

Saint Petersburg State University

Faculty of Sociology

Master in European Studies

**Sociological Analysis of Everyday Life Practices of Asylum-Seekers  
and Refugees from Northern Africa in Italy**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The thesis explores the everyday life practices of refugees and asylum-seekers in Italy whose countries of origin are mainly from north Africa, with the aim of gaining insights into their experiences, challenges, and coping strategies. The research employs a quantitative research approach, utilizing a structured questionnaire (survey) to gather standardized data from a sample of North African refugees and asylum-seekers residing in Italy.

The study investigates various dimensions of everyday life practice, and the findings contribute to the existing knowledge on the experiences and challenges faced by North African refugees and asylum-seekers in Italy, with a particular focus on their everyday life practices.

**Keywords:** everyday life practice, refugee and asylum-seeker, Italy, integration

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In recent years, Italy has seen a significant influx of African refugees and asylum-seekers, leading to a growing and diverse population of individuals seeking safety, security, and better opportunities. The everyday life practices of these individuals play a crucial role in their integration and well-being in their new host country. Understanding their experiences and the challenges they face is essential for effective policy-making and the provision of appropriate support services. This thesis aims to investigate the everyday life practices of North African refugees and asylum-seekers in Italy, employing a quantitative research approach through the use of a questionnaire.

The objective of this study is to gain a clear understanding of the experiences from various aspects of the everyday lives of African refugees and asylum-seekers in Italy. By utilizing a structured questionnaire, the thesis aims to examine the demographic characteristics, daily routines, housing situations, language and communication challenges, education opportunities, employment experiences, social and community activities, access to healthcare, legal documentation and residency processes, and the coping strategies employed by this population.

The thesis contains two main research questions on everyday life practice of North African refugees and asylum seekers in Italy.

1. What are the main challenges for the target North African refugees and asylum-seekers in accessing accommodation, education, employment, and social support services in Italy?
2. What coping strategies do the target North African refugees and asylum-seekers employ to overcome challenges and foster social integration in Italy?

To answer the research questions, the thesis will conduct a quantitative survey to the target groups. The quantitative approach, through the administration of a questionnaire, enables the collection of standardized data from groups of African refugees and asylum-seekers. This approach allows for statistical analysis and the identification of patterns, trends, and relationships among different variables. The findings will provide a comprehensive understanding of the everyday life practices and experiences of North African refugees and asylum-seekers in Italy, offering valuable insights into their integration processes and identifying areas that require further attention and support.

# **Chapter 1. Theoretical Framework**

## **1.1 Transnationalism**

Transnationalism generally focuses on connections and practices across borders, therefore transcending the national space as the primary reference point for identities and activities (World Migration, IOM 2008; Vertovec, S. 2004)

Transnationalism emphasizes the interconnectedness between origin and host countries, viewing migration as a dynamic process that involves the maintenance of social, cultural, and economic ties across borders. It helps explore how African refugees in Italy maintain connections with their home countries, engage in transnational activities, and navigate transnational identities while adapting to their new lives in Italy.

## **1.2 Social Integration**

By raising up the concept of assimilation, Valle and Burgess in 1921 started to shed light on the study of social integration. They describe integration as ‘process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitude of other persons and groups and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life’ (Park, Robert E.; Burgess, Ernest, 1969)

The social integration focuses on the processes through which refugees become part of the host society. The newcomers or minorities are incorporated into the social structure of the host society (Alba, Richard; Nee, Victor ,1997). It explores factors such as language acquisition, cultural adaptation, access to education and employment, and social interactions with the local population. This framework helps understand the challenges and opportunities African refugees encounter in their efforts to integrate into Italian society.

### **1.3 Human Rights and Legal Frameworks**

This framework focuses on the legal and human rights aspects of refugee protection. It examines international and national legal frameworks, including refugee rights, asylum procedures, and access to justice. It helps analyze how the legal status and protection granted to African refugees in Italy impact their daily lives, rights, and overall well-being.

### **1.4 Critical Race Theory (CRT)**

Critical race theory is often used in sociology to explain social, political, and legal structures, mainly focusing on race, and experiences of racism (Christian, et al., 2019) (Yosso, et al.,2005) and it is a cross-disciplinary examination. Critical race theory explores how racism and structural inequalities shape the experiences of marginalized groups. When applied to African refugees in Italy, this framework

helps examine the ways in which racial dynamics and discrimination intersect with their experiences, including access to resources, opportunities, and social inclusion.

### **1.5 Social Capital**

Bourdieu firstly defined social capital as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition” (Bourdieu,1985)

The framework of social capital focuses on the resources embedded within social networks and relationships. It examines how African refugees in Italy establish and utilize social connections to navigate daily challenges and access support. This framework helps understand the role of social networks, both within the refugee community and with the host society, in providing practical assistance, emotional support, and opportunities for integration.

### **1.6 Cultural Identity and Adaptation**

The cultural identity and adaptation theory explore how African refugees negotiate their cultural identities while adapting to the host society's norms and practices.

Cross-cultural adaptation is defined as “the dynamic process by which individuals, upon relocating to new, unfamiliar, or changed cultural environments, establish (or



re-establish) and maintain relatively stable, reciprocal, and functional relationships with those environments” (Kim, 2001; Liu, 2017).

It examines the processes of acculturation, biculturalism, and the preservation of cultural heritage. This framework helps analyze how cultural factors influence various aspects of daily life, including family dynamics, education, language use, religious practices, and social interactions.

### **1.7 Power and Resistance**

The power and resistance framework analyzes the power dynamics between African refugees and the dominant institutions and structures in society. It examines how power asymmetries affect their daily experiences, including encounters with authorities, access to rights and services, and the negotiation of their legal status. This framework helps identify forms of resistance and agency employed by refugees to challenge oppressive systems and assert their rights.

