

# Work as a pathway to belonging?

Exploring the nexus of regional tourism policies and refugee social  
emplacement in Veneto, Italy



Source picture: Melting Pot (2020)

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**Master:** Sustainable Development (ID track)

**Date:** 8th September 2024

## **Abstract**

This thesis explores the nexus between work, belonging, and social emplacement of refugees within the context of regional tourism policies in Veneto, Italy. It studies how employment opportunities can facilitate the social emplacement of refugees, and thus enabling them to navigate their new environments and develop a sense of belonging. Through a qualitative research approach, the data collection methods consist of desk research and in-depth interviews with twenty-one respondents, including refugees and experts in the field, to uncover the nuanced experiences of individuals as they are integrating into the host community.

The research emphasizes the critical role private, public and third sector institutions can have in supporting refugees. The findings highlight that work not only serves as a means of economic survival but also as a component of social identity and belonging to a community. The thesis employs a conceptual framework that integrates theories of social emplacement, actor-networks and strength of weak ties, providing a comprehensive lens through which to analyse the experiences of refugees in Veneto. It underscores the importance of trust, conviviality, and the emotional dimensions of migration, as respondents share their personal journeys and the challenges they face in adjusting to the host culture.

Ultimately, this research contributes to the broader literature on refugee social emplacement by emphasizing the significance of work as a pathway to belonging. It calls for policy recommendations that prioritize the creation of new internship and working opportunities for refugees and the involvement of local communities, and specifically third sector actors, in supporting refugees. By advocating for environments where refugees can thrive, the study stresses the importance of a more holistic approach to integration that recognizes the multifaceted concept of social emplacement and all the actors it entails.

**Keywords:** Social emplacement – refugees – Veneto - working tourism policies - tourism industry – belonging - institutional actors - urban sociabilities.

## Acknowledgments

I would first of all like to thank my supervisor Dr. Romain Dittgen for his support and guidance throughout my research process: from figuring out what my topic would be to how it can be unpacked through different theoretical lenses. Thanks to his supervision I was able to venture into a new context where I had no contacts and navigate my way through that. With no previous comparable experience to conducting a three-month long fieldwork and interviewing both experts and refugees, I surprised myself when I was able to find respondents and collect all the data needed for this research.

Secondly, I am grateful to all the individual twenty-one respondents who took their time to sharing their knowledge and experiences with me. All the people I interviewed, despite not knowing me beforehand, showed interest, open mindedness and trust in my research while feeling safe enough to meet and talk with me. I am aware that talking about emotionally-loaded topics such as one's migration journey and integration process can take a certain amount of courage and spirit. Grazie di cuore a tutti voi! Merci beaucoup à vous tous!

Furthermore, I would like to thank my family still living in Italy since without them I would not have had the support I got during my stay in Italy. To my aunts/uncles Francy, Daniele, Bea, Elena and Renzo, thank you for your availability and kindness. To my grandma, thank you for welcoming me and listening to my stories and helping me tackle any challenge I faced with regards to data collection. To my beloved cousins, Laura and Chiara, thank you for spending time with me and making my time in Italy filled with laughter and support.

My gratitude, moreover, extends to Silvia, Maan, and all my friends from Utrecht University. You not only helped me get some clarity on the direction of my thesis but by hearing stories from your own fieldwork made me feel heard, understood and made me feel part of a collective. Elide and Emma you were also fundamental: although you were not following the same study path as mine, I knew I could always rely on you for finding the motivation to push through and simply having a friendly shoulder to lay on.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the three most important human actors in the personal network of my thesis process (pun intended): Adam, Juan and my mum. To my boyfriend Adam, I can simply say köszönöm, I aspire to be as supportive throughout your research process and provide you any advice I can give just like you did with me. To my brother Juan and my mum, Elisabetta, I want to say grazie mille for having my back throughout my life and academic career. Without you, I would not be where I am today and would perhaps not have been able to carry out my Master thesis the way I did. Throughout the process of planning, conceptualizing my thesis up until my fieldwork and even presentation, you provided me with unwavering support and advice from your own personal experiences.

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# 1. Introduction

In Italy, tourism is a sector that heavily attracts workers with a refugee background. Only in 2022, there were 167,560 new immigrant workers (ANPAL, 2022) with no estimate found for new refugee workers only. This is because obtaining precise data for refugees only can be challenging due to the fluidity of refugee statuses and the informal nature of much of the employment available to this group (OECD and UNHCR, 2018). Limited information is available on the employment opportunities and conditions provided for them in the sector. Nevertheless, immigration is a phenomenon that will only keep growing in Italy and better working conditions are of relevance for both native Italians and newcomers. Only in 2022, the country received 77,220 asylum requests: that being 30% more than the previous year (Centro Astalli, 2023). Out of these, only 7,610 people obtained a refugee status, 7,205 received a subsidiary protection, 10,865 got granted special protection while many more requests were rejected. Precisely on this topic the National Agency for Active Labour Policies issued a report on immigrant workers in 2022 in collaboration with the European Union (ANPAL, 2022). It comprises all the statistics regarding immigration and its impact on the Italian labour sector. In the introduction, the authors stress the young population decline in Italy and the impact of this on the overall economy. Given that there are less and less ‘working age native Italians’ the need for ‘working age immigrants’ is heightened. The report nevertheless highlights that workers without residence permit can often be found at the margins of the labour market. Their lack of political legitimacy prevents them from benefiting from the welfare system (ANPAL, 2022).

Why is tourism a widespread industry in the country and attractive to refugees? Throughout Italy one can find a wide range of ecosystems: from mountainous regions to the Po Valley, as well as coastal regions and forests (BISE, n.d.). These different landscapes coupled with a vast cultural, urban and culinary history attract millions of tourists per year: in 2022, Italy welcomed 74.7 million international tourists (Statista Research Department, 2022). While tourism does not constitute the main industry in the country, it does however make up for 10.2% of the GDP and employs 2.71 million people each year (Statista Research Department, 2022a; Statista Research Department, 2022b). It is therefore important to consider not only the financial benefits this sector brings to the country but also the considerable impact on the Italian environmental and social landscape. For one, tourism entails accommodations, activities and transport and thus can cause a range of environmental impacts (Halleux, 2017). Repercussions on the social sphere are also noteworthy as institutions within tourism should actively engage and respect local communities, local perceptions, as well as provide decent working opportunities and conditions to its employees (Santos, 2023). These encompass elements such as labour rights, gender equality, social justice, and inclusive practices. Such topics cannot be neglected by the institutions governing the employment opportunities and conditions for refugees.

## 1.1. Working in tourism versus other industries

Immigrant workers and refugees coming to Italy often find employment in manufacturing, construction, agriculture, care work, tourism and hospitality (Ambrosini and Panichella, 2023). All of these industries without exclusion present instances of seasonality and a risk for exploitation of the workers: agriculture nevertheless, is the most striking industry in both regards (openpolis, 2021). Foreign non-EU workers amount to 11.4% of the employees and on average they are employed for contracts that last between 100 to 150 working days per year, with some contracts requiring even less (Giampaolo and Ianni, 2020; openpolis, 2021). In addition to this, that of agriculture is one of the industries with the highest presence of irregular employees: around 24.2% of employees in 2018. Very often these workers, due to their lack of working papers and legal paperwork, get caught up in a criminal circle defined as ‘caporalato’ (Giampaolo and Ianni, 2020). This occurs when the employers take advantage of the migrants’ irregular

status and the informal economic behaviour of the sector to employ these workers without a regular contract and paying them very low wages. Moreover, they create a series of problems linked to housing, transportation and social services coercing the migrants into paying for these with their already low wages. A way in which workers get involved in these working conditions are often through migration networks. For instance, Punjab workers are recruited in their home country through irregular channels run by fellow countrymen. An additional way to reach Italy is through seasonal flows that allow migrants to work regularly for three to six months after which they attempt to stay through irregular paths (Giampaolo and Ianni, 2020).

