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Università degli Studi di Padova

Dipartimento di Scienze Storiche, Geografiche e dell'Antichità

Dipartimento di Filosofia, Sociologia, Pedagogia e Psicologia Applicata (FISPPA)

Corso di Laurea Magistrale in Local Development

**Bridging the Host Society and the Immigrant
Community: A Case of the Municipality of Padua,
Veneto, Italy**

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ACADEMIC YEAR **2023/24**

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Il candidato dichiara che il presente lavoro è originale e non è già stato sottoposto, in tutto o in parte, per il conseguimento di un titolo accademico in altre Università italiane o straniere.

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Student's signature



Grace Atilola Obayomi

Acknowledgements

To God Almighty and for His sufficient GRACE, I say the Biggest Thanks.

I would like to express my profound gratitude to Professor Alessio Surian for his advice, support, prompt response and great influence on this research and also for giving a pleasant student-teacher relationship.

I am also using this medium to sincerely appreciate Prof. Anna Giraldo (the former Departmental coordinator) who is always prompt to responding to our troubles and worries especially as International students in a foreign land.

To all my Lecturers, Coordinators, I say very big thank you for allowing us to drink from the well of your Knowledge.

I also want to appreciate Professor Monica Fedeli and her Husband who led the first Path for me to Local Development during my first encounter with the University of Padova in 2019.

The research would not have been successful if not for the unflinching support of Honorable Christian Agbor and undiluted efforts from the members of Commissioni di Stranieri both Old and new and whose names I can mention all.

My Special Appreciation goes to families, groups and Friends who has made my WORLD in Italy; the Shobowale's Family and the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Mrs. Paola Montesso and her beautiful family, Voci da Mondo, Cantimigranti, Egbe Omo Yoruba Veneto Region, Concerned Nigerian Forum(CNF),MCBRAIN Internationals, Nigerian Scholars in Italy (NIIST)and most especially my brother Taiwo Olatunji, all my wonderful Classmates; Gladys, Wuday, Babatunde, Anh, Jacqueline and my Flatmates, I say a very big thanks to you all. I also thank Uncle Yemi and Aunty Malognze for their unending love for me always.

Most importantly, I acknowledge my Parents, Siblings and my Sweetheart, Mr. Adebayo Obayomi and my two lovely Sons, Samuel and Gabriel Obayomi for being there for me always. I thank you all.

Summary

The research focuses on the relations between the host society and immigrant community in the municipality of Padua, in the Veneto Region (Italy). It adopts a single-case study research design that enables the researcher to obtain a thorough comprehension of the intricate processes and interactions at play at the local level. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample for the study which enabled the researcher to select participants based on pertinent criteria. Four commissioners were selected and interviewed as key informants while 8 members representing the Nigerian immigrant community in the study area were selected because the Nigerians in Padua come from different backgrounds, age groups, ethnicities, and religious affiliations. Two semi-structured interview guides tagged “Foreigners Representatives Semi-structured Interview Guide” and “Nigerian Immigrants Semi structured Interview Guide” were used for data collection. The data collected were reinforced with analysis of documents retrieved from the Commission. The researcher adopted the thematic analysis technique, a method of qualitative data analysis that focuses on identifying and interpreting patterns or themes within the data.

The findings contribute to observing and to describing how integration efforts are dealing with the representation and participation of immigrant communities. The study discusses to what extent the local municipal integration strategy - involving a Municipal Commission representing citizens with a foreign nationality - helps immigrants to address the challenges relating to education and housing.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Study

Global immigrants' community continues to grow, and it is at its all-time high. There were 280.6 million global international migrants in 2020 (World Migration Report, 2020). Although this is only about 4% of the world's population of 7.8 billion people, it is not insignificant. If migrants had founded their own nation, it would have been the fourth most populous nation in the world, behind China, India, and the United States (UN DESA, 2023). Immigration is the international movement of individuals from their country of citizenship, their place of birth or of habitual residence, to a country where they do not have citizenship. The percentage of immigrants obviously varies from nation to nation for a variety of reasons migrants come to a new nation for a variety of reasons (Sagay, 2021), including the pursuit of economic success, employment opportunities, family reunion, retirement, and improved access to resources.

Partly due to its strategic location in the Mediterranean Sea, Italy is one of the first European nations approached by immigrants attempting to enter the continent. Based on 2020 statistics, with over 6 million (6,386,998) immigrants constitute about 10% (10.56%) of the total population in Italy and being the 11th top country with the highest number of immigrants (World Population Review, 2022), Italy has a good share of the global immigrant population. Meanwhile, Nigerians constitute 2.30% (119,089) of the 5,171,894 foreigners residing in Italy as of January 2021, being the third largest African community in Italy after Morocco and Egypt (Dömös and Tarrosy, 2020). Also, according to the National Institute of Statistics (Istituto Nazionale di Statistica, ISTAT, 2019), in 2017 and 2018,

despite the significant decrease of asylum seekers, Nigeria topped the list of inflows of non-EU citizens in Italy for asylum and humanitarian protection with about 20,000 and 10,000 respectively.

A natural implication of migration is the existence of enduring sociocultural and socioeconomic contact between, at least, two communities, that is: the host society and the immigrant group. In the past and contemporary eras, such contact has led to the discourse and phenomenon of including immigrants in the socioeconomic activities or blending the “opposing” communities, especially because of the benefits of the phenomenon for human, local, and national development. Integration, favoured as the optimal acculturation strategy (Bowskill et al, 2007), involves economic mobility and social inclusion for immigrants and their offspring. Successful integration creates economically robust and socially and culturally inclusive societies. Integration focuses on the structures and systems that foster growth and development in society, including early childhood care, primary and secondary education, post-secondary education, adult education, community development, workforce development, health care, and the provision of government services to communities with linguistic diversity, among others. A review of literature has indicated that migrants can become happier by migrating, but it strongly depends on the specific migration stream and migrants typically did not reach similar levels of happiness to those of natives (Hendriks, 2015).

While international immigration is addressed by national institutions such as the ministry of interior, the national statistics bureau, and the population commission, social inclusion/integration discourse is best approached as a local development phenomenon. For example, the Mediterranean City-to-City Migration Project (MC2CM) fosters dialogue and mutual learning, intercultural communication, employment, and the provision of housing and basic services for refugees and economic migrants through collaboration among various stakeholders, including non-governmental associations and municipalities (Mediterranean City-to-City Migration Project, MC2CM, nd.). This exploratory case study focuses on a territorial context in the North of Italy –the Municipality of Padua in the Veneto

Region. Northern Italy is witnessing a new wave of migrants. For instance, nearly 56% of new resident permits were awarded in northern Italy, compared to just 23% in the south and the islands (ISTAT, 2019). Thus, paying attention to the dynamics of the relations between the host society and the immigrant community vis-à-vis local development is worthwhile. Padua, the capital city of the Province of Padua (PD) has a population of 206,651 of which 35,073 are foreigners, representing 16.7% of the inhabitants (Dömös and Tarrosy, 2020). Moreover, Nigerians make up is the largest African immigrant community with 2,429.

In its effort to improve the representation, participation, and inclusion of its foreigners, the Municipality of Padua established the Commission for the representation of Paduan People with Foreign Citizenship (*Commissione per la Rappresentanza delle Persone Padovane con Cittadinanza Straniera*, Commission for Foreigners) by the “Regulations of the commission for the representation of Paduan people with foreign citizenship” (PadovaNet, 2022). The aims of this initiative are to facilitate participatory governance and contribute to the realisation of sustainable development goals (particularly SDG 10 and 11). The 16-member Commission officially represents non-European nationals and stateless individuals residing in the municipality. Its sixteen members are elected for a duration of 5 years. The Commission for Foreigners serves as a consultative body with the Office of the Mayor and other institutional bodies in all areas of administration albeit with the right to speak, but without the right to vote. It collects needs and requests in order to formulate proposals aimed at improving inclusion policies, enhancing the possibilities for participation in local public affairs. The three subcommittees of the commission deal with (a) communication and information on local services and initiatives (b) promotion of different cultures and (c) observatory on good practices and obstacles to inclusion.

1.2 Problem Statement

Research has demonstrated that immigration has substantial and long-lasting advantages for migrants and their families, and for both receiving and sending nations (host and origin society respectively), but research has also showed that immigration often poses formidable obstacles for individuals, communities, and organizations (Batalova et al, 2020). Many of these challenges border on under-representation and inadequate social inclusion or integration of the immigrants. A 2006 study that focuses on Nigerian women that were street prostitutes in Palermo, Italy shows the strengths and weaknesses of Italy's innovative anti-trafficking initiatives (Cole, 2006). The program lowered many of the risks of street prostitution, but financial bondage to traffickers, familial commitments, and supernatural threats made separating the women from exploiters difficult. Those who finished the rehabilitation programme had trouble integrating into Italian society. As Sagay (2021) analyses, migration is “feminizing” because culturally and socially created norms of masculinity and femininity encourage and inspire migratory tendencies among many women moving from Nigeria to Italy and creating a type of gendered social agency. Obi et al (2022) shows that Nigerian economic asylum applicants awaiting asylum decisions in Italy assessed their well-being by considering their pre-immigration goals, integration limits, and capacities. As a result of structural, psychological, economic, and social restraints, they reported a lower level of life satisfaction than they did in Nigeria. It seems Nigerian immigrants that experienced forced migration and these studies suggest the vulnerability of Nigeria immigrants (in Italy).

Most of the researches that concentrate on the integration of economic migrants examine the disparities in well-being between the economic migrants and the natives (Chen et al., 2019; Knight & Gunatilaka, 2010; Stillman et al., 2009, 2015). Meanwhile, a study tests a predictive model of psychological adaptation with international students whereby host national connectedness mediates the effects of personal resources and contextual factors on adaptive outcomes (Bethel et al (2020).

The findings of the study highlight the importance of international students' relationships with host nationals. Against the background of the concerns that immigrant organizations, especially those of a transnational character, may limit political integration among recent migrants, research shows a near-absence of perceived conflict between transnational activism and political participation/incorporation in host society (Portes, 2008). Also, admitting the complex relationship between migrant communities and institutions with regards to intangible cultural heritage, Giglito et al (2020) show that building a bridge at institutional and organisational level is necessary for addressing the under-representation and marginalisation of many migrant and refugee communities in cultural heritage participation, production, and safeguarding. Integration experiences of Nigerians in Italy have been of interest to academics.

Researchers have continuously and copiously studied immigrant integration from various disciplinary perspectives such as economics, psychology, sociology, geography, education and development but the dialectical dynamics of the relationship between host communities and immigrant communities need more scientific attention. An exploration of the role, challenges, and achievements of an immigrant "bridge commission" as well as perceptions of the communities they represent should be given more attention, especially from the Local Development perspective. This is the gap in literature that this study aims to fill.

1.3 Research Purpose

The aim of this study is to explore how an Italian local community facilitates and promotes integration of immigrants through its Commission for the Representation of Paduan People with Foreign Citizenship (Commission for Foreigners). Specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. highlight the successes of the Commission for Foreigners and the challenges confronting it, especially in assisting immigrants in Padua in the areas of housing and education

- ii. examine how Nigerian foreigners in Padova perceive the efforts and initiatives of the Commission and the benefits they derive
- iii. identify the housing challenges confronting Nigerian immigrants in Padua
- iv. assess how the Commission's role mitigate the immigrants' housing challenges

1. 4 Research Questions

Based on the foregoing, the following questions will guide this study:

- i. What are the successes of the Commission for Foreigners and the challenges confronting it, especially in assisting immigrants in Padua in the areas of housing and education?
- ii. How do Nigerian foreign citizens in Padova perceive the efforts and initiatives of the Commission and the benefits they derive?
- iii. What are the housing challenges confronting Nigerian immigrants in Padua?
- iv. How does the Commission's role mitigate the immigrants' housing challenges?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The linkages between migration and development have been identified by governments, development experts, and others. There is the growing number of research on the current and prospective contributions of migrant populations to local, national, human, and sustainable development and poverty reduction in their home countries. For instance, proper support for migrant and refugee communities in safeguarding their intangible cultural heritage can have benefits such as perpetuating a connection with their homeland, strengthening community ties in the host country, and counteracting demeaning and exclusionary narratives (Giglietto et al, 2020). But the search for best

practices in involving immigrants in the processes and benefits of development has not been concluded.