## **Chapter 2. Profile of Refugees and asylum-seekers in Italy**

### **2.1 General Profile**

Italy has been one of the most popular destinations for refugees and asylum-seekers, due to the factor of its geography. It initially receives refugees and asylum seekers who reach Europe, some of whom may have the intent to cross the border from Italy to other EU countries. Over 500,000 people have been seeking asylums in Italy since 2014, including tens of thousands of unaccompanied minors.

According to the U.N. refugee agency (UNHCR), in 2022, 105,129 migrants reached Italy in total, up from 67,477 in 2021 and 34,154 in 2020. The record number of arrivals in a single year was 181,436 in 2016. Some 13,386 of the migrants in 2022 were registered as unaccompanied minors.

In the year of 2021, Italy received over 165,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, among which there were over 12,000 unaccompanied children in reception facilities. The majority of them are from Nigeria, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Mali, Somalia and Gambia.

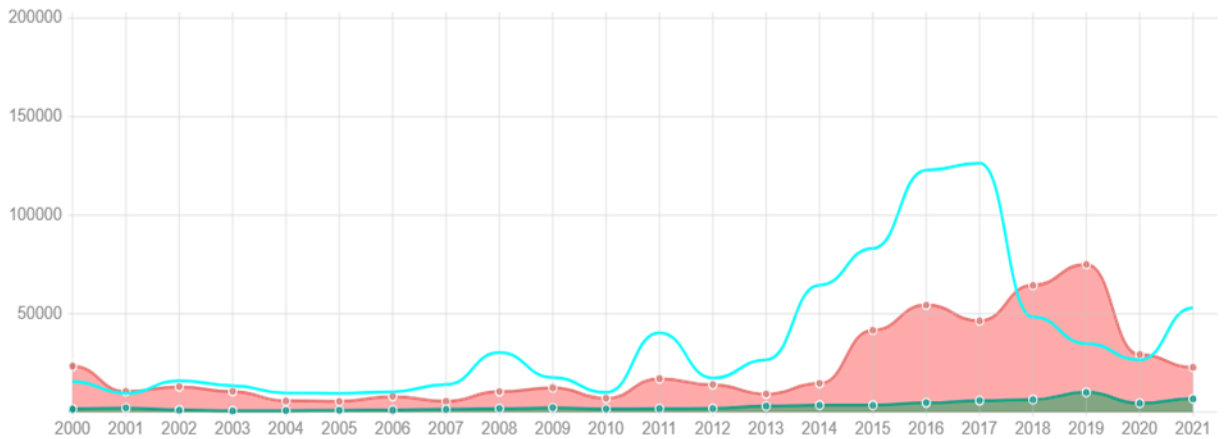
The U.N. refugee agency (UNHCR) claimed that in 2022, among the immigrants who landed in Italy through the Mediterranean Sea, 51% are from Libya, 31% from Tunisia and 15% from Turkey. Others include the citizens from Lebanon, Algeria

and Syria, etc. In 2022, most of the arrivals are from Egypt (20,542), followed by Tunisia (18,148), Bangladesh (14,982), Syria (8,594) and Afghanistan (7,241).

The refugees and asylum-seekers in Italy are mostly from African and Asian countries. And in the case of African migrants, the most popular way of travelling across the Mediterranean Sea is crossing through Libyan coasts, among whom the majorities are from Ghana, Senegal, Nigeria and Eritrea. Meanwhile, in recent year, smugglers started to use some other alternate routes such as Egypt and the Balkan route.

The largest groups of African immigrants are from North Africa. In recent years, by country of origin, most of the arrivals are from Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, and Algeria.

Figure 1. Incoming asylum applications in Italy 2000 to 2021



Source: WorldData.info

Blue line: the total number of asylum applications (first applications + reviews).

Green line: the number of recognized refugees

Red line: rejected applications

## **2.2 Legal Framework and Role of NGOs**

The migration and asylum matters are generally based on multilevel governance and independent institutional cooperation.

The Presidency of the Council of Ministries coordinates the overall migration policies. The Presidency also oversees the respect of rights of racial, religious and ethnic minorities through its Department for Equal Opportunities and the National Office for Racial Antidiscrimination (UNAR), which directly report to the Presidency. Their aim is to monitor the respect of rights, guarantee gender and racial equality and equal treatment and combat all forms of discrimination.

The Ministry of Interior works with the implementation of migration policies and the enforcement of migration legislation. Meanwhile, the practical coordination and implementation of migration policies is undertaken by the Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration through three Central Directorates (CD for Immigration and Asylum policy, CD for Civil Services Immigration and Asylum, CD for Civil Rights, Citizenship and minorities), and by the Department of Public Security.

The Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration takes the responsibility to implement a general policy-making in the numerous fields of migration and asylum.

The Ministry of Interior is the authority responsible for the management European funds on migration.

The department of Civil Liberties and Immigration of the Ministry of the Interior has a multilevel national working group whose general task is to prepare a national plan aimed to achieve the effective integration for the beneficiaries of protection international and to coordinate activities among stakeholders every two years, with regard to integration policy. This plan covers in education, employment, vocational training, language training, and healthcare, accommodation, recognition of foreign qualifications and family reunification.

As of the asylum, the National Commission for Asylum outlines and coordinates the activities of the Territorial Commissions for Asylum, which are in charge of asylum applications. The Department of Public Security - in particular with its Central Directorate for Immigration and Border Police – is specifically responsible for all activities connected to public order and security, such as controlling and tackling irregular migration, border control, implementation of expulsions, release or renewal of permits of stay.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Policies is in charge of integration measures such as access to labor market and to social services.

