



Citizenship and jus soli. Does birthright citizenship matter for the second generation?

A single case study of the experiences of the children of immigrants in Italy

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Abstract

In European countries, citizenship is mostly based on the principle of jus sanguinis, which means that citizenship is passed from parent to child. There are currently no European countries that apply unconditional jus soli, therefore there is no European country where a child becomes a citizen solely because he is born there, as it happens in the United States. There are countries that use conditional jus soli, which means that children become citizens if they fulfil certain requirements. Italy is one of the European countries with the strictest requirements. The relation between life experiences and citizenship status for the second generation is a topic that is not studied extensively, especially in regards to Europe. The aim of this paper is to find out if the citizenship law that is currently in force in Italy has effect for the second generation in regards to their legal status, their rights and their identity. The method used is a qualitative and descriptive approach. The data for this study was collected through five semi-structured interviews. The main findings are that current Italian citizenship law has effects on the legal status of the second generation and on their access to certain rights, while it does not have a major influence on their identity.

Key words: citizenship, dimensions of citizenship, second generation, jus soli

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1 Introduction

Given the importance of citizenship for rights, movement and identity, there is little research that studies the meaning that citizenship has for people. There is even less research on the meaning of citizenship for those that have acquired it through naturalisation. The relationship between citizenship and life experiences of the second generation is relatively studied very little, especially in Europe, and existing research is mainly focused on the US. Similarly, when it comes to research regarding citizenship for children of immigrants in Italy, the consequences that this law has for them is an aspect that is not given great attention. In this field the topics mostly studied are the legislation itself and the attempts that have happened over the years to achieve a reform.

1.1 Background

International law establishes that “the right to a nationality is a fundamental human right”, and that “the right of states to decide who their nationals are is not absolute”. However, the control over the requirements and the limits regarding who can and how to obtain citizenship in a country is an important part of state sovereignty. It is a part of the ‘domain reserve’ of a state, i.e., a matter of domestic affairs (Ziegler, 2013). In practice, states have a right to regulate citizenship within their territory, and the only major exception is the obligation to provide citizenship to those that would otherwise be stateless persons (Ziegler, 2013).

In European countries citizenship is mostly based on the *jus sanguinis* principle (right of blood), meaning that it is based on the nationality of parents and a child will in most cases receive the citizenship of the parents. The *jus soli* principle (right of soil), used for example in the US, is not common in Europe. This principle bases citizenship on the place of birth rather than on descent relations. Despite the fact that most European countries have large numbers of immigrants, none of them have a policy of unconditional *jus soli*. As a result, there are children and adults who are born and who grow up in Europe but hold citizenship of non-EU countries (Erdilmen & Hononan, 2020, pp. 1-10).

1.2 Research problem and research question

According to Eurostat, in 2019 over 5 million foreigners were naturalised in Italy, which is about 2.5 % of the foreigners that were residing in Italy that year. It is a rate that is average when compared with the ones of other European countries, and considering that the average

EU rate of naturalisation is 2.0% (Eurostat, 2022). Yet, the topic of citizenship acquisition for children of foreigners has been at the centre of Italian politics for a long period. The current law, that was passed in 1992, restricted the possibilities of obtaining citizenship through the jus soli principle and increased the possibilities of obtaining it through jus sanguinis.

Consequently, facilitating the connection between Italy and Italian descents living abroad, while making it challenging for foreigners to obtain citizenship based on their birth or their residency in the country (Bianchi, 2014, pp. 258-259; Colombo et al., 2011, p. 337).

Several government administrations as well as non-governmental organisations in Italy have been working to introduce some elements of jus soli into citizenship legislation and ease the process of citizenship acquisition for people born in Italy to foreign parents. But all attempts to change the law have failed and until now, no proposed bill has been implemented (Bianchi, 2014, pp. 258-261). In the political debate surrounding this issue, left and right-wing parties have different opinions. Right and far-right parties have been opposing a reformed law, with one of the arguments being that it is not necessary because the second generation enjoys the same rights, and is entitled to the same services and benefits as their Italian counterparts. On the other hand, centre-left and leftist parties, and second-generation youth associations, disagree and consider a reform essential to ensure equal rights and opportunities to all children born in Italy (Bianchi, 2014).

The thesis will look at the experiences of the second generation regarding citizenship and its different dimensions. The main research question that the thesis aims to answer is

“What effects does current Italian citizenship law have on the second generation, in relation to the dimension of status, rights and identity?”

The study will offer a descriptive analysis of the link between access to citizenship and access to rights, between citizenship and identity, and between citizenship and inclusion. Thereby contributing to the field of human rights in the area of citizenship.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this study is to provide an insight into the ways in which the current citizenship legislation of Italy affects and has affected people born in the country to foreign parents. In order to do so, the thesis will describe the experiences of the second generation. By researching and finding out what the implications of this law are, the thesis will contribute

to the public and political debate concerning the need for a reform. However, the thesis will not attempt to answer the question of whether a reform is necessary but limit itself to look at why it might or might not be necessary, by researching the problems that the current law causes. From a wider perspective, the thesis will show some of the situations that are possibly faced not only by Italian-born foreigners, but also by people that are born and live in countries with similar nationality laws. Lastly, the thesis aims to increase the awareness on the issue of citizenship acquisition for people of migrant descent born in Europe, as it is not a widely discussed topic.

1.4 Thesis outline

The paper is structured in eight chapters. This first chapter provides an introduction to the topic of citizenship and birthright citizenship, explains the research problem and research question, and the purpose of the study. The second chapter presents the studies that have taken place in the field, first with a general overview and after with a focus on Italy; then the results of previous findings and the gap in existing research, followed by a short explanation of the term ‘second generation’. Third is the chapter regarding theory, where the connection between citizenship and human rights, the feature of citizenship as an inclusion and exclusion mechanism, and the dimension of citizenship, are described. The methodology chapter is divided in six subchapters which explain the following: the chosen case study, how the material is gathered, how participants are selected, ethical considerations, the limitations and challenges that may arise during the study, and the operationalisation, which is how the interviews are carried out with the use of the dimensions of citizenship. The fifth chapter is a presentation of the empirical material that was produced during the interviews. Then the following chapter is a discussion of the material: first the main findings are summarised, then the results of each dimension are discussed in relation to previous research and limitations, and finally the validity of the findings is discussed. The seventh chapter is a concluding chapter divided as follows: a short summary of the general findings in relation to the previous studies and the limitations of this study; the contributions of this thesis to the academic field and to the political debate; and suggestions for further research. The eight chapter is a list of references.

2. Previous research

The purpose of this section is to place the study within the existing research and to use previous research as a starting point for this thesis. This is done by giving a background of the field of study of citizenship, and particularly citizenship for the second generation and by explaining the gap within the existing research. Moreover, in this section the use of the term ‘second generation’ will be shortly discussed.

The general topic of citizenship has been researched by several authors. However, some aspects of citizenship have been studied very little, such as the meaning that citizenship has for people, and citizenship for the second generation. The experiences related to citizenship have been studied by authors such as Bloemraad, who also writes that “there has been insufficient theorising about the mechanisms linking citizenship status to life experiences” (Bloemraad, 2017, p. 3). Most of the existing research that studies experiences of the second generation in relation to citizenship are focused on the United States, where unconditional *jus soli* is part of citizenship legislation (Bloemraad, 2022).

When it comes to citizenship regarding the Italian second generation of immigrants, there are some aspects that have not been explored as much as others. Most of the research on this topic has focused on the meaning of citizenship for the second generation, the way citizenship is related to their identity and sense of belonging, and on the debate about citizenship legislation. As I will present and discuss later in this section, the articles do not discuss the experiences of the second generation as a main purpose. And when their experiences related to citizenship are discussed, they are looked at from the perspective of ‘identity’.

2.1 Overview

The existing research is made of different types of studies with diverse methods, focus groups, purposes, etc. The studies that I will review here are relevant to this thesis because they either provide a method and/or theory that can be useful in this thesis, or because they have a similar purpose to this thesis. I will first review two articles written by Bloemraad on the topic of citizenship for the second generation. After that, I will provide a brief review of some of the previous research that has been done on the same topic in Italy. Finally, I will present the findings of these studies about citizenship in Italy and discuss the identified gap.

