

Young People's Transitions Through Italy

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Unaccompanied young migrants and refugees in Italy

UM in reception and transit

- 12,000 31 December 2015
- 6,135 are 'missing'
- Egypt, Albania, Eritrea, Gambia, Ghana, Mali (W Africa), Bangladesh & Afghanistan
- 81% are 16-17
- 95% male

Asylum

- 4,000 asylum applications (2015) – most African origin

Post-18

- 2,685 UM granted post-18 leave (2015) – most Albanians & Egyptians.

Research Questions

1. How do unaccompanied young migrants understand and interact with different types of **statutory and non-statutory welfare** as they become adult and why?
2. How do unaccompanied young migrants' interactions with different forms of welfare shape their **wellbeing and future trajectories**? What other factors come into play?
3. Do different welfare set ups – in particular the relative presence or absence of the state as the main welfare provider – favour certain **life/migratory projects** 'over others'?

Theoretical reflections

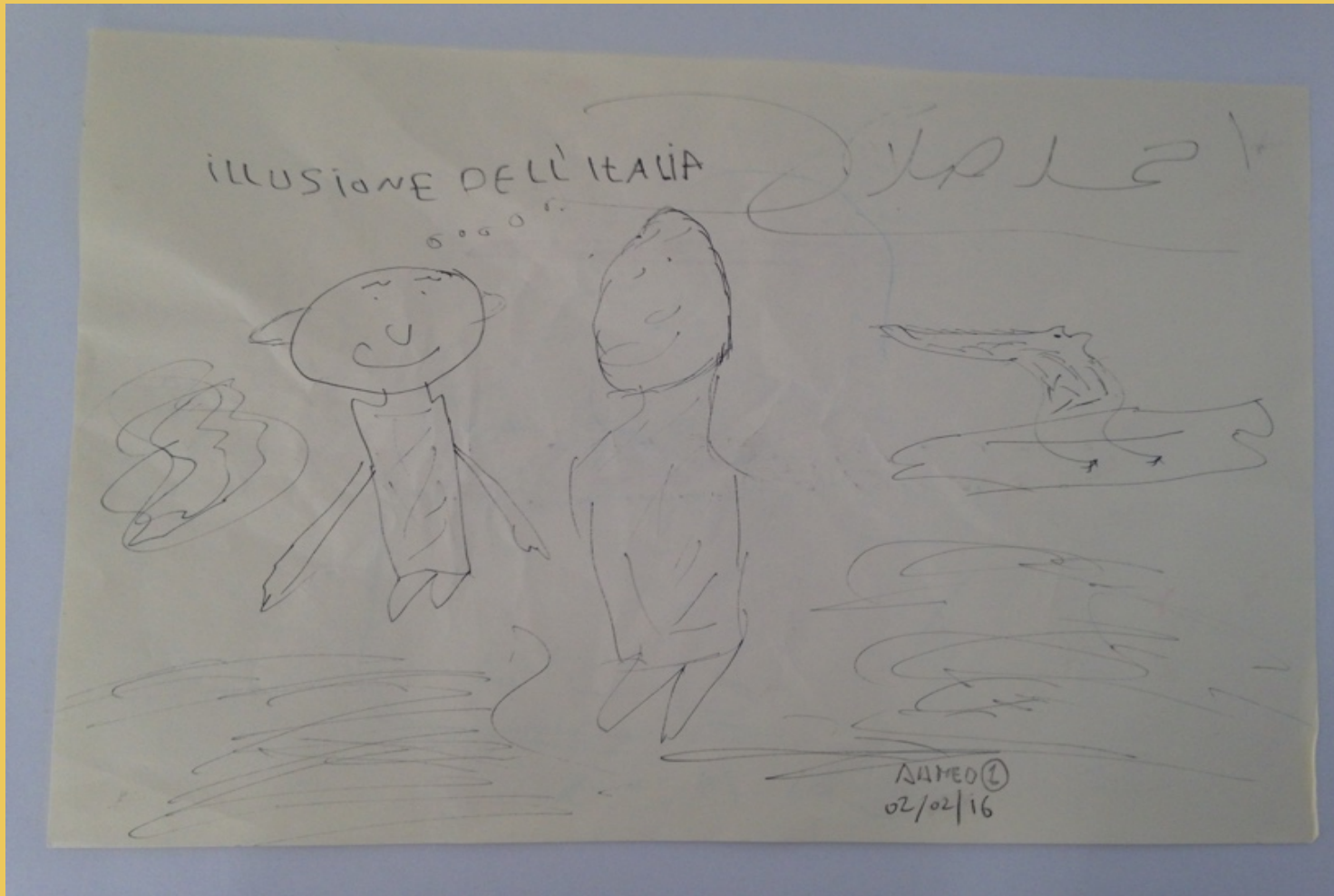
- Futures and wellbeing
- Wellbeing and engagement with the 'welfare mix'
- Welfare and immigration/asylum
 - different opportunities across different welfare regimes?
 - Are some 'life projects' (Chase and Allsopp 2015) more suited to Italy than the UK and vice versa?
 - Implications for CEAS