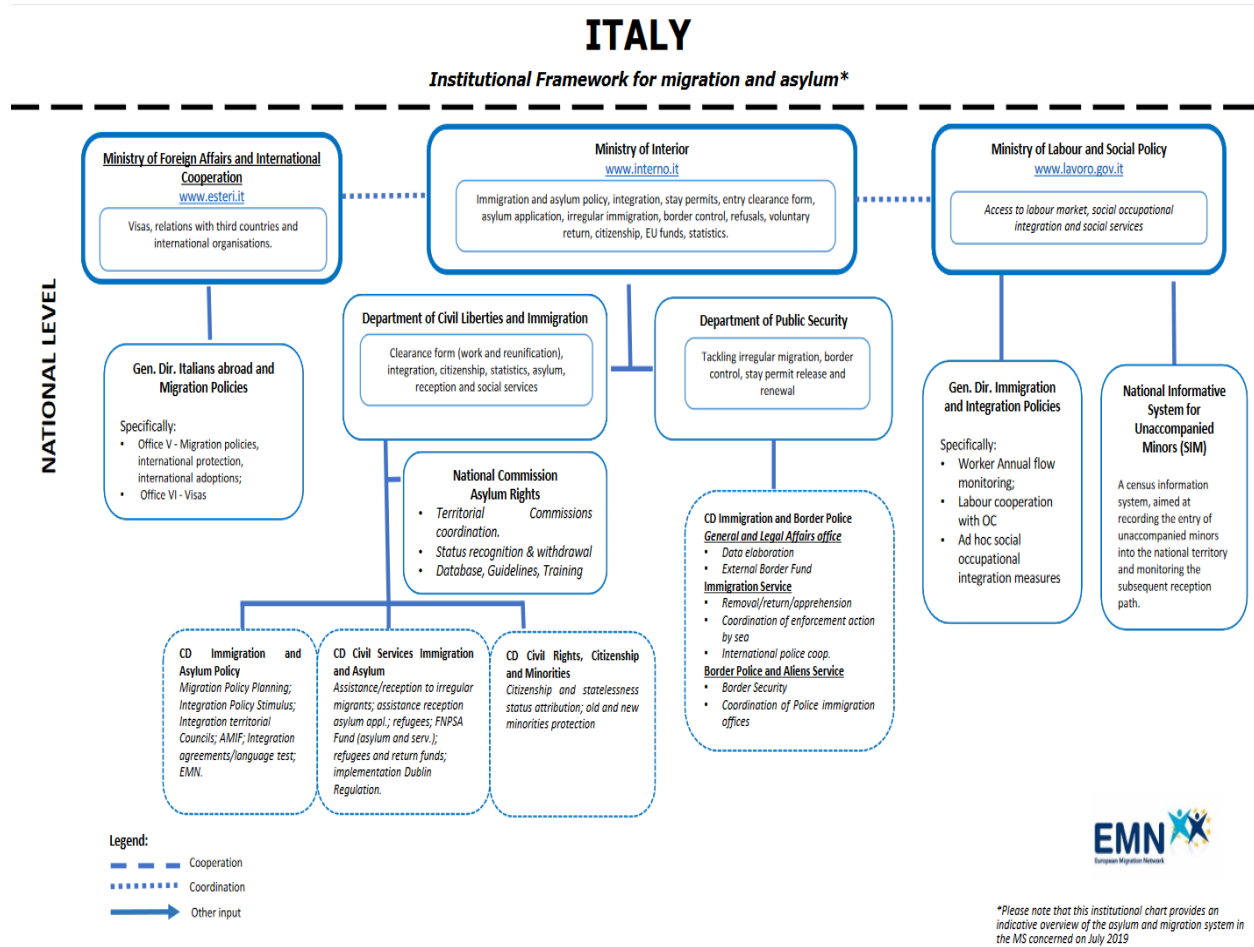
The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation is competent for issuing visas to foreign travelers and workers coming to Italy, keeping relations with third countries and international organizations, designing and realizing international

cooperation schemes, and supervising the procedures regarding international adoptions.

As of the asylum, some specific decrees should be followed. The legal system involves an initial phase of reception, ensured by centers run by the state, and a second-level reception phase ensured by the System for the Protection of Asylum Seekers and Refugees (SPRAR), operated by local institutions, in cooperation with third-sector organizations, which provided a full package of integration measures for individual asylum seeker or refugee included in the System. Integration services within these centers are now reserved for holders of international protection permits or some other type of permit and vulnerable groups.

With regard to reception conditions, only recognized refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, as well as unaccompanied minors, will be granted accommodation within the national reception system (former SPRAR, now called SIPROIMI), which offers room and board, as well as other services for integration.

Figure 2. Institutional Framework for migration and asylum



Source: European Commission



## **2.3 Accommodation**

Italy had established specific accommodation policies for refugees. In most cases, the specific government department and organizations take charge of the accommodations for refugees or asylum seekers.

Reception Centers: Italy operates reception centers, known as "Centri di Accoglienza" or "Centri di Accoglienza per Richiedenti Asilo" (CARA), which provide temporary accommodation and support services to asylum seekers and refugees. These centers are managed by governmental or non-governmental organizations.

Initial Reception Centers (CPI): Upon arrival in Italy, asylum seekers are usually directed to Initial Reception Centers (Centri di Prima Accoglienza, or CPI) where they receive initial support, including shelter, medical assistance, and legal information. CPIs are meant to provide short-term accommodation while the asylum application process is initiated.

Second-stage Reception Centers: After the initial reception phase, eligible asylum seekers may be transferred to Second-stage Reception Centers (Centri di Seconda Accoglienza) or other types of accommodation facilities. These centers offer longer-term accommodation and services to support refugees' integration, such as language courses, vocational training, and employment assistance.

**SPRAR System:** Italy also implements the System for the Protection of Asylum Seekers and Refugees (Sistema di Protezione per Richiedenti Asilo e Rifugiati, SPRAR), which aims to provide more personalized and community-based assistance. Under the SPRAR system, refugees are placed in smaller reception centers located in municipalities throughout Italy. This approach promotes integration and facilitates access to local services and support networks.

**Housing Solutions:** In addition to reception centers, Italian authorities may provide alternative housing solutions for recognized refugees who are in need of more permanent accommodation. This can include rental subsidies, housing, or assistance in finding private housing.

