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MIM Working Paper Series 21: 3



MALMÖ UNIVERSITY
MALMÖ INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES
OF MIGRATION, DIVERSITY AND
WELFARE (MIM)

MIM Working Paper Series No 21: 3

Published

2021

Editor

Anders Hellström, anders.hellstrom@mau.se

Published by

Malmö Institute for Studies of Migration, Diversity and Welfare (MIM)

Malmö University

205 06 Malmö

Sweden

ISBN: 978-91-7877-244-5 (pdf)

DOI: 10.24834/isbn.9789178772445

Online publication

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ABSTRACT

Access to language training is often a challenge for persons granted international protection in EU-countries. This article investigates language provision for refugees from a policy and governance perspective. The goal is to explain the local differences in language training provisions in EU countries. We use a most different cases approach including Cosenza in Italy, Glasgow in Scotland, Malmö in Sweden and Nicosia in Cyprus. We find that the combination of state policies and governance do explain differences in local access to language training. The results also strongly indicate that local governments are dependent on support from higher levels of government to secure training opportunities. The state is still the main actor, and its choices of policies and governance instruments are central for understanding differences in language provision for refugees in EU member states.

Key Words

Integration; multi-level governance; refugees: language training

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INTRODUCTION

It is widely accepted that language skills are a key contributor to successful labour market integration (Chiswick & Miller, 2003; Kaida, 2013). Still, access to language training is often a challenge for many refugees granted international protection in EU-countries. Indeed, according to a UNESCO report (Hanemann, 2018), the most striking barrier for integration is the absence of language and literacy programmes for adult refugees and migrants in many contexts. A recent evaluation of the application of the recast Qualification Directive (2011/95/EU) found that language courses in most countries were limited in terms of the number of participants and in terms of quality (European Commission, 2019). A scarcity of funding was seen as the main problem and training was often provided and funded through NGOs. This article investigates language provision for refugees from a policy and governance perspective. The goal is to explain the differences in language training provisions in local settings in EU countries. We acknowledge that differences between local settings can be due to different national policies, as well as differences in national governance models. We limit the analysis to persons granted international protection, from now on named refugees, and the period of analysis is concentrated on the current situation, from the time of the ‘refugee crisis’ in 2015 until 2019. The situation reflects the governance of language training for newly arrives refugees. In the first section, we discuss and explain our analytical framework, in relation to previous research on policies and governance of integration. We argue that both policies and governance need to be considered to understand local integration provisions. Next, we explain our method – a most different cases approach - and how we collected the empirical material. Before turning to our case studies, we discuss the EU approach to language training for refugees, and conclude that there are policies and governance structures in place with an agenda to secure language training for refugee groups. The case studies are separated into two sections. The first deals with national policies and clarifies the agenda and ambitions of national governments to provide language training. The second deals with the governance aspect, and investigates what instruments, if any, the states use to ensure access to language training at the local level. In the final analysis and conclusion section, we describe the similarities and differences we found in the policy and governance dimensions, and what consequences they have for local level language provisions and by extension the access to language training services for refugees in the various localities.

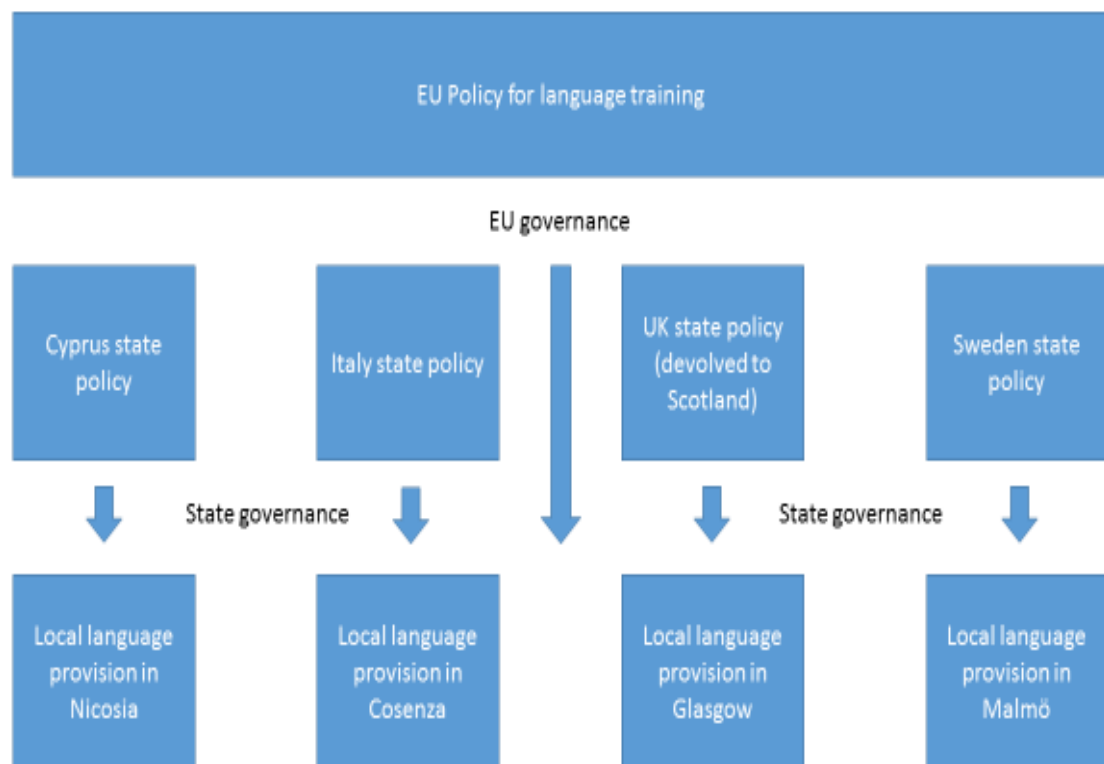
A policy and governance perspective on language training