In 2020, there were around 865 recorded cases of capolarato in agriculture, compared to 71 in the hospitality and tourism industry (openpolis, 2021). It is, therefore, necessary to highlight some figures on the tourism industry which recorded an incidence of 15.3% of irregular work. In this case irregularity is primarily linked to the seasonality of the sector: during peaks of seasonal activity, irregular labour is more commonly creating higher risks of exploitation. Tourism in Veneto, the region considered as case study for this thesis, is characterized by a high degree of seasonality when it comes to coastal and mountainous regions. Contrastingly however, the urban centres and thermal destinations are substantially less so (Regione del Veneto, 2018). An advocacy for deseasonalisation of the sector is therefore, being brought forth by social and trade union actors as it would reduce precariousness and irregularity. Moreover, the same actors have been denouncing this exploitation and made public this large criminal system (Giampaolo and Ianni, 2020). Highlighting these widespread instances of extortion serves to provide a realistic and transparent picture of how refugees and migrant workers can get misled to extremely precarious conditions when seeking for employment in Italy. However, it also serves to show that advocacy campaigns are being carried out by institutional actors such as social organizations and trade unions to safeguard refugee workers in their process of social emplacement.

## **1.2. Previous research on refugee employment in tourism**

The topic of refugee employment in the field of tourism is one that cannot be understood without considering the geographical context in which refugees live and work, as well as the policies in place with regards to labour conditions. Some authors addressed it by looking at the potential of the tourism industry to adopt more inclusive practices and ethical responsibility. Burrai et al. (2022) explored the intersection of tourism and the refugee crisis, specifically in Leeds, England. They found that by taking the role of tour guides, forcibly displaced individuals can more easily feel integrated in the host country. The study emphasized the ethical responsibility in tourism and future research opportunities are identified, including the impact of refugee-led tours on tourists and citizens, as well as the political dynamics shaping tourism experiences (Burrai et al., 2022). On the other hand, Santos (2023) provided some interesting insights into social sustainability and decent work in Portugal's tourism industry from 2010 to 2020. Factors influencing work quality and social well-being in the tourism sector are explored, emphasizing the importance of a competitive market, larger firms, and higher survival rates for better working conditions and social sustainability (Santos, 2023).

Other authors rather explored the topic of enabling factors that lead to employment for refugees. Scheibelhofer (2019) explored the role of agency and social positioning of refugees in the Austrian labour market. Through qualitative research with refugee families in peripheral regions post-asylum approval, the study revealed that refugees are not only exposed to institutional and varying social environments. Rather, they change these circumstances by their own agency. Overall, the study advocated for a comprehensive understanding of refugees' structural barriers, agency, and socio-institutional environments to facilitate their successful integration into national labour markets (Scheibelhofer, 2019).

Another approach to the topic is by looking at enabling and hindering factors in the industry. Dimitriadis and Ambrosini (2023) investigated the dynamic relationship between legal status, (im)mobility practices, and integration challenges faced by refugees and asylum seekers (refugees) in Northern Italy. The study emphasized the decentralized nature of the integration process, influenced by economic factors and unequal power relations. The importance of financial and cultural resources, such as language and driving skills, is underscored in coping with the constraints imposed by dispersal policies and local labour markets (Dimitriadis and Ambrosini, 2023). Benner's (2019) research highlighted the importance of understanding the interactions between organizations and public-private governance in tourism. The study proposed participatory policy-making fora to create a vision for qualitative growth, mobilize necessary investments, and address institutional patterns (Benner, 2019).

A final subtopic is the role of trust, conviviality, collaboration and emplacement: attention can be dedicated to how social relations inform the process of settling in a country and finding a job for refugees. Marcher et al. (2020) attempted to unravel the connections between tourism and migration, focusing on South Tyrol. The study distinguished between voluntary and forced migration, highlighting the impact on asylum seekers and refugees. Trust is identified as a key factor shaping relationships between residents, migrants, and tourists. The study concluded that people in tourism-intensive destinations with a critical mass of migrants may be more open-minded and tolerant than those in areas with less tourism and migration (Marcher et al., 2020). Finally, Martins and Davino (2023) focused on the challenges and opportunities associated with the emplacement – rather than integration - of migrants in rural, shrinking areas in Italy and Germany. On the one hand, their findings also confirmed that higher powers such as the political scene can impact the reception system as is currently happening in Italy. Nevertheless, the study advocated for a shift in perception, recognizing migrants' potential contributions to innovation and revitalization. The authors adopted a governance perspective, emphasizing that trust and cooperation among various actors involved in migration governance are essential elements (Martins & Davino, 2023).

All these papers investigated different aspects of the process of refugees' embeddedness in a new professional and living context. They therefore provide a suitable theoretical basis upon which to build this research. A topic that was not addressed by them and requires further consideration is that of social emplacement as opposed to social integration. Social emplacement was studied and described by Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2016) and Moralli et al. (2023) as all the social elements influencing the process through which refugees can build networks of connection within the opportunities or constraints of a specific city. Already from the definition, one can sense how social emplacement is dependent on and conditioned by the specificities of a host territory. Social emplacement has been conceptualized but not yet sufficiently researched in regional contexts.

This thesis thus, aims to fill the literature gap on social emplacement by focusing on the currently under researched context of Northern Italy and considering the extent to which regional tourism policies inform the social emplacement of refugees. The case study of Veneto, a region in Northern Italy, provides a suitable focus due to the presence of refugees employed in tourism, as well as many institutional actors that can support their emplacement process. In addition to this, several regional tourism policies are present to govern the reception, asylum and integration of refugees in the working and social context. In addition to this, the supporting role of contextual players was assessed and their contribution to creating an environment where refugees can build trusting relationships, find employment and start a new life in their host country.

From a societal perspective, this research is relevant as it placed further emphasis on the role of private workplace managers as well as actors from the governmental, private or third sector. Their roles were partly addressed by other papers as described in Chapters 2 and 3, however no author addressed all of



them together. By taking a holistic approach and looking at the intersection between these actors, this research seeks to uncover how social emplacement is regulated and shaped by the regional government as well as by other institutional players. In such way, the study raises awareness on the conditions in place to facilitate social emplacement and therefore, encompasses questions of social justice, conviviality, trust and accessibility. From these literature gaps and research objectives, the main research question and sub-questions therefore are formulated as following:

RQ: To what extent do regional working policies contribute to the process of social emplacement of refugees and asylum seekers (refugees) employed in tourism in the Veneto region of Italy?

1. Which regional tourism working policies are relevant for the governance of refugee social emplacement in Veneto?
2. What does the concept of 'refugee social emplacement' entail in Veneto?
3. How do policies focusing on working in tourism affect dynamics of social emplacement for refugees?
4. What role do workplace managers as well as actors from the governmental, private or third sector play in the social emplacement of refugees in Veneto?

## 2. Theory

In this chapter, the main concepts addressed by this research are unpacked and defined. Hence, each section addresses a different concept, among the following: social emplacement, Granovetter's strength of weak ties theory and the actor-network theory. Finally, the chapter concludes with an explanation and depiction of the conceptual framework adopted in this research.