Italy provides accommodations for asylum-seekers through a system known as the Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees (SPRAR). The SPRAR system aims to provide shelter, assistance, and integration support to asylum-seekers during their asylum process. Here are some key aspects of the accommodations for asylum-seekers in Italy:

**Reception Centers (Centri di Accoglienza):** Upon arrival in Italy, asylum-seekers are initially accommodated in reception centers. These centers, managed by government or non-governmental organizations, provide temporary shelter, basic services, and initial assistance. Reception centers vary in terms of size, capacity, and facilities, but

their primary purpose is to offer a safe and secure living environment while the asylum process is underway.

**SPRAR System:** Asylum-seekers who have entered Italy and are awaiting a decision on their asylum application can be transferred from reception centers to SPRAR facilities. The SPRAR system offers more structured and comprehensive support to asylum-seekers. SPRAR facilities are often smaller, community-based centers located in municipalities across the country. They aim to provide longer-term accommodation and integration services.

**Accommodation in Local Communities:** SPRAR facilities are typically located in local communities to promote integration and interaction with the local population. This approach helps asylum-seekers become familiar with the Italian culture, customs, and social dynamics. The accommodation provided in SPRAR facilities is generally in the form of apartments or group houses, allowing individuals or families to live in a more independent and community-oriented setting.

**Services and Support:** In addition to accommodation, the SPRAR system offers various services and support to asylum-seekers. These can include legal assistance, language courses, vocational training, psychosocial support, healthcare access, cultural orientation programs, and assistance in navigating administrative processes related to the asylum application.

Duration of Stay: The length of stay in reception centers or SPRAR facilities can vary depending on factors such as the progress of the asylum application, individual circumstances, and available resources. Asylum-seekers are expected to actively participate in integration programs and work towards self-sufficiency during their stay in the SPRAR system.

Integration and Autonomy: The ultimate goal of the accommodations provided to asylum-seekers in Italy is to support their integration into Italian society. Asylum-seekers are encouraged to learn the Italian language, acquire new skills, and engage in social and cultural activities that promote interaction with the local community. The aim is to foster autonomy and self-reliance, enabling individuals to eventually transition out of the SPRAR system.

## **2.4 Living Supplies and Health**

Some governmental or non-governmental organizations provide asylum seekers with the needed living supplies and basic healthcare.

**Reception and Identification Centers:** When refugees arrive in Italy, they are often initially taken to reception and identification centers, commonly known as "hotspots." These centers are managed by the Italian government and provide temporary accommodation, food, and essential items such as clothing and toiletries to meet immediate needs.

**Government Assistance:** The Italian government is responsible for providing essential services and assistance to refugees. This includes access to healthcare, education, and social support. The government may provide financial aid or vouchers for purchasing groceries, allowing refugees to acquire living supplies independently.

**Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs):** Numerous NGOs operate in Italy to support refugees and asylum seekers. These organizations collaborate with government agencies to provide additional aid and services. NGOs often distribute food, hygiene kits, and other living supplies to refugees in various locations, including temporary shelters, reception centers, and community-based settings.

Humanitarian Aid: International humanitarian aid agencies, such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), play a significant role in assisting refugees in Italy. These organizations work closely with the Italian government and local NGOs to provide essential living supplies, including food, clean water, shelter, and healthcare.

Community Support: Italian citizens and local communities often play an essential role in providing assistance to refugees. Community-based organizations and initiatives may organize donation drives, collect clothing and household items, or create community kitchens to provide meals to refugees. These efforts rely on the goodwill and solidarity of the host community.

## **2.5 Language Acquisition**

In Italy, language acquisition programs are an important aspect of the integration process for refugees. These programs aim to help refugees learn the Italian language, which is crucial for effective communication, accessing education, finding employment, and building social connections. Here are some key points regarding language acquisition for refugees in Italy:

**Language Courses:** The Italian government, in collaboration with various organizations, offers language courses specifically designed for refugees. These courses are usually free of charge and are available at different levels, catering to beginners as well as those with some prior knowledge of the language. The courses focus on developing speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills in Italian.

**Cultural Mediators and Interpreters:** In many language acquisition programs, cultural mediators and interpreters are employed to assist with communication between refugees and language instructors. These individuals are often bilingual or multilingual and help bridge the language barrier, ensuring effective learning and understanding process.

**Integration Programs:** Language acquisition programs are often integrated into broader integration initiatives. These programs often include orientation sessions, cultural awareness training, and information on Italian society, laws, and customs.

The goal is to provide refugees with comprehensive support to navigate their new environment.

**Collaboration with NGOs and Community-Based Organizations:** Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations play a significant role in supporting language acquisition for refugees in Italy. These organizations may provide additional language classes, conversation groups, and language exchange programs where refugees can practice their Italian skills in real-life situations.

**Access to Education:** Language acquisition programs in Italy also aim to facilitate access to formal education for refugee children and youth. Schools often provide Italian language support through special classes or integration programs to help students catch up with their peers and enhance their language skills.

**Online Resources and Mobile Apps:** In recent years, there has been an increase in the availability of online language learning resources and mobile apps that cater to refugees and migrants. These resources provide interactive lessons, vocabulary exercises, and pronunciation guidance, offering additional support for independent language learning.



## **2.6 Education**

The education of refugees in Italy is primarily facilitated through the country's public education system. The Italian government, in collaboration with local municipalities and organizations, has implemented various programs and initiatives to support the educational needs of refugee children and adults. Here are the ways of how refugees in Italy can access education:

**School Enrollment:** Refugee children in Italy have the right to access education on an equal basis with Italian children. Upon arrival, refugee children are enrolled in the Italian public school system based on their age and educational background. They are placed in appropriate classes or receive specific language support to integrate into the regular school curriculum.

**Language Support:** Language acquisition is crucial for successful integration into the Italian education system. Many schools provide language courses or support programs tailored to help non-Italian-speaking students learn Italian. These programs aim to improve their language skills and enable them to fully participate in the educational process.

