-qualified Italian workers for covering the low-wage occupational positions. Competition on the labour market between Italians and foreigners would be intensified and the immigrants would serve as scapegoat for all the problems of Trentino. This tendency would also be reflected on a political level with

greater and greater consensus given to those political parties oriented towards the expulsion and exclusion of immigrants. Due to this exclusion and marginalisation, the immigrants would tend to isolation and would be reluctant to collaborate. This would ultimately bring about cultural impoverishment and a lack of dialogue amongst the citizens. Furthermore, the second-generation immigrants would be “forced” to leave their cultural roots behind in order not to be marginalised.

The scenarios envisioned by the participants were then enriched with what could actually happen to an imaginary “hero”. In this way, certain aspects emerged and most frequently were interpreted as “risks” for the future of Trentino. Undoubtedly, these aspects would have to be taken into account by the policy-makers since they deserve to be carefully examined. Another complex and multi-faceted element, which originated worries amongst the participants, regarded social inequalities (in the labour market opportunities, in education, in the access to services, etc.). This topic is not new, however immigration and the impact of the economic crisis would emphasise some of its features. This is particularly true for the second-generation immigrants: because of the high number of them in Trentino (as in the rest of Italy) it is even more urgent to discuss the legal recognition and overcome the current situation in which – due to the naturalisation law currently in force – the second-generation immigrants in Italy appear as “perpetually foreign” and inevitably disproportionate in number. Furthermore, an economic and production system unable to valorise the competences of people coming from abroad (also by recognising their qualifications), still reluctant to ensure equal opportunities in the access to the labour market for all workers (regardless of where they come from) would miss an important chance in terms of wealth and competitiveness.

INTRODUCTION

The report contains the outcome of the foresight exercise carried out in Trento in January 2014 within the SEEMIG project.

The foresight exercise is intended to gain insight into the future perceptions, expectations and fears of the citizens of Southern and Eastern European countries by utilising storylines and forming plausible future scenarios on macro and micro levels. Its activities are designed to address critical questions which might significantly shape the future of the region in the coming years (INFOSTAT Slovakia, 2013).

The foresight exercise can be defined as a qualitative exploratory approach of participatory design. This method based on quality opens a “more holistic” perspective than the one offered by other approaches based on quantity, especially when the phenomenon is investigated through the perceptions that specific population targets have of it. Therefore this method is able to offer alternative future scenarios, which might happen but also might not. This exercise may serve as a mental map for possible future situations thus taking alternative forecasts into consideration (INFOSTAT Slovakia, 2013).

Within the SEEMIG project, the exercise was aimed to facilitate a free and open discussion about the key factors which may impact the present and the future of Trentino with a particular reference to migrations and the labour market. Hence, the exercise was focused on the reasonable pathways leading to the future based on the current perceptions and contemporary trends (as well as expected dramatic events) related to migrations and the labour market.

In order to achieve this goal, the exploratory and participatory design of the foresight exercise put great emphasis on the active involvement of stakeholders and individuals with different professional, educational and social backgrounds. The participants in the exercise were identified and then divided into three groups (which were uniform as regards the number of persons involved):

- a) *experts*: sociologists, economists, statisticians, historians, demographers;
- b) *public authorities and decision makers*: politicians and policy makers on local and provincial level;
- c) *migrants and activists*: refugees, trade-unionists, representatives and members of immigrant associations, representatives of other associations working with immigrants.

The participants were invited to discuss together and to develop future scenarios based on their considerations of the connections between the labour market, the demographic situation and immigration in Trentino. Therefore they exchanged views with one another as to the factors explaining the migrations, the possibility that these factors may change in the future, the social and economic impact of the people’s mobility and so on.

In the positive scenario envisioned by one group, thanks to the alleviation of the impact of the economic crisis, unemployment would decrease and migrants would have more chances to see their professional competences fully recognised on the labour market; as a consequence, the occupational segregation of immigrants would be reduced. A social and cultural context more open to diversity and recognising equality would foster social cohesion, the mutual cultural enrichment and the

reduction of social inequalities. In the negative scenario, instead, the economic conjuncture would still be unfavourable and would bring a reduction of the work opportunities for migrants who would be forced to leave Italy. Competition on the labour market between Italians and foreigners would be intensified and the immigrants would serve as scapegoat for all the problems of Trentino. On a political level greater and greater consensus would be given to those political parties oriented towards the expulsion and exclusion of immigrants. As a consequence, the immigrants would tend to isolation and would be reluctant to collaborate. This would ultimately bring about cultural impoverishment and a lack of dialogue amongst the citizens. Furthermore, the second-generation immigrants would be “forced” to leave their cultural roots behind in order not to be marginalised.

From the scenarios envisioned by the participants it is possible to outline the risks related to migration and the labour market in Trentino.

The first regards the worsening economic situation which may further reduce the work opportunities of migrants. If migrants were forced to leave Italy, there would be a direct loss for the enterprises which would struggle to replace foreign workers with Italian ones (in the event of an economic upturn, the firms would have to attract new workers, train and integrate them at considerable costs). Instead, for the immigrants who will stay in Italy despite the occupational difficulties, the competition with the Italians on the labour market could be aggravated to the detriment of the migrants. An economic and production system unable to valorise the competences of the foreigners and still reluctant to ensure equal opportunities in the access to the labour market for all workers (regardless of where they come from) would miss an important chance in terms of wealth and competitiveness. The impact of this event should not be underestimated at a political level since the social conflicts could increase favouring the consensus to those movements oriented towards the expulsion and exclusion of immigrants. Therefore the problem of social inequalities remains in the foreground, especially when considering the second-generation foreigners. For this reason, it is a short-term priority to discuss the legal recognition of young people of foreign origin who were born in Italy.

The report is structured in five sections. The first is an introduction, and then all the main characteristics of the local context are described with particular reference to the economic situation and the current migration trends (Chapter 2). Then the methodology used for the foresight exercise is presented along with its organisation (Chapter 3). Chapter 4 is dedicated to the outcome of the exercise and analyses the ideas leading the participants to the identification of the key factors of migrations and the labour market trends as well as the (positive or negative) future scenarios which they envisioned. Finally, Chapter 5 presents a synthesis of the outcomes of the foresight exercise which may serve as a key to future challenges.