### 2.1. Social emplacement in its constitutive elements

Social emplacement as a concept plays a crucial role in unpacking the settlement process of refugees in a host context. The concept of integration has been used interchangeably with emplacement (Wessendorf and Phillimore, 2019), however, Moralli et al. (2023) consider integration to be limited as it disregards cultural differences and favours those of the host society. Social emplacement on the other hand, are the social elements influencing the process through which refugees can build networks of connection within the opportunities or constraints of a specific city (Moralli et al., 2023). This process is highly dependent on and conditioned by the specificities of a host territory. In their article, they also emphasize that the choice of residence of asylum seekers is not always personal but often very dependent on the availability of places in reception centres as well as employment opportunities. Specifically in rural areas, emplacement can be understood by looking at four dimensions (Moralli et al., 2023): path dependency, choice, social capital and access to services and housing.

The first one is *path dependency* which refers to how paths of emplacement are determined by the specificities of a particular territory (Moralli et al., 2023). These can for instance be the availability of jobs or welcoming initiatives. Phillimore (2020) in a similar vein, coins 'locality' as an overarching term indicating the availability of work, good-quality housing and healthy living conditions in the localities that refugees reside in and argues that these are important factors for refugees and migrants' integration. Specifically, locality allows for economic opportunities, social networks, institutional support, cultural acceptance, and political climate. By adopting a multi-dimensional perspective, researchers can better capture the diverse factors that influence integration trajectories (Phillimore, 2020).

Secondly, *choice* impacts social emplacement dynamics. Often refugees do not have the freedom of being mobile as they cannot choose where to live and work. Hence, they may end up living or working in a place where they cannot fulfil their aspirations as they had expected to. As suggested by Stewart (2015), refugees' choices are often constrained by host countries' legal frameworks as well as prejudices held by locals. Their 'vulnerability' is thus a multilayered and multidimensional social space influenced by political, economic and institutional capacities of people in specific places at specific times. Being an asylum seeker involves waiting and uncertainty. For most individuals, the fear of deportation is constantly present and can reinforce their feelings of temporariness. And this can interfere with the ability to make their preferred choices when it comes to housing or employment (Stewart, 2015). These arguments tie in with Nikolaev and Bennett (2016)'s findings. In their research they sought to test whether people who live in regions with greater levels of economic freedom perceive greater control over their lives and thus higher freedom of choice. Economic freedom is here intended as encompassing principles such as personal choice, voluntary exchange, freedom to enter markets and compete, and security of privately owned property and thus allowing individuals to "pursue the type of lives that they value the most while maximizing their autonomy and developing their talents" (Nikolaev and Bennett, 2016, p. 40). This hypothesis builds on the notions of 'internal' and 'external locus of control': people possessing the former believe that their life trajectory depends on controllable factors, while the latter believe on the influence of uncontrollable factors such as destiny or luck. People with an internal locus of control tend to be more successful in domains of life and this characterial trait derives from the environment one lives in. Their empirical results confirm their hypothesis and hence, this could suggest

that refugees who have lived in countries with less economic freedom rather have an external locus of control but might aspire for higher economic freedom in their host country (Nikolaev and Bennett, 2016).

A third dimension is *social capital* which is fundamental to identify the difference between emplacement and integration. This refers to all the relationships based on trust and reciprocity that refugees can build with the local communities, and which creates a better sense of belonging. In literature, two main types of social capital were identified: bonding and bridging social capital (Lancee, 2010). The former refers to the connections one builds within one's close-knit group, such as family and co-ethnics. The latter consists of all the connections extending beyond one's immediate group and thus, facilitating access to broader networks. Distinguishing between these two serves to highlight that not all forms of social capital have a positive impact on the social emplacement of refugees. According to Lancee (2010), although bonding social capital can provide security, it also inevitably imposes social obligations on refugees which hinder refugees' upward mobility in the labour market. Bridging social capital, on the other hand, is positively correlated to labour market outcomes, suggesting that connections with individuals outside one's ethnic group can enhance employment opportunities and income (Lancee, 2010). Nowicka and Vertovec's (2014) paper is a meta-analysis comparing different definitions and perspectives of *conviviality*: a concept that is linked to bridging social capital. The concept of *conviviality* is often considered as a peaceful and happy living together and the authors want to explore how this unfolds when different people live together despite their differences. By comparing different temporal and spatial situations, *conviviality* is experienced beyond ethnic, racial or religious difference (Nowicka and Vertovec, 2014). These demographic differences can be overlooked as there are other divisions rather that impact *conviviality*: the rapport built between vulnerable and the protectors; between newcomers and long-standing residents and between those who respect or violate norms of civility. Overall, the authors highlight the need to explore *conviviality* as a means of understanding human togetherness and promoting positive interactions in diverse societies (Nowicka and Vertovec, 2014). The final dimension is *access to services and housing*: having the possibility to reach health, education institutions among others can be a great enabling factor for the social emplacement of refugees (Moralli et al., 2023). All these dimensions are considered as significant factors in my research as they are core to the concept of social emplacement.

Moralli et al. (2023)'s work builds on Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2016)'s insights on the concept of social emplacement. While the former authors focus on rural, non-urban environment Italy, the latter focus their attention on urban settings, namely the city of Manchester. Both papers adequately fit with the research context that I am considering for my research. The Veneto region is characterized by having some urban agglomerations surrounded by rural provinces. Hence although the research will mostly be conducted in urban environments such as Verona, Padova, Treviso and Venezia, it is relevant to consider that some refugees and asylum seekers might live or work in the rural province.

Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2016) place their focus on urban sociabilities, namely what Moralli et al. (2023) refer to as social capital. According to the authors, these urban sociabilities can only be grasped when one can untangle "how, where, why and within what structural contingencies" refugees form social relations with each other, or locals based on common domains of affect, mutual respect and shared aspirations. This concept therefore lies at the core of the social emplacement process of newly arrived residents. The concept of sociabilities encompasses a wide range of fruitful relationships between individuals such as the provision of help, protection and resources as well as the development of social connections. The meaningfulness of these stem from a mutual sense of being human shared by the two parties. Cities are generally seen as large contexts where strangers co-inhabit and therefore studying the social relations built within is proven to be rather complex. Therefore, urban sociabilities can best be interpreted through the use of a multiscalar analysis. Such an approach is not built on geographical

scales, but rather on “trajectories of institutionalized networks of power” (Glick Schiller and Çağlar, 2016, p. 19). This considers the interplay of governance schemes adopted by public, private, non-governmental and individual actors co-existing in the urban context. All these processes inevitably influence each other, and the way sociabilities are built between locals and newly-arrived residents. All the while setting aside assumptions of categorical differences between the two sides.

It is already evident how, by directing careful consideration to urban sociabilities, the process of social emplacement comes to exist (Moralli et al., 2023). While taking Manchester as an example, Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2016) consider three types of sociabilities: proximal, workplace, institutional. During the data collection, I uncover in what ways these three sociabilities take place for refugees employed in the tourism industry of Veneto. Hence, it is primarily relevant to define what the authors mean with each of these.

*Proximal sociabilities* are the relations built with neighbours and people who reside nearby: these people can turn out to provide significant support. On the other hand, *workplace sociabilities* are built in the workplace: these can range between relations with co-workers or even managers, despite any form of social or economic differences. The final type is *institutional sociabilities*: these are formed through the involvement of refugees with reception agencies, churches, schools and any other service centre. To conclude, the authors do recognise that social categories dictated by racial, ethnical and religious belonging, to mention a few, are often inevitable elements of social interactions and relations. Nevertheless, the very concept of sociability seeks to overcome these demographic and political elements by rather emphasizing shared experiences and aspirations.