It has been popular to argue for a local turn in migrant integration policies. The idea of a local turn is an important and significant critique of earlier understandings of integration policies that often have been defined in terms of national models of integration (Brubaker, 1992; Castles & Miller, 2009; Favell, 1998; Koopmans & Statham, 2000). The claim is that the state level approach is challenged by new forms of local integration policies (Alexander, 2007; Caponio & Borkert, 2010; Penninx, 2009). Researchers have provided a number of explanations for congruencies and incongruencies between local and national policies as well as between local policies in different cities (Bak Jørgensen, 2012; Scholten, 2013). Some scholars argue that there is a specific local dimension of integration policies characterised by a greater tendency to accommodate ethnic diversity and solve integration problems in pragmatic ways (Bak Jørgensen, 2012; Caponio & Borkert, 2010). Others have argued that local policies are uniquely shaped by the specific problem or political and policy settings in the different cities (Alexander, 2007; Mahnig, 2004). Scholten (2013) distinguishes between four ideal-type configurations of relations between government levels: centralist (top down), localist (bottom up), multilevel and decoupled (also see Scholten & Penninx, 2016). We acknowledge that Scholten uses these configurations as ideal types. However, we believe that it is important to stress that most policies have some form of multi-level governance structure in place and that all analysis of local integration policies must take into account higher levels of government and their ambitions to influence local level governments.

One important explanation for why many researchers point to a local turn in integration policy, and concur that national models of integration are becoming weaker, is that they look at the relationship between the local and the national level using frame analysis (see, for example, Bak Jørgensen, 2012; Scholten, 2013). If local governments are found to adopt official integration policies that are ideologically different to those of the central government, the conclusion is that national models of integration are disintegrating. What such analyses often miss are changes in actual integration measures and, in particular, policy changes in the legal-political domain, such as civic integration policies (Goodman, 2010) that have profound consequences for both local governments and immigrant newcomers in most countries. In light of such developments, some studies have argued against the local turn in finding that the state level has an increased ambition and indeed competency to influence local integration policies (Emilsson, 2015; Gerbhart, 2016). However, our ambition in this article is not to argue for or against a local turn of integration policies. We want to understand and explain access to local language provisions between localities by taking into account several levels of government. Unlike previous studies, we combine a policy and governance perspective in order

to explain local integration policies, specifically with respect to language training provisions for refugees. Local governments can have a policy agenda of their own, but lower levels of governments are by definition subordinate to higher level national governments, and can be influenced by supranational institutions as well. This is especially the case in countries with a unitary state structure where there is no constitutionally entrenched division of power. Here central government retains ultimate sovereignty, even if particular authority is delegated to subnational tiers of government' (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2017: 51). Our multi-level governance perspective is influenced by a theoretical model inspired by Etzioni (1975), which was originally developed to compare complex organisations. The model's main advantage is that it captures the power relations between those higher and lower in rank. Higher levels of governments can use three instruments to influence lower levels of government: coercive (laws and regulations), economic (funding) and normative (persuasion).

Figure 1. Analytical framework: multilevel policy and governance



In this article we analyse the multi-level governance in two different ways. First, we study the policies on three levels: the EU, the state and local level. Secondly, we investigate how the EU and member states actively try to influence language provision at the local level through laws and regulations, funding and persuasion. In this way we investigate language training policies from an ideological perspective, as well as the level of government interference in local provisions. Figure 1 below illustrates the analytical framework, considering both the multilevel policy and governance influence over local language provisions.