Thus, this study will deepen our understanding of how integration is implemented through representation and participation of immigrant communities and exemplify the extent to which such strategy (the bridge commission strategy) help immigrants resolve their challenges relating to housing. The report of the study will enrich the databases of relevant discipline, including migration studies, local development, community development, and social psychology. Also, local development experts, community engagers, adult educators, and migration/integration policy makers would find the results of this study very useful.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

There are two major limitations in this study that could be addressed in future research. First, is the study sample and sampling method. The researcher had to use purposive sampling method, which is based on researchers' judgment of the participants, in getting the targeted group comprising the commissioners who are most informative members of the Commission that could provide information on the role and challenges of the Commission with regards to the research questions and the participants who are informative and representative members of the Nigerian immigrant community in the study. This is limited however, because most of the participant could not be reached within the limited time frame for the study. This affects the number of targeted participants for this study and delimiting the study to housing aspect of the research. The effect of this limitation was mitigated by ensuring that the interview was complemented by phone calls to be able to interview a sizeable number of participants leaving the researcher with only seven participants.

The second possible limitation to my study is that also me being a Nigerian and immigrant researcher conducting the study to explore the challenges facing the immigrant community, there is always the temptation to allow my personal experience to obscure my sense my sense of judgement in analysing

and interpreting the data. However the effect of this were controlled by ensuring I follow all ethics of research conducting protocol and remaining as objective as possible.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This case study explores the representation, participation, and integration of immigrant communities in Padua by analysing the experiences immigrant representatives and those that they represent. While conscious of the fact that the Commission for Foreigners was established by the Italian government and it bridges the host society and the immigrant community, this study does not include the perspective of the host authorities and nationals. That is, Italians, either as municipal officers or other citizens, are not involved in this study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Preamble

This chapter seeks to review concepts, theoretical discourse on issues involving convergent and divergent views of host society and immigrant community in Italy and its municipality, provides a relevant theoretical frame work for the study, discuss the paradigms and strategies of immigrant integration, in sub-sections, provide and utilize findings of previous studies and reports with a view to proper understanding of the subject of this study.

2.2 Integration: Concepts, Theories and Approaches

The term ‘integration’ has been conceptualized and theorized in various researches. A basic definition of integration according to Rinux (2023, para. 1) is one described as “the process of becoming an accepted part of society”. Integration, in a broader sense, is a concept used to describe social, political, cultural and economic processes that occur when migrants arrive in a new society. In similar view, Whitaker, (2015) defined the term integration as “the process of settlement, interaction with the host society, and social change that follows immigration”. That is from the moment immigrants arrive in a host society, they must “secure a place” for themselves which is involve the task of finding a home, a job and income, schools for their children, and access to health facilities. In a cultural and social sense the migrant must as find a way to establish cooperation and interaction with other individuals and groups, get to know and use institutions of the host society, and become recognized and accepted in their cultural specificity (Scholten, Entzinger, Penninx and Verbeek, 2015). Lindo (2005) in *the Concept of Integration: Theoretical Concerns and Practical Meaning* viewed integration as a sociological concept, social environment in which individuals and groups form interdependencies.

In the same vein, Flip (2005) described integration as a general sociological concept in which proposes the social environment is a unit of reference in which individuals and groups form interdependencies and which is sometimes specified as systemic integration or system integration. Grzymała-Kazłowska (2008, Chapter 3) stated four degrees by which immigrants find their place in the host society in a variety of ways which include, ‘separation’ ‘adaptation’, ‘integration’ or ‘assimilation into the majority environment’. On the contrary, separation was described as a process, and state, where the group either remains in self-imposed isolation (marginalization), or is isolated from the majority of society. Isolation may be an effect of official policies followed by the state, or by a specific government, but it may as well result from historical prejudices, tradition, resentment, or be an effect of recent events. Adaptation was described as the next stage of the “entry” of immigrants into the host community. The concept of adaptation was made popular by Darwin, and it means as much as to acquire a minimum of capabilities enabling survival. Immigration was described as next degree of “entry” of immigrants into the majority group and which include a process and state where immigrant individuals and groups establish relatively robust relationships with members of the host community and take part in diverse aspects of its life, while not abandoning their own national identity. Integration was further described as social relations of which an individual or group function within a new social environment, enjoy at least a minimum of economic security, and have attained at least a moderate level of language and cultural competence within the country of settlement. Integration means, beyond a certain level of capability, a striving to become a part of the surrounding society.

In OECD (2023, p. 4), it was argued that “the concept of integration, in its usage pertaining to migration, is open to a range of definitions, which undergo particularly significant variations between different national contexts”. In a similar view, Hamberger (2009, p. 3) agreed that there are contradictory definitions of integration and one should be aware of the fact “that there is no satisfactory core definition of the concept of “integration”. Similarly, a lot of models(ref) have been

developed throughout the European Union which could not describe and explain a process developing when migrants arrive into a new society and that rather, these models present an ideal situation, the desirable en result of a process that needs policy stimulation (OECD, 2003). For instance, both the French republican model and British multicultural model (Bertossi, 2012), hold idealistic view of the national society. They are not useful to describe and explain how integration takes place in society day after day. By implication, no consensus was possible since each member state has its own model of integration forged over the years. Each nation-state strives to at least to defend and preserve its model, sometimes to export it and to transpose it at the European Union level. In other words, there is no consensus on a shared thick definition of integration either in academia or in the European policy-making world.

There is no consensus on the ideal integrated European society for tomorrow either. To put it differently, there is no consensual European Union model of immigrant integration. The result was that the European policy debates, discussions and policy-making on integration develop without a clear definition of integration and without a clear vision of the end result to be reached through European policy-making. In support of this view, Scholten (2011) emphasized that the concept of integration has stimulated lots of debates in academia over the years and nowadays there still is no common understanding of what the concept of integration actually refers to. The lack of academic consensus on the definition of integration is certainly a problem if the idea is to root policy-making in research results. It was further argued that developing immigration policy without simultaneously framing integration policy would be problematic considering the facts that issues affecting economy and employment, public goods sharing, ethnic and cultural diversity, social and political participation should be discussed in terms public policy goals. As such, a holistic approach is clearly needed in order to consider the complexity of the migration and post-migration situations in the affected domain (OECD, nd.).

In resolving the controversies around conceptualizing the term integration, the idea of Common Basic Principles (CBP) on integration was later developed as the basis for the development of European Union integration policy (Martiniello, 2004). The Common Basic Principles (CBP) provided a framework to be used as a guide for implementing and evaluating current and future integration policies. The principle maintained four positions that: (i) integration is possible and that it makes the case for investment (ii) that equal rights and anti-discrimination policies are at the heart of a proactive integration policy (iii) recognition that immigration can benefit the European Union as a whole in economic, social, political, and cultural terms (iv) integration should be viewed as a "two-way process" involving both migrants and their descendants, as well as host societies, with references to the private sector, public sector, and NGOs as "integration actors". Furthermore, from historical point of view, integration studied by the Chicago School of urban sociology was considered as the process of settlement of newcomers in a host society (Lindner, 2013).

The dimension of research migrant settlement focused on the legal and political aspect of becoming part of a host society (e.g., legal residence, citizenship, and voting rights), while other dimension focused on the socio-economic aspect (e.g., immigrants' access to health care, education, housing, and the labour market) or on cultural-religious aspects (United Nation, 2014, pp. 60-75). The heuristic model of integration processes and policies proposed by (IMISCOE, 2016) which encompassing three analytically distinct dimensions in which people may (or may not) become an accepted part of society namely, (i) the legal-political, (ii) the socio-economic, and (iii) the cultural-religious. The model described each dimension of integration as involving different parties (the immigrants themselves and the receiving society), different levels of analysis (the individual, collective, and institutional levels), and other relevant factors such as time and generations. The proposed model considered "integration policies, policy frames, concrete policy measures, and both the vertical and horizontal aspects of integration policymaking in order to account for the complex, multi-layered, and often contradictory character of integration policies" and through the heuristic approach the

integration processes and policies were systematically described (Dekker, Emilsson, Krieger and Scholten, 2015).

According to (Drouhot, Deutschmann, Zuccotti, Zagheni (2022), some dimensions to integrating of migrants and established nationals may be discussed under some conceptual terms:

Assimilation: this has been described as a much contested notion whereby on entering a new country immigrant groups are encouraged, through social and cultural practices and/or political machinations, to adopt the culture, values, and social behaviors of the host nation in order to benefit from full citizenship status. Integration is viewed as a one-way thing in which immigrants bear the whole responsibility for change. They are expected to undergo unilateral change, particularly in the public domain, in order to fit into a predetermined order. Women of Turkish ancestry, for example, are frequently asked to work without headscarves when serving clients in Germany, as such changes to staff uniforms are deemed to repel customers. When differences cannot be tolerated, they must be eliminated. But bearing in mind the fact that democratic societies have many distinct lifestyles, values, and institutional processes that are continually evolving, there is no monolithic culture or social order to conform to.

Therefore, conformity represented by assimilation was considered fictitious because it is not shared the view of the majority. However, due to conception of integration as one-way assimilation, the term was being replaced with other preferred terminologies, *inclusion* and *participation*. Jorgensen (2012, p. 3) discussed that social inclusion is a stated policy goal for governments directed at eliminating the exclusion of all disadvantaged groups to enable everyone to “have access to, use, participate in benefit from and feel a sense of belonging to a given area of society”. Hanfstingl et. al. (2021) in a *Systematic Review of the Last Two Decades on Assimilation and Accommodation* provided a systematic overview of psychological areas using assimilation and accommodation to explain development and adaptation processes from 1998 to 2018. Their study identified the main psychological research areas

connected to assimilation and accommodation. They used assimilation and accommodation as keywords to extract data from SpringerLink, PsycINFO, and PsycARTICLES in which out of 500 articles, 473 were included in the analysis in which ten categories were identified to allow systematization along with different research areas and development trajectories. The study analyzed the meaning of the categories in terms of scientific impact, their connection to Piaget and Baldwin, application, and research methods.

Multiculturalism: integration approach, reciprocity, equality, diversity and cohesion, are the guiding principles and this is in tandem with a multicultural understanding of the functioning of modern democracies (Brochmann and Hagelund, 2012). Multiculturalism had earlier been adopted by some EU member states, including Italy to understand relations between different population groups within their country, over the past couple of years while emphasis on loyalty to a particular national identity has returned. But the latter withdrawer from the fragile multi-cultural terrain is closely linked to concerns about economic and military security, which the idea of a single collective identity is seen to assuage (Eder, 2009). The normative assertion of multiculturalism concept is that citizenship and national identity must be redefined to accommodate group identities significant to both minorities and majorities. This implies the right to be included, to full membership, sharing of national-public space or culture and the ability to change it as part of that sharing (Zapata-Barrero, 2019).

Interculturalism: this concept emphasizes the local level of identity because of the geographical and physical proximity among groups that facilitate dialogue and exchanges as opposed to multiculturalism which focuses on the question of national identity. While multiculturalism is focused on how receiving states deal with post-immigrant diversity; interculturalism does the same but is more focused on the city as the unit of analysis. However, either in multiculturalism or interculturalism the assimilationist approach is rejected because of its defense of a historical national homogeneity (Kastoryano, 2018).

Equality: For cohesion to thrive on the interaction of different communities, this interaction must be guided by the principle of equality (Pryce, 2017, Inaugural lecture). That is, while the building of social networks on recognition of difference is essential for the process of integration; there is still the tendency for the failure of this approach if migrants and ethnic minorities are not treated as equals. In supporting this view (Kahlenberg, Cookson, Shaffer, and Basterra, 2017) suggested that it is the task of integration policies to ensure that migrants and ethnic minorities are provided with equal rights of full partnership and participation in the formation of a cohesive society. However, such rights should provide the immigrant the needed security being the minority group (United Nation, 2012).

Acculturation: A theory developed by a Social Psychologist Berry (1980), to address the various ways in which immigrant groups strive to maintain their heritage culture and/or engage with the host group. The theory identified four types of migrant-host relationships (based on these two dimensions), they are: assimilation (migrant identifies with and adjusts to the host culture's norms and rejects original culture), separation (the affinity for one's culture of origin and rejection/resistance to the host culture), marginalization (lack of engagement with both the host culture and one's culture of origin), and integration (balancing one's culture of origin with the host culture, which some identify as becoming bicultural) (Anderson, 2017).