Although this paper explores all the elements of urban sociabilities as essential elements of social emplacement, the authors urge for further research so that comparative efforts can be employed between cities with different hierarchies of power.

## **2.2. Granovetter’s theory in context: the supporting role of institutional actors**

A salient element to consider when investigating the social emplacement process of refugees is the supporting role of institutional actors. Specifically, private sector actors such as workplace managers, colleagues and labour unions, governmental and third sector institutions can play a significant role in the process. For instance, studies show that workplace managers can provide refugees employees with the necessary tools to thrive from decent work, safe working conditions, and equitable pay practices (Santos, 2023). Trade unions, furthermore, advocate for better working conditions by communicating with governments and employers (ITUCS, 2023). Governmental and public institutions obtain state or EU funding to support projects focused on the reception and initial integration of newly arrived refugees within a specific area. Finally, third sector organizations can assist with securing housing, serve as guarantors for rental agreements, and offer information about job opportunities (IRES, 2021).

The ‘strength of weak ties theory’ (SWT) by Mark Granovetter looks at the function of ties in facilitating the flow of information and resources across social networks (Granovetter, 1983). As such it is a relevant theory for analysing how institutional actors propagate resources and support services to refugees. In his 1983 paper, Granovetter restates the core argument that weak ties or acquaintances are more likely to connect further social groups than strong ties, namely close friends. Hence individuals with few weak ties are “deprived of information from distant parts of the social system and confined to the provincial news and views” of their close friends (Granovetter, 1983, p. 202). This bridging function of weak ties facilitates the flow of information and resources, such as employment and cultural diffusion, across different social networks. Having said this, it is important to understand the origins and developments of such bridging ties as not all weak ties serve the same functions and are as affective in creating bridges between actors. These ties can change over time based on contextual factors which might impact their

facilitating role in the communication and coordination within complex social networks. Nan Lin adopts a similar line of thought in his chapter “Building a network theory of social capital” (2001) where he discusses social capital and individuals’ tendencies to engage in networking to reap a profit. Entering the right social networks can provide access to flows of information and these same networks can exert influence on agents that are useful to a given actor (Lin, 2001). For instance, recruiters can be influenced through word of mouth by the network to hire or promote an individual. Moreover, being connected to a specific network can certify an actor with social credentials, thus making it easier for him to access resources. Finally, social networks reinforce identity and recognition, this can add to an individual’s sense of entitlement to the resources the network offers (Lin, 2001).

All in all, Lin (2001) emphasizes the need for individuals to invest in social relationships to generate returns. Granovetter (1983) also touches on the idea of investment in social relations, particularly in the context of job searches. He illustrates how individuals leverage their weak ties to find employment opportunities, suggesting that the strength of these ties can influence the effectiveness of social capital in achieving desired outcomes. Both these theories inform on the potential facilitating role of given actors in an individual’s network, hence they are implemented in this paper when looking at the role of institutional actors in the social emplacement of refugees employed in tourism.

### **2.3. Actor-Network Theory**

The Actor-Network theory (ANT) introduced by Bruno Latour as a framework to analyse and determine the agency and influence of both human and non-human actors in shaping a given social and technological phenomena (Latour, 1996). The author believes that ANT is a way to describe the “very nature of societies” (Latour, 1996, p.369). Translation is a core concept through which all the actors involved in a problem are aligned and coordinated in the network. This process includes the negotiation and transformation of meanings, interests, and associations among the actors involved. ‘Interessement’ is another key concept in actor-network theory, referring to the process by which actors are enrolled or mobilized to act in a particular way within a network (Latour, 1996). Thus, ANT offers a unique outlook on social interactions and technological developments by emphasizing the distributed nature of agency and influence within networks (Latour, 1996). In this paper, ANT is used to analyse social emplacement.

The role of external actors on the social emplacement of refugees was in part addressed by other researchers. Jang et al. (2021) for instance, address the topic of deskilling and reskilling of political refugees in the Republic of Korea by making use of an actor-network analysis. The study highlights the challenges faced by refugees in finding work that aligns with their prior experience, often leading them to accept low-skill day labour which in the medium to long-term causes them to lose the skills they had in the first place (deskilling) (Jang et al., 2021). In this regard, the study emphasizes the importance of programs that provide migrants with work experience related to their original field (reskilling). Work, credentials and civil activism are not translated and therefore, refugees must rely on the support of the ‘right’ intermediaries such as human networks and work channels to find suitable jobs (Jang et al., 2021).

Sha (2021) investigates the topic of migrant networks as social capital to understand the social infrastructure of migration. She does not explicitly employ ANT, but she conducts a literature review of papers on the notion of migrant network. Migrant networks are sets of social ties that connect migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants across origin and destination areas through bonds of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin (Sha, 2021). They are considered a type of social capital playing significant roles in various stages of transnational mobility, including both regular and irregular migration. Having said this, there are four possible negative consequences of social capital: exclusion of outsiders, excessive claims on group members, restrictions on individual freedoms, and downward leveling norms. Overall, changes in migrants' social networks affect how they react to critical events

during their migration, shaping their migration trajectories (Sha, 2021). Within migrant networks, Boese (2015) chooses to address the role of one actor, namely employers. A 'successful settlement' calls for factors such as secure and affordable housing; access to adequate employment opportunities; supportive attitudes and environment in the local community, among others. In this regard, employers can assume different roles, some supporting and others deterring: they can attract refugees to the regional location; provide settlement support; be hosts and cultural ambassadors; determine current and future residency; and finally, perpetrate discrimination or exploitation (Boese, 2015). Employers therefore can be gatekeepers to economic participation for refugees and can enable 'everyday multiculturalism'. Nevertheless, the paper points out that discrimination against migrant workers is a systemic issue rather than an isolated occurrence, underscoring the need for further examination of employer behaviours and attitudes (Boese, 2015).

Finally, Phillimore (2020) reflects on the role of social interactions, networks built within the host society, institutional frameworks and systems as variables that impact refugee integration. Hence, government policies, legal frameworks, and organizational structures designed to assist refugees in their integration process are effective if the discourse and public perceptions surrounding refugees are positive (Phillimore, 2020). All in all, the paper provides a rich theoretical basis for exploring refugee integration through the lens of host society opportunity structures and it can be incorporated in an actor-network analysis on the topic of social emplacement.

## **2.4. Conceptualization**

This research builds on existing theories. For one, the research focuses on a specific context that has not been investigated yet, namely the social emplacement of refugees working in tourism in the Veneto region of Italy. Moreover, the research question is exploratory given that refugees, third sector actors, governmental actors and private sector actors are contacted, and their input is used to form an assessment on how the social emplacement of refugees takes place.

The figure 1 below depicts the conceptual framework upon which this thesis will be based on. Regional working tourism policies has a direct influence on the social emplacement of refugees. The dependent variable is an overarching concept with four constitutive elements (path dependency, choice, urban sociabilities and access to services and housing). Three further actors (private sphere actors, governmental actors and third sector actors) have a potential impact on social emplacement which is displayed by dotted lines. Finally, the actor-network theory and the strength of weak ties theory are used to assess the role of such actors and thus, encompass them in the framework.