2.1.1 Citizenship for the second generation

Bloemraad (2022) writes about citizenship for the second generation in her article titled “Claiming membership: boundaries, positionality, US citizenship, and what it means to be American”. The article deals with citizenship in the US and the understanding that immigrants have of the concept of citizenship. Bloemraad’s article is based on interviews that she has carried out with immigrants and with their children. The people interviewed were asked what it means to be a good citizen and what it means to be an American. The questions that Bloemraad asks are based on her analysis framework where she argues that citizenship is not only who you are, which represents ethnic citizenship, or what you value which represents civic citizenship. It is also what you do, actions such as good moral behaviour and economic contributions (Bloemraad, 2022).

The article “Being American/Becoming American: birthright citizenship and immigrants’ membership in the United States” looks at the debate regarding birthright citizenship to children of immigrants in the US. In particular, children born in the US to temporary or undocumented immigrants. Bloemraad (2013) uses empirical material to understand how the second generation affected by this debate interprets the concept of belonging. The results of the interviews are then used to offer a different view on the issue, as opposed to the arguments made in political and public debates. The article discusses themes such as rights, inclusion and the meaning of being American (Bloemraad, 2013).

2.1.2 Citizenship for the second generation in Italy

The studies that have been done on citizenship in relation to the second generation in Italy can be divided into three main themes, which are: the political and public debate about *jus soli* in Italy, the development of nationality legislation in Italy, and the relation of the Italian second generation with citizenship and identity.

Bianchi’s (2011) article “Italiani nuovi o nuova Italia? Citizenship and attitudes towards the second generation in contemporary Italy” explores the thoughts and opinions of Italians on the topic of citizenship to second generation immigrants. The author uses fourteen interviews

where her target was to find out Italians willingness to give citizenship to second generation youths (Bianchi, 2011).

Bianchi's (2014) article "Italiani anche noi: Minister Kyenge, Children of Immigrants, and the Pathway to Citizenship Reform" examines the developments of citizenship law in Italy by looking at the attempted reforms that have happened over the years, and with a focus on the work done by Minister Kyenge towards this matter. The author also briefly discusses the dimensions of the second generation in Italy, the public's opinions on granting them citizenship, and some of the issues that this group of people encounter (Bianchi, 2014).

The study "Second-generation attitude? African-Italians in Milan " by Andall is based on 27 interviews done with people of African descent that were born in Italy or that have lived in Italy since they were under six. The topic of the article is citizenship and belonging, and by using the interviews the author shows some of the issues that the current law causes in the area of identity and sense of belonging (Andall, 2002).

The research titled "It's complicated, isn't it: Citizenship and ethnic identity in a mobile world" by Baldassar and Raffaeta` studies the experiences of the second generation, with a focus on the Chinese community in the Italian city of Prato. The aim of the study is to show the strong link between citizenship and identity in a country like Italy, where citizenship is based on the principle of jus sanguinis (Baldassar & Raffaeta`, 2018).

The study "Citizenship and multiple belonging. Representations of inclusion, identification and participation among children of immigrants in Italy " was made by carrying out interviews to children of migrants enrolled in higher secondary school, and its purpose is to examine their understanding of citizenship (Colombo et al., 2011).

2.2 Previous findings

The articles reviewed in the previous section are articles that are related to the topic of citizenship for the second generation in Italy. None of the article's main purpose is to review the general consequences that this law has on the second generation, but most of them make

mention of some of the consequences in the analysis. The studies have similar findings in regards to the problems encountered by the second generation.

Bianchi (2011) mentions denied political inclusion and recognition in society, and lack of financial security as some of the effects. She (2011) states that a reform would contribute to integration into society and to access to national and European rights for the second generation (Bianchi, 2011, p. 322). Andall (2002) finds that Italian foreigners born in Italy face difficulties in obtaining citizenship, due to certain requirements. For instance, some of the interviewees said that they were not able to show uninterrupted residence in Italy since birth because they were not registered by their parents when they were born, but rather after some months. Another interviewee argued that it is not acceptable that one has to wait until eighteen before they can apply for citizenship, despite being born and raised in the country.

Many of the people interviewed found it hard to identify themselves and struggled with their sense of belonging to Italy. They also have had experiences of discrimination, stereotyping, and harassment. (Andall, 2002, pp. 394-399). Baldassar & Raffaeta` (2018) report of lengthy processes, long queues outside offices, and a confused atmosphere, experienced by people applying for a permit of stay. Experiences that create a sense of non-belonging for those without citizenship that are born in Italy, who describe them as institutionalised exclusion (Baldassar & Raffaeta, 2018, p. 742). Similarly, to Andall (2002), the study realised with high school teens also discusses how the requirement to prove uninterrupted residence in Italy since birth penalises the second generation, who at times cannot fulfil this requirement because of parents past actions (Colombo et al., 2011, p. 337). In her other article, Bianchi (2014) mentions fear of not being allowed to stay in the country and fear of deportation, as well as economic instability and struggle in finding a job, as some of the issues experienced by the second generation. She also talks about the time and money that they have to use to renew their permit of stay, as discussed by Baldassar & Raffaeta` (2018). And lastly, she mentions the problems that students without citizenship have when the school takes trips to neighbouring countries, and they cannot join because of visa or residence permit issues (Bianchi, 2014, pp. 258-259).

2.3 Gaps in previous research

One author that has studied the experiences of foreigners related to their citizenship situation is Bloemraad. However, her studies concentrate on the United States, where nationality legislation is based on the principle of *jus soli* (Bloemraad, 2022).

When narrowing down into studies on Italy, the questions answered by existing studies are mostly why this law exists, why politicians have never been able to change it, and what the public thinks about it. The way the law affects people has been explored scarcely, and mainly with attention to identity and belonging, as it is the case for the previous studies presented above. The topics found are the development of nationality legislation and the parallel development of political and public debate on the subject (Bianchi, 2014; Bianchi, 2011); the relation between citizenship status and identity and how the former affects the latter (Andall, 2002; Baldassar and Raffaeta, 2018) and generally the battle of organisations for achieving a reform (Bianchi, 2014; Bianchi, 2011; Zinn, 2011). In his book, the author Joppke (2010) writes “Why did Italy, in 1992, pass a restrictive citizenship law that doubled the residence time required for naturalisation (from five to ten years) and that made the road to citizenship significantly more difficult for the children of foreigners born in the country?” (Joppke, 2010, p. 51). Questions like this one are what prevail in existing research while the question of the effects that this law has for foreigners born in the country is not prioritised.

The lack in existing research is also partly addressed by Bianchi (2011) who writes that “the majority of Italian research is based on the study of active citizenship [...] rather than investigating the effects of attaining citizenship as a legal status” (Bianchi, 2011, p. 325). Some of the effects that the 1992 law has on second generation children are mentioned in various articles but there is no study that provides a systematic analysis of the implications encountered by second generation as a consequence of this law. Although the problematics related to nationality law in Italy are discussed by the scholars who take on the issue of citizenship, they are not the focus. Or when their experiences are one of the targets, as in Baldassar and Raffaeta (2018), they are analysed through the lenses of identity.

All in all, the experiences of the people affected by this issue is an aspect that is understudied, despite being of central importance to the discussion of citizenship for the second generation.

Therefore, focusing on reviewing the experiences of the second generation is the purpose of this thesis. The thesis aims at contributing to the field of human rights and the right to citizenship, by filling this gap in existing research.

2.4 Terminology remarks

The term *second generation* is used in research to describe children of immigrants. The parents who migrate to a country are referred to as the ‘first-generation immigrants’, and consequently their children are called the ‘second-generation immigrants’ or ‘second generation’. The term is used in previous research such as in Bloemraad’ (2017, 2022) studies. It is commonly used in Italy and it can be found in most of the studies discussed in the section on previous research, namely the articles of Bianchi (2011, 2014), Andall (2010), Baldassar & Raffaeta’ (2018), Colombo (2011), and others.

To follow the convention used in this field, I also use the term ‘second generation’ in this thesis. However, this thesis discusses the situation of the children of immigrants who are *born* in the country where their parents migrated to, and not of children of immigrants in general. The reason for this selection is explained in the method chapter under “Sample selection”.