*'There is an important interplay between **welfare regimes**, forms of immigration, and **immigration policy regimes** in producing distinctive patterns of immigrants' **social rights** across countries...in the literature on international migration, social rights have been discussed mostly in terms of **formal entitlements**...the discussion has tended to present social rights at a particular point in time rather than to adopt a **longitudinal perspective**'*

(Sainsbury 2006: 229)

Methodology

‘Migration projects’ linked to stories and storytelling



‘It’s me and my cousin. He’s in Italy and I’m in Egypt and we’re talking on the phone. I’m asking him ‘so how’s Italy?’ And he says ‘Oh it’s great, yeah. There’s work, money, there’s all you could ever want! You have to come to Italy!’ And then I come to Italy and it’s not like that. This picture is about that.’

Ahmed, 16, Italy.

‘Collective’ migration projects



Migrant support centre, Italy, 2016.

Why use **storytelling** as a research method and epistemological framework for this **policy-focused research**?

- Shift in focus on wellbeing: -> from objective to **subjective** understanding
-> from past to futures ('ontological security') - Giddens, Chase
- Globalisation, 'imagination of possible lives' and understanding the 'risk society' (Beck, Giddens)
- Reflected in policy framework e.g. policy focus on 'life project planning' (EU, Council of Europe – 'pathway plans'. Migration projects nevertheless understood as **linear and one-way** (see Chase and Allsopp, 2015)
- Research **ethics** and the importance of relational practices - 'the way in which we enter the worlds of those who are the focus of our research' (Miller 2004)
- Epistemology and 'truth' (Jackson, Gabriel)

Storytelling – between the subjective and the structural

Agency: “We also tell stories as a way of transforming our sense of who we are, recovering a sense of ourselves as **actors and agents** in the face of experiences that make us feel insignificant, unrecognized or powerless”. (Jackson 2002: 17)