CASE SELECTION, METHOD AND RESEARCH DESIGN

In order to study the governance of language provision at the local level in the EU we selected four cities as our sites of field research: Nicosia in Cyprus, Cosenza in Italy, Glasgow in the UK and Malmö in Sweden.¹ These cases were selected as part of a larger project (Anonymised) which sought to compare integration of refugees at the local level in northern and southern Europe. While our four local areas are broadly comparable in terms of their size, their experiences with migrants and refugees differ radically. Displaced migrants have been accommodated in Glasgow since the mid twentieth century; however, in the main this was achieved through managed refugee resettlement programmes, which brought small numbers of recognised refugee groups to Scotland (Piacentini, 2012). This changed significantly with the (then) New Labour UK Government's the Dispersal Scheme, which was intended to 'share the burden' of accommodating asylum seekers across the UK and 'ease' the concentration of asylum seeking populations in the southeast of England (Hynes 2011). Malmö meanwhile has experienced large and continuous refugee immigration since the late 1980s. Today about one third of the population was born abroad of which many arrived as asylum seekers or families to persons granted international protection. In contrast, Cosenza in the southern Italian region of Calabria has, following long periods of emigration to the USA, Brazil, Canada and Argentina and to north-eastern Italian regions, during the last decade become a place of almost uninterrupted arrival of refugees (Fantozzi, 2011). Finally, in Nicosia, there has also been a steady rise of refugees in recent years. The absence of sufficient legislative and administrative structures have created unprecedented challenges for these new arrivals and their applications for asylum.

The main empirical materials used in the article are government documents and interviews with local stakeholders. In each country, field work and interviews have been concentrated, but not exclusively so, to Nicosia in Cyprus, Cosenza in

¹ The UK was still a member of the EU during the period in which the research took place.

Italy, Glasgow in Scotland, and Malmö in Sweden. Our discussion of these cases relies on a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis, and recognises that researchers are working in ethically fraught and logistically complex arenas. The inquiry therefore reports on the specific character of language learning and integration approaches, rather than purely uncovering what provision is (in theory) available. This relies on over eighty interviews with stakeholders including local, national and non-state actors, conducted via face-to-face meetings and audio-recorded as far as possible. Interviews were transcribed or documented using agreed formats and standards for handling the issue of multiple voices, interruptions, labelling of participatory and visual activities, and so forth. The research did not set out to test theories in a narrow sense but instead develops theories and concepts about migrant and refugee integration from empirical data. It uses an inductive and iterative approach that has the necessary openness for finding new and surprising practices. Field notes and transcripts were organised using NVivo qualitative data analysis software, to enable us to connect relevant themes and patterns in the data. The coding was developed inductively, using themes that emerge from the data rather than being imposed on the data in advance. Regarding personal data protection, as per our strict adherence to the ethics protocol, we made no reference to participant names or institutions.

Most different systems design

The four cases are all localities within the EU, but should be considered as most different cases. The cases differ when it comes to the history and geography of refugee reception. Italy and Cyprus are very different landing points for many refugees as they first enter the EU, while the UK and Sweden are contrasting final destinations for many. The countries also differ in their form of political economy (Esping-Andersen, 1990) and governance structure (Thijs, Hammerschmid & Palaric, 2017). The case study therefore adopts a most different systems design. The most different systems design identifies cases that are as different as possible. Such comparison ‘highlights structural and cultural differences while allowing them to be examined in terms of common criteria’ (Keating, 1991: 11). This individualizing comparison attempts ‘to contrast specific instances of a given phenomenon as a means of grasping the peculiarities of each case’ (Tilly, 1984: 82). This method ‘emphasizes contextual specificity, institutional diversity and the divergence of evolutionary pathways’ (Brenner, 2004: 18). Each case comprises a different ‘type’ of governing regime, representing particular power constellations. The concern is to ‘[specify] how different national and international circumstances shape regimes and their policy biases’ (Kantor et al., 1997: 349).

EU POLICIES AND GOVERNANCE OF LANGUAGE PROVISIONS FOR REFUGEES

Even though the main responsibility for refugee integration lies with the Member States, the EU plays a role through the legislative framework for the reception of refugees and in supporting integration measures taken by national and local governments as well as by civil society (Foti, 2019). According to the Qualification Directive (2011/95/EU Art. 34), beneficiaries of international protection are entitled to ‘access to integration facilities’.

In order to facilitate the integration of beneficiaries of international protection into society, Member States shall ensure access to integration programmes which they consider to be appropriate so as to take into account the specific needs of beneficiaries of refugee status or of subsidiary protection status, or create pre-conditions which guarantee access to such programmes.