2. COUNTRY CONTEXT

2.1. Political and Socio-economic Overview

Over the last thirty years except for a few negative phases (such as the current period), employment in the Province of Trento has increased with a parallel substantial decrease of unemployment. This trend has been fostered both by the growing resident population on the territory since the 1990s, especially thanks to migrations, and by an increasingly stronger participation of women in the labour market (Speziali, 2013). As regards the situation since the early 2000s, it should be noted that the local labour market has seen levels of almost full employment, and because the local labour force has been scarce (in specific sectors, mostly those demanding low-skilled workers), foreign citizens have contributed to maintain this trend. This development has met the needs of the market and has been crucial to cover job positions which the locals have been reluctant to take: as a consequence, immigrant labour has gradually substituted the former recourse to Italian women, the young and the elderly. The foreign labour force, in particular, has been relevant for the harvesting in agriculture (nearly two in every three workers recruited in this sector in a year are foreigners) as well as in elderly care (nearly 90% of the workers recruited are foreigners).

More recently, in 2012 and especially in the first six months of 2013, the same negative trends as in late 2011 were spotted again in the labour market of Trentino. The increased unemployment, even over a long period of time and in particular affecting youth (and foreign citizens) combined with a major fall of labour demand from companies have been only a few of the several difficulties that the local labour market has been facing. In addition, factors like fixed-term recruitments and a significant presence of foreign workers in those sectors most harshly affected by the crisis (*e.g.* construction, porphyry mining) have caused serious hardships for the foreign labour force, especially men (the unemployment rate of foreigners grew from 6% in 2008 to 15% in 2012). The consequences of the economic recession at local level are currently a hot topic of public debate and have been one of the most discussed aspects in the foresight exercise.

Nevertheless, Trentino appears to be still in a far better position compared to the rest of Italy. The figures of 2012, in fact, confirm that the unemployment rate in this region (6%) is nearly half of the Italian one. Also as far as youth unemployment is concerned, in Trentino the situation is worsening less dramatically than in the rest of Italy, even though it poses numerous problems and has become more serious over the last two years (in Trentino youth unemployment represents 20,5% whereas in Italy it reaches 35,3%). These results, amongst others, are due to the specific character of the regional production and economic system¹ and to the anti-crisis policies implemented by the institutions of the Province (Employment Agency – Labour Market Observatory, 2013).

From a demographic point of view, in Trentino as well as in Italy the trends over the last few years have highlighted relevant factors such as increased migrations, decreased fertility, longer average life expectancy and the ageing of the population. In the decade 2001-2011 the population in Trentino

¹ Trentino is an autonomous province with dynamic small businesses and an important seasonal economy in tourism and agriculture. Trentino is also a net recipient of public money, with a powerful hold over the local economy.

grew by 10% supported by an increase both of natural processes and migrations. At national level the population grew by 4% supported only by the increase of foreign migrants (Autonomous Province of Trento – Statistical Service, 2013).

2.2. Development of international migration

As for immigration, over the last twenty years in Trentino (as well as in Italy) it has grown from low numbers into a well rooted and widespread social phenomenon (Ambrosini, Boccagni and Piovesan, 2013). The foreign residents are about 48.700, which means that the foreign population in 2012 is nearly thirty times more numerous than it was in the late 1990s, and now it represents nearly 9% of the overall resident population (this figure is higher than the national average of nearly 7%). In Trentino from the second half of the 1990s on, the immigrants from Eastern Europe have been the most numerous, whereas the immigration from Africa (mainly from Maghreb) seems to have dropped systematically.

At the outset of the economic crisis the growth rate of the foreign residents still turned out to be positive, however they were lower than in the previous decade. Therefore the growth of this phenomenon seems to have considerably slowed down especially when considering the new migration flows from abroad. From this perspective the situation in Trentino is in line with the national one (in which an even more reduced growth rate of immigrant workers has been registered against a relative boost of the emigration flows of Italian citizens). However, the reduction of the new flows is parallel to the signs of settling of the foreigners such as the number of infants born with a foreign citizenship (which now account for nearly one fifth of the infant population in Trentino), the increase of non-EC citizens having a long-term residence permit (that is 60% of non-EC residents in the province), school attendance (the pupils with foreign citizenship represent 11,5% of the school enrolment in Trentino), the number of acquisitions of the Italian citizenship (increasing steadily over the last few years, especially when the citizenship is acquired by naturalisation).

The local perception of international migration has never been surveyed in Trentino. Over time there have not been serious episodes of intolerance or rejection of foreigners. As emerges from the report of the Statistical Service of the Province (2013), the empirical evidence confirms Trentino's high levels of social cohesion,² which appear much higher than the national average and than in other regions of Northern Italy. However, over the last three years the social cohesion indicator, which measures the level of trust of the people towards their fellow citizens, has fallen. This outcome may be seen as the impact of the economic crisis affecting also personal relationships and the level of trust towards the other people.

² Measured by indicators such as: trust towards the generality of the people, satisfaction with familial relationships and with friendships, participation in associations and voluntary work.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Workshops

3.1.1. When and where were the workshops conducted

The workshops were held on 17th January 2014 in Trento at the Immigration Information Centre (CINFORMI) of the Autonomous Province of Trento. CINFORMI provided three multi-purpose rooms all equipped with tables and chairs arranged in such a way to favour communication and the exchange of views, as well as whiteboards on which the moderators kept track of the discussions of the participants.

3.1.2. How were the workshops conducted

After all the participants came into the room chosen for the plenary session, one of the three moderators briefly presented the SEEMIG project, the organisation and the objectives of the foresight exercise (even though the participants had already received detailed information about these contents when they were contacted and invited to the workshop). The moderator who contacted the participants by telephone and by email already knew most of them and he introduced the other two moderators. He also reminded the participants that the audio of the event was going to be recorded in order to better analyse the contents, in full compliance with the privacy laws. None of the participants objected to this, therefore they were asked to sign the relevant consent form. The participants were also reminded that they were free to express their own opinions (and that there would be no right or wrong answers to the fundamental questions of the workshop), and that the very exchange of views would make the exercise more fruitful. Next the moderator explained how the groups were going to be divided and assigned a moderator to each group. Finally, before inviting the participants to the various rooms he handed them a file containing information about SEEMIG, worksheets and a pen.