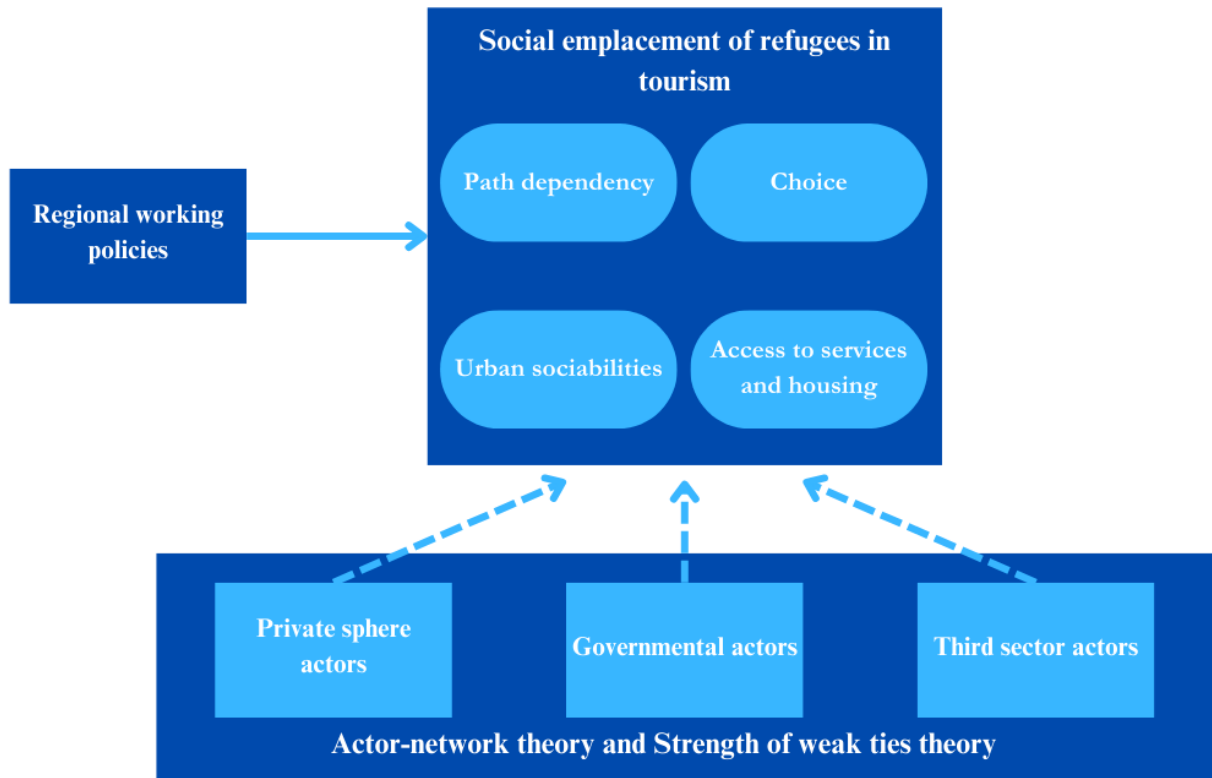


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework. Source: Author's own work.

### 3. Regional context and case study

As mentioned in the introduction, every year there are more people seeking refuge in Italy. Most people requesting political asylum in Italy in the recent past come from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Tunisia, Nigeria, Egypt, Ivory Coast, Georgia, Somalia, Morocco and Gambia (Centro Astalli, 2023).

On a yearly basis, the Italian government issues a ‘Decreto Flussi’ (Flow Decree) whereby they devise quotas of how many non-European Union workers can be hired in Italy (Governo Italiano, 2023). In this estimation they consider seasonal workers, subordinate workers, as well as self-employed workers. The quota for 2024 stands at 151,000 foreign workers and among the sectors considered are those of the food industry and tourism-hospitality. From this, a set number of workers is allocated to each Italian region (Governo Italiano, 2023). This Decree allows for the reception of citizens from countries with which Italy has agreements and political relations with. Refugees and victims of irregular and dangerous migration flows are also taken into account<sup>1</sup>. In the touristic sector, there are 31,000 slots open to foreign workers, however any employer who wants to hire a non-EU citizen through the Flow Decree must first check with a ‘Centro per l’Impiego’ or employment centre that there are no other workers in the country who are suitable for the job (MLPS, 2023).

According to UNHCR (2024), in Italy asylum seekers are allowed to work already 60 days after submitting their asylum application. To do this, they can register with an employment centre where they are asked to sign an immediate availability declaration form (DID). By owning this document, asylum seekers can keep working while they wait for a decision on their asylum procedure. Only if they receive a refugee status or subsidiary protection are they granted a residence permit with which they can work in Italy just like any other resident without limitations (UNHCR, 2024).

#### 3.1. Refugees at work

This section serves to build the regional case study and frame the context in which the data collection will be carried out. The goal is thus, to bring forward reports written by Italian institutions on the topic which are reviewed in the Discussion chapter to reflect on the findings of the study. For this purpose, the report by the Istituto di Ricerche Economico-Sociali del Piemonte (IRES, 2021) is used as the primary source. Research for this report was conducted within the scope of FAMI (Fondo Asilo, Migrazione e Integrazione) or the asylum, migration and integration fund and sheds light on refugees at work and the corresponding services and policies in the Piemonte region (IRES, 2021).

#### *Prerequisites when entering the workforce and extra challenges*

When it comes to prerequisites when entering the workforce, the first topic of relevance is that of skills and competencies (IRES, 2021). In this regard, the paper delineates the complexity of recognizing the educational and professional qualifications that refugees might have acquired in their origin countries. Several competent bodies are usually called upon and this involves numerous steps and a substantial financial cost which refugees often cannot bear (IRES, 2021).

A second requirement is the language. In Italy, language training for foreigners is offered through free Italian courses organised by CPIAs (Centres for Adult Education), voluntary associations, vocational

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<sup>1</sup> The prioritized origin countries: Albania, Algeria, Bangladesh, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Korea (Republic of Korea), Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Philippines, Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Japan, Jordan, Guatemala, India, Kyrgyzstan, Kosovo, Mali, Morocco, Mauritius, Moldova, Montenegro, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Republic of North Macedonia, Senegal, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tunisia and Ukraine (Governo Italiano, 2023).



training organisations and organisations involved in reception projects. The challenge here can be that some refugees do not consider Italy as a destination territory, and therefore are not so inclined to invest time and resources in completing the language learning courses. Moreover, the learning of Italian, is more effective if associated with 'on-the-job' courses when it comes to specific sectors with technical terms (IRES, 2021).

Additionally, internships are a recurring theme (IRES, 2021). When asked what they would ask of public institutions when it comes to work integration, many companies request for the organisation of work trials and internships. Internships can be a way to train refugees, while adequately compensating them and facilitating their entry into the labour force. Throughout the internship, it is important to devote appropriate time to also train the worker on issues related to the company culture, company rules, the operation of certain procedures and compliance with certain rules. Other forms of support during a career path are mentoring, job coaching and case managing (IRES, 2021).

Finally, the report reflects on extra challenges encountered by refugees when looking for work (IRES, 2021). One of these is mental health: many refugees experience physical and psychological trauma during migration but also post-migration once they settle in Italy. Some influencing factors can be inadequate reception conditions in large facilities, the inability to find a minimally stable job or achieve a situation that gives sense to their migration. Therefore, rather than accepting mental health as the cause of challenges when finding work, in many cases it tends to be a result of it. An added challenge is that reception centre operators often prefer that refugees do not look for a job immediately, in the belief that it is better to focus on learning the Italian language. When this occurs, reception centre operators start exercising a form of control which can be 'hetero-directed and infantilising' (IRES, 2021).