2.3 Dimension and Measurement of Integration

Hellen (2016) in *Monitoring Report on Integration* stressed the importance of having specific data on immigrants to ensure that immigrants are being reached and their needs served by the policies; which means without monitoring of outcomes, the needs of immigrants may be ignored or not effectively addressed (Collett and Petrovic, 2014). The study use Ireland as a case study of a country which pursues a policy of mainstream service provision in the area of integration, with targeted initiatives to meet specific short-term needs (Office of the Minister for Integration, 2008) with reference to a unit within the Department of Justice, the Office of the Promotion of Migrant

Integration (OPMI), with a cross-departmental mandate to lead and co-ordinate migrant integration. The delivery of integration services rests with individual government departments and agencies.

Casey (2016) observed that negative attitudes to immigration have increased considerably in the UK in the last 15 years, and immigration has become a highly salient political issue. Sighting Ireland as a case study, Mc-Ginnity et al., (2013) stated that negative attitudes to immigrants and immigration rose somewhat during the economic recession in Ireland. Fanning (2015) however argued that Ireland has not had a marked political or media backlash against immigration. Measurement of integration in the host society through four classical dimensions of immigrants life include cultural, social, economic and political (Council of Europe, nd., pp. 10-15). *Cultural* (knowledge of the host country's language, some understanding of its society and respect for its basic norms) *Social* (insertion into education and welfare systems) *Economic* (access to the labor market, employment) *Political* (is equated with the final stage of integration, the right to vote and to stand for election, usually acquired through naturalization).

2.4 Theoretical Framework

This study's theoretical framework is based on the participatory communication model (PCM), which emphasises the significance of active participation and communication among decision-makers and stakeholders (Tuftte and Mefalopulos, 2009). To achieve social change and development, this paradigm underlines the significance of the active participation of individuals or communities in the communication process. Participation is the involvement of individuals in life-changing decision-making processes. PCM underlines that participation is not merely the inclusion of individuals, but also their active participation in the decision-making process. Communication, on the other hand, is described as the exchange of information, ideas, and opinions between individuals or organisations. There are numerous modes of communication, including spoken, nonverbal, and written.

Participatory communication is therefore a people-centered approach that prioritizes co-creation and co-ownership of information for development in a variety of circumstances. The model also acknowledges that power is an essential component of participation that power dynamics can impact the degree and quality of involvement, and that efforts must be done to level the playing field and empower marginalized groups such as immigrant communities. A central tenet of PCM is that effective communication is necessary for the success of participatory processes, which in turn contribute to development. (Tufté & Mefalopoulos, 2009). PCM is appropriate for this case study for a variety of reasons. First, it acknowledges the significance of local knowledge and skills, which can result in contextually more relevant solutions. Second, it can enhance participant ownership and accountability, which can result in more sustainable outcomes.

Thirdly, it can encourage cooperation and collaboration by aiding in the development of trust and rapport between participants. This study examines the Commission for the Representation of Paduan People with Foreign Citizenship (Commission for Foreigners) as a forum for communication between the Italian local population and Nigerian immigrants in Padua. Relationships between the Commission and the Municipality, on the one hand, and the Commission and the Nigerian community, on the other hand, can create more inclusive, collaborative, and effective development practices. The model is a useful theoretical framework for case study research, since it provides a lens for examining complicated communication processes and their influence on individuals and communities. PCM is central to the third paradigm (the multiplicity paradigm) of development, which emphasizes people-centeredness in response to problem-solving and the requirements of individuals from many societies. (Musakophas & Polnigongit, 2017). If their needs are satisfied, Nigerian immigrant communities can contribute to individual growth and development in their host community.

The following indicators were used to assess the Commission's effectiveness in participatory communication for promoting integration: (1) Successes of the Commission in assisting immigrants in Padua in the areas of housing and education; (2) Challenges facing the Commission in assisting immigrants in the areas of housing and education; and (3) Perceptions of foreign citizens in Padova regarding the Commission's efforts and initiatives, as well as the benefits they derive. The study examined how the Commission for Foreigners enables and promotes the integration of Nigerian immigrants in Padua from the standpoint of local development. This viewpoint acknowledges the connections between migration and development, as well as the role immigrant communities can play in local, national, human, and sustainable development. Consequently, the case study adopted a participatory method of data collecting and analysis. Using the model may be accompanied with a number of obstacles. At the person level, there are issues of attitude, communication skills, and facilitation capacity; while at the organisational level, there are issues of institutional mandates and objectives, leadership, and political climate (Fliert, 2010).

Participatory approach can be time-consuming and resource-intensive, necessitating considerable inputs of time, money, and people. It might be challenging to balance the various opinions and interests of participants. Furthermore, power dynamics and socioeconomic inequities can restrict the quantity and quality of involvement, necessitating efforts to level the playing field and empower marginalized groups. Nonetheless, several measures were adopted to mitigate these obstacles; including limiting the scope of the study to a municipal (Padua) and a manageable number of participants, as well as gathering data from two sets of participants. In conclusion, the PCM was utilized as a theoretical framework to shed light on how participatory communication initiatives, such as the Commission for Foreigners, might promote integration and handle housing and difficulties. It proved the relevance of a participatory approach to research and practice by emphasizing the significance of active participation and communication among research participants (Cornish and Dunn, 2009).

2.5 Review of Previous Studies

2.5.1 Role of Institutions and Local Communities in Promoting Integration

According to Jorgensen (2012)'s view, in integration processes, there is a need for comprehensive integration policies in a democratic societal settings because global developments are expected to lead to the growth of immigrant populations worldwide. In addition, with the existence of various schools of thought policies abound to vary from country to country, some key elements which should feature in successful integration policies are those that, (i) *offer a vision for both immigrants and receiving societies* which involve making of explicit policies that offer a framework for development of common goals that guarantee viable and livable communities, provide guidelines and instruments for all immigrant and the host to contribute collectively, (ii) *coordinate with immigration policies* which is to ensure consistent and transparent immigration policy which without constitute impediment to effective integration policies, (iii) *promote integration policies that acknowledge diversity*, which involve giving adequate attention to the framework of immigration and integration policies, politically to ensure recognition and acceptance diversity of attitudes,

(iv) *provision for national realities*, that is beyond the nation-state, regional integration policies, such as those for the Italy, should strive to set *general* frameworks, rules, and instruments that facilitate local actors,(v)*understanding the importance of urban areas*, that is since cities, are often the port-of-entry for immigrant populations, who face special challenges such as segregation, social exclusion, and marginalization and specific responsibilities that differ from those of national authorities and therefore, it is at this local level of municipalities and cities that tensions between national and local governments become visible and the need for coordination between immigration and integration policies becomes urgent,(vi) *recognition of the local context*, that is since integration processes from the point of view of immigrants themselves are taking place at a local level, and since circumstances there may vary significantly, local policies for integration that build on active interaction between

immigrants and local society should receive the highest priority and such local policies should be given more tools and room to act in ways appropriate for the locality,

(vii) involving non-governmental organizations, that is, there are numerous non-governmental actors such as churches, trade unions, employers' organizations, political parties, the media, and other civil society actors that strongly influence, whether positively or negatively; the integration process and therefore, Government policies that aim at steering processes of settlement and integration should actively involve not only immigrants themselves, but also those important players in civil society; such non-governmental partners are important in that: they function as direct partners in the implementation of policies, may influence the political climate and political outcomes, and may be important agents in combating exclusion, discrimination, and xenophobia (ILO, IOM, OHCHR, UNHCB, 2001), *(viii) delegate authority appropriately* in which integration policies should define clear priorities for action in a number of domains (Penninx, 2003).. For long-term immigrants, priority should be given to areas where authorities have effective instruments to promote integration, especially with regard to work, education, and housing.

2.5.2 Role of Immigrants in Local Development

Migration has been proposed to influence significant development benefits to origin and destination countries alike in the presence of correct policies (Caponio, 2010). Data has shown that migrants remit substantial amounts to developing countries (estimated at \$442 billion in 2016), promote trade and investment, and bring innovation, skills and knowledge to their countries of origin and destination (World Bank, 2016). The presence of migrant workers promote range of skills, fill labour market gaps, stimulate the economies of the countries their host communities, thereby promoting jobs and generate more tax revenue. Furthermore, through migrants and diaspora communities, greater cultural diversity is established in societies of their residence in which social remittances in the form of skills and new ideas are in return promoted. Thus, not surprisingly, with ever-increasing numbers of people

moving between countries, the contribution of migration to development has received significant international attention (Caponio, 2005). As revealed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which included migration in three targets, and indirectly linked to many more, and recognized “the positive contribution of migrants for inclusive growth and sustainable development”.

2.5.3 Immigrant Housing and Education as Key Immigrant Integration Indicators

OECD/European Union (2018, pp. 17-33) described education an instrument of socio-economic development and of modernization consistent with our traditions and national ethos. He further stated that the key to national integration lies in making the institutions of primary learning organized in an egalitarian manner with, outer and inner environments being attractive enough for a young child, whatever background he comes from. That is there cannot be national integration without understanding the character of the nation and there cannot be communal harmony unless we intrinsically believe in the validity of different beliefs and approaches. Maria and Giorgio (2016) in *Education as a Tool for the Economic Integration of Migrants* had pointed out that educational institution have an important role to play in bridging the gap in educational attainment between native and immigrant populations. (INENDU, nd., p. 45) argued that immigrant integration can be enhanced by using free pre-school programs and by recruiting teachers with an immigrant background, who can help immigrant children by establishing positive role models. Minello and Barban (2012) investigated on the short-run educational expectations and long-term educational aspirations of the children of immigrants living in Italy and attending eighth grade. The authors viewed educational ambition, both as a predictor of educational choice and as a measure of social integration. They consider both secondary-school track and university goals revealed that attending a school where most of the Italian pupils have high educational expectations may lead children of immigrants to enhance their own aspirations.

Conger, Wagner and Leanna Stiefel (2007) examined nativity differences in students' rates of attendance, school mobility, school system exit, and special education participation. Their finding revealed that, foreign-born has higher attendance rates and lower rates of participation in special education than native-born, if demographic and school characteristics are constant. However, another study, EU (2021) revealed that in 2021, the tertiary educational attainment rates for both categories of foreign-born persons aged 25–34 years were lower than for native-born persons; while OECD (2012, pp. 13-145) also confirmed that Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), Italy being a member, and “the EU, 11 and 12% of immigrants have a very low level of education, compared with 7 and 5% of the native-born” identified challenges in accessing education as (i) Legal barriers including lack of clear provisions on compulsory education for children in reception centres, that is lack of legal provisions on how children’s education level should be assessed and assigned to school grades. (ii) Administrative challenges which inflexible registration deadlines, residence and other personal documentation requirements, extended stay in first reception centres where school enrolment is not compulsory (e.g. in Italy and Greece). Such challenges are even more pronounced when it comes to early childhood education (Germany, Nordic countries, etc.), upper secondary education and vocational training (Italy) (iii) Insufficient human and financial resources of education authorities including limited places in schools and preschools, lack of catch-up classes, budgetary shortfalls, insufficient guidance and training for teachers and education practitioners who work with refugee and migrant students, including those in need of psychosocial support and language learning (see below), (iv) Psychosocial support in primary and secondary schools is often lacking to assist teachers and refugee and migrant children, who may have difficulties to concentrate and learn in class due to stress and trauma accumulated in countries of origin, in transit or at destination.

This may also relate to pending family reunification and asylum procedures, as well as significant differences between education systems (v) Scarcity of additional language and cultural mediation

support, which is essential to address language barriers and communication challenges, as refugee and migrant children often do not have sufficient knowledge of the language of instruction or there is a low interest in learning the language of the host (vi) Stereotypes and judgment based on perceptions at school may lead to discrimination, prejudice and bullying as refugee and migrant children are seen as different, and teachers are not always sufficiently equipped to promote multiculturalism and openness to diversity (vii) Limited opportunities for adolescents, particularly those aged 15-17 years, face greater challenges in integrating the national education systems in formal high schools or institutions for vocational training. Some of them have gone beyond the age of compulsory education in certain countries (e.g. Italy, Greece, Germany, etc.).