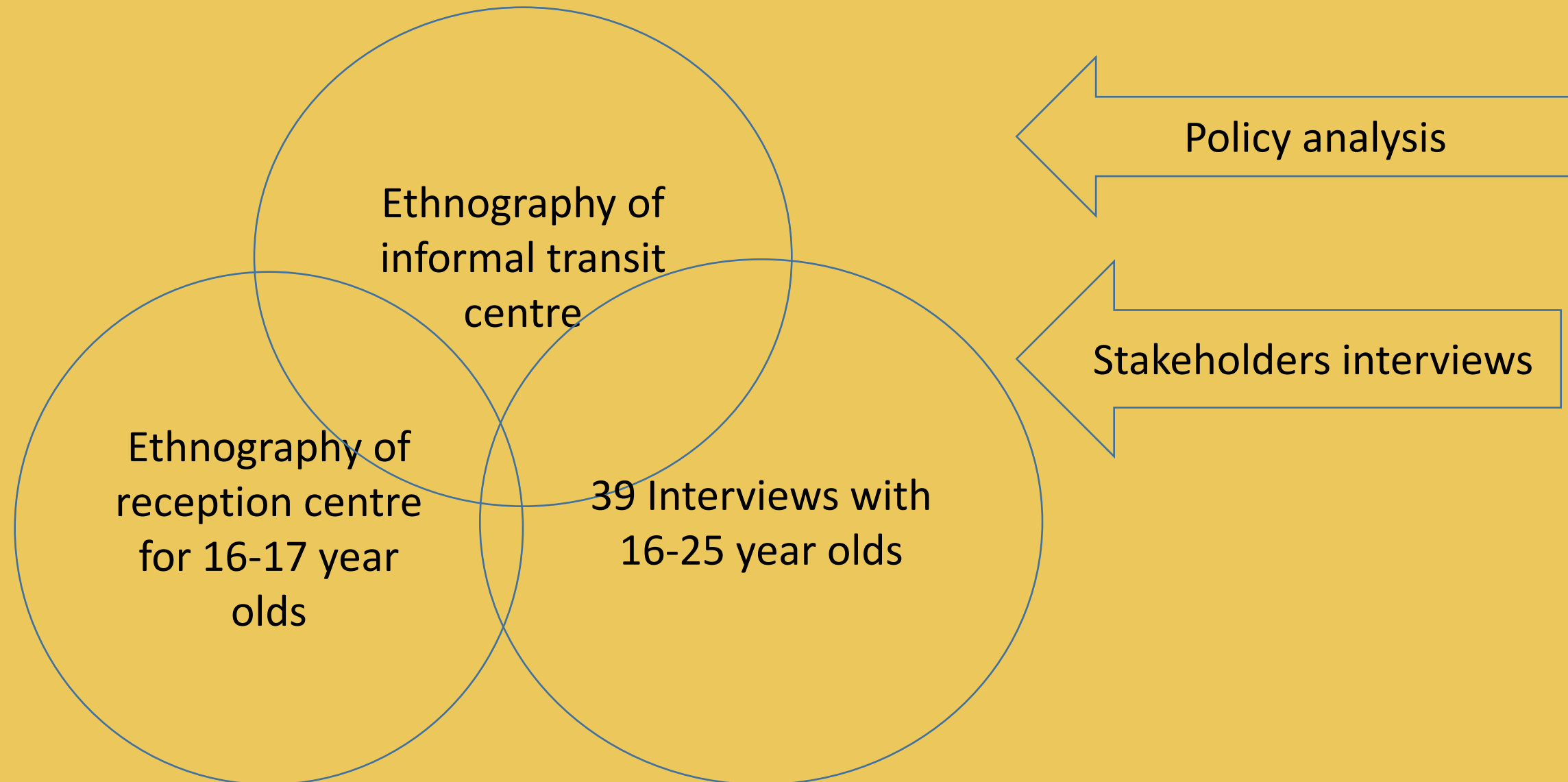
The story as a ritual of confession – discipline or freedom (Foucault): “Getting what you want very often means getting the **right story**.” (Bruner 1990: 86) – ‘strategic vulnerability’

‘The confessional discourse, whose power agenda is not merely the humiliation or purification of the subject, but the definition of a domain of experience as a domain of **surveillance and control**’ (Gabriel 2004: 27)