### *Social capital and working aspirations*

The final salient themes covered by the report are the construction of social capital and the working aspirations of refugees. The authors state that the ability and luck that comes into play when obtaining a job depends less on the quantity and quality of previous skills (cultural capital) than on friendships (social capital), mentality and behaviour (cultural capital) and the weight carried by obligations to send remittances back home (IRES, 2021).

Four forms of networks (social capital) are identified to which refugees recur to for finding employment:

1. The network of compatriots already living in Italy: they help meet an immediate need for a job which might turn out to be a form of precarious employment (IRES, 2021).
2. The network of other migrants met along the migration route and in reception centres: they are the most important network. Most of the interviewees found job opportunities through them. However, these networks may also lead to complicated paths up and down Italy, often achieving little stable employment while exerting a lot of energy (IRES, 2021).
3. The network of solidary natives, who are people who work for associations or cooperatives, priests, nuns: this is a form of territorial network which leads to the path of integration. These people can offer support that other networks cannot offer. They can for instance act as guarantors to obtain housing and sometimes money, a job opportunity at one's own religious structure, amongst others (IRES, 2021).
4. The network of Italians met at work or in leisure-sports contexts: they are considered as friends by the interviewees. Contrastingly to the previous network, this one has less capacity to direct them towards a job. However, their role is less prescriptive and paternalistic and rather horizontal: they can potentially give financial help or a bed to sleep in (IRES, 2021).

To conclude, the paper identifies two distinct refugee career models which are also determinant in the degree of integration, and thus of social emplacement, that refugees experience. The first strand of refugees is driven by an economic need as they perceive an immediate pressure to earn money to send home as remittance. They often have no network with natives and no interest in learning Italian. They, therefore, search for jobs through 'community' networks, compatriots and when not working, they are often in touch with their families back home. For these individuals it is harder to find their place in Italy and often feel lost even after years in Europe (IRES, 2021).

The second category of refugees is driven by a symbolic need as they perceive a less urgent need for financial retribution. They might be younger, without a wife or children, have simply broken bridges with their family or their family does not immediately need their help. For them, the internship is a valuable opportunity to learn even if it is not well compensated and they value the local language. They tend to abide by the behavioural model of the 'good immigrant' and their integration process tends therefore to be smoother and less challenging (IRES, 2021).

In addition to these four forms of network, there are other institutional actors which cannot be overlooked when considering the social emplacement of refugees as they play fundamental roles in the process. As part of these actors, workplace managers, governmental, private and third sector institutions are considered. Their role is further elaborated on in the following sections.

### *Private sector actors*

When it comes to private sphere actors, there are two relevant groups that are addressed by this thesis: workplace managers and trade union operators. As for workplace managers, they can assume a key role by providing refugees employees with the necessary tools to thrive from decent work, safe working conditions, and equitable pay practices (Santos, 2023). In her article, Santos (2023) stresses that the development of the tourism industry towards a sustainable direction requires proactive measures to improve working conditions, opportunities for career advancement, and foster a culture of dignity. Employers and managers should therefore carry out some action plans to ensure refugees are well integrated in the touristic labour market. These action plans are determined in accordance with the 'Multistakeholder plan in 10 points' written by the OECD and UNHCR (2018) and is used to operationalize the supporting role of actors in the Methodology chapter. The situations in which companies directly hire refugees are rare (IRES, 2021). In many cases, employment is found through networks: organizations with the mission of supporting refugees tend to leverage the connections they have with companies to open job opportunities for refugees (IRES, 2021).

With regards to the second group, trade unions are invested in guaranteeing the protection of all workers' labour rights: this includes migrant workers. Trade union operators are engaged in frequent discussions with governments and employers to ensure rights are respected and can urge migrant workers to ask for better working conditions through collective bargaining (ITUCS, 2023). Some of their work includes the advocacy of freedom of protection from abuses, as well as the creation of counselling services for migrant workers to understand the recruitment procedures. Moreover, they provide legal support during process of attainment of justice in cases of rights violations. Finally, they can invest in the arrangement of vocational and language training for migrant workers (ITUCS, 2023).

CISL (Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori) is the Italian Confederation of Trade Unions (CISL, n.d.). Founded in 1950, it is independent from any political, institutional, economic or ideological power. They focus on defending and advancing regular, adequately compensated and dignified employment (CISL, n.d.). Within the confederation, ANOLF (Associazione Nazionale Oltre le Frontiere) is an association specifically targeted at foreign and migrant workers in Italy (ANOLF, n.d.). Their mission is founded on the protagonism of immigrants and the protection of their needs. Some of

their functions include counselling, assistance and the promotion of projects, courses, seminars and festivals of encounter between peoples (ANOLF, n.d.).

### *Governmental institutions*

Governmental and public institutions are often the first ones refugees get in touch with. Regional governments and ministries receive funding from the state or from the EU to invest in projects targeted at the reception and first phases of integration of newly arrived refugees in a given territory. They are for instance, responsible for ensuring refugees are properly registered to attain legal status and obtain the necessary documentation (Ministero dell'Interno, 2024). Moreover, they can offer temporary housing or refer them to organizations that provide some options. A fact worth of notice is that most regional governments in Italy have 'enti strumentali' dedicated to providing a given public service (Valle d'Aosta, n.d., ISTAT, 2023). These entities act autonomously but their obligations are backed by the government. There is no direct translation for this in English due to the specific connotation in the Italian law system; however, it can somewhat be translated to 'instrumental bodies' or 'government agency'. Some of these 'enti' are specifically focused on labour and facilitating employment resources in a specific region, thus potentially supporting refugees in the search for employment. The Veneto region has one such entity called Veneto Lavoro and its role is to support labour policies in accordance with regional planning and the guidelines of the regional government (Veneto Lavoro, 2023). On its website or by directly contacting their operators, one can access a wide range of information on active policies, working conditions, opportunities as well as data on regional statistics. This entity also acts as a mediator between people looking for employment and companies by effectively acting as an employment centre (Veneto Lavoro, n.d.-a). Because of its key functions in the field of employment, Veneto Lavoro is considered an influential actor for the scope of this thesis.

With regards to the reception process of asylum seekers, the Italian government has a program in place known as SAI (Reception and Integration System). This is a network of local authorities that access the National Fund for Asylum Policies and Services to implement integrated reception projects (SAI, n.d.). Local authorities operate at the territorial level along with the support of the third sector to ensure integrated reception actions are available. In addition to the provision of lodging services, a SAI also supplies assistance and orientation measures, by tailoring individual pathways of socio-economic integration to each recipient of the service (SAI, n.d.).

### *Third sector institutions*

Third sector institutions are all those organizations belonging neither to the public nor to the private sector, that may receive government funding (Northern Bridge, n.d.). They include non-governmental organizations and non-profit organizations. Moreover, values-driven organizations also fall into this category and are aligned with a particular social and political perspective: an example of these could be the ones operating as SAI or working alongside them. Further organisations include charities, voluntary and community organizations as well as social enterprises and private research institutes (Northern Bridge, n.d.). According to IRES (2021) some relevant third sector organizations encompass laic and religious associations, volunteers, benefactors which may be volunteer-based, individual or group initiatives. They can provide assistance in finding housing, act as guarantors for a rental contract, or even Italian friends giving out information about possible jobs (IRES, 2021).