Housing is also a key factor of well-being. Kourkouta and Frantzana (2019) argued that immigrants are not integrated solely through the labour market or the education system, and so, decent living conditions can, in turn, trigger a virtuous circle leading to improved general well-being, which includes brighter employment prospects (Lambrini, Aikaterini, Konstantinos, Alexandra and Areti, 2019). Sarah (2007) identified range of barriers affect newcomers' experiences finding housing: *Primary barriers* (defined as unchangeable characteristics of a person): skin color ("race"), ethnicity/culture/religion, gender, age, and disability. *Secondary barriers* (defined as those that can and often do change over time): level of income, source of income, family size, language/accent, household type and size, experience with dominant institutions and culture, knowledge of institutions and culture knowledge of the housing system, and knowledge of own rights and responsibilities under the law. *Macro-level barriers* (defined as broader contextual factors that are generally not within a person's ability to change): the structure of housing markets (housing prices, availability of different types of housing), state policies regarding housing (including the construction and maintenance of social housing and non-profit housing), and societal level social constructions of difference (racialization, culture).

2.5.4 Patterns and Importance of Communication between Host and Immigrant Communities in the Process of Acculturation

Pradeep (2021) describes the word Communication (derived from the Latin ‘Communicare’ it means ‘to share’) as the act of sharing ideas, emotions, and feelings between two or more people. Communication is described as a dynamic two-way process between the sender and the target audience/s whereby the message is produced, disseminated and interpreted (Fatimayin, 2008, Chapter 2). Communication scholar Young, Kim (2001) in his *stress-adaptation-growth model*, explained that acculturation is an interaction between the stranger and the host culture. He further explained that personal and social communication, the host environment, and individual predisposing factors are the central features of the acculturation process. POECD (2020) observed that in the COVID 19 pandemic, effective communication on migration and integration has helped governments achieve crucial policy objectives: to provide timely and accurate information on the pandemic, ensure the continuation of migration and integration processes, communication campaigns addressing the general to counter prejudice against migrants in relation to the spread of the virus.

Kim (2006) in *Theoretical Development and Testing of a Causal Model of Communication Patterns of Foreign Immigrants in the Process of Acculturation*, explained that communication patterns can be conceptualized on two levels: cognitive and behavioral. The cognitive level is observed by the complexity of an immigrant's perception of the host society; the behavioral level by the immigrant's involvement in the host society through interpersonal and mass communication. Three causal factors which are identified as major determinants of the immigrant's communication patterns include: *language competence*, which is related to the adequate use of language, especially written, and they are characterized by: (1) the adequate use of written language and structuring of content; (2) reading and writing of scientific documents in the reader’s native language; and (3) reading, writing, and translation of documents to other non-native languages, particularly in the most used (e.g., English),

translation may not indicate a complete proficiency of another language; *acculturation motivation*, which is refers to the level of adjustment of an individual to new and/or different cultural environments; and *accessibility to host communication channels*, this was consider as interpersonal channels which guide and influence attitudes and encourage wider adoption of health behavior (WHO, nd., pp.3-5).

2.6 Contexts of Immigration and Integration in Italy

2.6.1 Overview of the immigrant community in Padua, Veneto, Italy

Historically, immigration in Padua, Veneto, Italy as political region of Europe has been rooted in the political victory of the Northern League Party in Veneto in 2008. The nature and magnitude of the League's electoral success in Veneto raised several apparent paradoxes with regard to immigration. Since Immigration has been central to the League's politics in Veneto, immigration became a significant factor in the party's conquest of local power. Increased migration to Italy and the internal mobility of labor migrant to the region have led to a much more culturally diverse local workforce and environment, when compared to the past. The political priorities of League's electoral manifesto were either explicitly or implicitly related to immigration. Some unanimous resolutions were approved by the political party in March 2008 on immigration, in which they claim to fight illegal immigration (Andall, 2008). Immigration started in the early sixties in Western European countries. Italy among the Western Europe has recorded influx of immigrants in the last two decades (Van MoL and de Valk, nd., Migration and Immigrants in Europe, pp. 31-35). Immigrants are attracted to Italy and especially the Veneto region (in the north-east of Italy) by job opportunities with majority of them come from North Africa, Eastern Europe, China and Sub-Saharan Africa and without knowledge of the Italian language background. (Shkopi and Vathi, 2017) described that citizenship right and political right in Italy (Pauda) have connection with proper naturalization and political integration. Study report on the health status of migrants, a case study of Moldovan, show that

immigrant community (especially women) have recorded higher prevalence of some diseases than the native Italian (Vianello, Zaccagnini, Pinato, Maculan and Buja, 2020).

2.6.2 Nigerian Immigrant Community in Padua and Italy

Nigerian migration to safe-haven of Europe has been propelled by economic adversity, political turmoil, and religious (Obi-Ani , Ngozika Obi-Ani and Mathias Isiani, 2020). According to study report, as at 2021, there are 119,435 immigrants from Nigeria in Italy, 2014 in Italy there are 71,158 regular immigrants from Nigeria, while in 2006, and there were 37,733. The three cities with most number of Nigerians are: Turin, Rome and Padua But many Nigerians also reside on the island of Sicily (Wikipedia).

2.6.3 Challenges and limitations of integration efforts (in Padua, Veneto, Italy): some challenges debarring integration effort in Italy have identified: (i) persisting downward labour inclusion and segregation in the low-wage, unprotected sectors of the labour market, (ii) lack of migrant political representation and upward social mobility, (iii) lack of access to political and citizenship rights, disruption of the Italian refugee reception system due to the new Security Law, (iv) Emergence of a xenophobic and nationalist discourse targeting migrants (Caritas Italian, 2019). Regional Development Policy in Italy discussed recent policy changes such as (i) several territorial reforms have taken effect, notably reforms of the provincial level along with the establishment of metropolitan cities, (ii) the operational programme “Metropolitan Cities 2014-20”, (iii) significant investment in bolstering administrative capacity and in promoting the modernization of the public administration to improve the effectiveness of public investment in recent, (iv) Italy’s Agency for Territorial Cohesion has been providing technical support to central, regional and local administrations in the implementation of regional policy programmes and investment projects since 2013 (v) Selection of 72 project areas across regions, covering 1072 municipalities and 2 million

inhabitants (3% of the total population and 17% of the national territory) within Italy's Strategy for Inner Areas (Regional Outlook, Italy,2019)

2.6.4 Commission for the Representation of Paduan People with Foreign Citizenship

The commission is an official organization representing non-EU citizen and stateless person legally resident in the municipality of Pauda and not having Italian and/ or EU citizenship; it is usually composed of 16 elected representatives. It is an advisory organism for the Mayor, the Executive the Municipal Council, the council commission and district Councils. The commission does present to them proposed resolutions and submit its own proposal on issues concerning the administrative life of the city.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Preamble

The purpose of this study is to explore how an Italian local community facilitates and promotes the integration of immigrants through its Commission for the Representation of Paduan People with Foreign Citizenship (Commission for Foreigners). To achieve the aim and objectives of the study, this chapter describes the methodological approach and steps adopted for the study. It discusses the single-case study research design and connects it to the theoretical framework of the study (PCM). The context, population, sample, and sampling technique are presented. Furthermore, the chapter describes the research instruments, data collection and ethical considerations, and the data analysis method.

3.2 Research Design – Single-case Study Research Design

This exploratory qualitative study adopted the single-case study research design (Yin, 2018). A case study is a research design that entails a detailed examination of a single case or a limited number of cases (Yin, 2014). The objective of a case study is to comprehend the complexities of a particular case or cases in their natural context and to investigate the underlying principles or processes at work (Yin, 2014). A case study involves a comprehensive examination of a particular subject, which may be an individual, group, organisation, or society. Case study research aims to describe a real-world scenario associated with a socialised modern phenomenon (Pegram, 2000). Multiple methods of data acquisition are employed to obtain a complete picture of the single unit of analysis. Case study research has a long history in the sciences, social sciences, and humanities, serving as a pivot for both practise and research. The single case study research design is a method that concentrates on the in-depth analysis of a single individual or case to obtain insights into a particular phenomenon. Yin

(2018) defines single case study research design as an in-depth examination of a tiny, non-random sample.

The single case study research design is one of the two major case study research varieties, the other being the multiple case study research design. Different perspectives have been presented by scholars regarding the distinctions between single-case study research and multiple-case study research. They explain that the choice between single and multiple case studies is contingent on the research question and context, and that both approaches have benefits and drawbacks. The primary distinction between the two approaches is the arrangement of "first-order-Abstract" to "second-order-Abstract" in the numerous case study research (Zhen-hui, 2010). Zhen-hui (2010) contends further that multiple case studies have advantages in terms of conclusion accuracy and reliability, as well as the potential for quantitative analysis and diverse interpretation. In the meantime, Gustafsson (2017) suggests that the choice between a single case study and multiple case studies depends on factors such as the quantity of available information and the context of the research. Due to the study's focus and context, the single case study research design is desirable. The purpose of case study research, according to Yin (2018), is theory development. Consequently, case study research begins with theoretical propositions. When "how," "why," and "what" questions are of interest to the researcher, a singular.

3.2.1 The rationale for adopting a single-case study research design

Single case-study is the preferred research design (Yin, 2018). This method is frequently employed in psychology, medicine, and the social sciences to explain rare or unusual cases. When the researcher desires to acquire an in-depth understanding of a particular phenomenon or when the phenomenon is rare and difficult to observe, the single case study research design is particularly useful. This design concentrates on a comprehensive analysis of a tiny non-random sample (Hunziker & Blankenagel, 2020). In addition, this design permits the accumulation of rich and detailed data that can shed light on intricate processes and interactions.

In addition, single-case studies are frequently employed when conducting exploratory research or verifying a new hypothesis. Yin (2018) suggests that single case studies can be used to assess hypotheses or theories by analysing extreme, typical, revelatory, or longitudinal cases. Consequently, this design is especially useful for investigating complex phenomena in depth and generating hypotheses for future research. It enables researchers to collect detailed information about a particular case, which can then be used to generate hypotheses for further study. Individual case studies can also be used to test existing theories and models, as they offer the opportunity to evaluate how well these theories and models stand up in real-world situations. In conclusion, the single case study research design is an effective method for gaining a deeper understanding of complex phenomena and exploring new areas of study.

The single case study research design is appropriate for the investigation of how a local community in Italy facilitates and promotes the integration of immigrants through its Commission for the Representation of Paduan People with Foreign Citizenship (Commission for Foreigners). This design would enable the researcher to obtain a thorough comprehension of the intricate processes and interactions at play in the Italian community. It would also enable the researcher to collect comprehensive data regarding the Commission for Foreigners and its role in facilitating and promoting the integration of immigrants, which could then be used to formulate hypotheses for future research and test existing theories and models.

However, case study designs are criticised for their limited generalizability. Inappropriate would be the use of a single case study as a research design if the findings of the case study must be generalised to other cases or contexts. Due to the limited sample size and non-random selection, generalising the findings to larger populations may not be appropriate. For instance, if a case study was conducted on an individual with circumstances and characteristics that are not representative of the larger population, the results may not be applicable to other individuals or groups. Moreover, if multiple

factors influence the outcome of the case study, it may be challenging to determine which factor is the most significant. Meanwhile, Flyvbjerg (2006) corrects five prevalent misconceptions about case study research, such as the notion that one cannot generalise from a particular case and that case studies are biased towards verification. Overall, case study research can be a valuable method, but researchers must be cognizant of its limitations and undertake rigorous research.

3.2.2 Participatory Single-Case Study

As discussed under the theoretical framework, this study is anchored on the participatory communication model (PCM), which emphasises the significance of active participation and communication among decision-makers and stakeholders (Tufté & Mefalopulos, 2009). The following indicators were used to assess the Commission's effectiveness in participatory communication for promoting integration: highlight the successes of the Commission for Foreigners and the challenges confronting it, especially in assisting immigrants in Padua in the areas of housing and education; examine how Nigerian foreigners in Padua perceive the efforts and initiatives of the Commission and the benefits they derive; identify the housing challenges confronting Nigerian immigrants in Padua and; assess how the Commission's role mitigate the immigrants' housing challenges.