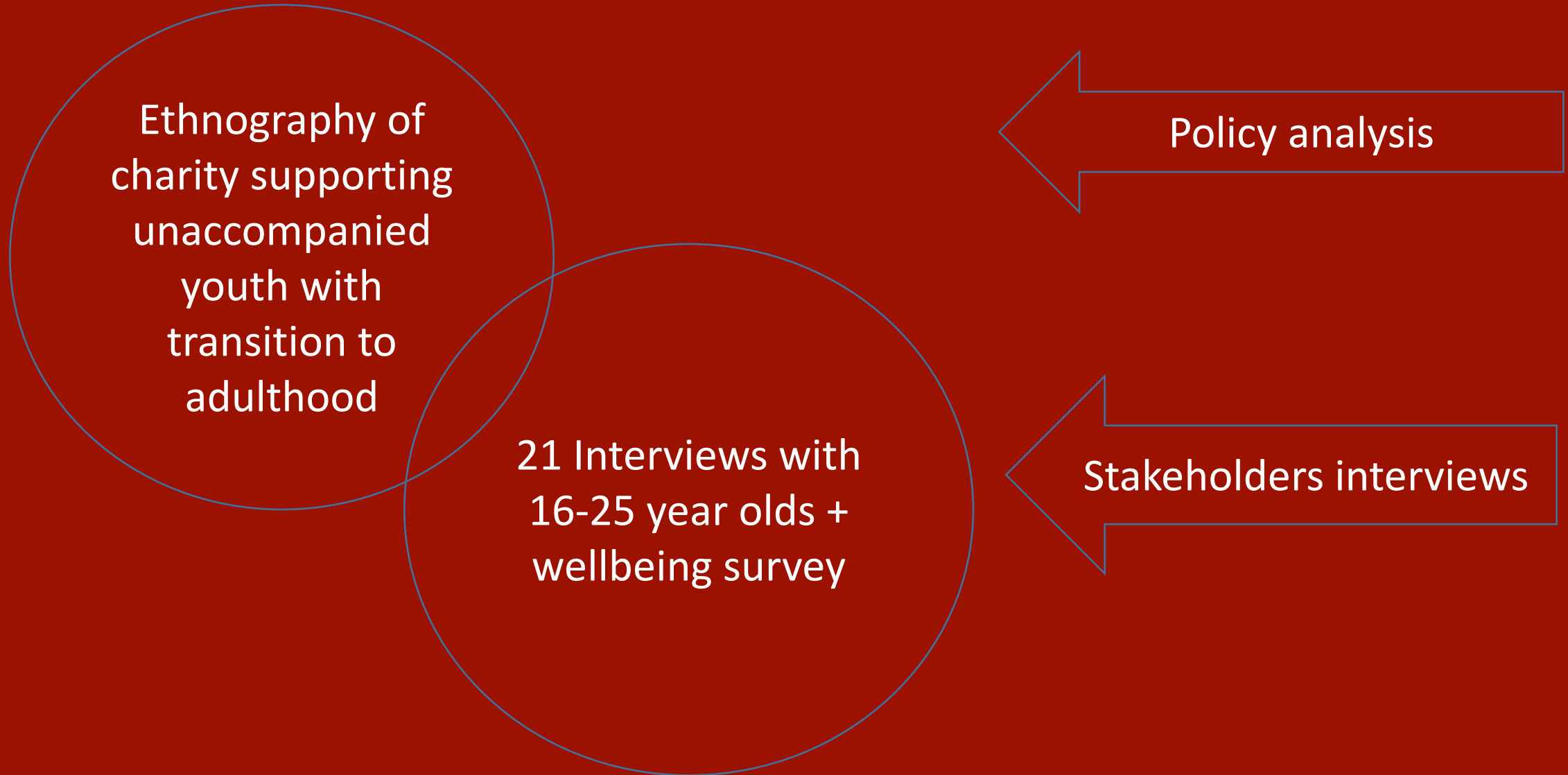
Process or product? “Engaging with the story also means engaging with the storyteller, his or her **motives, fantasies, and desires**.” (Gabriel 2004: 30)

Poetic license: “Let’s create a fiction that is truer than **truth**” (Pirandello)

Fieldwork in Italy (August 2015 – February 2016)