The Qualification Directive is a legal act and part of the supranational Common European Asylum System (CEAS). A Directive obliges member states to achieve a particular result but does not dictate the means by which it is to be achieved. The question is what access to integration facilities entails when it comes to language training. Thus, while the qualifications directive is a coercive governance instrument, the goal when it comes to language provisions for refugees is quite diffuse and difficult to follow up and enforce.

There are also softer forms of EU governance that have developed outside of the supranational governance structure. The EU has no formal responsibility for immigrant integration (Article 79(4) Lisbon Treaty), but a policy agenda has developed through soft non-binding measures, including cooperation, monitoring and funding (Geddes and Scholten, 2016). In 2004 the Council of Europe adopted the Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration, where the fourth principle specifies that ‘basic knowledge of the host society’s language, history, and institutions is indispensable for integration’. The European Commission also introduced an Action Plan on the integration of third country nationals in 2016 to add weight to the common policy framework. To achieve the ambitions of the integration policy agenda, the EU uses both economic and normative instruments. The key EU fund targeting refugees is the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). Other EU funds, such as the Social Fund and the Structural and Investment Funds are also (re)directed to support the integration agenda (Foti, 2019). While the integration policy agenda is perhaps more specific compared to the Qualifications Directive, policy implementation is non-binding, relying on economic and normative governance instruments.

STATE POLICIES ON LANGUAGE TRAINING FOR REFUGEES

In this section we study official state level policies on language training for refugees in Cyprus, Italy, Scotland, and Sweden.

Our first country case, *Cyprus*, stands out as an EU member state that is currently without a coherent integration policy. Cyprus approach to migration and integration policies has its origins in the manual labour shortage after the ‘economic miracle’ (Christodoulou 1992) that took place in the 1980s, which caused the local economy to rapidly develop and expand. Since then, Cyprus has employed a ‘guest worker’ model, with work permits linked to specific employers and granted on an annual basis and for a maximum period of five years. The guest worker model was extended by default to refugees, something that is evident in the lack of integration policies. The lack of language training services reflects the idea that refugees “are not here to stay”. One of our informants told us that language training is undermined by an anti-immigrant discourse, which argues that Cyprus has already given refugees so much. To provide language courses would, in this perspective, send the wrong signals that refugees are welcome.

Some integration policies were introduced in 2010 in the framework of the first National Action Plan (NAP) on integration (2010-2012), which included a priority pillar on education and language training (Trimikliniotis & Demetriou, 2011). The NAP was revised in 2013 and covered a period of 3 years. From the expiration of the latest NAP until now, Cyprus does not have an action plan on integration. Although a call for proposals for a NAP on integration for the years 2020-2022 was published in January 2018 with the deadline set for September 2018, there is still not an available draft (ECRI, 2019).

Some language classes are nevertheless available, although most provisions are not catered towards refugees. The state provides language training through the Adult Education Centres (AECs), the State Institutes for Further Education (SIFE) and the School of Modern Greek of the University of Cyprus. AECs classes take place in primary schools around Cyprus. While AECs are not specifically targeted at refugees, they do not exclude the group either as they carry no eligibility criteria. SIFEs also offer Greek classes for non-native speakers. Migrants can attend these classes at no cost. The School of Modern Greek of the University of Cyprus in Nicosia provides up to three scholarships for asylum seekers and refugees per class. Asylum seekers and refugees tend to make up about 15-20% of those attending (10-15 in classes of about 70 students).

The *Italian* state has an integration policy where language training is one important aspect (Dal Monte et al., 2016; DI Maio, 2018). Language skills are today one of the requirements to gain a long term residence permit, which has increased the emphasis on language training for refugees and other migrants. Language skill requirements were introduced 2009 in the so-called ‘security package’ (Law No. 94

of 15 July 2009). This requires all migrants who applied for a residence permit of at least one year to sign an 'integration agreement' with a state authority (the Prefecture) to learn basic Italian (level A2 of The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) (Article 4-bis of Legislative Decree No. 286/1998).

To ensure that migrants can meet the language requirements and to certify that the migrant has achieved the necessary skills, Public Provincial Centres for Adult Education (CPIA) were established in 2014/2015. These centres provide language courses for non-Italian nationals as well as preparing Italians and foreign nationals to obtain a diploma for further studies. The language training provided to refugees is designed to provide only a basic level of language knowledge (namely, the A2 level of the CEFR). The current system does not really differentiate between the need for basic literacy and Italian language learning. Each CPIA provides a 200 hour course to achieve A2 level. Of the 200 hours, just 20 are reserved to support activities for those students who are unable to begin the A1/A2 course (usually because they are illiterate).