3. Theoretical framework

In this section, I will first talk about the concept of citizenship and its relation with human rights, and I will explain the duality of citizenship as a form of inclusion and exclusion. Thereafter I will discuss the dimensions of citizenship, which is the framework that I will be using in the analysis of the material.

3.1 Development of citizenship: human rights, inclusion and exclusion

Citizenship is a membership-based concept and it means membership in a state. This membership provides certain rights and duties. Brubaker says that citizenship is a mechanism through which individuals are assigned to the territory they belong to. It operates as a way through which inclusion and exclusion manifest, as it divides people between insiders and outsiders. It is globally universal but locally exclusive (Brubaker, 1992, p.31). Citizenship can be organised in dimensions such as status, rights and identity (Bauböck, 2017, p.65).

Citizenship is considered to have come about in ancient Athens, where it was a membership reserved only to the main male figure of a household. The purpose of this form of citizenship was forming a community among strangers and increasing political participation. In Roman times, the understanding of citizenship shifted closer to what we think of today, it was seen as a legal status and as the entitlement to certain rights. The concept of citizenship continued to change during history, through feudalism and the absolute state, and the modern concept of citizenship was established after the French Revolution (Joppke, 2010, pp.7-8).

According to Joppke (2010), human rights had been a part of citizenship since the existence of modern citizenship. But it is only after World War II, when the problem of stateless people became evident, that human rights started to have a major role on both national and international level, and as a consequence reduced state sovereignty on the matter of citizenship. When the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights established a “right to a nationality”, human rights really entered the field of citizenship. According to Arendt (1979) the right to a nationality represents the right to have rights because it represents the right to be a member of a community that has the power to guarantee people their rights (Joppke, 2010, p.27).

In the early 90s citizenship and migration started to be discussed together by scholars. Brubaker (1992) explains the duality of citizenship, saying that it is a form of *internal inclusion*, but also of *external exclusion*. This is because it creates an official membership and equal status to people within a society but also excludes all foreigners from such membership and status. Brubaker (1992) argues that citizenship is a mechanism of social closure that states use to protect themselves from migrants and control access over their territory (Joppke, 2010, pp. 14-16). However, nationality laws can be more or less exclusive and according to Brubaker this difference is based on the understanding that a state has of nationhood. States that consider the nation *civic* try to create the nation according to its political image and see citizenship as something connected to the territory one is born into. Such states will therefore prefer inclusive nationality laws that are based on the *jus soli* principle, like for example France. Countries such as Germany have instead traditionally seen nationhood as *ethnic* and based on ethnic features. These are the countries where citizenship is inherited through the principle of *jus sanguinis* with the goal of protecting the ethnic characteristic of the nation (Joppke, 2010, p.17). As pointed out by Baldassar and Raffaeta` (2018), the approach of Italy to nationality laws is similar to the one of Germany, preferring exclusive laws in order to

preserve ethnic nationalism (Baldassar and Raffaeta', 2018, p.754). Conditional jus soli for the second generation was introduced into German legislation in 1993 and in the same period similar measures were taken by other European countries that were becoming more liberal, while Italy on the other hand has continued to use its ethnic approach to nationality law (Joppke, 2010, p.20).

3.2 Dimensions of citizenship

With the development of migration in the modern world, citizenship has also continued to evolve and according to Joppke (2010), to analyse citizenship in relation to migration, one has to look at the three dimensions of citizenship. He says that these are 'status', 'rights' and 'identity' (Joppke, 2010, p.28). Joppke discusses the three dimensions in his book "Citizenship and Migration", where he analyses how citizenship has evolved with the influence of human rights and migration. Other scholars, such as Bloemraad (2000) identify one other dimension, which is 'participation'. Joppke explains that he did not include this dimension when analysing the development of citizenship in relation to migration, as he believes migration has not caused a lot of changes to this dimension (Joppke, 2010, pp. 145-146). Bloemraad (2000) provides an explanation of citizenship and the four dimensions in her article "Citizenship and Immigration: a current review". She defines citizenship as a membership relation that connects the individual and the community. She connects legal status and identity to the individual, and rights and participations to the socio-political community (Bloemraad 2000, pp. 10-11).

In this thesis I will use the framework provided by Joppke and not include a separate dimension for participation. This is because although this dimension gives attention to social practices, I do not think it is necessary to include it as a dimension of its own, as it relates to the other dimensions. The activities of participation in society are often a result of one's legal status and of one's rights.

3.2.1 Status

This dimension refers to the basic notion of citizenship, i.e., a status given by a state to an individual and which is legally recognised. This status confers the individual certain rights and obligations. The possession of the status of citizenship distinguishes state members from outsiders. Citizens are entitled to unconditional stay in the territory and to the ability to enter

and exit the country at any time, they are protected from deportation, and are treated under certain laws and regulations (Bloemraad, 2017, p.527)

3.2.2 Rights

As mentioned earlier, legal status in a state gives a set of rights and duties to the individual. According to Marshall (1983), citizenship is composed of civil, political and social rights. Civil refers to rights such as freedom of speech, freedom of faith, right to own property, right to justice, right to a fair trial. Political rights are those that give the right to participate in the political decision-making and have political power, as a voter or as someone who is elected for a political position. Social rights are the rights that give access to social services, economic benefits, education, work, healthcare, housing (Marshall, 1983, pp.30-31). The contract between the state and the individual is made of both rights and obligations. As such, the member of a state agrees to pay taxes, respect the law, and other duties.

The rise in migration that has happened with globalisation has changed the relationship between rights and citizenship. While in the past these rights used to be reserved for citizens, starting from the 19th century non-citizens residing in a country started to be given civil rights. Today foreigners that reside in a country are given social rights and political rights as well, although the degree of access they have to these rights differ from country to country. According to Soysal (1996), the international human rights discussion has disconnected rights from one's nationality, in the sense that it has directed states into having to grant rights to non-citizens as well, in order to respect the individual and his rights (Bloemraad 2000, p.18).

3.3.3 Identity

This dimension refers to the relationship between citizenship and identity. It represents the ties between one citizenship and one's identity and sense of belonging. Citizenship can have an influence on the way one identifies himself and at times the two can clash. The growing practice of migration has challenged the relation between citizenship and identity as the presence of migrants has deconstructed the unity that existed between the two. Being a member of a society and enjoying the rights given by that society is no longer equal to belonging to one ethnic or national identity (Colombo et. al, 2011, p.335). This change can contrast with certain states and their perception of nationhood because they have traditionally identified as one single community with a shared identity. These are 'ethnic' nations such as Germany where biological links were seen as the foundation of the nation. On the other hand,

‘civic’ nations have transformed into nations with multicultural identities (Bianchi, 2011, pp. 322-323).

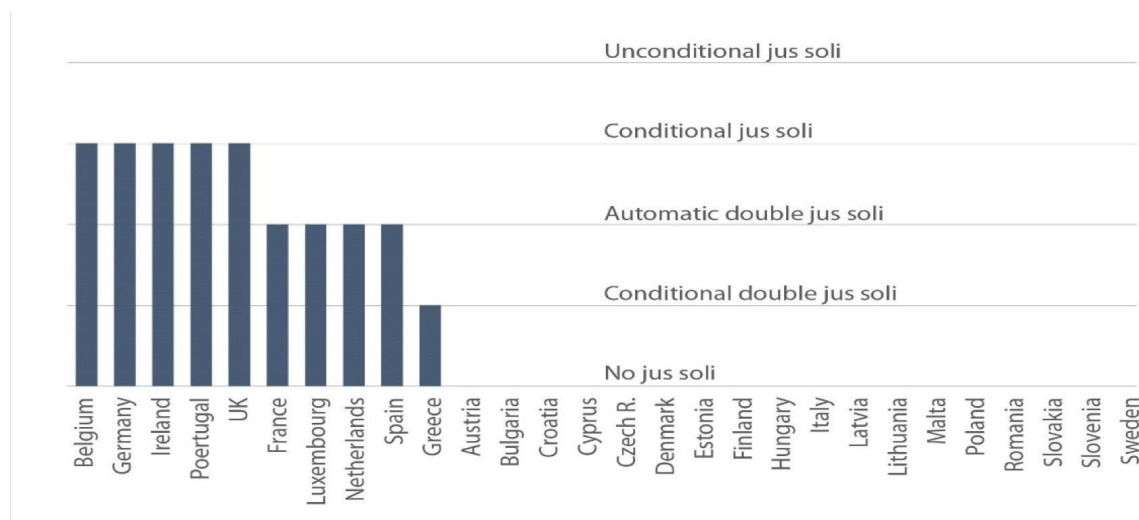
4. Methodology

In this section I will map out the method used in this thesis. First the selection of the case and collection of data will be explained, and then how the theory will be used in the analysis of the data will be described. Lastly, I will briefly discuss the limitations of this thesis and the possible challenges that may occur in the process.