3.1.3.1 Workshops 1-3: Brainstorming and brain-mapping sessions – arriving at key drivers of migration

The participants in the brainstorming sessions were invited to freely discuss about the most crucial key factors which may have an impact on the present and the future of Trentino, with reference to migrations and the labour market trends. They were asked to exchange views considering a time reference starting from the present moment until 2025.

In each of the three groups the moderators sparked the discussion with some ideas and then during the session they posed specific questions (which had been previously agreed on) in order for the participants to focus on certain aspects (such as the connection between immigration and the local labour market, the main features of migration in Trentino and the factors explaining it, how likely these factors are to change in the future, the role of national and international regulations and their impact on migrations and its intensity, etc.).

The participants showed a high level of interest in the discussion and the moderators ensured that everyone had the chance to express their opinion.

It is true that in certain groups some people participated more actively than others, however this did not make their opinions more or less valuable than the others'. In fact, the moderators continually encouraged everyone to participate in the discussion. In spite of this, there still were people who shared less than others and willingly took on a more passive role acting more as listeners rather than speakers.

3.1.3.2 Workshop 4: Synthesizing (Selection of main drivers, Development of matrix, Formation of mixed groups, Development of scenarios)

After the brainstorming sessions, which ended almost simultaneously since the three moderators had previously agreed on the duration of each exercise phase, all the participants were invited to the plenary session room for a short coffee break. In the meantime, the three moderators shared their first impressions with one another about the brainstorming outcomes and the participation of the people. In addition, during the coffee break several participants kept discussing the topics of the brainstorming in a very relaxed atmosphere.

When the discussion continued in the plenary session room one of the moderators presented the conclusions drawn by the groups and invited the representative of each group to describe the main drivers identified and to report them on the whiteboard. Then all the participants were asked to select the drivers which they considered the most relevant in order to put them into the matrix of binary opposing scenarios. This phase was relatively short: some of the participants wished to clarify in depth the significance of only one of the factors that emerged in all three groups, yet seen from different angles.

With the help of one of the moderators the drivers were put into the matrix drawn on the whiteboard. At that point, the participants found out which group they had been assigned to, whether the one in charge of developing the positive scenario or the one in charge of the negative scenario. The moderators had previously formed the two groups in order to ensure balance in the number of experts, decision and policy makers and immigrants/activists in each group. None of the participants objected to the choice of the moderators.

One of the groups remained in the plenary session room with a moderator whereas the other group worked in the adjacent room with two moderators (the same as at the brainstorming).

The two groups were asked to imagine the trends of migration and the labour market in Trentino from now to 2025 trying to assess the impact of the drivers selected. In one group a person did not contribute to the discussion, and after the moderator encouraged her to express her view she stated that she had no comment to put forward, yet she was satisfied with the views she was listening to since she found the "experiment" interesting.

Next the groups were asked to imagine the life path of a specific person (called "hero") in the debated scenario by thinking about his/her life in Trentino under those specific circumstances. Only in one case the participants struggled to trace this person's characteristics and life path up to 2025. Therefore they maintained the discussion on a more abstract level even though they were repeatedly encouraged to think about this person in more pragmatic terms.

After the discussion, the two groups gathered again in the plenary session room and two moderators presented the main outcomes of the discussion on the two scenarios and the "heroes". This

conclusive step had already been conceived by the organisers and also expressly requested from the participants. Finally, the ones who were talking to the organisers also after the end of the sessions expressed their gratitude for the invitation to take part in the exercise as well as their appreciation of the initiative.

3.2. Participants

In order to identify the participants in the foresight exercise two meetings were held at the CINFORMI. The staff of CINFORMI was asked to be present because this Centre had dealt with migrations for over a decade and had a strong network of contacts across the whole province including various bodies and associations. The people invited were first contacted over the phone (some phone calls were made by the person in charge of CINFORMI himself since the people were going to be less likely to turn down an invitation coming from him).

Overall 25 people were invited: 21 accepted the invitation (seven people per group). Of these 21 people, one person was not present on 17th January and had indeed called to explain that the absence was due to an emergency at the workplace. A few days prior to the event we were contacted over the phone by the president of an immigrant association. She had learned about the event from another association president. She admitted feeling disappointed by not being invited, and as a result she was asked to participate in the meeting since there was no intention to “discriminate” any association but only the need to limit the number of participants. After everything was clarified with this person, she eventually could not take part in the event due to other arrangements she had previously made.

The group of the experts was made of Italian people from the academic world (one from the Faculty of Economics, two from the Faculty of Sociology), public offices dealing with Studies and Statistics (two people), public offices dealing with studies on the labour market (two people).

The group of public authorities and decision makers was made of one Member of the Provincial Committee, two Council Members from the Valley Communities, two Presidents of the Valley Communities, one Member of the Community Council and one Provincial Officer dealing with immigration.

The group of the migrants and activists was made of two trade unionists, the operational manager of an association offering immigrant reception services, an operator of an association dealing with refugees and asylum-seekers, and three presidents of immigrant associations. Two people in this group were from Italy whereas the other five were born abroad (Balkans, Eastern Europe and North Africa) but residing in Italy for over ten years.

3.3. Approach to analyzing material

Audio recorders were used during the discussions and a collaborator of CINFORMI also took photos in the rooms where the discussions were being held (photos of the working groups and the notes recorded by the moderators on the whiteboards). Furthermore, a collaborator used a video camera in the plenary session room to record the audio without filming the people.

The moderators shared views on the notes taken as well as their impressions about the outcomes of the foresight exercise and the participation of the various people involved. The same three moderators had already largely discussed the workshop methodology at a preparatory meeting at CINFORMI, and on that occasion they exchanged views on a concise document, written in Italian by the writer of this report, which contained the essential aspects of the workshop organisation.