Language training is also provided within the reception centres where refugees are registered, within the umbrella of the SPRAR system (Protection System for Refugees and Asylum Seekers). The idea is that a part of the day is dedicated to school attendance within the CPIA and the remaining hours should be spent on personalized training in the host centres. A minimum of 10 hours per week should be reserved for language training. Language training in the reception centres has recently been undermined by the so-called Salvini decree (Law no. 132/2018), which excludes asylum seekers from access to language training and reduced the overall funds for integration measures at the centres.

In the UK, the devolved nations have competences over education. This means that the Scottish government is responsible for integration in terms of language policy in *Scotland*, which has a national strategy for the teaching of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). This strategy, first published in 2007, provides the framework against which ESOL delivery is resourced and monitored. It also forges connections with other policy areas, including the Scottish Government's Economic Strategy, its Adult Education guidance and Community Planning guidance. The current ESOL strategy clearly states that 'all Scottish residents, for whom English is not a first language have the opportunity to access high quality English language provision so that they can acquire the language skills to participate in Scottish life' (Scottish Government 2015:6). The ESOL landscape is complex, encompassing a range of providers and stakeholders.

Unlike the rest of the UK, the Scottish Government has waived ESOL fees for both asylum seekers and refugees. This means that an asylum seeker, refugee or EU migrant have parity of access to provision. However, there is no official policy for providing language training for refugees as a distinct group in the Scottish context. ESOL is available to anyone whose first language is not English. Language is

specifically mentioned in Scotland's national refugee integration strategy 'New Scots', now in its second iteration, but the objectives are more focused on opportunities to learn English rather than specific achievements or goals set for displaced migrants. There are, therefore, no nationally prescribed expectations in terms of how many hours of teaching refugees should receive and what level of proficiency they should achieve.

Swedish language training and education for adult immigrants started in the 1960s with migrant workers in mind. Over time it has become more oriented towards newly arrived refugees and their families (Righard, Emilsson & Öberg, 2019). Today, municipalities are obliged to ensure that all residents aged 16–64 years that do not possess basic Swedish language proficiency can access municipal adult education in Swedish for immigrants (SFI). Today SFI is a highly formalised education, with national course curricula, including the School Act (SFS 2010:800), the Ordinance of adult education (SFS 2011:1108), the Ordinance about program curriculum for adult education (SKOLFS 2012:101) and the course curriculum of Swedish for immigrants (SKOLFS 2017:91). The education is voluntary, free of charge for the participants, and should on average be at least 15 hours per week during a four-week period. Courses should normally be available within three months after a person has registered as domiciled in a municipality, but for refugees the goal is that it should be made available after one month.

Swedish integration policy make a sharp distinction between general policies that is to be adapted to the population diversity and special measures that only apply to the newly arrived refugees. The most important targeted measure is the introductory program coordinated by the Public Employment Service, which last for 24 months and include language training, civic orientation and labour market preparatory activities. The idea behind the program is to increase the country specific human capital and make the refugees ready for the labour market. Since participation in an introduction program is the only way to get benefits, almost all refugees partake in in the program and, thus, the Swedish for immigrant course.

To summarize, Italy, Scotland and Sweden all have policies in place to help immigrants learn the national language. In Italy, language training opportunities is tied to the language requirements to receive permanent residence permits. There are courses within the adult education system that are complemented with specific language training for refugees. Scotland has a system where Colleges provide language training for all non-English speakers, combined with courses run by local authorities and more informal community based language training. In Sweden, all municipalities are obliged to offer language training as part of the adult education according to a national standard to all persons speaking a non-Scandinavian language. For refugees, language training is a part of the introduction program almost all refugees take part in. Cyprus currently lack a policy to offer refugees language training, but offers some limited opportunities to take part of language

training at general educational institutions. In the next section we take a look at how the policies are implemented in practice, and discuss how this affects access to language training at the local level.

STATE-LEVEL GOVERNANCE AND ACCESS TO LOCAL LANGUAGE TRAININGS

As outlined in previous sections, the state has three governance instruments to influence service delivery on lower levels of government. They can use laws and regulations to ‘force’ local governments, use economic means as carrots for implementation, or use normative instruments such as persuasion and soft forms of governance to influence local decision-making. Actors at the local level can also decide on policies and services by their own account.

Cyprus and Nicosia

The Cyprus state lacks a long-term strategy as well as a coordinated approach to provide language training for refugees. The three state institutions that provide language training services do so without collaboration or policy coordination with the local authorities. They receive funding from the state and they charge a small fee from the students. The language courses provided by the SIFE and AECs do not tend to target refugees, and there is no data on the actual numbers of refugees who take advantage of these opportunities. The School of Modern Greek of the University of Cyprus also targets non-Greek speakers and it provides up to three scholarships for asylum seekers and refugees per class. Asylum seekers and refugees tend to make up about 15-20% of those attending (10-15 in classes of about 70 students). Except for the generic language courses there are no regulations, nor funds, to force or stimulate local actors to provide language training for refugees. On the contrary, the main approach from the state is to create a hostile environment. The SIFE’s afternoon Greek language classes for unaccompanied minors is the one exception, and has been offered to minors after a ministerial decision in 2017.