4.1 Case selection

Although European countries base citizenship, for the most part, on the principle of *jus sanguinis*, elements of *jus soli* are included in legislation too. In some states, there is a law of conditional *jus soli* or double *jus soli*. Double *jus soli* refer to the place of birth of the parents. For example, if a non-citizen who is born in France, has a child in France, the child will automatically become a citizen. These rules are shown in ‘Figure 1’ below. Here the most inclusive form of *jus soli* existing in each country is illustrated.

Figure 1: Rules of *jus soli* citizenship in EU



Data Source: Global Database on Modes of Acquisition of Citizenship, GLOBALCIT

Each country has different requirements. This can be seen in Figure 2', where the requirements for citizenship after birth in some European countries are listed. These were the requirements in force in 2018.

Figure 2: Jus soli after birth in the EU: requirements

Country	Age	Requirements
Austria	--	6 years of residence before applying
Belgium	> 18	Residence since birth
	< 12	parents residing in country for 10 years
Bulgaria	--	3 years of permanent residence
Croatia	--	5 years of residence before applying
Czech Republic	--	permanent residence
Finland	> 18 and < 23	6 years of permanent residence, of which last 2 uninterrupted in the country
France	> 18	5 years of residence since 11 y.o.
	< 18	a) 5 years of residence since 11 y.o.;
		b) 5 years of residence since 8 y.o
Greece	< 18	5 years of continuous residence of one parent; child registered at primary school
Hungary	--	5 years of residence
Ireland	< 18	residence in country 5 out last 9 years, including 1 year before application
Italy	> 18 and < 19	uninterrupted legal residence in the country since birth
Netherlands	> 18	uninterrupted legal residence in the country since birth
Portugal	< 18	one parent residing in country for 5 years
	--	10 years of residence in the country, legal or illegal
Romania	> 18	8 years of residence or 5 years of marriage with a citizen
Slovakia	--	3 years of permanent residence
Slovenia	--	legal residence in the country since birth
Spain	--	1 year of residence
United Kingdom	> 10	residence in the country during the 10 first years after birth; max absence from country 90 days per year

Source: EUDO Citizenship

The case selected for this thesis is the state of Italy. Italy has one of the most outdated and restrictive nationality laws in Europe. The reason for the selection of this country as a case is mainly due to availability of material. In essence, the debate on citizenship and jus soli has been going on since the implementation of this law in 1992. And because this issue has been a topic of Italian politics for a long time, the availability of academic material, newspapers articles and similar sources related to this issue in Italy is larger when compared to the material available in relation to other European countries. Additionally, accessibility to the language of the previous research was also a factor considered when selecting the case for the study.

Italy can be considered a deviant case when it comes to jus soli legislation in Europe because it is the country with one of, if not the most, restrictive laws regarding jus soli citizenship. The selection of an extreme case for this research question rather than a more typical case can seem questionable because it can raise concerns over the reliability and the external validity of the findings of the study. According to Flyvbjerg, extreme cases can be useful for getting a point across and they can reveal more information compared to other types of cases (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 229). He also argues that generalisation should not be the only source of progress in research. Flyvbjerg sustains that a descriptive case study that is not aiming to generalise its findings is still valuable as it provides new knowledge for that field of study (Flyvbjerg, 2006, pp. 22-227). Even though Italy can be considered an extreme case when it's compared to other European countries, the findings of the study can be generalised to an extent. As shown in Figure 2, eligibility for citizenship based on birth in Italy requires uninterrupted legal residence since birth and only allows applications completed between the age of 18 and 19. This last restriction, providing only a one-year window to apply based on jus soli, is what makes the case of Italy extreme among European States. But when the one-year restriction is taken away, there are other countries whose legislation in this issue is not far from the one of Italy. In fact, Netherlands requirements are as Italy's, uninterrupted legal residence since birth and applications allowed from the age of 18. For this reason, the findings of the study could be valid in countries with similar laws. But at the same time, it may be that not all results can be extended to other countries because domestic factors play a role in shaping the experiences of the people living in a country.

4.2 Data collection

In order to carry out this research, primary data is necessary because the data that will be analysed are first-hand experiences of the second generation in Italy. Therefore, I will collect data in the form of interviews. An alternative method that could have been used is analysis of secondary data such as existing interviews, articles, academic journals, or other sources. There are two reasons for the choice of using this data type. The first is that since the aim of the research question is to investigate experiences, it seems like the most suitable method to make use of primary material in the form of interviews. Secondly, this method resembles the method used in similar studies. In her article Andall (2002) makes use of semi-structured

interviews to understand the experiences of the African Italian second generation in Milan (Andall, 2002, p. 389). The same method of semi-structured interviews is used by Bianchi to research Italians willingness to grant citizenship to the second generation (Bianchi, 2011, p. 325). In their study that focuses on the experiences related to identity, Baldassar and Raffaeta` (2018) also use interviews. And the same is done by Colombo, Domaneschi and Marchetti in their article (Baldassar & Raffaeta, 2018; Colombo et. al, 2011). The use of this method in articles with similar topics and purposes as this thesis indicates that carrying out interviews is a suitable approach for answering this research question.

As seen in the studies mentioned above, I will also be using *semi-structured* interviews. According to Gubrium and Holstein (2003) this approach to interviews can produce meaningful answers. These authors argue that active interviews allow the respondents to participate and contribute to the production of data. This method does not make use of the conventional way of interviewing where the respondent is seen as passive but rather allows the respondent to create, add and remove, transform the answers. The interview is not only guided by the questions or by the answers, but is assembled during the encounter with the help of follow-up questions (Gubrium and Holstein, 2003, pp. 67-70).

4.3 Sample selection

As explained before, the term ‘second generation’ in this thesis refers specifically to people born in the country where their parents migrated to. It does not refer to children of immigrants in general, as it is often the case in literature about the second generation. The reason for this choice is that it is important not to consider native-born and children who moved to the country as teenagers in one group when researching a topic such as this. This is because mixing the two groups together can produce misleading answers to one’s research question, as Andall also points out in her article, when discussing the method used and possible issues (Andall, 2002, p. 391).

The aim of this thesis is to find out the experiences of children of foreigners in connection to their lack of citizenship. But the experiences of a child born in the country and of a child who was brought to the country as a teenager might be different. For this reason, it is important to specify and define the focus group of this research. The research is concerned with the principle of *jus soli*, or the lack thereof, which translates into ‘right of soil’. As such, the participants are people who were *born* in the country and did not have a birthright to

citizenship in that country, who did not have a 'right of soil'. This group is what is defined as 'second generation' in the thesis and these are the people who will be part of the interviews.

4.4 Ethical considerations

Before the interviews took place, the interviewees were given information regarding their participation. They were asked to sign an information letter. The letter explained the purpose of the study and how the interviews were going to be used. They were informed that the interviews would remain anonymous, that their names would not be shared in the thesis, and that the material would be destroyed once the study is completed and the thesis has been graded. The letter stated that their participation is voluntary and they are free to stop participating at any time and without explanation. At the time of the interview, the participants were told again that the interviews are anonymous and they were asked for consent to record the conversation. Furthermore, they were informed that they could feel free to not respond to questions they did not feel comfortable with and that they could interrupt the interview at any time to ask questions or for any other reason.