**Integration and Inclusion:** Italian schools strive to create an inclusive environment for refugee students. Teachers and school staff receive training on intercultural education and inclusive practices to support the diverse needs of students. This

includes promoting tolerance, respect, and understanding among students of different backgrounds.

**Integration Classes:** Some schools offer integration classes specifically designed for newly arrived refugee students. These classes focus on language learning, cultural orientation, and integration into the Italian school system. Integration classes provide additional support to help refugee students adjust to their new educational environment.

**Community Support:** Various community organizations, NGOs, and volunteers play an essential role in supporting refugee education in Italy. They may provide tutoring, mentoring, or extracurricular activities to help refugees excel academically and socially. These initiatives supplement the efforts of the public education system.

**Adult Education:** In addition to children, adult refugees in Italy can access education and vocational training opportunities. Adult education centers, vocational schools, and language schools offer courses specifically designed for refugees, which help them acquire new skills, improve their language proficiency, and enhance their employability prospects.

The educational opportunities and programs available to refugees in Italy can vary depending on the different region and local policies. However, the Italian

government and civil society organizations are committed to ensuring that refugees have access to education and the opportunity to rebuild their lives.

## **2.7 Employment**

Employment opportunities for refugees in Italy can vary depending on several factors, including the individual's skills, qualifications, language proficiency, and legal status.

**Legal Framework:** The Italian government has implemented policies to promote the integration of refugees into the labor market. Refugees who have obtained legal status, such as refugee status, subsidiary protection, or humanitarian protection, have the right to work in Italy.

**Job Placement and Integration Programs:** Public employment agencies, municipalities, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Italy offer job placement and integration programs specifically designed for refugees. These programs aim to facilitate access to employment opportunities, provide vocational training, and offer support in job search and integration into the labor market.

**Language and Skill Development:** Language skills play a significant role in searching for employment in Italy. Many organizations and institutions offer language courses and vocational training programs to help refugees improve their language proficiency and acquire new skills relevant to the local job market.

**Recognition of Qualifications:** The recognition of foreign qualifications can be a challenge for refugees seeking employment in Italy. However, the Italian

government has established procedures to evaluate and recognize foreign qualifications, enabling refugees to have their skills and qualifications assessed and potentially recognized for employment purposes.

**Self-Employment and Entrepreneurship:** Some refugees choose to establish their own businesses or engage in entrepreneurial activities. The Italian government, along with NGOs and microfinance institutions, provides support programs, financial assistance, and training to encourage and facilitate self-employment and entrepreneurship among refugees.

**Public and Private Sector Opportunities:** Refugees in Italy can access employment opportunities in both the public and private sectors. Public institutions, including municipalities and social services, often hire individuals with language skills and cultural competencies to work with refugee populations. Private companies may also offer job opportunities based on the refugee's qualifications and skills.

**Challenges and Support:** Refugees may face various challenges in looking for employment, such as discrimination, lack of experience, or limited language proficiency. To address these challenges, there are initiatives promoting diversity and inclusion in the workplace, along with programs offering mentoring, coaching, and support services to refugees during their job search and integration into the labor market.

The employment landscape for refugees in Italy is complex and influenced by multiple factors. The Italian government, in collaboration with organizations and civil society, continues to work towards creating more inclusive policies and opportunities for refugees to access the labor market and build a new life in Italy.

Employment opportunities for asylum-seekers in Italy are more limited compared to those for refugees who have obtained legal status. Asylum-seekers are individuals who have applied for asylum in Italy but are still awaiting a decision on their refugee status. During this period, their access to the labor market may be restricted. However, there are some avenues through which asylum-seekers can seek employment:

**Restricted Access:** Asylum-seekers in Italy generally face restrictions on accessing the labor market during the initial stages of their asylum application process. These restrictions are in place to prevent abuse of the asylum system and to ensure that the legal process is followed.

**Labor Market Access:** After a certain waiting period, asylum-seekers may be granted the right to work legally in Italy. The duration of this waiting period can vary, and it is important for asylum-seekers to stay informed about the specific regulations and eligibility criteria established by the Italian government. Once granted the right to

work, asylum-seekers can seek employment on an equal basis with Italian citizens, subject to any applicable work permit requirements.

**Temporary Job Placement:** Some municipalities and NGOs in Italy offer temporary job placement programs for asylum-seekers. These programs aim to provide short-term employment opportunities to individuals who are in the process of seeking asylum. Temporary jobs can help asylum-seekers gain work experience, earn income, and contribute to their integration process.

**Informal and Irregular Employment:** Due to the challenges in accessing the formal labor market, some asylum-seekers may engage in informal or irregular employment. This includes working in sectors such as agriculture, construction, or domestic work. However, it's important to note that informal employment may come with risks, such as exploitation, low wages, and lack of legal protection.

**Volunteering and Internships:** Asylum-seekers can explore volunteering opportunities or internships with organizations and NGOs that support refugees and migrants. Volunteering not only provides valuable experience but also allows individuals to develop their skills and expand their professional network.

**Language and Skill Development:** While waiting for a decision on their asylum application, asylum-seekers can focus on language learning and skill development. Enhancing language skills can significantly increase employment prospects. Many

organizations and institutions offer language courses and vocational training programs specifically tailored to asylum-seekers' needs.



## **Chapter 3. Research on The Target Groups**

### **3.1 General Research Descriptions**

The research mainly discusses and analyzes everyday life practice of refugees and asylum-seekers in Italy, and mainly refers to those who come from North African countries, for the reason that they are one of the largest immigrant groups in Italy. Through analyzing the questionnaire surveys, the research gives an overview of how the target groups value their everyday life practice and collects broader demographic data and quantitative indicators of social integration.

#### **3.1.1 Main Objectives**

**Understand the lived experiences:** The primary objective is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the everyday life practices of African refugees and asylum-seekers in Italy. This includes exploring their routines, activities, challenges, and coping strategies within the Italian context.