Even though the local level governments, for example in Nicosia, do have a more positive outlook on providing language training to refugees, they don’t seem to have the capacity or will to cover the demand. As the municipalities face a growing population of refugees, they have sought out alternative ways to raise funding and support integration. Most of the language training courses rely on EU funding where local authorities provide language training in collaboration with NGOs. For example, the municipality of Nicosia works with the Municipal Multipurpose Centre, an NGO, and uses EU funds in order to implement integration programmes such as child day care and language training for third

country nationals. The number of participants in these kinds of projects are often low. Due to an absence of national policy and minimal collaboration among the stakeholders, there is also a lack of sustainability as language training is provided sporadically and on a short-term project basis, with no long-term evaluation of any quality or outcomes.

The interviews with local stakeholders revealed a number of challenges in teaching Greek to refugees. Language training is not suitably tailored and/or accessible for the diverse refugee group, in terms of gender, educational background, age, literacy and residence. There is limited or no teacher training, which makes it more difficult to cater to these specific needs. Classes can include anyone from university graduates to those without basic literacy skills. The classes often end up being either too basic or too advanced for the students, depending on their educational background. In line with the study conducted by Spaneas et al. (2018), we also identified an inequality between those who live in cities and those who live in rural or suburban areas. In the past, this was mitigated to a certain extent by a project which was funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), (2012-2015) and implemented by third sector organizations in collaboration with the AECs. In the framework of this project they used the premises of primary schools across Cyprus, after school hours and this gave a broad geographical scope. All other language training courses offered by governmental bodies, municipalities and NGOs, even those funded by the AMIF, have a limited scope and are mainly offered in urban areas (Spaneas et al 2018).

Italy and Consenza

The Italian government require refugees to learn the language in order to secure a long-term residence permit. This is a form of coercive governance instruments directed at individuals rather than local governments. However, in order to facilitate language acquisition, they have set up an infrastructure where they fund and regional partnerships (Bianco & Ortiz Cobo, 2019). Two main institutions provide language training in parallel. The Provincial Centres for Adult Education (CPIA) are general Adult Education Centres, also open to migrants. This education system is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR), which allocate funds to Regional School Offices according to the number of adults enrolled, and a small part directly for implementation of specific projects. Thus, language education is organised in regional networks, who in turn cooperate with local municipalities (MIUR, 2018). The staff training, however, are financed by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund 2014-2020 (AMIF) as part of the more general national objective of integration of the immigrant population (CPIA Cosenza, 2018). The second language training institution is the SIPROIMI (former known as SPRARs), which provides language training to recognised refugees and

unaccompanied minors only. It is financed by the National Fund for Asylum handled by the Ministry of the Interior (SPRAR, 2018). The CPIs and SIPROIMIs can cooperate with each other by re-allocating part of their resources for Italian language learning activities.

Refugees have access to free language training at CPIAs on a voluntary basis. In 2019, Cosenza offered language training at 11 different locations with a capacity of 900 students. In the SIPROIMI network the number of available study places is limited, and can differ between regions. Overall, access to language training in Italy is reasonably high. Our fieldwork in Cosenza, however, revealed deficiencies and challenges in the provision of language training. The teaching is not adapted to different needs and educational backgrounds, and therefore attendance is inconsistent and dropout rates are high. Participation is hampered by the fact that the language training is often located in urban suburbs with large immigrant populations or in outlying areas that are difficult to reach by public transport. Some classes are overcrowded, particularly those leading to a lower secondary education certificate.

Scotland and Glasgow

Language training provision in Scotland for adults is divided into three strands: (1) Further Education courses at colleges (2) local authority provision and (3) 'community' settings (including third sector and voluntary courses). Only the first of these is regulated at the national level and there is no formal expectation placed on local governments to provide a minimum level of language provision.

In Scotland, the precedent set in both the 2007 and 2015 ESOL Strategies was for English language teaching at the local level to be coordinated through Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) and much of the publicly funded provision was delivered through these partnerships. In this model, different types of ESOL providers, including further education (FE) colleges, local authorities and third sector groups formed a partnership, which received resourcing from the Scottish Funding Council, and distributed funds amongst the partners (Scottish Government 2015). Local government also received funding through local authority block grants for Community Learning and Development (CLD), through which they were expected to form partnerships with local voluntary groups and businesses (CPPs), which were involved in providing community development activities, including ESOL classes. Through CPPs and CLD providers, the 2015 ESOL Strategy model created an infrastructure in which Scottish Government provided guidance (through Education Scotland) and resourcing (through the Scottish Funding Council) for ESOL provision but left the allocation of resources, delivery and coordination to local-level stakeholders.