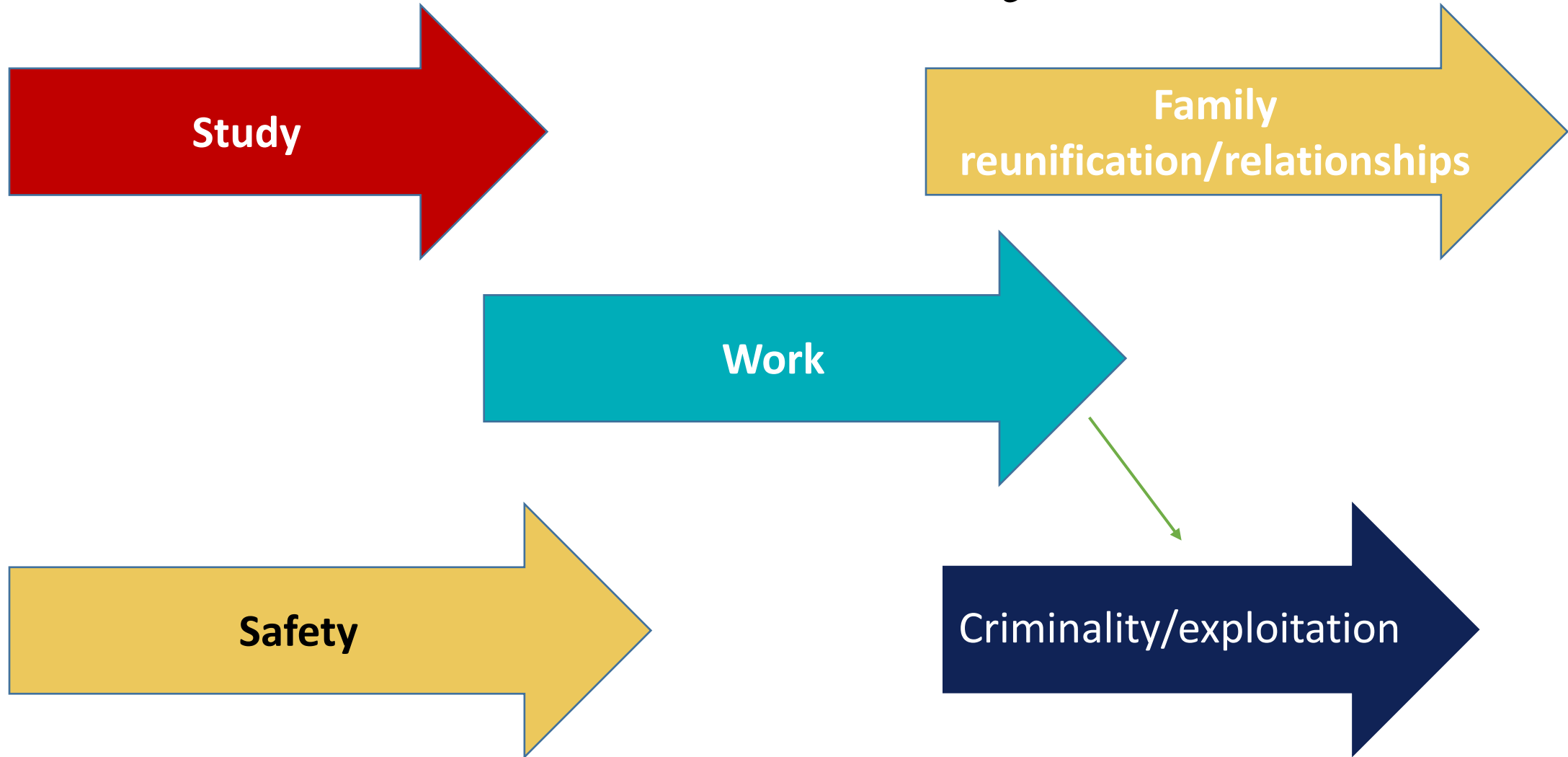


Fieldwork in UK (February 2016– October 2017)



COO	Italy	UK
Eritrea	4	9
Morocco	1	1
Palestine	2	
Afghan	4	5
Bangladesh	4	
Egypt	9	3
Somalia	1	
Liberia	1	
Gambia	3	
Ghana	1	
Senegal	3	
Ivory Coast	1	
Mali	3	
Albanian	2	
Sudan	0	2
Iran	0	1
	39	21

Forging a path through the mixed economy of welfare in Italy



Case Study 1: Miriam*, 17, Eritrea

Family
reunification/relationships

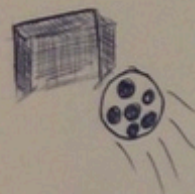
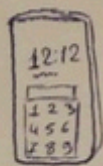


‘I ask Beata* [an Italian volunteer at the centre] what she makes of the minors staying at Casa Pace. There was some trouble a while ago, she says, where some arrogant adults made the kids sleep outside for four days. She explains that the kids don’t want to go and stay in the new Red Cross centre because even though ‘it’s great, there are no bed bugs and loads of space and clean beds and it’s all new’ – it is further from the *traffickanti* and they can’t do business there. They’re also worried they’ll get reported. We discuss the fact they only went there the one night of the knifing but on the condition Ella* would give them a lift back the next day. ‘Oh, and we’d miss them!’ she adds....As we sit there a police car passes through the narrow street, over the chalk drawings I did with the kids earlier. Beata grabs 10 year old Omar* and hugs him in close so that he doesn’t run out in front of the car. His sister Miriam is out at the Colosseum...when she gets back later I let her use my phone to call their uncle in Sudan who is sending them money.’
(Fieldnotes, 28 October 2015)

‘Today I spoke to Miriam who is happy in Germany. Through a friend who spoke English she explained she is now studying and Omar is also studying. They didn’t have the money to get to Sweden yet. She seems very happy and excited. They are staying in a refugee camp and she says she likes Germany and maybe they will stay there. Omar goes to school every day.’ (Fieldnotes, 10 January 2016).