**Identify social integration barriers:** Analyzing everyday life practices can help identify the social, cultural, and institutional barriers that African refugees and asylum-seekers encounter in their daily lives. This objective involves examining factors such as access to education, healthcare, employment, accommodation, and social support networks.

### 3.1.2 Research Questions

- a. What are the main challenges for the target North African refugees and asylum-seekers in accessing accommodation, education, employment, and social support services in Italy?
- b. What coping strategies do the target North African refugees and asylum-seekers employ to overcome challenges and foster social integration in Italy?

### 3.1.3 Research Methods

The research mainly applies questionnaires (surveys) as the quantitative method to analyze the target groups' experience on everyday life practice. Along with related literature review and public information, it provides an overview of everyday life practice of refugees and asylum seekers from North Africa in Italy.

### **3.2 Result Analysis**

The author selected respondents from the target groups and distribute questionnaires (mainly online) (see Appendix 1). The target groups include refugees and asylum seekers from North Africa who have emigrated from their countries of origins and lived in Italy for curtain period. The respondents are selected regards to the age of 18 and above, and the background of the respondents varies from students, workers and adults of any random age and background.

In total, there were 107 pieces of questionnaires distributed, and received feedback from 83 respondents, from which 72 pieces of questionnaire considered valid and reliable.

The questionnaire consists of 10 main questions, which are relevant to the aspects of daily routine, accommodation, education, employment, healthcare and social integration, etc.

**Key findings through the survey:**

- Demographic profile of the respondents.

The respondents consist of 39 males, 27 females and 6 respondents remain unknown gender.

Among the 72 pieces of valid questionnaire feedback, 46% are at the age 18-24, 39% are at the age 25-34, 13% are at the age of 35-44, and only 1% are at the age of 45-54 and 55+ respectively.

*Figure 3. Ages of respondents*

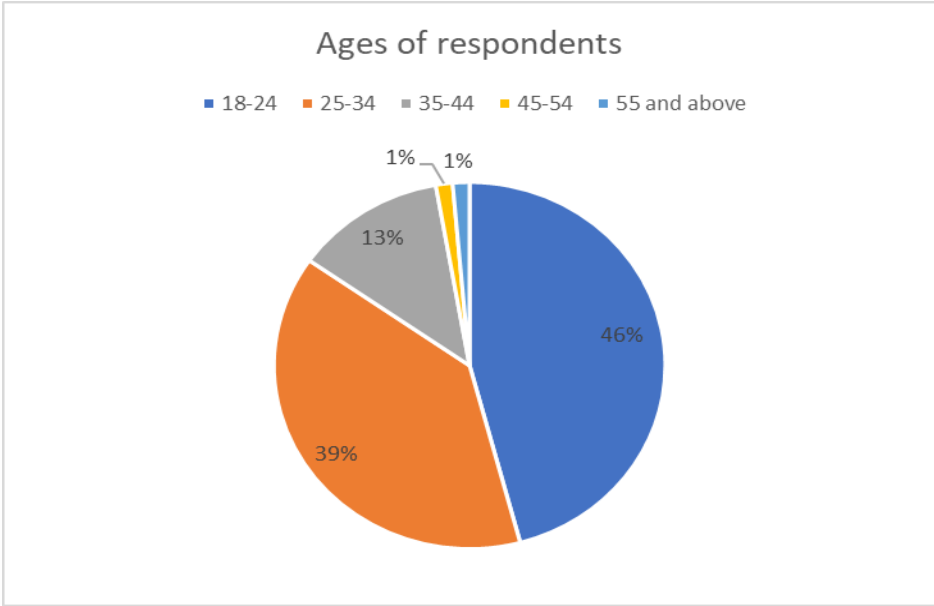
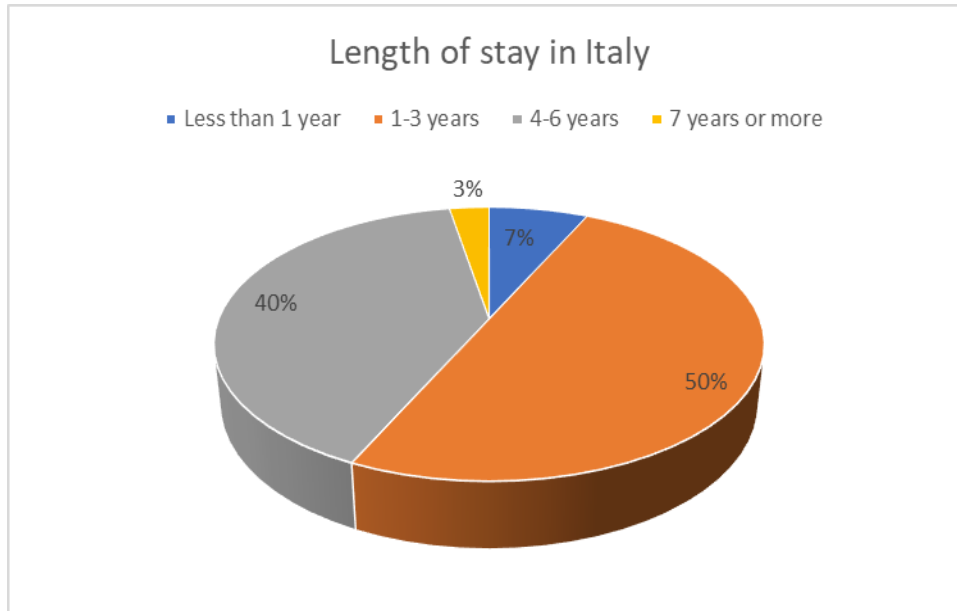


Figure 4. Length of stay in Italy



The respondents are generally from North African countries, among which Syria, Libya and Morocco rank the top 3 countries of origin, followed by Egypt, Algeria, etc.