4.5 Limitations and possible challenges

Since the interviews carried out for this study are a small number, it may be that the findings of the study cannot be generalised to all the population of second generation in Italy. The findings cannot be generalised to be the experience of all people living in European countries with similar nationality laws, as other factors play a role as well, besides nationality laws. However, the results of the study can provide an assessment of what are some of the experiences and possible difficulties that the second generation meets, as a consequence of restrictive citizenship legislation. In addition, although there are no previous studies with the exact same purpose of this study, existing articles do mention some of the problems that Italian citizenship law causes to second generation youths, especially in the dimension of 'identity'. Therefore, with the support of previous results, one can create a full picture of the experiences of the second generation, despite the limitation in the number of people interviewed.

Another aspect to consider is that previous research might be focused only on the dimension of identity because it is the only area where citizenship law in Italy has had relevant impacts

for the second generation. In other words, it can be that there will not be interesting findings in the area of status and rights. Nevertheless, if that is the case, this research will still contribute to existing research by finding and showing that current citizenship law in Italy has no effects in certain dimensions of citizenship when it comes to the second generation.

Lastly, as this analysis is based on primary material, its reliability may be limited. This is due to the fact that the answers given by the respondents may be incomplete, influenced by bias or be affected by feelings and other factors.

4.6 Operationalisation

To answer the research questions, I have formulated questions that were asked during the interviews. The interviews are semi-structured and the formulation and organisation of the questions based on the dimensions of citizenship presented earlier. This means that the questions were formulated and organised by following the three dimensions and providing questions related to each dimension. After carrying out the interviews, I will also use the dimensions of citizenship to analyse the answers gathered in the interviews. In short, I use the conceptual tools described in the theory section to formulate questions and analyse the interviews, and to be able to create a methodical assessment of the effects that the Italian citizenship law has on each dimension of citizenship.

A similar method to this is used in Colombo's article where the authors have grouped and analysed the answers of their interviews by using the different dimensions of citizenship (Colombo et al., 2011).

In formulating the questions, I have used previous research as a reference and I have used the 'dimensions of citizenship' to give structure to the questions but also to develop new questions. As the interviews went on, I have allowed previous interviews to guide the following interviews. What this means concretely is that I have adjusted questions and added questions while I was in the process of doing the interviews. Another aspect that I considered while writing the questions for the interviews was to maintain a balance between generic questions and specific questions. This was done to try to ensure that the interviews would produce the necessary answers to find information regarding status, rights and identity of the interviewees while at the same time allowing space for them to discuss the topic broadly. When asking general questions, at times interviewees were unsure of what to answer and

therefore I gave examples to guide them in their answers. These steps are in accordance with Gubrium and Holstein (2003) theory on *active* interviews because the participants are not only answering the questions but also actively taking part in creating the interview by discussing related thoughts, opinions and experiences. To give an example, in the first interview the respondents said that he did not know until he was 15 that he did not have Italian citizenship, and then he continued to explain how he found out about it, even though this was not a direct answer to the question that he was asked. Many do not think about their legal status until they are adolescents or young adults. This is indeed a significant factor to consider because one's knowledge or, lack thereof, of his legal status will likely have an influence on the way he recounts his past experiences. For instance, they might have never reflected on whether the lack of certain rights or opportunities were due to lack of citizenship, as they were not aware of not having citizenship. Therefore, after the first interview, a question regarding the respondents' knowledge about his legal status and his right to citizenship was added.

First, I have created questions that aimed at finding general information about the respondents, such as “were you born in Italy?”, “do you have Italian citizenship?” and “what does citizenship represent to you?”. This part was made of six general questions when the first interview was carried out, after that the question “have you lived in Italy uninterruptedly from birth until you turned 18?” was added. This is because it seemed that the existing questions were not providing exhaustive information regarding the residence of the respondent and adding a direction question appeared necessary. After the general questions, I moved into the three dimensions of *status*, *rights* and *identity*. Accordingly, the first section was for questions regarding legal status. It started with a general question about whether the respondents have ever had any issues related to their legal status and then zoomed into more specific questions regarding residence in the country, renewing residence permits, travelling, and applying for citizenship. Similarly, the following section regarding *rights* started with a question asking the respondents if they think that they had the same rights as citizens, when they did not have citizenship. After that, the following questions aimed at discussing if lack of certain rights affected them in their daily lives. Lastly, the questions about *identity* were formulated to find out the way the second generation identifies and the effects that citizenship has on their identity. When the discussion of these three dimensions ended, the respondents were again asked general questions to give them the opportunity to share general experiences on citizenship. These questions were the following: if and how they think lack of citizenship

has had influence on their ability to shape their future, if they experienced any changes after receiving citizenship, and if they have any other thought or experience they would like to share regarding the issue of citizenship for second generation in Italy.

The five people interviewed are all born in Italy. Two of the respondents are from Northern Italy, one is from Central Italy and two are from Southern Italy. All of the participants no longer live in Italy but they all live within Europe. Respondents 1 and 2 left Italy at respectively 18 and 19 years old. Respondents 3 and 4 left Italy while still underage, the first at 13 and the second at 17. Respondent 5 is the only one that left Italy later on, when he was 30 years old. Three of the respondents (the ones who left Italy as adults) now have Italian citizenship. The other two (who left Italy as underage) do not have it and one of them is now a citizen of another European country. All the people interviewed had the passport of the country of origin of the parents before they became Italian citizens, and none of them was a European citizen before becoming Italian citizens.

Before starting the interview, the participants were informed that the questions were meant to start conversation on particular topics and issues but that they could talk of related things as well and share their thoughts and experiences. The interviews were transcribed and when necessary, translated to English, as two of the interviews were conducted in Italian. The answers were then coded to find patterns and common themes among the answers of the different participants.

5. Analysis: presentation of material

5.1 Status

In the start of the interview, the participants were asked if citizenship has a meaning for them. They had similar answers. Respondent 1 said “Now I have the confirmation that I was born there. It is not only a fact but also in a written document.” Respondent 2's answer was “When you get citizenship, things in your life get easier in general.” Respondent 4 replied with “For me citizenship is more about the document itself.” And lastly, Respondent 5 said “it was something that I got on paper because I was born and raised in Italy all my life”. Only respondent 3 had a very different answer saying “I feel like citizenship is meant to be a representation or a tie between you and a country and it is kind of meant to identify you personally. However, for me, I feel that it is not like that.”

The interviewees' answers showed that while growing up they had different levels of knowledge about their legal status in the country. Respondent 1 said that he did not know that he was not an Italian citizen, he thought it was obvious since he was born there. He started to question it when he was 15 and he heard the discussions about jus soli legislation in the news. Similarly, respondent 4 said that he always thought he was an Italian citizen, until around 16 when he began to hang out with other foreigners and they started discussing their legal status in Italy. He said that at that point he understood that *"even if you are born there and have lived there, have gone to school there, you are still a foreigner"*. On the other hand, respondents 2 and 3 both knew about their status as children.

Respondent 2 said: "Yes I knew because I did not have Italian documents [...] and I knew I could not get it until the age of 18. I think (I knew from) pretty early, probably around 12, I started to care a bit more and asked more questions."

Respondent 3 knew since she was little too, and she said: "Yes, I was aware from day one. It would always come up when I used to go with my mom and my dad to any office, there were always different rules and regulations for if you were Italian or not, and then you'd always see that just because you were not Italian you would have to bring a thousand papers. [...]. My family was the type of family that involved me in very mature things and to be honest I think it was good."

When asked whether they encountered issues with their legal status, all the participants said that they have not had any problems, in the sense that they were never stopped by the police, denied entrance in the country, or had other problematic situations. The issues they discussed were related to the families' residence permits. However, respondent 1 did not remember anything about the process of renewing the permits while respondent 2 said: "Nothing really, I was never really involved, I had a pretty normal life, especially because my mom was working in that sector so it was easier for me to have anything I needed. Maybe when I was younger, if I needed to show documentation for school, doctors or anything related to my life, to show that I lived there, I would show my residence permit."

The other participants had very vivid memories of the annoyances that came with renewing the family's documents.