The organisation of the funding from the Scottish government has changed several times during the last decade, but maintained the level of funding at around £1.45 million per year. As the result of discussions with Education Scotland, in 2018 it was determined that all ESOL funds should be channelled directly to FE colleges, which then have the responsibility for allocating funds to community partners. The SFC saw this change as an opportunity to (a) provide a sustained funding pathway and (b) formalise a governance infrastructure, with colleges taking the lead.

The Scottish Government also encourages local authorities to set up additional ESOL classes, and this need is most pressing in Glasgow. Glasgow City Council contributes money towards ESOL classes that are run by the Workers' Educational Association (WEA), Glasgow Life and the Glasgow ESOL Forum. Since 2015, the UK government has also become a major funder of ESOL in Scotland by providing resourcing through the Vulnerable Person's Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) for resettled refugees. The Home Office provides specific funds for this but again there are no conditions as to how the money is spent and what kind of classes are offered. Local governments can draw on specific funding from VPRS of up to £850 per refugee per year for ESOL provision, with the only stipulation that the Local Authority provides a minimum of eight hours tuition a week (Home Office 2017). The introduction of the VPRS has provided participating local authorities with the flexibility to design ESOL provision in ways that best suits the needs of their learners. However, it has also created inequality as resettled refugees are provided with a bespoke language service whereas those with other immigration statuses must compete to access limited ESOL provision.

Demand for ESOL in Glasgow has remained particularly high with persistent issues relating to accessibility and waiting times across the city (Meer et al 2019). Refugees who have not arrived via the resettlement route often struggle to access college ESOL courses. This problem is mostly keenly felt in Glasgow where there is a backlog and people waiting to access the ESOL courses they want at college. Further Education ESOL places are sometimes filled by people with less precarious migration statuses, leading to fewer places available to refugees. The post-2018 changes to the ESOL funding infrastructure included preferences either towards accredited forms of ESOL or towards classes in which progression could be demonstrated. However, this placed non-accredited courses (college or community) and non-credit bearing literacy courses in a vulnerable position.

Sweden and Malmö

State regulation of Swedish for immigrants has increased over time. Requirements to have authorised teachers, national tests and standardised grades, as well as requirements to have a responsible principal, are some of the regulations that municipal providers need to comply with. Municipalities are also required to offer differentiated study pathways, as well as flexible teaching hours. The ambitions from the state is to have a standardised national model of Swedish for immigrants that is similar across the country. The education consists of four courses, A, B, C and D that can be studied along three study pathways, dependent on the student's educational backgrounds, conditions and goals. Study pathway 1 is for students with little or no educational background, this includes those who are illiterate and students with limited reading and writing skills. Study pathway 2 is for students with longer school backgrounds and who can use the Latin alphabet. Study pathway 3 is aimed at students who have studied at the university level and can use the Latin alphabet. The courses have a grading system (a, b, c, d, or e) and the knowledge requirements for each course are the same regardless of the study pathway. All students should be given the opportunity to study up to and including course D within their pathway, which corresponds to B1/B1+ in the European framework.

The municipality can offer courses through its municipal adult education or through a subcontractor; and quite a few choose to procure the service from non-municipal actors (Skolverket, 2018a). Generally, all adult education, including language training, is financed through the municipal budget. However, refugee reception and integration is financed by the state. This means that there is a system for state compensation to the municipalities for costs related to the reception of new arrivals and their family members, including a special post for language education. Municipalities receive a flat-rate compensation for every person eligible to participate in the Introduction Program (SFS 2010:1122). In 2017, over 163 000 students participated in the Swedish for immigrants education (Skolverket, 2018). The average cost per students was about SEK 40 000:- in 2017.

The governance model is clearly a top down model with local level implementation. The model is supported by two state agencies. The National Agency for Education is in charge of the details of the curriculum. They also have a mission to follow up and evaluate Swedish for immigrants, where they write yearly reports on the personnel and students (Skolverket, 2018, 2019) and collect statistics that are publicly available.² The abundance of statistical information about costs, students per teacher, type of provider, drop-out rates, and student results are used as indicators for benchmarking and is a form of soft governance. The School

² Found here: <https://www.skolverket.se/skolutveckling/statistik/sok-statistik-om-forskola-skola-och-vuxenutbildning?sok=SokA>

Inspectorate conduct quality reviews in municipalities every few years that occasionally is compiled in national reports on how municipalities live up to the ambitions decided by the state and state agencies. In 2017 the School Inspectorate did supervision reports in Malmö (Skolinspektionen, 2017). After some criticisms, Malmö did some adjustments which were approved by the agency.