3.4. Problems and difficulties

The organisation process of the workshop did not pose specific problems; however it certainly demanded a considerable amount of time from several people, especially when it came to identifying the potential participants. The conduction of the workshop, instead, was more rigorous for the moderators who had to thoroughly set a specific timing for each step of the sessions (which had been clearly decided by the three moderators at the preparatory meeting), yet fully respecting the time for the internal discussions within the single groups.

The moderators agree on the fact that all the participants felt at ease. It must be said, however, that most of them (including the immigrants) had already had the chance to get to know one another, exchange views or collaborate. Therefore there is no apparent reason to think that some people may have felt less free than others to express their opinions (or intimidated by the presence of important political personalities).

4. RESULTS OF THE FORESIGHT EXERCISE

4.1. Key drivers of migration

The next paragraphs explore the main aspects emerged from the three brainstorming sessions. As mentioned above, the group of the experts, the one of the public officials and the one of the migrants were invited to reflect and exchange views about the key factors which in their opinion would have an impact on the present and the future of Trentino with reference to the migration and the labour market from now up to 2025.

4.1.1. Experts

First of all, the group of the experts wished to point out that it was necessary to take into consideration not only the present and the future, but also the past. In fact, migration as a phenomenon occurs in cycles and therefore “it should be considered on a longer time scale than just the present and the future” (as one of the participants explained). Furthermore, it is true that Trentino was the destination of a significant migration flow, but before that it had experienced emigrations in particular towards some European countries and South America.

Unanimously the participants identified the economic factors as crucial drivers for migrations, yet considering the *variety* of causes behind people's mobility and especially bearing in mind how *dynamic* and *fluid* this phenomenon could be. In this respect, it was underlined how migrations are connected with the “decomposition and recomposition of the value chain as well as with moving to countries offering better economic and production conditions”. Hence, more participants agreed that in the first place the factors originating mobility are “differentials”, namely income and quality of life differentials. Therefore the collocation of these differentials in the world may change the direction of the migration flows. In any case, these flows are not expected to cease. In particular, the participants underlined the importance of structural economic factors of the host countries and, as regards Italy, they identified the long-term economic decline and the production stagnation of numerous sectors in the labour market with low innovation potential, which keep existing by cutting down their costs rather than by implementing other strategies. Like in the rest of Italy, also in Trentino these structural factors continue to originate a demand for low-skilled immigrant labour (often underestimating the human capital that they represent). The expectation for the future is that this labour demand will remain strong (especially as for the seasonal activities in agriculture and tourism) and that new developments will arise in the labour demand in the sector of care. One of the participants also said that within 2025 more opportunities are likely to be created for a relatively high number of high-skilled immigrants, considering the Italian average, in certain innovative sectors (relying more on technologies, etc.). The integration of immigrants into the labour market was largely discussed highlighting that over the last few years there had been work opportunities for immigrants which did not compete with the ones of the locals. This factor made the integration of the foreign citizens in Trentino easier. However, this trend is changing for the worse and in the future the scenario may be radically different and poses the questions about second and third generations on a very delicate level: “the people who were born here asking for integration into the labour market coherently with the life they have lived here may experience difficulties”. This was one of the

comments raised on this aspect. As a result, two participants pointed out that if competition in the labour market is seen negatively by the single local worker who has to compete with immigrants, the competition here may serve as a spur for the Italian young people, who are often less motivated and have no precise projects compared to their foreign peers. Moreover, the participants discussed about the long-term problems in managing the impact of the economic crisis of the last few years, which strongly affected the weakest segments of the labour market (and foreigners in particular). Then all the foreigners who have recently lost their job are not expected to return to their country of origin. When the topic of foreigners in the illegal labour market was brought to the table, one of the participants wished to point out that the critical aspects of the presence of foreigners cannot be limited to undeclared work. In Trentino the undeclared work of immigrants appears less relevant than in other Italian regions. In addition, immigrant workers are less reluctant to accept exploitation and other unfavourable conditions due to their legal status: the people who have recently arrived are interested in earning more and more money in order to bring resources back to the homeland. Therefore their initial expectations are more based on the country of origin. In fact, this would also demonstrate that the overexposure to exploitation is not only connected with the legal status but is sustained by broader factors.

Next the cultural factors were mentioned. Even though the concept of “culture” had not been defined, the participants underlined that in the future culture would be the element to work on and thoroughly think about in order to avoid xenophobia and racism. This aspect was also closely linked to the culture of the host country in terms of its good (or insufficient) policies fostering integration and contrasting discriminations. In this respect one of the participants, who the others then agreed with, emphasised the need to see the term “hosting capacity” as a neutral term. In fact,

“It does not mean that we like immigrants and that people show more solidarity towards them. It rather means that first of all there is a significant labour demand and a relevant public investment in housing, school, social and healthcare policies to favour the interethnic relations”.

This was also seen as a mid-term structural feature before considering the quality perceived of the interethnic relations or any stereotyping processes (which may rather occur in the long run). In addition, the participants stressed the importance of reinforcing the ability to understand the rapid changes of the migration phenomenon by means of public policies taking into account solidarity and economic aspects fostering integration.

Hence, the connection between the economic aspects and the integration policies is crucial. According to the participants, indeed, facilitating processes which do not lead to marginalisation would be functional both to the social cohesion of the host community and the mid and long-term economic development. The following quote of a participant helps to demonstrate this point:

“Why should the public authorities invest in these policies? Because immigrants contribute to the creation of income, general taxation, and the support of the welfare system. The net balance of the host country is positive. Not only are we warm-hearted but it is also convenient for us, it is a matter of self-interest”.

4.1.2. Public officials

Also the participants in the group of the decision makers/public officials recognised the complexity of migrations and the forces producing them. In this respect, one of them pointed out that “there is a risk of speaking of this phenomenon as if it was something precise, easy, and straightforward but it is not”.