Respondent 3 commented: "I remember, I can never forget, any time we had to go to the migration office, we would wake up so early in the morning. The moment my mom said

‘Tomorrow you are not going to school’, I would know that it was because we had to go to the migration office. I remember these long queues that would continue all the way down the street, and we would just wait there, sometimes you get there at like ... 7 am and you are there until 2 or 3 pm. [...]They had strict rules and you could not renew your permit without your children, so sometimes you could see families with five kids [...] It was not fun.”

Respondent 4 gave a similar answer and added: “Everytime they would tell my mom that there is a document missing, we would have to go back and again queue up there the whole day from the morning”.

Respondent 5 also said “Yes, I remember that I used to go there with my mom, I would help her and translate the documents, it was such a long process... We had to wake up at 5 o’clock.”

The respondents initially said that their status as non-citizens did not create them problems when travelling and that they did not travel often outside of Italy before the age of 18. Although after discussing the topic, almost all the respondents had something to add. Respondent 1 said that after becoming a citizen, he has noticed that he experiences less controls. Respondent 2 explained that the reason he did not travel outside of Europe before 18 was lack of Italian citizenship, as travelling without an Italian passport would require applying for a visa and he did not have the chance to do that. Respondent 3 and 4 both gave a recount of experiences they had when travelling where they felt like they were controlled more than other people.

Lastly, the participants were asked questions about their experiences of applying for citizenship. Two of the respondents had a positive experience while the other three said that the process was long and complicated.

Respondent 2 answered “Of course I did not know anything about getting citizenship, my mom did everything for me. I know that it can take a long time to get it, it can take months or years but for me [...] it did not take a long time, maybe a few months.”

Respondent 5 quickly replied “Smooth and straightforward process. You just had to go there at 18 and apply, and basically it was automatic. I remember that my mom was so scared, so the day I turned 18 or the day after, we went to the office and applied for my citizenship. Because when you turn 19 then you lose the opportunity of becoming a citizen.”

The other three respondents had similar experiences to each other, with respondent 1 saying that he was repeatedly asked “annoying questions” on whether he has ever lived outside of Italy; respondents 4 describing the process as “not easy”; respondents 3 saying that she knows from other members of her family and from friends that applied, that it's very difficult to get citizenship. Respondent 1, 2 and 5 received citizenship when they were respectively 19, 18 and 18, respondent 3 did not apply, and respondent 4 gave up on his application. Respondent 4 added that he had to pay between 200 and 300 euros for his application.

5.2 Rights

It appeared that most of the participants did not think that their lack of citizenship had major effects on their access to rights.

Respondent 4 said he never felt like he had less rights but it was rather some comments or attitudes that would make him feel like he was not equal to others.

Respondent 1 and 5 did not have any experience to share in relation to rights but they both believe it is because of their unawareness at the time. Respondent 1 said that he thought he had the same rights since he thought he was a citizen. And respondent 5 answered: “At that time I didn't know but now I know for sure that I did not have the same rights. When you are a teenager, you don't really focus on those matters. But now you know, that at that time you were not equal, even though you were born and raised there.”

Respondent 2 said that he never felt like he had less rights and he always felt equal to others. However, he recalled a time when his school went on a trip outside of Italy by saying: “although I didn't go for other reasons, I knew it would have been difficult for me to go there because of not having my Italian ID or passport.”

Respondent 3 was the only one that said her experiences made her realise she was not entitled to the same rights as non-citizens. She gave four examples, two of which were direct experiences. Firstly, the participant discussed education and said that for instance she knows that if she wanted to take part in an Erasmus exchange, it would not have been easy for her as a non-EU citizen. She also said that there are some government jobs that non-citizens are not allowed to have, and commented that “as a person who was born and raised there, you know the same things as other Italians but you only don't have citizenship. Yet you are not considered qualified for those jobs.” Then she talked about financial benefits and explained

that when her mom had economic issues, a friend informed the mom that she could receive support because she had a child. However, according to respondent 3, the mom was told “you can’t receive this money because you're not Italian”. Respondent 3 believes that even if this did not affect her directly, it had effects because the social benefits could have helped her and her family. The last example was in regards to travelling. The participant said that when she was in middle school, her class wanted to organise a trip abroad but due to the fact that her and another classmate were non-EU citizens, the trip was taken in Italy, as the school did not want to apply for visas but also did not want to leave two students behind.

Furthermore, the participants expressed their disagreement to two circumstances regarding their rights. First, the requirement of 18 years of uninterrupted residence, that they believe seems unreasonable and distant from other European states' requirements. Second, the fact that a person who moves to Italy as an adult has a right to citizenship before those who are born there, given that the residence requirement for naturalisation of adults is 10 years.

5.3 Identity

When discussing their identity, all the participants expressed that they feel Italian, at least to a degree, regardless of their citizenship status. Respondent 1 initially said that he feels Italian, then later in the conversation explained that he feels half Italian. Respondent 2 said that most times he just says that he's Italian and at times he explains where he is originally from. Respondent 3 answered by saying that she feels Italian but she doesn't really know how to identify herself, as she feels that she belongs to three different countries. She added “I have an identity crisis.” Respondent 4 commented “I feel half Italian. It's normal that when you are born and raised there and have gone to school there, you somehow feel Italian”. Respondent 5 was the only one that said “I feel Italian, 100%”.

The participants that have acquired citizenship argued that becoming Italian citizens did not change how they perceive themselves. While the participants that do not have Italian citizenship believe that becoming citizens would not make them feel “more Italian” than they already do. Respondent 3 also said “I would not have been more integrated if I had citizenship”.

The respondents (except for respondent 3) are of the opinion that citizenship does not change the way they are perceived by others. Partly because most of the people around them assumed

that they were Italians, no one really questioned it, and according to participants 5 Italians do not know that if you are born there, you don't become a citizen automatically. Also, respondent 1 added that he does not think people's perception is based on what citizenship one holds. On the other hand, participant 3 (who does not have Italian citizenship) believes that citizenship can have an influence on people's perception. She said: "when someone asks me 'where are you from?', I hesitate to say I am Italian because sometimes I feel like I'm lying". And she thinks that for some "close-minded" people, she was not Italian since she did not have citizenship.

The participants believe they were part of the communities where they grew up. Even though none of them was an Italian citizen before the age of 18, they felt that they belonged to Italy, their cities and their communities. Respondent 2 shared that before getting citizenship, there were a few times where he would doubt his identity and think "I am not really Italian" but he would then realise that he was part of the community and the fact that legally he was not a citizen, did not mean he did not belong there. Respondent 4 said that at times he felt excluded from the community, but it was not due to his lack of citizenship.

As having or not citizenship can have long term effects, I asked the participants if they think their citizenship status has or has had any influence on their ability to shape their future. Respondent 1, who acquired citizenship at 19, said he did not experience any effect and he never felt excluded from Italian society. Respondent 2, who became a citizen at 18, said that before receiving citizenship there were occasions where he reflected on what he would do if he was not able to become a citizen. He said: "I thought I wouldn't have a chance to move abroad, or travel, or even in Italy have an office job." Respondent 3 said that when she finishes her studies, she would like to work in the sector of migration in Italy but she knows that many of the jobs in the public sector require citizenship and therefore she presumes that she might not be able to fulfil the criteria to work in those positions. Respondent 4 believes that if he stayed in Italy one more year, instead of leaving with his family at 17, his life would be different because he would likely be an Italian citizen now. And he also said that having citizenship would have made his move to another EU country easier and would have helped him in finding a job. Lastly, this was the answer of respondent 5: "I don't know how to answer that ... because when you are a teenager, you don't think about your future long term [...]. But right now, I can say that my life would have been very complicated if I did not get citizenship.

6. Discussion

6.1 Key findings

The research question that this thesis seeks to answer is “*What effects does current Italian citizenship law have on the second generation, in relation to the dimension of status, rights and identity?*”. The data gathered in the interviews carried out for this study have produced the following key findings.