Around 7% of the respondents have the refugee status, while most of the other respondents are considered (or processing to be) asylum-seekers.

Most of the respondents have been staying in Italy for 1-3 years (50%), following by 4-6 years (40%), less than 1 year (7%) and 7 years or more (3%).

- Daily routines

Respondents are asked to indicate the scale of their daily routine establishment since they arrived in Italy. About 41% of the respondents consider that they have totally

established the daily routines and have been following daily routines during their stay in Italy. Most of the respondents hold reserved views on their daily routines in Italy.

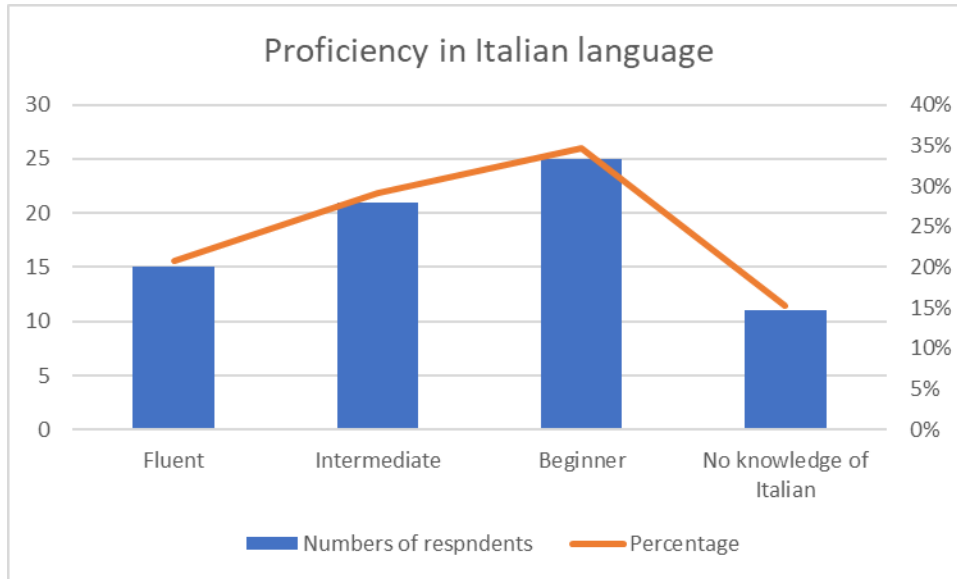
- Accommodations

Respondents rate the condition of their accommodations and their satisfaction on it by indicating 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).

The result shows that 22% of the respondents are strongly satisfied with their housing conditions, whereas 28% hold the view that the current accommodation doesn't meet their need. The rest of the respondents consider the housing condition generally meets their needs, but the sense of stability remains rather low.

- Language

Figure 5. Proficiency in Italian language



As shown in the chart above, most of the respondents have the beginner (25%) or intermediate level (21%) of Italian language skill. Meanwhile, 15 respondents indicate that they can speak fluent Italian, and on the other hand, 11 respondents claim that they don't have any knowledge of Italian language.

- Education

The respondents are generally from diverse background, as well as different education background before they landed in Italy. To access the education in Italy, they may face certain difficulties depending on the local policies.

Around 53% of the respondents claim that they have had the opportunities to pursue education in Italy. School education, especially language training has been provided for many of the respondents. Some others indicate that they also have gained access to some of the vocational institutions. However, there are still nearly half of the respondents haven't pursued any local education in Italy.

- Employment

Around 69% of the respondents claimed that they have been able to find employment or engage in income-generating activities in Italy. However, most of the respondents who have been able to find such employment usually engage in the low-paid and unstable jobs, such as temporary deliveryman, infrastructure workers and cleaning, etc.

- Social and Community Activities

Among the respondents, only 31% indicate that they have actively participated in social or community activities in Italy, such as church activities, local events organized and published on Facebook. However, most of them rarely communicate and connect with local Italians. They usually participate such activities with their own community friends or relatives. Meanwhile, the rest of the larger part of the respondents do not often participate in local social or community activities.



- Access to Healthcare

Healthcare in Italy can be very challenging for refugees and asylum-seekers to access, depending on their legal status and local healthcare policy. If lacking the residence permit, the cost can be rather unaffordable for them. In the questionnaire, nearly 74% respondents indicate that they have faced difficulties in accessing the healthcare. The cost and their legal status are claims as the main challenges.

- Legal Documentation and Residency

Nearly 73% of the respondents claimed that they find it very challenging to get the legal documentation and the resident permit. It usually takes long time to get through the process, and it can be very strict when it comes to gain the resident permit. At the same time, the rejection rate has been getting rather high during these years.

- Overall Satisfaction

In the end of the questionnaire, the respondents rate the overall satisfaction with their everyday life practices in Italy, where 1 represents "Very Dissatisfied" and 5 represents "Very Satisfied."

*Figure 6. Overall Satisfaction*

<b>Overall Satisfaction</b>	<b>Numbers Respondents</b>	<b>of Percentage</b>
1	6	8%
2	5	7%
3	23	32%
4	30	42%
5	8	11%
Total	72	100%

As shown on the table above, 11% of the respondents are very satisfied with their everyday life practices in Italy, while 8% of them are strongly dissatisfied. Most of the respondents hold more reserved view, and stay relatively neutral.

### **3.3 Conclusion on Quantitative Survey**

The target refugees and asylum-seekers whose countries of origin are from North African countries contribute to the questionnaire analysis, which gives a general overview of their everyday life practice in Italy.

Generally, they face many challenges but at the same time have access to various opportunities to settle and integrate in Italy.

From daily routine, accommodation, to education, employment and legal documentation, settling themselves down in Italy is never easy. Most of the respondents haven't fully adapted to the daily routines in Italy, and also do not feel totally comfortable and satisfied with their accommodations. Their willingness to participate in local activities stays rather low, as they usually only interact with their own community. Meanwhile, there are many education opportunities for the refugees and asylum-seekers to gain in Italy, as well as the language training program. Nearly half of the respondents have got access to local education program, and most of the respondents can at least speak basic Italian language, even though few people can fluently speak Italian.