The group then established that the migration flows usually are directed where the work opportunities are. With specific reference to Trentino, they mentioned the production sectors which had attracted most foreign labour over the last few decades highlighting that these very sectors, deeply affected by the economic crisis, may cease to be attractive. At the same time, the group maintained that Trentino is now attracting more migration probably because of the guarantees it offers (more than those implemented in other Italian regions) in terms of public support in case of difficult circumstances and the quality of its services rather than the work opportunities of some sectors of the local market.

The importance of the work-migration connection was always recognised, yet it was highlighted that only one type of migrant was taken into consideration, namely the economic migrant. However, migration is an extremely more complex phenomenon and despite today's strong impact of the economic conjuncture, in the future some of the problems and pressure regarding migrations will not decrease. The need to escape from conflicts and wars, for instance, will always be present. For these reasons, several participants considered the current political approach “old-fashioned” since it tends to focus only on the economic future perspective, and all migration policies are then based on this. Instead, it would be far better to look at migrations through a long-term perspective considering the various needs originating the people's mobility (family, work, education, persecutions). Furthermore, still concerning the importance of the work-migration connection, it was said that in the future immigration may represent an opportunity for innovation and development in Italy. Indeed, according to a participant, “if we think about the human capital of leading force and spirit of enterprise which most immigrants have, we may realise how this could help revitalise certain sectors of our economy”.

Starting from an idea expressed by one of them, the participants asked themselves some questions about the future and agreed that it was fairly difficult to conceive scenarios of the next decades. One of these questions, in particular, regarded the competition in the labour market. Which consequences will arise from the return of the locals who lost good jobs to low-skilled occupations, especially considering that these occupations are often covered by immigrants? And what will be the impact of the immigrants being more capable of adapting, moving flexibly, investing resources and taking new work opportunities while the locals appear to be more bewildered in the difficulty to enter the world of work? The participants then imagined a future where the current widespread definition of “immigrant” as a “poor” and disadvantaged person will no longer be true. According to a participant, the fundamental questions were:

“What could happen in Trentino if we inverted the image of the foreigner that we currently have? What will happen when the immigrant will no longer be the waiter at my hotel but my employer?”

Therefore according to the group the social relationships will be an essential element in the future, especially if combined with the capacity of the immigrant to integrate into the local society and with the level of open-mindedness of the host society in terms of valuing the differences. A participant

summarised the concept by saying that “it has become harder and harder to divide the world into locals and the others. We cannot keep accenting these divisions and contradicting ourselves claiming that we are Europeans and then every time stepping out of the world. From a cultural point of view it is crucial to work also on this aspect since here the possibility to live together is at stake”. The participants also agreed that if the society in Trentino was not be able to see the difference as a value in itself and thus did not learn to value it, the children of immigrants would risk being discriminated by the community and treated as inferior citizens. The first generation immigrants often experienced this kind of treatment, but it would be a problem with unprecedented consequences if this attitude was perpetuated in the future to the detriment of young people of foreign origins who actually have the same expectations as their Italian peers. In this context, a participant suggested that in the future one of the key factors would be the answer to the question “will our community be able to offer opportunities to everyone, including those who are different or have a different cultural background?” The other participants then continued to discuss this point underlining how key the cultural factor is since it shapes the vision of a society, the kind of society that everyone can imagine or want.

After these considerations, the participants unanimously identified culture as the key factor from now up to 2025. In fact, in their opinion it would determine the outcome of the current migration processes. They maintained that everything derives from the cultural factor: policies, the type of immigrant reception, the corrective measures on the labour market are all affected by culture. Hence, economy still is a largely relevant element but it should be managed within a broader cultural context since development is not only the result of economic strategies. In addition, one of the participants wished to clarify that the cultural factor does not refer just to the host country, but it rather suggests exchanges and inclusion processes of the community so that the vision of the society does not contemplate the option of marginalisation. From these considerations the group then exchanged views on the role of politicians, who should be the first in charge of setting this cultural change in motion as well as ensuring the balance of the future society.

Amongst the other factors mentioned (but not analysed in depth) was the value of the skills and education of immigrants.

4.1.3. Migrants

Initially the group of the immigrants and activists discussed the economic factors connected with immigration, in particular the situation of the labour market. Until a few years ago the immigrants in Trentino - as in the rest of Italy - had accepted low-skilled occupations and had been attracted by a large demand in the labour market. However, the crisis changed this situation and the difficulties of foreigners in the labour market are forcing many of them (especially those who obtained the Italian citizenship) to move to other European areas which provide better work opportunities, and above all more solid support for those who lose their job. What emerges is that the foreigners are way more inclined to “take chances” moving from Italy to other European countries or going back to their country of origin, or simply rearranging their ideas as regards the destination country (a participant mentioned the case of Moldavians who seem to prefer Russia to Italy after they learnt that the work opportunities in Italy had slumped). For the people who stay in Italy, the social and economic situation is so heavily determined by the needs of the labour market that, as a participant said, “in Italy the equation still is: foreigner = worker”.

Another important element for the present and the future, closely linked to the economic situation, is the legal aspect. It is true that in Italy there have been numerous regularisations, however the Italian law is still very strict when it comes to residence permits (which heavily depend on having an occupation), but it applies to an occupational context which demands flexibility, instead. In fact, this has caused occupational uncertainty amongst a high number of immigrants (if they lose their job, they risk losing their residence permit). In a future perspective, if the crisis affects elderly people, there will be the risk to have permanent uncertainty (also on a legal level) amongst immigrants.

According to the participants, the combined effect of the economic and legal factor might worsen the situation for immigrants since it would make them more prone to extortion, thus discriminations might become more frequent. Then the participants imagined the possibility that Trentino may lose its foreign workers (who choose to move to other countries) and evaluated the consequences. It was pointed out that in a future marked by an upturn in economy Trentino will need foreign workers again but it will struggle to find professionally trained labour because by that time many will have left the country. Italy will then have to attract new immigrants and invest resources in their professional training and integration into the local society through various projects. One of the participants highlighted that the number of low-skilled people from Africa (especially sub-Saharan Africa) is growing (and will be still growing in the future) and since they are supported by humanitarian aid they will stay in Italy. Also this trend will create the need for professional training efforts and will become socially relevant. This aspect was connected with unpredictable events, a factor “beyond anyone's control” which might have a significant impact: humanitarian emergencies in the African countries.