The citizenship law that was passed in 1992 and is still in force today has a number of effects for the second generation. On the dimension of legal status, the current law causes the second generation bureaucratic negative experiences related to their residence in the country. The requirements of the current law make obtaining citizenship very difficult for members of the second generation that left Italy before the age of 18 and that are unable to prove 18 years of uninterrupted residence, thereby making their status as non-citizens hard to change. On the dimension of rights, the interviews showed that the second generation is often unaware of whether they have the same rights as others. However, the effects of the current law are visible on the areas of employment, welfare benefits, travelling and studies abroad. Finally, on the dimension of identity, the current law has no important effect for the second generation. According to the majority of the answers, their way of identification and the way others perceive them is not related to their citizenship. Furthermore, the findings show that the current law is the cause of exclusion of the second generation from certain areas of society, when compared to citizens. However, most of the participants report feeling included, they do not have many instances where they experienced that they were excluded because of not being citizens, or where they thought that citizenship would have facilitated integration.

6.2 Discussion of empirical findings: previous research and limitations

6.2.1 Status

The respondents showed that for them citizenship is mainly the representation of a legal document. This is the dimension of citizenship that the second generation considers more important, and it is seen as a practical thing that will make things easier in the bureaucratic system. The same conclusion was reached in one of the previous studies (Colombo et. al, 2011: 338). Only one of the respondents expressed that she believes there should be a

connection between one's citizenship and identity. However, all of the participants did say that they think they should be citizens because "they are born and raised there":

The findings show the lack of citizenship did not cause the respondent major challenges regarding their legal status in Italy but it nevertheless had effects. They had ordinary lives and did not have problems such as fear of deportation, or unusual encounters with the police. The main and prevalent topic in their stories was related to renewing the residence permits. Their experiences show that one has to often spend a day or more at the migration office, which implies the children not going to school. One of the respondents had a different experience but it is due to the fact that the parent knew people working in the migration office, and therefore his experience cannot be considered as a general experience. They all think that their legal status as residents and non-EU citizens had effects on their travelling experiences. However, only one of the respondents gave a concrete example, saying that he did not travel a lot before 18 because he did not have citizenship. This shows that the second generation may have less access to travelling compared to their peers because they cannot engage in the process of applying for visas, they may not have the financial possibilities, or may receive a rejection. Two other respondents believe they were controlled less after becoming citizens; however, their experiences can be based on other factors unrelated to citizenship status. All in all, the main problems were the time spent on residency permits renewals and the inability to travel.

These results are partially similar to the ones of previous research. The studies carried out by Bianchi (2014) and by Baldassar & Raffaeta` (2018) both showed that the second generation struggles with the renewal of their residence permits, and use time and money in this process. This is similar to what is found in this study. However, the interviews carried out by Bianchi (2014) also indicated that the second generation experiences fear of not being able to stay in the country and of deportation. This is something that was not experienced by the people interviewed in this thesis.

An aspect that should be considered in these results is that all the participants had either left Italy or received citizenship by the time they were 18. The experiences they discussed about their legal status are representative of the time they were all non-citizens, which is when they were still underage. During that time, their legal status was connected to one of the parents and as shown in the findings, some of them were even unaware of the situation until they were adolescent. This means that they were not responsible for their documents and when

they became responsible (at 18), all of them had either received citizenship or already left Italy. In short, their answer may tell only half of the story. The adults of the second generation may or may not have a lot of difficulties when they turn 18 and live in Italy as non-citizens. As adults, they may encounter problems in renewing their permits, acquiring permanent residence, travelling, and even experience fear of deportation as found in Bianchi's (2014) study. But the participants of this study cannot contribute to that part of the question. And this may be the reason for the incongruence on this aspect compared with previous studies. Nevertheless, the findings show that as underage non-citizens, their difficulties related to their status were mainly having to renew permits with their parents and not being able to easily travel as much as others.

Lastly, the interviews show that the process to become an Italian citizen based on birth in the country is relatively easy if one lives in Italy until 18 and if the person (or the parents) are aware that they have only one year to apply on the grounds of *jus soli*. The interviews show that people of the second generation can be penalised by parents' past actions. Participant 4 is an example of this, as he is now unable to fulfil the requirement of 18 years of uninterrupted residence because his family decided to move when he was 17, unaware of the consequences it would have had for him. Participant 3 left Italy very young and she knows that she is not eligible for Italian citizenship, hence why she did not apply. She is now a citizen of another European country but she said "Why should it be easier in a country where you are just a visitor compared to your own roots?" These results are similar to the findings of previous research where the people interviewed discussed the complicated requirements and their inability to fulfil them because of parents' past decisions, and their disagreement with the requirement of 18 years of uninterrupted residence (Andall, 2002; Colombo et. al, 2011).

6.2.2 Rights

By looking at the majority of the answers, it would seem like current legislation does not have significant effects on the dimension of rights. This is because out of five participants, only one had experiences that she perceived as inequality. Only one participant said he believes he did not have less access to rights. However, like in the dimension of 'status', the answers on the dimension of 'rights' are also limited by the characteristic of the participants, ie. the age they left Italy and/or acquired citizenship. And this is also shown in the answers of the participants that said that at the time, they thought they were equal to citizens.

As mentioned before, the fact that all the participants had either left Italy or acquired citizenship by the time they were 18, means that they never lived in Italy as non-citizens adults. Consequently, they have no experience of inclusion or exclusion in areas such as political participation, employment, welfare system, etc. Only participant 3 shared experiences of access to rights as a non-citizen. Her experiences are related to exchange studies, public sector jobs, social benefits and school trips. These are topics discussed in previous research as well. Bloemraad (2017) writes that research shows that in 2014 access to public sector employment was limited to nationals or European nationals in ten EU countries and other thirteen countries had partial citizenship restrictions. She mentions how the lower level of access to social benefits of non-citizens can be a reason for lower standard of living, compared to citizens. She also talks about scholarship and movement between jobs (Bloemraad, 2017, p. 537). Additionally, the answers of respondent 3 are similar to the ones of Bianchi's (2011) study where she argues that the current law has effects for the second generation on their access to national and European rights (Bianchi, 2011, p. 322). Lastly, the inability to take part in school trips mentioned by participant 2 and 3 are discussed in previous research too (Baldassar & Raffaeta`, 2018, pp. 258-259).

6.2.3 Identity

The answers of the participants revealed that all but one of them identify as "half Italian". The only participant that identifies as 100% Italian is participant 5, who is also the only one that left Italy at 30 and not as a teenager or young adult like the others. The citizenship status of the participants had no correlation with their identification or the way their identity is perceived by others. The results show that the participants think they should be Italian citizens because they are "born and raised there" but that whether they have Italian citizenship or not does not change the fact that they all consider themselves Italian. Moreover, they mostly all felt like they belonged to their communities.

These findings are different from the results of previous studies because they show that the current citizenship legislation does not have important effects on the way the second generation identifies, on their self-perception, and on their sense of belonging to the country. On the contrary, in her study, Andall (2002) argues that the second generation finds it difficult to identify themselves and experience feelings of not-belonging (Andall, 2002). Similar findings emerged from the study carried out by Baldassar and Raffaeta` (2018) where the authors argue that citizenship is the only tool available to the second generation to

consider themselves Italian, in a society that does not recognize mixed identities as Italian (Baldassar and Raffaeta`, 2018, p. 753).

A consideration should be made in regards to the difference in these results and those of previous studies, which is that in this study only people born in Italy were interviewed while the other studies considered the group of second generation as people that were either born in Italy or moved there as children. This can have an effect on the results as people born there may feel more included and Italian regardless of their citizenship, compared to those that were born elsewhere. This factor can be seen also in the study by Colombo, where the people interviewed that were born in Italy felt more Italian compared to those that were brought to Italy as children, regardless of citizenship (Colombo et. al, 2018, p. 343).

6.2.4 Inclusion and exclusion

As discussed by Brubaker, citizenship has a dual function, it creates internal inclusion and external exclusion. It is a concept that clearly and legally distinguishes citizens and foreigners (Brubaker, 1992, p. 21). The gathered material shows the duality of citizenship and the way citizenship plays a part in creating inclusion and exclusion of people that are part of a society. The current law of citizenship in Italy denies citizenship, until the age of 18, to people born in the country by foreign parents. The interviews show that this in some cases results in exclusion of the second generation. As stated by Brubaker (1992), one of the primary forms of exclusion towards non-citizens is exercised through territorial closure. Non-citizens are not free to travel outside and inside of the country as citizens are (Brubaker, 1992, pp. 23-24). The people interviewed mentioned that they did not travel a lot outside of Europe before the age of 18. However, in the few experiences they had, they talked about more security controls compared to citizens and one of the participants said lack of citizenship was the reason why he did not travel. Moreover, current legislation requires uninterrupted residence in Italy for 18 years, which means that if a member of the second generation wishes to become a citizen once he turns 18, he must reside in Italy until then. As a consequence, the second generation are excluded from opportunities that citizens have, such as taking part in exchange studies or working abroad for extended periods.