### 3.2. Case study: Veneto

As aforementioned, the ANPAL (2022) report indicates that tourism is one of the most popular working sectors for the refugee population when arriving in the country. In addition to this, it discusses the Italian regions with the greatest influx of immigrant workers. The northern regions of Lombardia and Veneto are the ones expecting the most entries (ANPAL, 2022). These two and particularly Veneto are therefore a suitable context to consider within this research study. According to the Decreto Flussi, in 2023, Veneto was assigned 14,851 entries, thus equalling to 15% of the national amount.

**Tab 35. Ripartizione territoriale ingressi previsti dal Decreto Flussi 2023**

Province	Stagionali	Non stagionali	Totale
Verona	3.976	1.492	5.468
Treviso	351	2.561	2.912
Venezia	1.211	790	2.001
Rovigo	1.036	396	1.432
Padova	741	526	1.267
Vicenza	106	1.142	1.248
Belluno	197	326	523
<b>Veneto</b>	<b>7.618</b>	<b>7.233</b>	<b>14.851</b>
<b>Italia</b>	<b>58.750</b>	<b>42.881</b>	<b>101.631</b>

Elaborazioni Fondazione Leone Moressa su dati Min. Lavoro e Politiche Sociali

Figure 2: Number of foreign workers expected in each province of Veneto (Fondazione Leone Moressa, 2024)

Veneto also happens to be one of the most popular tourist destinations as it holds within it a great diversity of cultural heritage as well as sea, mountains, lakes and countryside (Ministero del Turismo, 2023). Notable cities like Venezia, Verona and Padova are renowned worldwide for their charm and history. Moreover, the Garda Lake and Jesolo attract tourists in summer, while Cortina d'Ampezzo on the Dolomites is one of the most popular ski resorts in the Alps (Ministero del Turismo, 2023). Tourism therefore is inevitably a core industry for the region, and it is worth investigating how the region is tackling the themes of sustainable tourism as well as welcoming immigrants in the labour force. Hence for the scope of this research, the region of Veneto is chosen and specifically the città d'arte (art cities): Padova, Vicenza, Treviso, Verona and Venezia. As opposed to the coastal and mountainous areas, in these cities, the tourism industry is not characterized by high seasonality as tourists arrive throughout the entire year (Bozzato, 2022; Regione del Veneto, 2018). For this reason, seasonal and fixed-term employment for refugees working in tourism is less common in these urban centres. This has the potential of making their employment conditions and social emplacement different from refugees working seasonal jobs. For reference, the locations of the art cities are depicted in the map below (Figure 3).

Fig. 1 – Veneto. Mappa delle aree turistiche individuate

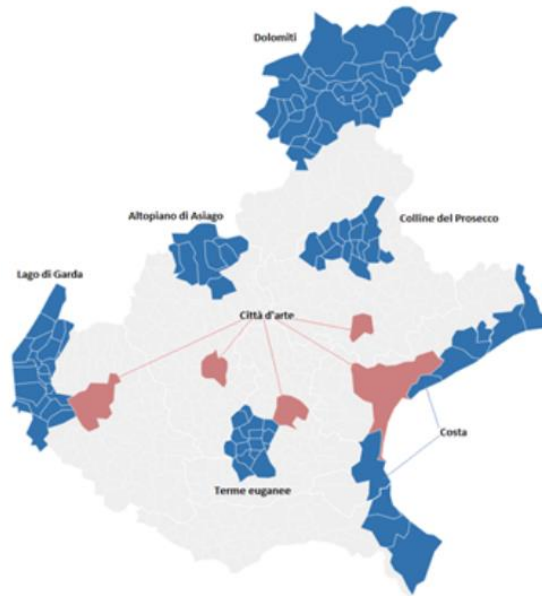


Figure 3: Touristic areas in Veneto (Barazzuol et al., 2023)

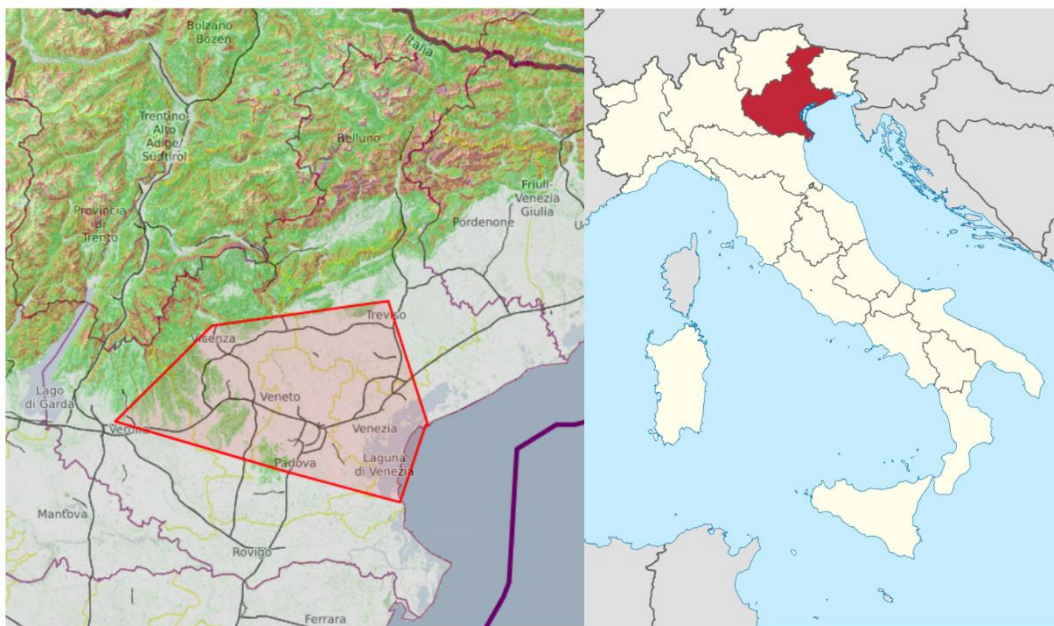


Figure 4: Geographical map of Veneto and its art cities encapsulated by a polygon. The left map was created by the author of this research on Caltopo. The map on the right was adapted from Wikimedia Commons (2011) and it displays Veneto's location in Italy.

In September 2023, the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) hosted the third edition of Sustainable Tourism Forum in Padova (De Franceschi and Fiorentino, 2023). This conference addressed the Strategic plan for tourism in Veneto 2022-2024 and how it must tackle, among other issues, the socio-demographic change in Italy, technological progress and sustainable development (De Franceschi and Fiorentino, 2023). This policy, along with others are elaborated on and addressed in the Results chapter. Gaining a better understanding of regional tourism policies enables for a better overview of the current political and social sentiment in Veneto with regards to refugee workers.

According to the report on foreign immigration in Veneto by Fondazione Leone Moressa (2024), in the region, 37.7% of foreigners are in the income bracket of less than €10,000 per year, compared to 22.9% of native Italians. Moreover, 14.6% of foreigners and 27.9% of native Italians are in the €25,000 to €50,000 bracket. In the highest income bracket (higher than €50,000) are 6.8% of taxpayers born in Italy and just 1.9% of those born abroad. This highlights a still evident divide between locals and foreign workers.

Furthermore, in the report, the supporting role of third sector associations is emphasized: in 2023, there were 127 recognized associations working in the field of immigration in the region (Fondazione Leone Moressa, 2024). 64% of them are 'Italian', while 36% are 'immigrant' associations. Padova and province are host to 26% of them, with Venezia, Verona and Treviso closely following. Vicenza records 13% of registered associations. This concentration of associations further justifies my decision to focus on the art cities. With regards to the activities carried out, 72% of the organisations commit to safeguarding and promoting the culture of origin and 31% further deal with intercultural mediation (Figure 5) (Fondazione Leone Moressa, 2024). Many associations offer services of a practical nature and to support their members in their daily lives, such as bureaucratic assistance, legal protection or Italian language courses. Considering their functions, it is of great relevance to consider what the supporting role of third sector organizations is when it comes to the social emplacement process of newly arrived refugees.