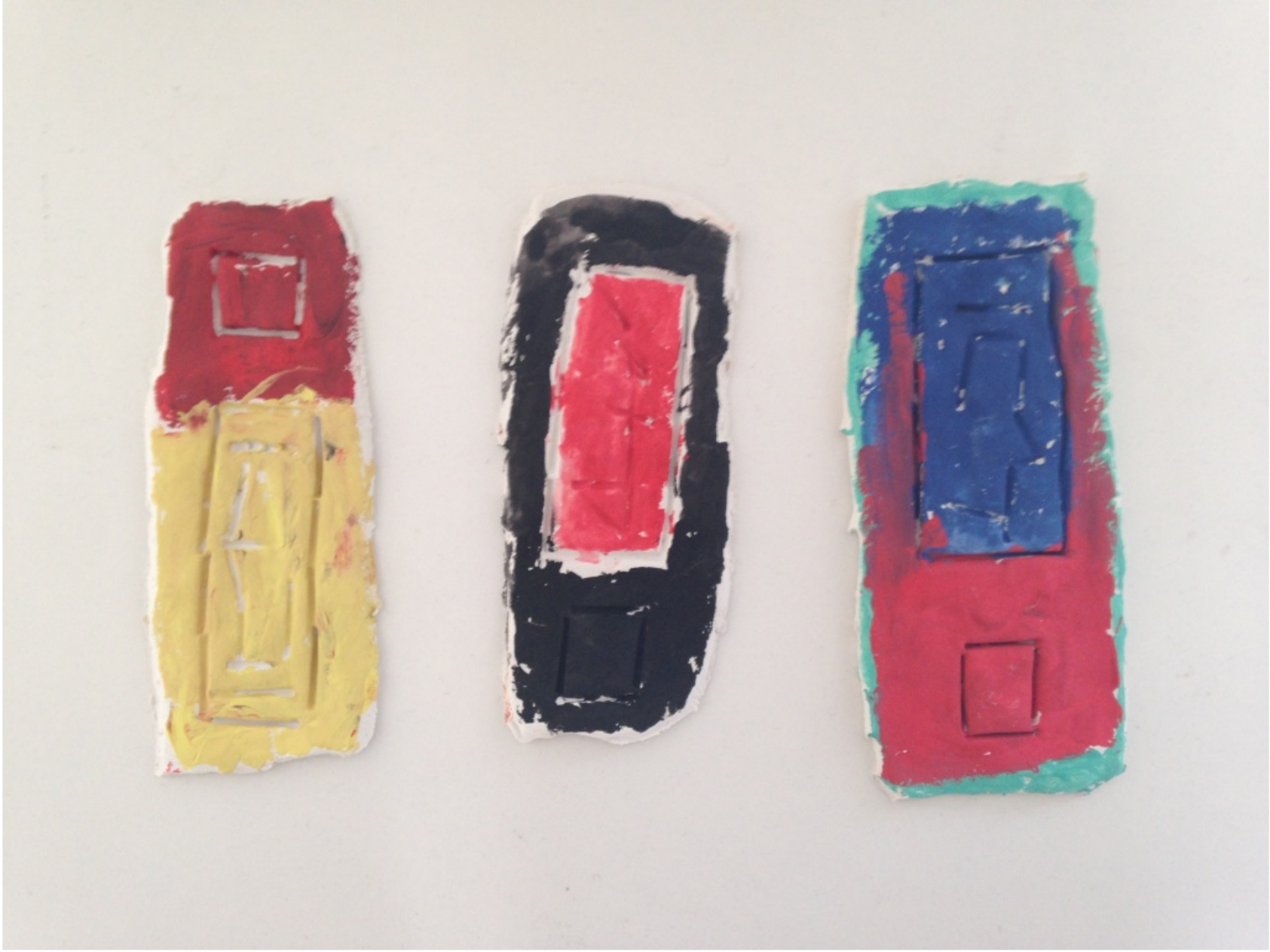
MUSEO DI SARDI



Porte Aperte

Questo oggetto è uno scudo ma mi fa pensare ad una porta. La porta mi fa pensare alla casa. Nelle case dei miei amici le porte sono sempre aperte. Queste porte rappresentano io, Ahmed, ed i miei amici Ahmed e Manzur. Ho scritto i nostri nomi sulle porte in arabo.