On the other hand, many respondents find it very difficult to apply for the status of refugee or asylum-seeker, as well as the legal documentation. As a consequence, without those legal documentation, the healthcare can be unaffordable to them, and

it is usually rather tough for them to find employment and the available jobs can be rather unstable and low-paid.

The overall satisfaction with everyday life practice in Italy is neutral and most respondents feel rather satisfied. Even though there are various challenges that they need to face, the future is still promising.

## CONCLUSION

It has always been challenging for the refugees and asylum-seekers to fully integrate themselves to everyday life practice in Italy. Through the research on the target groups, we can draw an overview of the challenges and their corresponding coping strategies. Thus, we can get answers to the hypothetical research questions.

Challenges:

### 1. Legal and Administrative Challenges:

The asylum seeking and refugee approving procedures in Italy can be rather tough and the quotas are limited. Challenges include lengthy waiting periods, limited access to legal support, and uncertain legal statuses. These factors create significant stress and uncertainty in their daily lives.

### 2. Accommodation and Living Conditions:

African refugees often face substandard housing conditions, overcrowding, and inadequate access to basic services. Discrimination in the rental market and the lack of affordable housing contribute to their precarious living situations, impacting their well-being and integration prospects.

### 3. Language and Education:

Language barriers pose a significant challenge for African refugees in Italy. Limited proficiency in Italian affects their ability to access education, employment opportunities, and social interactions.

### 4. Employment

Obstacles to employment and economic integration are commonly stressed. African refugees often encounter discrimination, limited job opportunities, and difficulties in getting their foreign qualifications recognized. Informal and precarious work arrangements are prevalent, affecting their financial stability and social inclusion.

### 5. Social Integration and Networks:

The role of social networks in African refugees' everyday lives can be very important. Strong community ties and support networks within the African diaspora are identified as important sources of social connection, practical assistance, and emotional support. However, due to the lack of forging meaningful connections with the host society, it can be very challenging for them to culturally integrate.

### 6. Healthcare

African refugees face specific health challenges, including limited access to healthcare services, mental health issues due to traumatic experiences, and barriers to obtaining health insurance.

Coping strategies:

1. **Language Learning:** Many refugees and asylum-seekers actively engage in language learning programs to improve their proficiency in the Italian language. Learning the language enables better communication, integration, and access to various services and opportunities.

2. **Building Social Networks:** Refugees and asylum-seekers can establish social networks and support systems within their own communities as well as with locals. These networks provide emotional support, practical assistance, and opportunities for cultural exchange.

3. **Engaging in Community Activities:** Participation in community activities, such as cultural events, sports clubs, or volunteering, can foster social integration. By actively engaging with the local community, refugees and asylum-seekers can establish connections, build relationships, and contribute to the community.

4. **Seeking Education and Skill Development:** Accessing educational opportunities and skill development programs can enhance integration prospects. By acquiring

new knowledge and skills, refugees and asylum-seekers can improve their employability and increase their chances of successful integration.

5. Utilizing Support Services: Various support services, including those provided by NGOs, government agencies, or community organizations, offer assistance in areas such as housing, legal support, healthcare, and employment. Refugees and asylum-seekers can utilize these services to address their specific needs and overcome challenges they may encounter.



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## Appendix

### Appendix 1.

Quantitative survey on everyday life practice of refugees and asylum-seeker from North Africa in Italy

<p>Instructions:</p> <p>Please indicate your responses by selecting the appropriate option or providing the requested information.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gender:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Male</li><li>b. Female</li><li>c. Prefer not to say</li></ol></li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Age:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. 18-24</li><li>b. 25-34</li><li>c. 35-44</li><li>d. 45-54</li><li>e. 55 and above</li></ol></li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Country of Origin:</li></ul>

- Legal Status:

- a. Refugee
- b. Asylum-seeker
- c. Neither (please indicate other legal status)

- Length of stay in Italy:

- a. Less than 1 year
- b. 1-3 years
- c. 4-6 years
- d. 7 years or more

- Daily Routines:

Please rate your agreement with the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 represents "Strongly Disagree" and 5 represents "Strongly Agree."

- a. I have established daily routines (e.g., cooking, cleaning, personal hygiene) since arriving in Italy.
- b. I have a structured daily schedule that I follow regularly.

- Accommodation:

Please rate your agreement with the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 represents "Strongly Disagree" and 5 represents "Strongly Agree."

- a. My current accommodation situation meets my needs.

b. I feel a sense of stability in my accommodation situation.

- Language and Communication:

a. How would you rate your proficiency in the Italian language?

Fluent

Intermediate

Beginner

No knowledge of Italian

b. Have you faced any difficulties in communicating with the local community, authorities, or service providers due to language barriers?

Yes

No

- Education:

a. Have you pursued any form of education since arriving in Italy?

Yes

No

b. If yes, please provide details (e.g., type of education, institution, duration).

- Employment

a. Have you been able to find employment or engage in income-generating activities in Italy?

Yes

No

b. If yes, please provide details (e.g., type of work, employment status).

- Social and Community Activities:

a. Do you actively participate in social or community activities in Italy?

Yes

No

b. If yes, please provide details (e.g., types of activities, organizations involved).

- Access to Healthcare:

a. Have you faced any difficulties in accessing necessary healthcare services in Italy?

Yes

No

b. If yes, please provide details (e.g., challenges faced, types of healthcare services).

- Legal Documentation and Residency:

a. Have you faced any challenges in obtaining legal documentation or residence permits in Italy?

Yes

No

b. If yes, please provide details (e.g., challenges faced, current legal status).

- Overall Satisfaction:

Please rate your overall satisfaction with your everyday life practices in Italy on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 represents "Very Dissatisfied" and 5 represents "Very Satisfied."

Thank you for participating in this survey!