Next the participants focused on a political factor. In fact, they mentioned the difficulties of the Italian politics in managing immigration and underlined the “separatistic” nature of many activities. They also commented that this will have negative consequences in the future. According to a participant, “the Italian politicians do not listen to immigrants. They keep them separated and they represent a side issue for them, so they manage their situation separately. Many aspects are taken into account without considering the immigrants themselves. Hence, the political perspective is neither open nor broad and immigration remains something to be managed separately. In this way, every political effort is doomed to fail”. Another participant also suggested that the Italian politics is too welfare-oriented and “considers the foreigners as poor, needy people”, without noticing the capital of skills and culture they bring, and that they are often in a condition in which this potential is not even used.

The discussion then was largely focused on the recognition of qualifications of foreigners in Italy. In fact, the Italian law does not facilitate the recognition of the competences and qualifications acquired in the country of origin and this affects the entry of the foreigners into the world of work. Some participants observed that if the recognition of qualifications was easier, foreigners would also be more likely to find better work opportunities. Therefore it would be important to distinguish between “formal” recognition of the qualifications (in legal terms) and “informal” recognition which occurs in the labour market.

Finally, some comments were raised regarding a factor linked to the country-of-origin policies and the bilateral agreements between Italy and these countries for the voluntary return of the people to the country of origin and the development policies of these contexts.

4.1.4. Comparison of key drivers

In the last phases of the workshop, the moderators asked the participants to summarize their ideas and concisely define the principal drivers which were going to be relevant in the future. This step was not always easy because of the major effort at synthesis demanded from the people who had to reduce a complex and articulated discussion to a few concepts. In some cases, after the general discussion when putting the drivers into a scheme, the participants identified aspects which had not been defined or labelled during the discussion with the same terms used in the summarizing scheme. Notwithstanding these considerations (and referring to the previous paragraphs for the analysis of the development of the discussion which resulted in the definition of the drivers), the groups came to the identification of the factors represented in the chart. It must be pointed out that many factors defined with the same “label” took on different nuances when they were discussed in the various groups. For this reason, the chart contains the label term as well as a short specification of the meaning that the group attributed to the factors mentioned.

Table 1: Identification of main drivers by group

Drivers	Experts	Public Officials/Decision-makers	Migrants
Driver 1	Economic development	Social and cultural factor (framework for inclusion or for marginalization)	Economic situation (occupational opportunities)
Driver 2	“Flexibility” of migration policies (able/unable to adapt to the fast-changing nature of migration)	Political factor (labour market policies, immigration policies)	Mechanisms to control/regulate entry/residence of foreigners
Driver 3	Ability to enhance and employ the migrants’ professional skills and culture	Social factor (climate of trust? Promotion of social cohesion?);	Recognition of migrants’ qualifications
Driver 4	Competition between local and foreign workers (as an added value)		Humanitarian emergencies
Driver 5	Economic factor (ability/inability to integrate foreign creativity into the Italian labour market)		Country-of-origin policies (development policies, for assisted voluntary return...)
Driver 6			Cultural factor (public perceptions and reaction to migration...)

Source: Author.

4.2. Matrix of key drivers

After a spokesperson of the groups presented the most relevant conclusions of each group and shared the drivers previously ranked with all the other participants, the participants decided to select 3 factors, with the guidance of the moderators, which they considered the most important (by merging the findings of the groups).

During this phase a discussion on the *economic factor* was started, in particular the meaning of the term “*economic development*”. A participant emphasised the need to take into account the long-term trends (“I do not think it is productive to wonder whether the crisis will or will not continue from now until 2025. What is really crucial all over the world for migrations in general is the economic development of the various areas. The current trends are indicating that the migration flows towards Trentino will probably change their composition. We must be ready to prepare policies and actions aimed at managing the change of these flows”). When the moderators asked the participants to think of how this driver could be better envisioned, giving it a common definition, the participants themselves agreed that the term “*economic development*” referred to the structure of opportunities for immigrants (within a positive scenario, a situation in which immigrants were given more opportunities for more qualified working, whereas, within a negative scenario, a context where the Italian enterprises kept employing low-qualified foreign labour).

A participant also underlined that in his group by *cultural factor* was meant a factor able to determine all the rest (economic development, policies and social factors). Therefore the other participants agreed on putting it into the matrix, however a debate was started as of how this concept could be applied. The participants agreed that culture is the “starting point”, and by culture was meant the *understanding of a society*, the vision of the world and vision of the social relations/interactions (a participant wished to clarify that they were referring to “the vision of a society where the rights of the people were respected regardless of where they come from”, and to a “cultural orientation that openly shows what kind of social relations we pursue, from which also the political orientation derives as well as the type of government of the society or its open-mindedness, etc.”). The participants agreed that “equity” could be the distinguishing factor between the two scenarios and that such a distinction was also due to the open-mindedness of the society in considering the immigrant not only a “competitor” or a “needy person”, but also someone who could contribute to the cultural enrichment (in this respect, a participant emphasised that “the society needs to be *pollinated* if it wants to grow”). At this point, the groups noted the difficulty to achieve synthesis with concepts of this kind and the need to have a common glossary in order to clarify the meaning of the terms used (for example, the term “culture”).

Finally, the participants spoke about the *political and legal factor* referring to the Italian and European laws regarding the entries and the residence of foreigners, as well as the social and educational policies (“all these policies are affected by the cultural factor” as clarified in particular by a participant).

Table 2: Matrix of key drivers

POSITIVE SCENARIO	NEGATIVE SCENARIO
<i>Social and cultural framework</i> characterized by equity of rights and fair treatment of everyone as	<i>Social and cultural framework</i> characterized by inequality, hostility, rejection, lack of cross

part of the Italian society	“pollination” of cultures
Development of the <i>economic context</i> – opportunities for migrants to use their professional skills and exploit their potential	No development of the <i>economic context</i> – opportunities only for low-skilled migrants
Italian and European <i>political context</i> favouring mobility and migration	Italian and European <i>political context</i> not favouring mobility and migration

4.3. Development of scenarios (macro-level analysis)

The following paragraphs report the outcome of the work carried out by the two mixed groups formed in order to imagine what could happen in Trentino from now until 2025, in a negative and a positive scenario, with reference to the three drivers identified in the matrix. However, despite the remarks of the moderators, the groups did not always stick to the two time periods given (that is from now until 2020 and from 2020 until 2025).