The study examined how the Commission for Foreigners enables and promotes the integration of Nigerian immigrants in Padua from the standpoint of local development. This viewpoint acknowledges the connections between migration and development, as well as the role immigrant communities can play in local, national, human, and sustainable development. Consequently, the case study adopted a participatory method of data collecting and analysis. Using the model may be accompanied with a number of obstacles. At the person level, there are issues of attitude, communication skills, and facilitation capacity; while at the organisational level, there are issues of institutional mandates and objectives, leadership, and political climate (Fliert, 2010). Participatory

approach can be time-consuming and resource-intensive, necessitating considerable inputs of time, money, and people. It might be challenging to balance the various opinions and interests of participants. Furthermore, power dynamics and socioeconomic inequities can restrict the quantity and quality of involvement, necessitating efforts to level the playing field and empower marginalised groups.

Nonetheless, several measures were adopted to mitigate these obstacles, including limiting the scope of the study to a municipal (Padua) and a manageable number of participants, as well as gathering data from two sets of participants. In conclusion, the PCM was utilised as a theoretical framework to shed light on how participatory communication initiatives, such as the Commission for Foreigners, might promote integration and handle housing and education-related difficulties. It proved the relevance of a participatory approach to research and practise by emphasising the significance of active participation and communication among research participants (Cornish and Dunn, 2009).

3.3 Context and Population of the Study

In alignment with the principles of the research design adopted for this study—the single-case study—this section defines the time-space frame of this study. Padua (Italian: Padova) is a city and municipality (Italian: *comune*) in the Veneto region of Italy and is the capital of the Province of Padua (PD). According to ISTAT (Italian National Institute of Statistics), as of January 2021, Padua has a population of 214,000. The city has a rich history and is home to many historic landmarks and buildings. Padua has a local government that is responsible for providing services to its citizens. The city has experienced significant growth and development over the years. Padua has a population of 206,651, of which 35,073 (16.7%) are immigrants (Tuttitalia, 2022).

Nigerians represent 2.30 percent (119,089) of the 5,171,894 immigrants residing in Italy as of January 2021 (Tuttitalia, 2021), the third largest African community in Italy after Morocco and Egypt. Also,

according to the National Institute of Statistics (Istituto Nazionale di Statistica, ISTAT, 2019), despite a significant decrease in asylum seekers in 2017 and 2018, Nigeria topped the list of inflows of non-EU citizens seeking asylum and humanitarian protection in Italy in 2017 and 2018 with approximately 20,000 and 10,000, respectively. Moreover, with 2,429 people Nigerians constitute the largest African immigrant population in Padua. Immigrants play an important role in Padua's growth and development. As one of the largest immigrant groups in Padua, Nigerian immigrants have contributed significantly to the city's economy and have played an important role in its development. However, Nigerian immigrants face many challenges such as discrimination, lack of access to education and healthcare, and difficulty finding employment.

3.3.1 Paduan Commission for Foreigners

The Commission for the Representation of Paduan People with Foreign Citizenship (Commissione per la Rappresentanza delle Persone Padovane con Cittadinanza Straniera) is a body of the Municipality of Padua, Italy, dedicated to defending and advancing the rights of Paduans with foreign citizenship. The Commission is comprised of members from diverse cultural origins who serve as a liaison between the local government and the foreign residents of Padua by providing them with information, assistance, and advice. Paduan Commission for Foreigners was established by Padua Municipal Council to represent foreign citizens/residents in the Municipality of Padua who are citizens of a non-European Country or stateless (Commission for the Representation of Padovan People with Foreign Citizenship [CRPPFC], 2021). The Commission was established to promote the integration of foreign citizens into the social, economic, and cultural life of the city of Padua (PadovaNet, 2022). The Commission also aims to promote the participation of foreign citizens in local government and to provide them with information on their rights and duties.

At its meeting on 11 April 2016, Padua Municipal Council adopted Decision No. 2016/0030 disbanding the Committee for the Representation of Foreign Nationals Resident in Padua, which had

been established by Decision No. 47 of 6 June 2011 and voted into existence by more than 4,000 foreign residents on 27 November 2011 (European Parliament, 2016). The present Commission was elected in 2021 for a duration of 5 years by foreign citizens/residents in the Municipality of Padua who meet certain requirements—have a valid identity document and a valid residence permit or in renewal process; and are over 18 years old (PadovaNet, 2022; CRPPFC, 2021). The Commission, as it is presently constituted, consists of 16 members, including a President and a Vice-President. The Commission has an advisory role and can make proposals to the Municipal Council on issues related to foreign citizens. It advises the Mayor, the City Council, the City Council, the Council Commissions, the District Councils, and other institutional bodies on all administrative action matters (PadovaNet, 2022). It collects requirements and requests in order to formulate proposals intended at enhancing participation in local public affairs and improving inclusion policies.

The Commission has three standing subcommittees dealing with: (a) communication and information on services and initiatives of the territory; (b) promotion of different cultures; (c) observatory on good practices and barriers to inclusion. Meanwhile, The President or Vice President of the Commission attends City Council meetings with the right to speak on agenda items, subject to the approval of the City Council President, but without the right to vote (PadovaNet, 2022). Overall, the Commission is a vital resource for Paduans with foreign citizenship, providing a range of services that promote their rights and facilitate their integration into the local community.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Technique

The focus of the single-case study design is on in-depth analysis of a small non-random sample. Participants for this exploratory qualitative single-case study were in two categories: members of the

Paduan Commission for Foreigners and members of the Nigerian community in the municipality of Padua. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample for the study. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique that involves selecting a sample based on the researcher's judgment about which participants will be most useful or representative of the population being studied. In a single-case study in which the target population is limited to a single person or organisation, purposive sampling is frequently the most appropriate method for selecting participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). Purposeful sampling enabled the researcher to select participants based on pertinent characteristics or criteria (Patton, 2015), making it well-suited for single-case studies. Furthermore, given the small sample size typical of a single-case study, utilizing purposive sampling can enhance the validity and accuracy of data collected (Patton, 2015).

For this study, for the first category of the participants, the researcher selected the most informative members of the Commission that could provide information on the role and challenges of the Commission with regards to the research questions. Two commissioners were selected for key informant interviews. They were commissioners that: (1) could speak English language (2) belong to the three subcommittees of the Commission (that is, the three focuses of the Commission were represented) and (3) had been involved in any initiatives that directly or indirectly benefited Nigerian immigrants in Padua. Also, the only Nigerian immigrant in the Commission was inevitably included in the sample.

For the second category of the participants, the researcher selected both informative and representative members of the Nigerian immigrant community in the study area. That is, on the one hand, Nigerian immigrants who reported that they had with the benefited from the Commission and, on the other hand, those who said they had not benefited—and/or not contacted the Commission were included. The five selected Nigerian participants self-reported as adults being 18 years or older, and they included those that had resident permit and those that had none. Additionally, the purposive

sampling technique was utilised to with the consideration of the fact that the Nigerians in Padua come from different backgrounds, age groups, ethnicities, and religious affiliations. This approach would enrich the interpretation of the results by reflecting on similarities and differences.

3.5 Research Instruments

Two research-designed instruments were deployed for collecting data for this study. The two instruments are semi-structured interview guides. They were developed through a careful literature review and they were also subjected to a review by the project supervisor. Both instruments were designed to ensure reliable and valid data collection. The first instrument for the study was tagged “Foreigners Representatives Semi-structured Interview Guide”, to be used with the participants that are members of the Commission for the Representation of Paduan People with Foreign Citizenship. Questions in the instrument include: How would you describe your experience as a representative of foreigners in Padua? What successes has your Commission recorded since your election into the Commission? What are the issues that hinder you in carrying out your functions? What are the Commission’s efforts toward helping immigrants with housing? How does the Commission help immigrants that want to acquire skills and competences?

The second instrument, the “Nigerian Immigrants Semi-structured Interview Guide” was used to elicit information from the sampled Nigerian immigrants in Padua. The interview guides contain questions such as: How would you describe your experience with this Commission or any of the representatives? In what ways has the Commission been a connection between you and the Municipal Government of Padua? How have you (or anyone you know) been supported by the Commission regarding housing matters? How has the Commission helped you (or anyone you know) to acquire skills and competences? How do you think the Commission could serve the Nigerian community better? Also, each of the instruments starts with “Tell me about yourself” in order to carefully elicit comparable socio-demographic information from each participant.

3.6 Data Collection and Research Ethics

The data for this study are primary data generated through semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with the selected members of the Commission for Foreigners as well as with the selected Nigerian immigrants who have interacted with the Commission. Being of a member of the Nigerian immigrant community in Padua like the researcher, the Nigerian commissioner-participant served as a starting point for contacting the Commission and its other members as well as in interacting with some of the Nigerian immigrant-participants. Other participants were initially contacted at various meetings that the participants attended. After each participant had been informed about the research purpose and participation criteria, a Zoom interview was organised.

To ensure research ethics were upheld, consent was obtained from all participants before the interviews were conducted. Additionally, confidentiality was maintained throughout the study to protect the privacy of the participants. Permission was obtained from each participant for conducting and recording the interview. However, due to the nature of this single-case study being limited to a municipality, a specific commission, and an immigrant community, anonymity was not guaranteed to the participants. The limitation of the level of confidentiality was also expressed. The data collection procedure employed in this study was maintained to gain in-depth insights into the experiences and perspectives of both the commission members and immigrants.

3.7 Data Analysis Method

The researcher adopted the thematic analysis technique, is a method of qualitative data analysis that focuses on identifying and interpreting patterns or themes within the data. It involves identifying the most significant or recurring themes and interpreting them in the context of the research question. Thematic analysis is a widely used qualitative analytic method that offers an accessible and theoretically flexible approach to analyzing qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is a starting point for qualitative research, not a map, and requires the researcher's ability to understand, describe, and interpret experiences and perceptions (Braun & Clarke, 2019). The process involves transcribing the interviews, cleaning the transcripts, and coding the data before describing the emerging themes. The thematic analysis involves identifying patterns and themes within the data, which can help to provide a rich and nuanced understanding of the experiences of immigrants in the community. This study will use thematic analysis to examine how the Commission for Foreigners operates and how it contributes to the integration of immigrants in Padua.

Meanwhile, a study that uses quantitative data analysis methods, such as regression analysis or factor analysis, to explore the same research question would provide a different perspective on how the Commission for Foreigners impacts immigrant integration and may reveal relationships between variables that cannot be captured through thematic analysis alone. This study is limited in this regard.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Preamble

This chapter presents the results and discussion of the findings from the analysis of data collected. The purpose of the study was to explore how the Commission for Foreigners operates and how it contributes to the integration of immigrants in Padua. The researcher employed qualitative design using the single case study approach involving one-to-one in-depth interview to gather data. Over a period of two months, semi-structured, private interviews were conducted with seven purposively selected participants. Through the thematic analysis technique, patterns and themes within the data were identified which helped the study to provide a rich and nuanced understanding of the experiences of the commissioners and the immigrants in the community. Findings and discussions of the results are presented generally for each research question that guided the study.

4.2. Profile of Participants

Respondents for the study were grouped into two main categories, the member of the Commission and the Nigerian immigrant community. The commissioners' category of respondents was made up of three members with 10-20 years of stay in Padua while the Nigerian's category was made up of five immigrants with 10-20 years of stay in Padua. The researcher believes that the first and the second categories of respondents have accumulated enough experience and knowledge to provide information with regards to the research questions. For the purpose of anonymity and confidentiality the identity of the respondents (the immigrants and the commissioners) were undisclosed by assigning pseudonyms to them as showed in Table 4.1. In the table, the pseudonyms that start with letter "C" indicate the commissioners while the pseudonyms that start with letter "P" refer to the immigrants.

Table 4.1 Profile of participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Location	Nationality
CMB	Female	Padua	Philippine
CCRT	Male	Padua	Nigeria
PKLV	Male	Padua	Nigeria
PFST	Male	Padua	Nigeria
PSTD	Male	Padua	Nigeria
POK	Male	Padua	Nigeria
POEM	Male	Padua	Nigeria

4.3 Research Question 1:

What are the Successes of the Commission for Foreigners and the Challenges confronting it, especially in assisting Immigrants in Padua in the areas of housing and education?

The first research question sought to explore successes of the Commission for Foreigners and the challenges confronting it, especially in assisting immigrants in Padua in the areas of housing and education. Themes were generated from collated views of the participants on the successes and challenges confronting the Commission as regards the in the areas of housing and education in respect of the immigrants in Padua. The themes were categorized into successes and challenges. As showed in Table 4.2 themes emerged regarding successes of the Commission for Foreigners and the challenges confronting it, especially in assisting immigrants in Padova in the areas of housing and education.