Case Study 2: Ravi*, 20, Bangladesh

Work



‘I needed money, that’s the main thing. Here if I work I can get money....’ (interview February 2016).

‘You need to find a job to pay for a house. No work, you sleep on the street... Since 2013 I’ve not been in work. That’s 3 years without work. It’s a lot, a lot of time. When you have a document you’re free when you don’t you’re not. When I have my document maybe I’ll leave the country...I have to search a new solution, a new life...If you don’t work, if you have no house, no work, you have nothing, that means you’re finished. That’s it. There’s nothing...’ (Mali, 19)

‘I’d say 70% are racist around here, really. I don’t mean to be rude, I know it’s a harsh word, but it’s true.’ (Ivory Coast, 22)

‘In the UK there is work but no papers and in Italy there are papers but no work!’ (Afghanistan, 21)



Lemar*, 17, Ghana. First day of an internship with a pizzeria

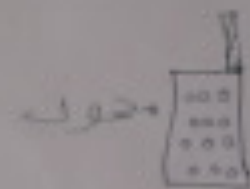


MUSTO AL AHMED

MERCEDES

STEREOPHON

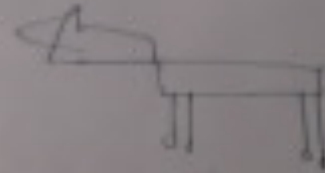
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Case Study 3: Midi*, 18, Senegal

Study

Safety



‘She [the teacher at the reception centre in Southern Italy] liked me so, so much and she wanted me to study. If you go elsewhere, she told me, you can study properly. You know me, I’m not here to work. I want to study...She even got me the ticket! She gave me books and helped me a lot. Then in [city in the north] we had the problems... (Interview, 11 November 2015)