Access to language training is not a problem according to the informants we met during the field work in Malmö. Our field studies also confirm that local municipalities seek to conform to the national regulations. Two contested topics arose significantly in the conversations: how to balance between a labour market and a language focus, and how to handle students with no or low educational background from their home countries. Overall, the focus is on improving the quality and results, rather than access to language training.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

The ambition of this article is to explain the differences in language training provisions in local settings in EU countries. We want to understand how and why the provision differ at the local level by studying four EU-countries and one local case per country. We use a multilevel governance framework that acknowledge that local provisions could be affected both by policies and governance instruments at national and supra national levels of government.

If we look at the supranational level, we see that the EU does have a formal policy in place to improve access to language training in member states. However, the coercive instrument in place, the qualifications directive, is unclear as to what the responsibilities are when it comes to providing language training. There is also non-binding cooperation in the field of integration. Here, the EU-Commission uses soft forms of governance through normative and economic instruments to improve access to language training. In two of our local cases, Malmö and Glasgow, we find no impact of supra national policies and governance on local language provisions. In Italy, EU-funds are used to educate language education teachers. The situation is very different in Nicosia, Cyprus, where the state level lack both policies and ambitions to provide language training to refugees. The main approach in Cyprus is to create a hostile environment in order to repel potential asylum seekers. Language training opportunities therefore rely almost entirely on initiatives from local governments and NGOs, cofounded by the EU.

Table 1. Policy, governance and access to local language training for refugees

	State policy	Primary funder	Multi-level Governance	Access	Local variations
Nicosia, Cyprus	No	EU	No	Low	High
Cosenza, Italy	Yes	State	Decentralised	Medium-High	Medium
Glasgow, Scotland	Yes	State and local government	Decentralised	Medium	Medium
Malmö, Sweden	Yes	State	Top-Down	High	Low

In Italy, Scotland and Sweden there are national policies in place with the ambition of giving refugees access to language training. The Italian policy is connected to the language requirements for residence permits, and focus on giving students basic language skills. Formal language education within adult education is complemented with more informal language training in reception centres. In Scotland and Sweden there are policies in place that on paper are ambitious. In Scotland, there is a clear ambition and agenda to provide language training for refugees. Over time the provisions have gone in a direction of more formalised language training in Colleges rather than community based training. Sweden stands out since language training is considered a right for all non-Scandinavian speaking migrants. For refugees, language education is part of the introduction program that aims to upgrade the country specific human capital among the newly arrived refugees. The conclusion is that while the state in Cyprus show little interest in providing access to language training to refugees, the other three states share an ambition for refugees to have access to language training services. Despite similar policy ambitions in Italy, Scotland and Sweden the local differences between Cosenza, Glasgow and Malmö are large, indicating the importance of also looking at the national governance instruments.

Since Cyprus lacks any state policy, while funding some generic language education, access to language training for refugees is limited and relies on sporadic and temporary projects. The local government of Nicosia lack the will or capacity to compensate for the absence of state support. Swedish language training has a clear top-down governance model. Even though local governments are responsible for service delivery, they must comply with many detailed regulations that leaves little room for local variations. These coercive governance instruments, together with secure funding to the municipalities per person, rather than lump sums, do secure access to language training in all localities. In Scotland, the government hands down funds to local colleges which coordinate and distribute the funds on the local

level. These funds are limited, and therefore refugees tend to be crowded out by other migrant groups. The availability of courses will be dependent upon several factors including location and whether the refugee has arrived via the asylum system or as a resettled refugee. In addition, both the UK government and local governments provide funds for targeted language training to refugees. However, compared to Sweden the funds per student is much smaller. This complex funding system do provide opportunities for refugees even though access can hardly be guaranteed. In some ways the Italian governance system is similar to that found in Scotland. The Italian government provides funding to regions, which in turn allocate resources to the local levels. Access to language training seems quite good, as no one can be denied language training within the adult education system, and there are specific courses for refugees as well. Both the Scottish and Italian governments, thus, do provide funds to implement their policies but leave it up to lower levels of governance to work out how the training should be organised, resulting in unequal access depending on geography. Table 1 summarize these findings.

We find no evidence of a local turn of integration policies. The combination of state policies and governance do explain differences in local access to language training for refugees. The results strongly indicate that local governments are dependent on support from higher levels of government to secure local language training opportunities. Local differences in access to and content of language training for refugees are, thus, not explained on the local level. The state is still the main actor, and its choices of policies and governance instruments are central for understanding differences in language provision for refugees in EU member states. Especially since the EU, so far, cannot compensate for the large local differences across its territory.

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