Table 4.2: Themes on successes and challenges of the Commission for Foreigners

Participant	Quotations (Words, Phrases, Sentences)	Theme
CMB	<p>...we are <i>not get paid</i> for the service unlike the local government who are paidTo <i>balance personal work with the commission</i></p> <p><i>activities is very hard.... we don't get immediate attention</i> on what we ask for, those are the challenges we faced during my tenure as the president</p> <p>....When I assumed office the success the very first thing is <i>modification</i> of the law...</p> <p>....we <i>liaised</i> with the local authority to allow those immigrants without no document to have access to the vaccine as well,</p> <p>I have given my word to the Muslim that they will have location where they can do their prayers you know.....</p> <p>....<i>this commission was abolished!.....</i></p>	<p>Money</p> <p>Managing of Time</p> <p>Attention</p> <p>Legislation</p> <p>Liaising</p> <p>Provide</p> <p>Location for Muslim</p> <p>Crushed</p>
CCRT	<p>most of our most of refugees <i>don't have access to study</i> at the University of Padova</p> <p>This commission is said to <i>bring the foreigner nearer to the government.</i></p>	<p>Access to study</p> <p>Accessibility</p>
PFST	<p>some of the challenges we are facing like <i>we don't have the power to vote</i>, as I have said before there are <i>some decision that we cannot take</i> so is something that is really affecting the commission</p>	<p>Power to vote</p> <p>Power to take decision</p>
PKLV	<p>what I know is that <i>they represent us</i> here in case of any problem like repartition like the case I was concerning house issue I was not having money <i>the case was able to be made easier</i> they're our <i>intercessor</i> they intercede for us....</p> <p>....not every government in Italy that <i>support</i> this commission</p>	<p>Representation</p> <p>Intercede for people</p> <p>Lack of support by Government</p>

Successes of the Commission for Foreigners

Emerging themes on the successes of the Commission for Foreigners include legislation, provision of Islamic worship center, liaison activities, representation, and intercession or advocacy.

Legislation

The theme to answer the research question regarding the Success and failure of the Commission for Foreigner shows that participant who are members of the Commission were participatory in the legislative duties of the community. CMD's response was "When I assumed office the success the very first thing introduced was *modification* of the law". This was supported by PKLV who said

"What I know is that they represent us here in case of any problem like repartition like the case I was concerning house issue I was not having money the case was able to be made easier they're our intercessor they intercede for us" (PKLV)

The members of the Foreign Commission had recorded success in the area of legislating laws that see to the housing problem among the foreigner. United Nations (2012) had noted that communication task involves rights and responsibilities/obligations. Which means it is the right of the immigrant for the commission to speak on their behalf. That is, it is an obligation for them. This will be a form of participatory duty of the Commission. Since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, the right to adequate housing has been reaffirmed and explicitly recognised in a wide range of international human rights instruments as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and joined the body of universally accepted and applicable international human rights law (WHO, 2021).

Location for Muslim

This theme, according to participant CMB who was also a member of the commission is the provision of a worship place for the Muslim. The freedom of religion was emphasized by Factsheet (2023) that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance. This is

also a form of participatory process in which religion is respected. Based on the Participatory Communication Model, participation necessitates listening (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). The Muslim communities of foreigners were listened to by the Commission which provided them with a location to do their prayer.

Liaison role

The participant CMB stated that “we liaised with the local authority to allow those immigrants without document to have access to the vaccine as well”. Liaising involves communication or cooperation which facilitates a close working relationship between people or organizations (Cambridge Dictionary, 2023). According to participant CMB, the Foreign commission representatives reported liaised with the local authority in Padova, to allow the immigrant without “Paper” to have access to the vaccine during the covid-19. This is what UNICEF (2023) terms as a form of humanitarian service which was discharged by the Foreign commission to the immigrants. This was noted by CMB as their success. The Participatory Communication Model explained that Communication is a human need: the satisfaction of the need for communication is just as important for a society as the concern for health, nutrition, housing, education and labour (Aminah, 2016). The liaison service rendered by the Commission is a form of Participatory communication and justifies the success of the commission.

Representation

Another theme supporting the research question on the success of the Foreign Commission is the representative role of the commission as noted by participant, PKLV, who attested to leadership role being provided by the Commission for Foreigner for the immigrants when he said:

*What I know is that **they represent us** here in case of any problem like repartition like the case I was concerning house issue I was not having money the case was able to be made easier they're our **intercessor** they intercede for us (PKLV)*

Annual Review of Political Science (2008) explained “that the opposite of representation is exclusion. And the opposite of participation is abstention. ... Representation is not an unfortunate compromise between an ideal of direct democracy and messy modern realities”. Representation is crucial in constituting democratic practices (Plotke 1997, p. 19; Urbinati 2000). Building on the Participatory Communication Model, it can be explained that representation involves dialogue which is a form of participatory communication. As was earlier explained, there are two major approaches to participatory communication, dialogical pedagogy of Paulo (1993) and the second involves the ideas of access, participation and self-management articulated in the UNESCO debates of the 1970s (Macedo, 2005).

Intercession or advocacy

Another theme to answer the question of success of the Commission for Foreign Immigrants on the immigrants as it affect housing issue is the intercession (advocacy). According to Onitata (2020), who quoted John Quincy Adams, the 6th president of US, the measure of a great leader has much less to do with how you define their role and more about their actual impact on others. Great leaders don't reach the height of success without facing their share of minor challenges and major crises. This was noted by PKLV when he stated

*What I know is that **they represent us** here in case of any problem like repartition like the case I was concerning house issue I was not having money the case was able to be made easier they're our **intercessor** they intercede for us (PKLV)*

PKLV told the researcher during the interview the problem of housing he encountered and how the Commission interceded for him. The narratives by PKLV also show that the Commission helped his wife and kids to get accommodation through communicating with the other members of the community. In Participatory Communication Model, Communication has been described as facet of the societal conscientisation, emancipation and liberation process. The social responsibility of the media in the process of social change is very large. Indeed, after the period of formal education, the media are the most important educational and socialization agents.

Challenges of the Commission for Foreigners

Emerging themes on the challenges confronting the Commission for Foreigners include financial incapacity, lack of access, lack of support, policy instability, and time limitations.

Financial incapacity

The theme of financial incapacity or money issues is to answer the research question on the challenges of the Commission for Foreigners on housing and education matter. This was stressed by participant CMB when she said: “we are *not get paid* for the service unlike the local government who are paid”. The participant noted that they were rendering their services to the commission as “free” service unlike the local government staff who are being paid. This was observed by CMB as a challenge as this may imply spending their personal money to run the affaire commission. Financial problem is a situation where money worries are causing stress. According to Thomas Richardson (2013), there is a strong relationship between financial problem and depression which can establish that financial problem noted by CMD, has direct relationship with mental health of the members of the Commission for the Foreigner. And it can be argued that bad state of mental health is not helpful for good leadership. With respect to the Participatory communication Model, good health is aligned with good communication which is aligned with good leadership. Emeritus (2023) argued that Communication

skills help leaders to define the goals of team members clearly. It also helps understand team members' goals and desires and solve their grievances. Effective communication skills also help foster an open and good rapport between leaders and their teams, which increases productivity and efficiency.

Time limitation and management

This theme also provides answer to the research question on the challenges of the Commission for Foreigner. Participant CMB state: “to *balance personal work with the commission activities is very hard...*” Time is life. Every aspect of life depends upon time. As human life progress with time, energy and physical strength seem to diminish. It is all-important to perform various tasks during a specific time period. Any act performed after time is of no use. It is also important to live in the present moment (Chaudhari, 2022). Though Chansaengsee (2017) had suggested that one can prevent disappointment in life by practicing time management. What CMB said reveals that the members of Commission for foreign citizen had the challenge of balancing their time with their personal work. Based on the theory of Participatory Communication Model, Demirdağ (2021)’s findings show that there are positive and meaningful relationships between motivation and the subscales of communication and time management. Also supporting this view, Antara, Sitiari, and Sarmawa (2021) noted that time management has a significant positive effect on work motivation. Time management has a significant positive effect on employee performance. Communication has a significant positive effect on work motivation. The commission staff complained about the challenge of managing their time with the duties of representative at the Commission.

Policy instability

Another theme for discussing the challenges of the Commission is the lack of policy stability which limits the political attention that the commission should enjoy. For instance, the previous Mayor of

Padua Municipality (before 2016) was noted by participants as not recognizing the importance and role of the commission. Participant CMB said: “we don’t **get immediate attention** on what we ask for, those are the challenges we faced during my tenure as the president”... Chuanli Xia and Fei Shenwho (2019) have suggested that Government response to public opinion is essential to democratic theory and practice. Meanwhile the theory of Participatory Communication has argued that participatory communication is for social change and participation involves the more equitable sharing of both political and economic power, which often decreases the advantage of certain groups. The Commission having management function as a body might be affected by structural, change involves the redistribution of power. This explains why the Commission has lacked the needed attention from the government.

Lack of support

Another theme to provide answer to the research question one relates to ‘Support’. A participant from the interview revealed that “not every government in Italy that *support* this commission” (PKLV). This is supported by the statement of CMD who also decried that the attitude of the past government towards the commission and immigration policies when she **said “...this commission was abolished!”**. Related issue of non-governmental support are well discussed in literature, for instance in GENEVA (21 November 2018) when Italy’s proposed tightening of immigration rules will have a serious impact on migrants’ lives, and are of grave concern, UN human rights experts, said today, urging the Government to reverse course. “The abolition of humanitarian protection status, the exclusion of asylum seekers from access to reception centres focusing on social inclusion, and the extended duration of detention in return centres and hotspots fundamentally undermine international human rights principles and will certainly lead to violations of international human rights law,” the independent experts said (UN, 2018). Open Immigration (2018)’s news report revealed that the Italian government has approved a new bill targeting migrants.

4.4 Research Question 2:

How do Nigerian foreign citizens in Padua perceive the efforts and initiatives of the Commission and the benefits they derive?

Findings indicated that Nigerian immigrants have positive perceptions of the efforts and initiatives of the Commission. The emerging themes also connect to how the participants have enjoyed mind-lifting psychosocial benefits, amidst several challenges, through the commission or the commissioners. Table 4.1 indicates the themes that emerged regarding the perceptions of foreigners in Padua about the efforts and initiatives of the Commission and the benefits they derive.

Table 4.3: Perceptions of foreigners in Padua the Commission for Foreigners

Participants	Quotations (Words, Phrases, Sentences)	Themes
PKLV	...I don't see anything about them even the commission they help me they are nice the way <i>they care for me</i>	Care Role of Commission
PFST	it's okay... ..they have <i>already done a lot</i> because....	Efforts of Commission

Care and solidarity of the commission

Participant PKLV said, “I don't see anything about them even the commission *they help me they are nice the way they care for me*”. The comment of PKLV affirms the perception of the commission by the Foreigner as impressive. PKLV had narrated his experience with the members of the Commission, how he was helped when he had problem of housing;

Frankly speaking the vice president you are talking about we are friends he is a nice guy our spoken outspoken very intelligent I don't see anything about them even the commission they help me they are nice the way they care for me it's okay

Participant PSTD had a perception of being helped by the Commission for Foreigner during some of his predicaments as a new immigrant though he was a student when he came as immigrant. He said that:

“There are certain processes you need to through to get fully integrated and when I came he orientated me about what procedure we need to go through as a student in Padua, it was more of informative and guidance that I got through them, though there were no physical interaction. I have been supported. He linked me to some agent”,

Moreover, for participant POK, his perception of the Commission was that of effort making. He believed that the commission is making effort to address some of the problems of the immigrants in municipality. POK’s response show his satisfaction with the performance of the Commission when he said, *“they have listening ears, **they have been trying a lot** like, we are trying now to host African competition, the commission is the one making a move to see that everything go smoothly”* (POK).