Another form of exclusion related to territorial closure is the right of residence, which for non-citizens is not unconditional (Brubaker, 1992, p. 24). The participants of the study shared experiences related to the renewal of their residence permits, which many of them did not

recall as a pleasant experience and that also caused them to not attend school. Their right of residence was connected to the one of the parents, since they were underage, which means that if the parent became illegal, the child would as well. This means that despite being born in the country, the members of the second generation are excluded from enjoying the same residence rights that the citizens of the country have, during their whole period of childhood.

Furthermore, there were other experiences shared by the interviewees that revealed conditions of exclusions. These are situations such as inaccessibility to certain jobs and social benefits. Brubaker (1992) argues that the exclusion of non-citizens from these goods and opportunities has an influence on the ability to shape one's life. This is also the response that some of the participants gave, saying that they think having or not citizenship has had an impact on their life. Only one of the participants said that citizenship did not have an influence on his future and that he never felt excluded.

The only dimension of citizenship where there seems to be a homogenous feeling of inclusion is the dimension of identity. Unlike their legal status and their access to rights, which are affected by their citizenship, the answers of the participants show that the second generation perceive itself as Italian, regardless of whether they are citizens or not. They feel included in the society even while they are non-citizens, they do not perceive differences compared to citizens and do not show connections between integration and citizenship.

Overall, one can say that, although some of the answers differ, the lack of citizenship that the second generation encounters results in forms of exclusion in their daily lives, which in some cases can have long term effects.

6.3 Validity

6.3.1 Internal validity

The sample of the study was initially planned to be approximately 6 to 10 interviews. This seemed like a reasonable number for the given time and size of the thesis. But the number of people interviewed in this study is smaller than the initial planned number. One may suggest that neither 6 nor 10 interviews could be sufficient to answer the research question of this thesis. However, this study is based on qualitative analysis. The scope of the thesis is to describe the experiences of the second generation in order to establish the consequences

caused by citizenship law. Hence, what is essential in the study is not the size of the sample but the content of the interviews.

There is no set rule for establishing the sample of a research. Morse (1994) suggests using at least 6 interviews for phenomenological studies, i.e., studies concerned with describing a phenomenon by looking at individual lived experiences. While other scholars recommend between five and twenty-five interviews for the same type of study (Guest et. al, 2006, p. 61). Even so, one may consider the number of interviews in this thesis insufficient by arguing that a higher number could have revealed different answers and contributed to obtaining valid answers to the research questions. This is one of the problems that were mentioned in the method chapter, when discussing challenges that may come up during the study. However, by looking at the interviews that were carried out and the data gathered from the interviews, it can be said that data saturation has occurred. According to Glass and Straut (1967) a category is saturated when no additional data is being found by carrying out further interviews. It is argued that saturation can be known to have happened after at least two cases. In this study, the answers of the participants are similar between each other and no significant new data or themes appeared after the third interview. Therefore, saturation can be considered to have happened and the data collected can be considered valid to answer the research question of the study (Guest et. al, 2006, pp. 64-65).

With that being said, the answers can be valid only to an extent, not because of the size of the sample but rather because of the characteristics of the interviewees. As discussed in section 6.1, the people interviewed have one characteristic in common which is that by the time they turned 18, they had all left Italy or obtained Italian citizenship. This means that none of the interviewees have an experience of living in Italy as adults without citizenship. The participants who currently do not have Italian citizenship (Respondents 3 and 4) have experiences of living in other European countries without EU citizenship, but not of Italy. This is relevant because a person with such characteristics can have different experiences compared to the people interviewed. It does not mean that the answers given by the participants are not valid, but that a person who has lived as a non-citizen in the country may have additional experiences that may have not come up in these interviews. And as a consequence, the results of the thesis can be incomplete.

6.3.2 External validity

The results of the study can be generalised to the second generation of Italy. This is due to the fact that the answers show similar themes and patterns among the participants. Additionally, during conversations the participants have shared experiences of others and discussed similarities or differences with their own experiences. Although this data was not reported in the study because it is not the result of personal experiences of the participants, it contributed to understanding that the experiences of the participants and the findings can be generalised to a larger sample that has the same characteristics.

External factors can have an impact on the validity of the study. For example, the political situation in Italy can change and as a result the next second generations may have experiences that are different from the ones of the participants.

The results may also be valid for the second generations of countries with similar citizenship laws, such as the Netherlands. However, there are domestic factors that can influence the experiences of the second generations of other countries, regardless of the citizenship law. Therefore, in order to safely say that the study can be generalised to countries with similar nationality legislation, it would be necessary to repeat the study in those settings.

7. Conclusion

7.1 Concluding remarks

The scope of the thesis was to find the effects that current citizenship law in Italy has for the people born in Italy to immigrant parents. The research question was “*What effects does current Italian citizenship law have on the second generation, in relation to the dimension of status, rights and identity?*” The study has produced material that shows that the second generation is affected by the current law, mostly in the dimensions of status and rights. And that the second generation is excluded from certain activities and opportunities.

Although the available previous studies did not focus on the dimensions of status and rights, the findings of this thesis regarding those dimensions are similar to those of previous research. Much of the previous studies focus on the dimension of identity, and the results between this thesis and previous ones are dissimilar when it comes to this dimension. Moreover, another interesting aspect that emerged is that members of the second generation are not always aware of their status as non-citizens until they are young adults, which

consequently mean they are not aware of their access, or lack of access, to certain rights. This is a factor that has not been brought up in previous research. This can be because previous research focused solely on the experiences that the participants had after they became adults.

The limitations of the study were mainly caused by the steps taken in selecting the sample for the interviews, which resulted in participants with similar characteristics that did not fully represent the second generation. The results of the thesis are conclusive but they may be incomplete because the sample represents only a part of the Italian second generation.

7.2 Research implications

From an academic point of view, the findings of the thesis fill a gap in existing research regarding the relation between citizenship and life experiences. This is done by providing a systematic assessment of the experiences lived by people that are born in a country and grow up as non-citizens in that country. The study shows the meaning that citizenship has for people and the effects that lack of citizenship can have.

From a social perspective, the thesis fills a gap in the discussion regarding the need for a reform and the introduction of elements of *jus soli* into Italian legislation. It does so by researching the experiences of the people affected by the law, which is an aspect that has been understudied. The interviews show that, unlike what is argued by some political parties, the citizenship law that is currently in force has effects on the second generation. The consequences are experienced in their daily lives and at times as long term effects. The thesis therefore contributes to the political discussion regarding *jus soli* and citizenship in Italy.

7.3 Further research

As already mentioned, the meaning that citizenship has in people's lives is a topic that has not been researched extensively. In particular, when it comes to the children of immigrants in Europe, there is little research that discusses their experiences related to their citizenship. Most of the existing research focuses on the United States. A suggestion for further research is therefore to reproduce this study in other countries of Europe. In countries with similar legislations, repeating the study can contribute to understanding whether the experiences lived by the second generation in Italy are only a result of their citizenship status, or of other

factors as well. Moreover, comparing the same study in two countries with similar laws can show if the experiences of the second generation are similar, thereby increasing or decreasing the generalisability of the results to other European countries with similar laws. In countries with inclusive citizenship laws, carrying out a similar study can produce findings that can then be compared to the ones of countries with exclusive laws. Such a comparative study can provide an understanding on how much citizenship status affects the lives of the second generation in Europe. In general, the suggestion for further research is to create studies that look at the connection between citizenship laws in European countries and the experiences of people born in that country by foreign parents. With the aim to understand if the incorporation of the jus soli principle into the laws of European countries is necessary to ensure the equal rights and opportunities of the second generation across Europe.

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