Case Study 4: Hussein, 17, Egypt

Criminality/exploitation

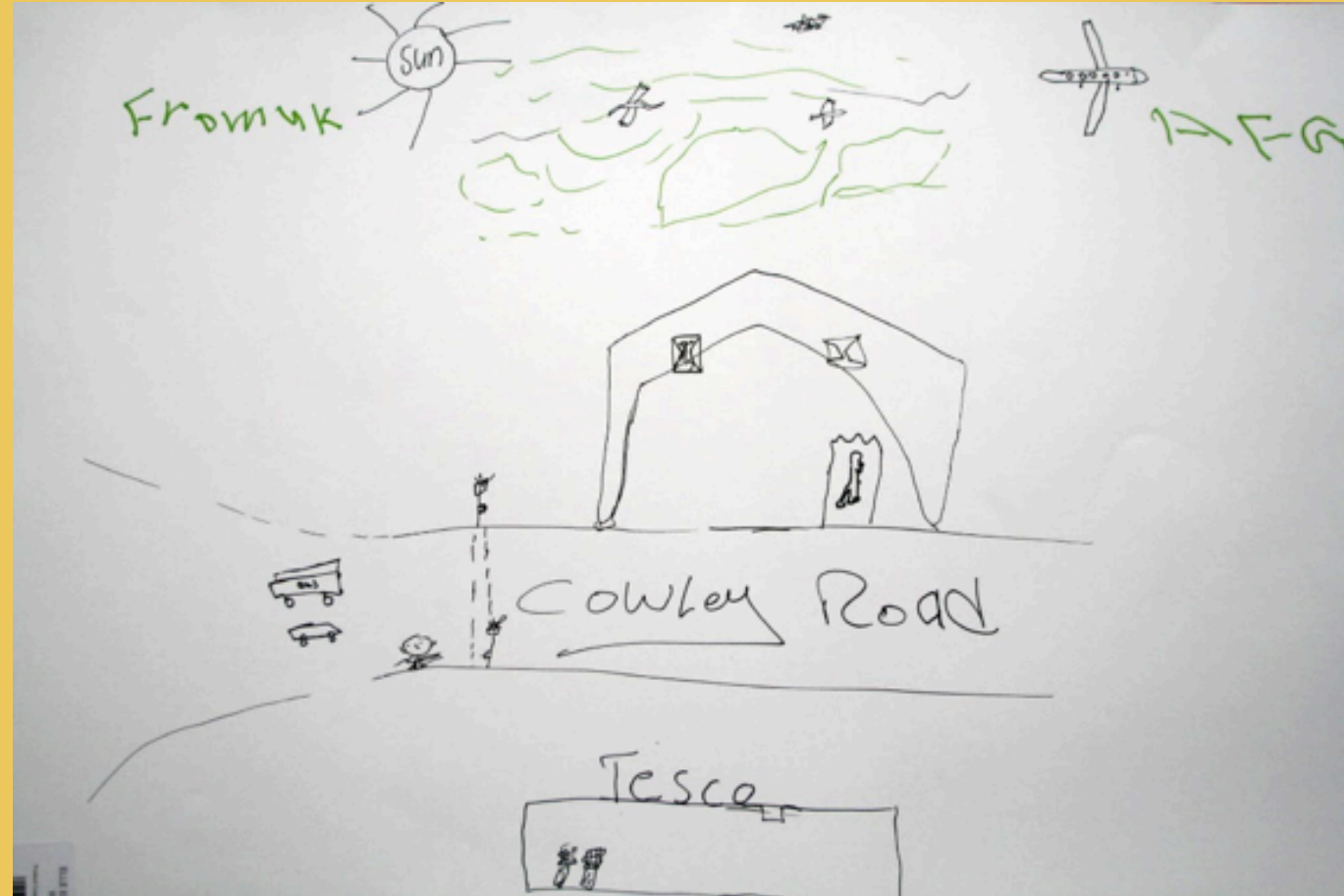


‘I have never been more angry than anyone than with him. I can’t tell the guys what to do but with him eventually he agreed to come with me to the police and we got him into a *casa familiare*, one of the good ones, and then he ran away again. I could have killed him as he’s already run away twice so his options are limited. I’ve contacted the biggest expert I know of minor rights but his phone isn’t working. I’m trying to work out where he could be and what are his rights. His background is so fucked up. But I could kill him.’ (Interview with volunteer at Casa Pace, January 2016)

‘I needed money quick, I didn’t have a choice’ (Egypt, 17)

‘Migrants are the new slaves of the world’ (Afghanistan, 21)

‘DIY asylum’? The particular case of Afghans



‘Do you know what? I was **scared**.’ (Afghanistan, 21)

‘UK is the UK, my friend, forget about UK. This is Europa, UK is not Europa! (laughs). The UK I had like a one bedroomed flat only myself. Here, one room you live two persons. UK, benefit like 50 Euro , £50. Here it like a week you get 20 Euro... I applied for a training...but we are still waiting , for the last six months, seven months. They don’t care (laughs) that’s it, they don’t care. Yeah... they say, ‘ we give you **documents**... you go’.’ (Afghanistan, 20)

Conclusion: ‘iron rod’ vs ‘colander welfare’

‘In Italy there are some advantages to not being strict about the rules.’ (Bilal, 19, Mali, refugee status)

Young people forge various pathways through the mixed welfare economy which centre mainly around **work, study, family reunification, safety** and in some cases **criminality and exploitation**.

Different trajectories are shaped by a range of factors but notable trends according to country of origin.

Some migratory projects are more suited than others to the context of Northern Italy (work and transit)

There is evidence to suggest that the specific pathways available to young people in Northern Italy may be shaped – in part – by the type of welfare regime. In particular:

- Relatively noninterventionist state
- Statutory focus on incorporating young people into the labour market
- importance of clientalistic networks

There are also significant risks! e.g. bartering of work contracts/ absconded minors vulnerable to exploitation

Implications for policy and practice

- Common European Asylum System?
- How do young refugees and migrants *understand welfare*?
- Immigration control and welfare (care and control, firewalls)
- The missing 10,000 – victims or agents?
- Who is best places to support unaccompanied children?
- Need for a longitudinal perspective
- Secondary migration



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