The two participants, PSTD and POK, expressed confidence in the ability of the Foreign Commission as having ‘listening ears’ and as being able to defend their right. United Nation (nd., pp.1-5) observed that “around the world, the human rights of millions of migrants, including many involved in large movements or mixed movements, are insufficiently protected or at risk of abuse”. It further mentioned some exclusive rights of the immigrants such as right to work (UN, nd., pp.1-55) right to information, (UN, nd., pp.1-54) right to education, right to an adequate standard of living (UN, nd., pp. 1-49). The Commission is referred to as human right defender as individuals or groups who act to promote, protect or strive for the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms through peaceful means (UN, nd. Facts Sheet,29). The perception of PSTD and POK f the Commissioners as their human right defender aligns with the participatory communication in that Communication rights

to freedom of opinion, expression and language enables people to realize other human rights including the right to work, education, marry and found a family, own property, self-determination, freedom of religion and social security (United Nations, 2018)

Efforts of the Commission

A theme relating to the efforts of the Commission answers the research question on how foreign citizens in Padua perceive the efforts and initiatives of the Commission and the benefits they derive. Based on the experience shared by the participants, the Commission is making effort to help the immigrants in some ways. The experience shared about the commission indicates that participant have expectations on the Commission playing roles in speaking on their behalf.

That gives me impression that he is representing the people, and he is really after the growth of the people. He helped me to get vaccinated because at that time we need to access some things in school. He connected me with NGO and helped people who are new and couldn't find their way because at that time I was new. He directed me to where to get Covid vaccine and kept on checking on me to ensure how I reacted and also helped me to get the second dose. There was also a time he was helping me to get accommodation, I told him I dint get a place to stay and he was really concerned about it.” (PSTD)

Sometimes it helps to have someone else who can speak on your behalf and represent your interests, especially in formal situations or when you don't feel very confident (Sutton, nd.). A person who speaks on behalf of someone is often referred to as an advocate whose duty is to get ones' important views or wishes across about, such as the care or medical treatment which one receive, or the management of one's finances. Advocacy does not always have to be provided by paid professionals. For example, often people take a friend or family member with them to important meetings with

doctors, social workers or other professionals who give them moral support and to speak up on their behalf. By way of participatory communication, the participant's perception of the Commission's effort is linked to the view that their representation by the Commission to the municipal government should be an approach based on dialogue, which will allow the sharing of information or opinions among the various stakeholders and thereby facilitates foreigner's empowerment (Laura & Dunn, 2009).

4.5 Research Question 3:

What are housing challenges confronting Nigerian immigrants in Padua?

Regarding the Research Question 3, the theme of racial discrimination stood out from the interviews in connection with the theme of lack of accommodation, as shown in Table 4.4.

Lack of accommodation

Lack of accommodation as a result of scarcity of vacant apartments and other reason is a major challenge confronting Nigerian immigrants in Padua. In the interview with POK, he said that: *“The problem we have now is housing and the commission is trying their best to start giving immigrant house instead of being homeless.”* In a study (Boeri et al. 2012; Jayet et al. 2010) it was proposed that the stock of migrants in Italy will continue to grow considering the demographic and economic developments in African countries. Because according to Natale et al. (2018b) migrants are not evenly distributed across and within Italian municipalities, which allows for a study of variations in the concentration of migration in relationship to housing values and in addition the Italian housing market is relatively deregulated; hence changes in supply and demand are readily reflected in house prices.

Some have argued that unlike in some northern European countries with pseudo-housing markets, such as Belgium, Denmark and the Netherlands, where immigrants can rely on state support by receiving public housing, Italy has a housing market with minimal state intervention (Cuerpo et al. 2014; Elsinga and Wassenberg 2014; Scanlon et al. 2015). Cuerpo et al. (2014) had argued that unlike some northern European countries with pseudo-housing markets, such as Belgium, Denmark and the Netherlands, where immigrants can rely on state support by receiving public housing, Italy has a housing market with minimal state intervention. Some challenges of housing has been earlier discussed by Kalantaryan and Alessandrini (2020) in which the relationship between the presence of migrants and housing values in the neighbourhoods of Italian provincial capitals shows (a) the intense immigration of last decades; (b) the uneven spatial distribution of migrants between and within municipalities; (c) an increase in demand and limited supply for housing suited to migrant characteristics; and (d) a largely unregulated housing market.

Table 4.4 Housing Challenges and Immigrant Living

Participant	Quotations (Words, Phrases, Sentences)	Themes
PKLV	I was begging them if they could give me some time and they gave us some time of which they told us to leave since we are finish our contract we are begging them if they go if you tell them you're in Nigeria they will say no this house is not for rent it is for those super someone to buy it was very confusing and that brings me back to housing issue	Racial discrimination
POK	The problem we have now is <i>housing</i> and the commission is trying their best to start giving immigrant house instead of being homeless	Lack of accommodation

Racial Discrimination

The participant PKLV narrated his experience with some of the housing agents and how this affected his life and settlement. He narrated how he was asked to leave his apartment since his contracts have expired. He applied for a protection and requested for accommodation to be able to secure a life contract, but the people insisted that he should go. According to him he could not secure accommodation because he was a Nigerian. The situation left him and his family homeless. The following is an excerpt from PKLV's narration:

It happens that I was looking for your house since last year I had to pay some agents that hurts my money and from the police they said due to the fact that I assign her already signed the contracts they were they cannot return my money I was in cooperative they were accommodating me and my family we are having documents issue we had apply for a special protection and protectionist and because of the what they said we are already finish her project we have to leave I was begging them if they could give me some time and they gave us some time of which they told us to leave since we are finish our contract we are begging them if they go if you tell them you're in Nigeria they will say no this house is not for rent it is for those super someone to buy it was very confusing and that brings me back to housing issue. I was asking them to give me they said no that we have to leave I was like where am I going to keep my family because I don't have any sister or brother my brother's place is very far I don't want to go there what came to my mind was that I should just put them in an hotel they now call that they will help my wife and the kids but the place is a little bit far taking food substance to that place I spent \$300 every week I just thank god that at least we are managing there for now until I get the better place for them.

An example of discrimination was found in the report of ODIHR in Italy (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights). ODIHR reported 555 cases of hate crime by police forces (more than 369 relating to racial and xenophobic episodes) in 2015. Racial discrimination involves being treated differently on the basis of race in one of the situations covered by the Equality Act. The Equality Act 2010 says you must not be discriminated against because of your race. According to OHCHR (2010) report, migrants often are unable, in practice or because of their legal status, to rent adequate accommodation. They are forced to live in overcrowded and insecure conditions. Migrants will also often end up living in precarious and unsafe conditions in cities and urban areas.

The Italian legal system aims at ensuring an effective framework of guarantees, to fully and extensively guarantee the fundamental rights of the individuals, providing them with a wide range of protection means which have, as their core, the principle of non-discrimination set out at Art. 3 of the Italian Basic Law: “All citizens possess an equal social status and are equal before the law, without distinction as to sex, race, language, religion, political opinions, and personal or social conditions” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018). Discrimination may be direct discrimination, when someone treats you worse than another person in a similar situation because of your race or indirect, when an organisation has a particular policy or way of working that puts people of your racial group at a disadvantage (Pettigrew, 2015). PKLV further stated:

I felt relieved even the vice president help me to see the way until they help me my situation I was not into any stuff issue the way the woman was speaking it was provoking the way she was talking to me as if I am a son I don't know but I just have go, Because of my family, you have to use wisdom. I kept my low you know you kill a rat when he has come close to the port.

4.6 Research Question 4:

How does the Commission's role mitigate the immigrants' housing challenges?

The fourth research question seeks to explore the role of the Commission and its impacts in mitigating housing challenges of the immigrants. As Table 4.5 shows, themes that emerged from analysis relate to advocacy opportunities, immigrants' rights, and support from women. They shed light on the broader goals and initiatives of the Commission for Foreigner.

Advocacy opportunities

CMB emphasizes the importance of providing immigrants with the opportunity to be heard, indicating a commitment to ensuring their voices are taken into account in decision-making processes. By insisting on the necessity of the commission's existence, CMB demonstrates a strong dedication to empowering the immigrant community and ensuring their concerns are not overlooked. The theme of "opportunity to be heard" indicates that the commission aims to create a platform where immigrants can express their concerns, including housing-related issues. The theme of "opportunity to be heard" suggests that the commission aims to facilitate dialogue between immigrants and relevant stakeholders, including policymakers and local authorities. By providing a platform for immigrants to voice their concerns, the commission can gain insights into various issues, including housing challenges, and work towards finding appropriate solutions.

Furthermore, PKLV mentioned the desire for the commission to create a programme. This suggests that the commission is actively seeking opportunities to organize initiatives aimed at addressing various concerns faced by immigrants, potentially including housing challenges. Such a program could involve collaborations with local authorities, housing organizations, and community stakeholders to develop strategies for improving housing conditions, providing housing assistance, or promoting integration within the housing sector. Additionally, this initiative could also focus on

providing education and resources to immigrants on their rights as tenants and homeowners, as well as connecting them with legal assistance if needed. It is important to recognize the unique challenges that immigrants face when it comes to housing, such as language barriers and discrimination, and work towards creating inclusive and welcoming communities. By addressing these concerns, we can help improve the overall well-being of immigrant populations and promote a more equitable society. Through proactive efforts like this, we can build stronger communities that are better equipped to support all members, regardless of their background or circumstances.

Table 4.5: Impacts of the Role of the Commission on the Immigrants

Participant	Quotations (Words, Phrases, Sentences)	Themes
CMB	<p>...I am not there for personal gain I was there to give immigrants the opportunity to be heard they said it was useless having the commission so I insisted so I want the immigrant to be there so that anything they decide I will voice it...</p> <p>...the official candidates agreed that the rights of immigrants must be acknowledged so I...</p> <p>...I promulgated support for women....</p> <p>We motivate them try as much as possible to create an agenda for them</p> <p>Majority of people that are being taxed are immigrants, that is a very big opportunity to for us to say no</p> <p>have been working hand-in-hand issues like there was one program that we were awarded certificates some few weeks ago in the Venice University....</p>	<p>Opportunity to be heard</p> <p>Immigrants Have right</p> <p>Support for women</p>
PKLV	I would like the commission to make a program	

The rights of immigrants

CMB highlights the need to acknowledge and respect the rights of immigrants. This suggests that the commission actively works towards promoting fair treatment, equal opportunities, and inclusivity for immigrants in various aspects of their lives. Furthermore, the theme of "support for women" indicates that the commission recognizes the importance of addressing gender-specific issues that immigrant women may face, which could potentially include housing-related challenges. For instance, the commission might advocate for improved access to safe and affordable housing for immigrant women, ensuring their specific needs are considered. The United Nation (2010) report on rights of immigrants to housing according to a Special Rapporteur elaborated the guidelines for the implementation of the right to adequate housing (Farha, 2020, including to “ensure the right to adequate housing for migrants and internally displaced persons”. They state that:

1. *States must ensure the equal enjoyment of the right to housing without discrimination for all internally displaced persons and all migrants, regardless of documentation, in conformity with international human rights and humanitarian law.*
2. *There should be no discrimination on the basis of immigration status in access to emergency shelters and States should ensure that housing providers are neither permitted nor required to convey information to authorities that would discourage undocumented migrants from seeking shelter for themselves and their families.*
3. *Effective protective mechanisms must be in place for migrants to secure effective remedies for violations of the right to housing and non-discrimination.*
4. *Refugees and internally displaced persons who have been unlawfully or arbitrarily deprived of their former homes, lands, properties or places of habitual residence must be ensured a right to return consistent with the principles on housing and property restitution for refugees and displaced persons.*

These guidelines are templates for participatory communication between the government of Pauda municipality and the Foreign Commission through the instrumentality of commissioners whose duty is to ensure the Act is utilized for the benefit of the immigrants. According to UNHCR (2016) Results Framework, basic needs in terms of access to basic services and assistance in health, nutrition, food, SHELTER, energy, education, as well as domestic items and specialised services for people with specific needs. The role of participatory communication in housing was stressed by Rojs, Hawlina, Gračner and Ramšak (2019, pp. 91-106) “Community-based and participatory rental housing, organised in cooperative manner, does not merely bring new legal and economic frames of housing provision. It thrives on democratic principles based on inclusive participation of all

stakeholders it concerns. Such principles reflect a step beyond mere housing provision and represent a new lifestyle with socially oriented normative frames.