4.3.1. Scenario 1 (Positive Scenario)

It should be mentioned that at the start of the session one of the participants questioned again how appropriate it would be to choose the cultural factor as the factor determining all the other processes. He rather recommended bearing in mind that all the factors mentioned were intertwined (beyond any hierarchic outline).

The group observed that in the short run (within 5 or 6 years from now) the first effect of the combined action of the 3 key drivers would be *the mitigation of the impact of the economic crisis*. Hence, since no miracle could be expected shortly, there would at least be an alleviation of the negative consequences of the recession. In practical terms, a decreased unemployment, probably a stronger participation in the vocational training, new active labour market policies and the vocational training would be strengthened. In addition to this, a wider formal recognition of professional skills and their valorisation within 2025 would determine a reduced occupational marginalisation. In such a scenario, there would be enough room for “good competition between Italians and foreigners on the labour market”. A participant also said that it could not seem impossible to imagine that in 10 years Italy will have entry policies thanks to which the people with qualifications of a certain level will be able to access to mentored and recognised career paths alternating education and work. This would facilitate the entry of those people who could provide, more than others, an added value to the social and economic progress of the country. Furthermore, these people would integrate into a social context where residing permanently would be more sustainable. Therefore within 2025 there could be a growth (yet based on low numbers) of highly qualified immigrants occupying middle to high level or managerial working positions.

Within a decade the “*ius soli*” could be recognised in Italy, or at least *a less restrictive law on citizenship* might be in force. Foreigners could be even entitled to vote (in the community or provincial elections).

Also a considerable *decrease in the school inequalities* could be achieved: the gap between Italians and foreigners would be narrower in terms of student performance, school lag (that is attending class grades lower than those corresponding to the age), drop-out risk, concentration on technical and vocational education.

There would also be a lower level of inequality in the health and living conditions. In a decade the existing discriminatory policies, in force also in Trentino, could be abandoned especially as regards the access to housing.

At the same time, the participation in associations could grow with a greater variety of people coming from different countries within certain bodies. Also the participation of foreigners in politics could rise. From 2020 the debates in the Italian institutions could become more fruitful also concerning immigration.

4.3.2. Scenario 2 (Negative scenario)

The participants in charge of drawing the negative scenario envisioned that in 2025 in the Province of Trento the public deficit would progressively grow due to the economy falling back into recession, and the provincial administration would plan *more spending restraint* (the so called “spending review”). Public spending on the social sectors would decrease, thus also the welfare programmes and benefits would be less available.

The unemployment rate would increase and some skilled workers would be forced to leave the labour market. Many foreigners who lost their jobs might decide to move to other EU countries or return to their country of origin. The *labour market would lose its expertise* to the detriment of the enterprises. The Italian highly-skilled unemployed people would replace the immigrant workers covering low-wage occupations without expanding on their previous experience or having the same kind of work experiences. There would be fewer incentives and investments in the development of professional competences and training.

The Italian workers would see *competition* with immigrant workers *as a negative aspect*, and the Italian unemployed citizens would consider immigrants as people taking away their jobs. The people would start blaming one another and eventually *immigrants* would be the “*scapegoats*” blamed for all the problems (in particular the economic crisis). In addition, there would be no dialogue opportunities, which are crucial in the perspective of managing the change. In this respect, in the past Trentino was already marked by a certain cultural closure. Hence, in such a negative scenario, this entropic vision of society would be intensified.

In the political arena, a party similar to the Greek “Golden Dawn” would gain consensus. In fact, there already are movements spreading similar ideas (both in Europe and in Italy). The political factor would become more rigid and even the integrated immigrants, who lived in Italy for years and obtained the Italian citizenship, would still be seen as “foreigners” (especially dark-skinned people). Expulsion and forced repatriation policies would be the only political response to the problems, hence moving from assisted return programmes to a forced repatriation supported by return policies towards the country of origin.

Hostility towards migrants would increase. As a consequence, the attitude of migrants towards the State, its institutions and the Italian society would be as hostile: “if you encounter a hostile context of

reception, you become hostile, sceptical, disadvantaged” (quoting a participant). Immigrant associations would not cooperate with the public institutions, either.

Due to social exclusion and marginalisation, immigrants would not feel appreciated in the society in which they live and work. In a scenario where even certain rights were not duly recognised, immigrants would mainly be seen as people who are “difficult to handle, disadvantaged, sceptical, reluctant to cooperate and to take part in integration projects currently underway” (quoting another participant).

On a cultural level, there would be a lack of cultural “cross pollination”. Quoting a participant, the society in Trentino would not be “fed with new elements and would rest upon its own tradition, thus it would be doomed not to perceive the change and the potential within itself which a person coming from abroad might well contribute to”.

The children of immigrants (second generation) would be treated as second-class citizens. They would “survive socially” only by leaving their homeland culture behind and by conforming to the dominant one. Some participants maintained that the community would be so closed that it would exclude anyone “unable to conform” and “the only survivors will be those who forget their home culture and their origins and those who are not interested in their roots”. A participant expressed her worries in this respect: in the schools she had already seen foreigners feeling ashamed of coming from a culture considered inferior by the other schoolmates. In a negative scenario these aspects would even worsen.

These factors would create economic and cultural impoverishment as well as social tensions. The scenario until 2025 does not appear catastrophic because the time period considered is relatively short, however it would be deeply negative.

4.4. Development of personal life histories within scenarios (“heroes”, micro-level analysis)

The moderators asked the two groups to imagine a specific person within the (positive and negative) scenario they had just developed. Both groups struggled to define the main features of this person (especially in the negative scenario). However, in the following paragraphs are the ideas that emerged from the two groups in this respect.