Support for women

CMB expresses support for women, indicating that the commission recognizes and addresses the specific challenges faced by immigrant women. This suggests that the commission takes a gender-inclusive approach, working towards promoting gender equality and addressing issues such as housing discrimination or inadequate housing conditions that may disproportionately affect Nigerian immigrant women. In addition to providing support for immigrant women, the commission also acknowledges the importance of intersectionality in addressing issues faced by marginalized communities. By recognizing that Nigerian immigrant women may face unique challenges due to their gender, race, and immigration status, the commission is able to develop targeted solutions that address these complex issues. This approach not only promotes equality and justice for all individuals, but also ensures that marginalized communities are not left behind in the fight for social progress. Furthermore, by addressing issues such as housing discrimination and inadequate housing conditions, the commission is able to improve the overall quality of life for Nigerian immigrant women and their families. Ultimately, this gender-inclusive approach serves as a model for other organizations seeking to promote equity and justice in their communities.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Preamble

The purpose of this study was to explore how an Italian local community facilitates and promotes the integration of immigrants through its Commission for the Representation of Paduan People with Foreign Citizenship (Commission for Foreigners). Specific objectives of the study are to: highlight the successes of the Commission for Foreigners and the challenges confronting it, especially in assisting immigrants in Padua in the areas of housing and education; examine how Nigerian foreigners in Padua perceive the efforts and initiatives of the Commission and the benefits they derive; identify the housing challenges confronting Nigerian immigrants in Padua and; assess how the Commission's role mitigate the immigrants' housing challenges. To achieve the aim and objectives of the study, the study adopted PCM as the to the theoretical framework and single case study research design as its methodological approach. This ultimate chapter presents the study's conclusions, implications and recommendations for future studies.

5.2 Conclusions

Based on the data analysis and participants' perceptions, several conclusions can be drawn from this study. The Commission for Foreigners in Padua has achieved several successes in assisting immigrants in the areas of housing and education. These successes include participating in legislative duties, providing a location for Muslim worship, engaging in liaison activities with local authorities, representing immigrants in problem-solving situations, and interceding for immigrants' needs and concerns. Legislation has been a significant success of the Commission, as members have actively modified laws to address housing issues among foreigners. This demonstrates a participatory duty of the Commission and its role in advocating for the rights and needs of immigrants. The provision of a

location for Muslim worship is another success, highlighting the Commission's respect for freedom of religion and its participatory approach to addressing the needs of different communities. Liaising with local authorities to ensure access to vaccines for immigrants without proper documentation during the COVID-19 pandemic is another successful initiative of the Commission. This demonstrates a humanitarian service and aligns with the principles of participatory communication. The Commission's representative role has been crucial in helping immigrants navigate challenges and access necessary resources. By interceding for immigrants, the Commission has facilitated the resolution of housing issues and provided support to individuals and families.

Based on the analysis of the participants' perceptions, it can be concluded that Nigerian immigrants in Padua have positive perceptions of the efforts and initiatives of the Commission for Foreigners. The participants expressed satisfaction with the care, support, and assistance provided by the Commission, highlighting its role in addressing their needs and concerns. The Commission was perceived as being responsive, helpful, and actively working to address the challenges faced by immigrants in the municipality. The participants also recognized the Commission as a defender of their rights, emphasizing its role in advocating for their interests and facilitating their integration into the host society.

Furthermore, based on the analysis of the housing challenges confronting Nigerian immigrants in Padua, the following conclusions can be drawn: The scarcity of vacant apartments and other reasons contribute to a major challenge for Nigerian immigrants in Padua. The participants emphasized the difficulty in finding suitable housing, leading to homelessness or precarious living conditions. The interviews revealed instances of racial discrimination in the housing market. Nigerian immigrants reported being treated differently based on their race, facing obstacles in securing accommodation and experiencing biased attitudes from housing agents or landlords.

Lastly, the Commission for Foreigners in Padua plays a crucial role in mitigating the housing challenges faced by Nigerian immigrants. Through its initiatives and advocacy, the commission aims to empower immigrants and ensure their voices are heard in decision-making processes. The commission recognizes the importance of providing immigrants with opportunities to be heard and create a platform for dialogue. This allows immigrants to express their concerns, including housing-related issues, and enables the commission to gain insights into the specific challenges faced by immigrants in the housing sector. The Commission for Foreigners actively works towards acknowledging and respecting the rights of immigrants. It promotes fair treatment, equal opportunities, and inclusivity for immigrants, including support for immigrant women who may face gender-specific housing challenges.

5.3 Implications

The successes of the Commission for Foreigners indicate the importance of participatory communication and inclusive governance structures. The Commission's active engagement with immigrants and their communities has fostered trust, empowerment, and a sense of belonging among the foreign population in Padua. The provision of legislative representation, religious freedom, and intercession for immigrants demonstrates the potential for bridging the gap between the host society and the immigrant community. Such initiatives can contribute to social cohesion, integration, and the overall well-being of both immigrants and the host community. The challenges faced by the Commission highlight areas that require attention and improvement. Financial incapacity, lack of access, lack of support, policy instability, and time limitations pose significant obstacles to the Commission's effectiveness in addressing housing and education issues. These challenges need to be addressed to enhance the Commission's capacity to assist immigrants effectively.

Meanwhile, the positive perceptions of the Commission among Nigerian immigrants in Padua have several implications. Firstly, they indicate that the efforts and initiatives of the Commission are

effective in creating a positive impact on the immigrant community. The Commission's commitment to providing support, information, and guidance to immigrants has contributed to their psychosocial well-being and sense of belonging in the host society. This highlights the importance of establishing institutions and mechanisms that actively engage with immigrants and address their unique challenges. Furthermore, the perceptions of the Commission as a defender of rights underscore the significance of human rights frameworks in protecting and promoting the well-being of immigrants. The Commission's role in advocating for the rights of immigrants, including access to education, work, and adequate living conditions, aligns with international human rights principles. These perceptions emphasize the need for continued efforts to ensure the protection and fulfillment of immigrants' rights within the host society.

Moreover, the findings of this study have several implications for understanding the housing challenges faced by Nigerian immigrants in Padua. The study highlights the need for policies and interventions that address the scarcity of housing options for immigrants. Efforts should be made to increase the availability of affordable housing and to combat racial discrimination in the housing market. The experiences of Nigerian immigrants in securing housing reflect broader issues of social exclusion and marginalization. These challenges can impact their overall well-being, integration, and sense of belonging within the host society. Racial discrimination in housing violates the fundamental human rights of Nigerian immigrants. It is essential to promote and protect the rights of immigrants, ensuring equal access to housing without discrimination based on race or ethnicity.

Ultimately, the findings highlight the need for continued support and recognition of the Commission for Foreigners in Padua. Its role in addressing housing challenges and advocating for immigrant rights is essential in creating inclusive and welcoming communities. The emphasis on providing opportunities for immigrants to be heard and promoting dialogue with relevant stakeholders, including policymakers and local authorities, suggests the importance of collaborative efforts in

finding appropriate solutions to housing challenges. The recognition of gender-specific issues faced by immigrant women underscores the need for a gender-inclusive approach in addressing housing challenges. This implies the importance of considering intersectionality and developing targeted strategies that address the unique needs of marginalized groups.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

Further research should explore the financial constraints faced by the Commission and its impact on the mental health and well-being of its members. Understanding the relationship between financial incapacity and the effectiveness of the Commission can inform strategies for resource allocation and support. Future studies should investigate the reasons behind the lack of government support and policy instability affecting the Commission. This research can provide insights into the broader socio-political context and identify opportunities for advocacy and policy reform. It is essential to examine the long-term outcomes of the Commission's successes in housing and education assistance. Research should assess the integration outcomes, social cohesion, and overall satisfaction of immigrants benefiting from the Commission's initiatives. Comparative studies can be conducted to examine the experiences of similar commissions in other regions or countries. Comparing the successes, challenges, and strategies employed by different commissions can provide valuable insights and best practices for improving the effectiveness of the Commission for Foreigners in Padua.

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made for future research regarding the perceptions of the immigrants. Further research can delve deeper into the specific initiatives and programs implemented by the Commission that have contributed to the positive perceptions among Nigerian immigrants. Understanding the details of these initiatives and their outcomes can provide insights into best practices and areas for improvement. Conducting a comparative analysis of the perceptions of immigrants from different countries or regions within Padua can help identify any variations in their experiences with the Commission. Such research can

shed light on the effectiveness of the Commission's efforts in addressing the needs of diverse immigrant communities and inform tailored interventions. Longitudinal studies that track the experiences and perceptions of immigrants over an extended period can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the long-term impacts of the Commission's initiatives. This can help assess the sustainability and effectiveness of the Commission's interventions and inform future policy decisions. Evaluating the outcomes and impacts of the Commission's initiatives, particularly in relation to housing challenges, can provide empirical evidence of their effectiveness. This evaluation can include measures of housing conditions, access to affordable housing, and overall well-being of immigrant communities.

Meanwhile, to further understand and address the housing challenges confronting Nigerian immigrants in Padua, the following recommendations for future research are proposed. Conduct qualitative studies to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences and perspectives of Nigerian immigrants regarding housing challenges. This can provide insights into the specific barriers they face and potential strategies to overcome them. Compare the housing challenges faced by Nigerian immigrants with other immigrant groups in Padua or other regions of Italy. This comparative approach can help identify common patterns and unique factors that contribute to housing disparities. Evaluate existing policies and initiatives aimed at improving housing conditions for immigrants in Padua. Assess the effectiveness of these interventions and identify areas for improvement to ensure equitable access to housing. Conduct longitudinal studies to examine the long-term outcomes and trajectories of Nigerian immigrants in relation to housing. This can provide insights into the impact of housing challenges on their integration, socioeconomic status, and overall well-being over time. Involve Nigerian immigrants and other stakeholders in the research process to ensure their perspectives are adequately represented. Engage community organizations, housing agencies, and policymakers in collaborative efforts to address housing challenges and promote inclusive housing practices.

Furthermore, regarding mitigation of housing challenges for Nigerian immigrants in Padua, conduct further research to explore the effectiveness and impact of the Commission for Foreigners in mitigating housing challenges. This could involve evaluating the outcomes of specific initiatives, assessing the satisfaction and perception of immigrants regarding the commission's role, and examining the long-term impacts on housing conditions. Investigate the experiences and perspectives of other immigrant communities in Padua to gain a comprehensive understanding of housing challenges and the role of the commission in addressing them. This would provide a broader perspective on the effectiveness of the commission's initiatives across different immigrant groups. Explore the potential barriers and facilitators in the implementation of housing programs and initiatives by the commission. This research could identify factors that contribute to successful housing interventions and inform the development of best practices for promoting immigrant integration within the housing sector. Examine the intersectionality of housing challenges by considering additional factors such as socioeconomic status, educational background, and immigration status. This would provide a more nuanced understanding of how multiple identities and factors interact to influence the housing experiences of immigrants in Padua. Investigate the experiences and perspectives of local authorities, policymakers, and housing organizations regarding their collaboration with the Commission for Foreigners. This research could shed light on the dynamics of partnerships and identify strategies for enhancing cooperation and effectiveness in addressing housing challenges.

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ANNEX I

Foreigners Representatives Semi-structured Interview Guide

Participants: Members of the Commission for the Representation of Paduan People with Foreign Citizenship

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What is your role as a member of the Commission for Foreigners in Padua?
3. How would you describe your experience as a representative of foreigners in Padua?
4. How would you describe the relationship between your Commission and the leadership of the Municipality of Padua?
5. How would you describe the relationship between your Commission and various communities/associations of foreigners in Padua?
6. What successes has your Commission recorded since your election into the Commission?
7. What are the issues that hinder you in carrying out your functions?
8. What are the challenges affecting your Commission as a whole?
9. What are the Commission's efforts toward helping immigrants with housing?
10. How does the Commission help immigrants that want to acquire skills and competences?

ANNEX II

Foreigners Semi-structured Interview Guide

Participants: 7-10 Semi-structured interviews with Nigerian foreigners/immigrants in Padua

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What do you know about the Commission for Foreigners or the representatives of foreigners in Padua?
3. How would you describe your experience with this Commission or any of the representatives?
4. In what ways has the Commission been a connection between you and the Municipal Government of Padua?
5. How have you (or anyone you know) been supported by the Commission regarding housing matters?
6. How has the Commission helped you (or anyone you know) to acquire skills and competences?
7. What are the challenges that have hindered you from maximally benefiting from the efforts of the Commission?
8. How do you think the Commission could serve the Nigerian community better?