4.4.1. Scenario 1/Positive scenario

When asked to apply the developed scenario to a specific person, the participants began to question the appropriateness of characterizing and selecting a highly specific person, considering the multicultural society imagined in the scenario. They agreed that it was not relevant to mention this person's gender, citizenship, etc. However, one of the participants (who is the representative of an immigrant association) kept repeating that it had to be a dark-skinned hero. Since the others preferred not attributing any specific details to the hero, he then proposed considering a child as the hero (“because a child does not have any problem, it's the adults who cause the problems”, he maintained). As a result, also the others accepted the idea of imagining a child as the hero in 2025 (without detailing his/her nationality). A participant pictured the child leaving from a reception and

rehabilitation shelter because he/she came from a disadvantaged family. He envisaged that the child would successfully complete the secondary education in the Province of Trento. By 2025, after a study experience abroad, he/she would become a successful businessperson starting his/her own company in the Province of Trento. In a dream scenario after 2025, he/she would become a political delegate elected to represent business people in the Province of Trento.

The other participants highlighted that in such a short time period it was not possible for the child to complete such a career path. Therefore another participant proposed thinking about a young person, born in Italy from a father who had graduated abroad and completed his professional training at a company, who is an entrepreneur today and has his own business. He also got married to (or lives with) a provincial council member for social policies or culture. This young person “would be normal, someone who has nothing more and nothing less than his/her peers living in the same area”.

A participant concluded by saying that this situation is already very likely to occur, however there is no system allowing it to be more frequent. Hence, this would be an imaginary future without all the currently existing obstacles.

4.4.2. Scenario 2/Negative scenario

When asked to apply the developed scenario to a specific person, the group found some difficulties. After being encouraged by the moderator, the participants agreed that the worst case they could imagine was children being victims of discriminatory acts.

In the participants’ nightmare-like scenario, there was an Italian woman’s fostered niece from the Ivory Coast. This 8-year-old girl would be the victim of discriminatory acts at school. Because of the social and cultural framework characterized by rights inequality, she would be insulted along the streets and by 2025 she would be victim of discrimination on the labour market.

5. SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSIONS

The foresight exercise carried out in Trento was a valuable opportunity to gather people from very different backgrounds and invite them to reflect in a long-term perspective upon relevant social and demographic trends in the local territory. The SEEMIG project achieved an important objective gathering a group of different people and implementing a qualitative research approach which was completely new for them. In fact, the participants themselves appreciated the possibility to take part in the experience. Some of them – the policy-makers in particular – recognised the foresight exercise as a useful tool and wished to be able to implement it also in the future within their areas of competence in order to envision the long-term consequences of certain policies.

By analysing the ideas emerged from the foresight exercise, it can be observed that migrations are less and less detached from the local reality. From the words of the participants, in fact, it was clear that migrations constitute a consolidated phenomenon leading to the settling of very different people from other countries in the local context. They differ from the locals on the basis of their legal status and life conditions, yet – especially the second-generation immigrants – are oriented towards the identification with the host community and their lifestyle.

Therefore the participants, regardless of their areas of competence and their own life experiences, demonstrated to be aware of the settling of the immigrants in Italy and the impact of this process. This settling, in fact, had also been highlighted in the figure-based analyses of the WP3 country report (Albani et al., 2013) and the report on the local case (Ambrosini, Boccagni and Piovesan, 2013).

Nevertheless, the groups recognised also the critical aspects of this “normal”, regular process of foreigners settling in the local reality, and agreed that these critical issues could already be spotted in the present. However, the foresight exercise allowed them to analyse their worry that these issues could be aggravated in the mid or long run if they were managed by means of short-sighted policies and if the economic situation remained unfavourable.

The effects of the crisis have already taken their toll on the foreigners, who are massively included in market segments which have suffered considerably from the unfavourable conjuncture (such as the construction and manufacturing industry), therefore their occupational situation has become even more uncertain. Immigrants are far more vulnerable also from the education, social and economic point of view as well as due to their accentuated exposure to explicit marginalisation, even in a relatively advanced and inclusive welfare framework like the one in Trentino. The participants feared that in the next decades (and for the second-generation citizens) inequalities could be based on the ethnicity despite the fact that Trentino has always been a rich area with a high “integration potential” (compared to other Italian provinces, Trentino has developed advanced public services that became a point of reference and management of a wide range of integration issues).

In the event that the economic stagnation persisted, many foreigners would be excluded from the labour market and, according to the participants, the episodes of marginalisation could be aggravated giving rise to social conflicts. In addition, the immigrants could be used as scapegoats for all the social problems. It is impossible to predict how serious these conflicts could be, however the

participants mentioned very negative consequences such as social closure especially to the detriment of the second-generation foreigners.

The factor which encompassed the worries of most participants was social inequalities (in the labour market opportunities, in education, in the access to services, etc.). This topic is not new, however immigration and the impact of the economic crisis would emphasise some of its features. This topic will become more and more relevant in the next few years when the second-generation immigrants have completed their secondary education and start looking for a job. Therefore during the foresight exercise the participants underlined the urgent need to discuss the implications of the massive presence of children of immigrants, above all (but not only) in terms of legal recognition. This would be aimed to overcome the current situation in which – due to the naturalisation law currently in force – the second-generation immigrants in Italy appear as “perpetually foreign” and inevitably disproportionate in number.

Furthermore, an economic and production system unable to valorise the competences of people coming from abroad (also by recognising their qualifications), still reluctant to ensure equal opportunities in the access to the labour market for all workers (regardless of where they come from) would miss an important chance in terms of wealth and competitiveness.

Finally, one more aspect is worth being highlighted: many participants found it crucial to recognise the cultural dimension as the most relevant factor in determining the (positive or negative) results of the social, demographic and economic consequences of migrations. This mostly refers to how the phenomenon is generally envisioned, since the public discussion on immigration will then be based on such vision. In Italy, immigration is often seen as an “emergency” or something detached from the Italian social structure. Instead, from the foresight exercise emerged the “request” for a different, broader and less simplistic vision which is able to interpret migration as an integral part of the Italian society without concealing the inequalities affecting it.

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