**Fig 39. Associazioni iscritte al Registro del Ministero Lavoro, area Veneto.**

Dettaglio Attività dell'associazione (Domanda a risposta multipla, totale diverso da 100)

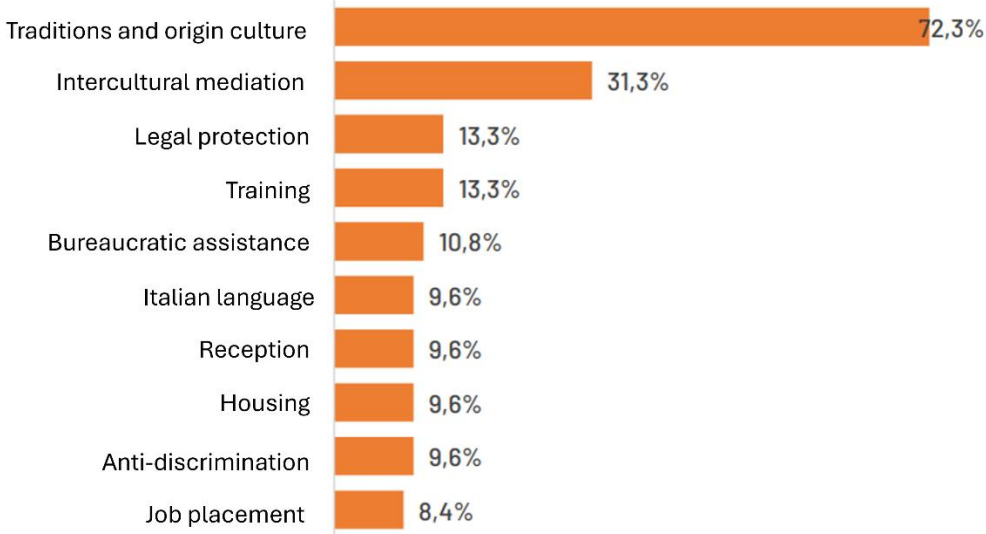


Figure 5: Third sector organizations registered in Veneto and their functions (Fondazione Leone Moressa, 2024). Translated by Author.

## **4. Methods**

In this chapter, an overview of the research methods used for this research is presented. First is an introduction on the research design and qualitative research methods employed. These are then followed by the sampling strategy and the methods with an analytical framework. Finally, the data processing section including the operationalization of the research variables is found before a reflection on the positionality of the author and the limitations of the methodology.

### **4.1. Research design**

This research was conducted between December 18th, 2023 and September 9th, 2024. The study area consisted of the Veneto region of Italy, where fieldwork was carried out between March 16th and May 30th. This region was chosen for its vast presence of refugees, as well as third sector, private and public organizations directly involved with the refugee population. Thus, focusing on this region, a substantial amount of data on regional tourism policies as well as all aspects contributing to the social emplacement of refugees could be collected. This analysis was conducted first by gathering and assessing secondary data: various reports, articles, grey literature and websites were analysed by means of a content analysis. This was done to assess what tourism working policies are currently in place in the Veneto region and whether any extra support is being provided to refugees. Furthermore, interviews and in-person visits were conducted to gain a better understanding of the topic.

### **4.2. Qualitative research methods**

Given that a case study strategy was chosen, the research will focus on qualitative methods. The necessary data – tourism working policies, social emplacement, potential role of actors other than workplace managers – that is needed is personal and subjective. For this reason, in-depth interviews are the most suitable research methods. In this effort, the participants were selected through purposive sampling based on whether they were personally or professionally involved in the topic.

### **4.3. Sampling strategy**

Given that the Veneto region is home to many touristic realities, it was not possible to investigate all of these over the course of three months. For this reason, it was not possible to gather a representative sample of refugees working in different segments of the tourism industry of Veneto. Hence, the scope was narrowed down to refugees and supporting organizations living, working and operating in the ‘art cities’. Specifically, the cities of Verona, Padova, Venezia, Vicenza, Treviso and in part, Rovigo were considered. Moreover, only refugees and managers working in either a hotel or restaurant were chosen. The sampling strategy involved a mix of purposive and snowball sampling. Given that I had no contacts in the region prior to starting the research, I started reaching out by email and phone to hotels, third sector organizations involved in refugee reception and integration and regional governmental institutions that I identified through desk research. Through an analogous process I searched for reports and papers on regional tourism policies. By the time I arrived in Italy, I had conducted two interviews with SAI representatives online and they suggested more organizations I should reach out to. Then throughout my months in Veneto, I kept sending emails, calling, in addition to visiting organizations in person. I travelled a couple of times per week to a different city (Verona, Padova, Vicenza and Venezia) for in-person visits to the different organizations’ offices with the intention to raise awareness on my thesis topic and gather respondents. As soon as I started interviewing more people, the interviewees themselves would share contacts of additional people or organizations I could reach out to. Moreover, by interviewing regional government representatives, I was able to access more material and insight on the regional tourism policies.

#### 4.4. Methods

As briefly mentioned in the previous section, the research methods consisted in desk research, in-person visits and interviews. With regards to desk research, literature on regional tourism policies was in the form of reports published by governmental and intergovernmental institutions, websites and newspapers. The in-person visits to organizations, on the other hand, were either spontaneous or under invitation by respondents. Finally, the in-depth interviews were conducted with a total of 21 respondents consisting of a diverse mix of stakeholders. Four interview guides were written in Italian, English and French for four different categories of interviewees: most of the questions asked to third sector actors, governmental actors and private sector actors were overlapping (as can be seen in Annex B). Their inputs allowed for a joint coding procedure as they were mostly used to address sub-question 1 and 4. The interview guide written for refugees (which can be found in Annex B) is different from the others as the inputs of the respondents were used to answer sub-questions 2 and 3.

The first category of interviewees was refugees. In total seven respondents were interviewed who either work in a hotel or restaurant: three of these interviews were conducted in person while four online due to scheduling convenience. The respondents have the corresponding characteristics with regards to nationality and gender: three Syrian women, one Bangladeshi man, one Pakistani man, one Afghan man and one man from Ivory Coast. On top of these, respondents mentioned the following origin countries when talking about refugees in Veneto: Iraq, Ukraine, Morocco and Sub-Saharan Africa, Moldova, Romania, Albania. With regards to length of stay in Veneto: Respondent 1 has been in Veneto for 10 years now, Respondent 3 for 4.5 years while the rest arrived less than 4 years ago. The most recent arrival is Respondent 2, who had only been in Italy for 7 months on the day of the interview. Finally, with regards to job role, one is a hotel manager, one is a cleaning lady in a hotel, another is the coordinator of the cleaning staff in her hotel, while the four men are assistant chefs. The second category of respondents were regional government representatives and labour union representatives. In total four regional government representatives and one labour union representative were interviewed: all of these interviews were conducted online. The third category of respondents were hotel and restaurant managers. In total two hotel managers and one restaurant manager were interviewed: one interview was done in person, while the other two online. The final category were SAI/third sector representatives. In total six people were interviewed who operate in the region of Veneto: two interviews were conducted in person and four online. A detailed description of the respondents can be found in the Annex in table 3 while an analytical framework is below with an overview of the research stages and the steps involved for each.



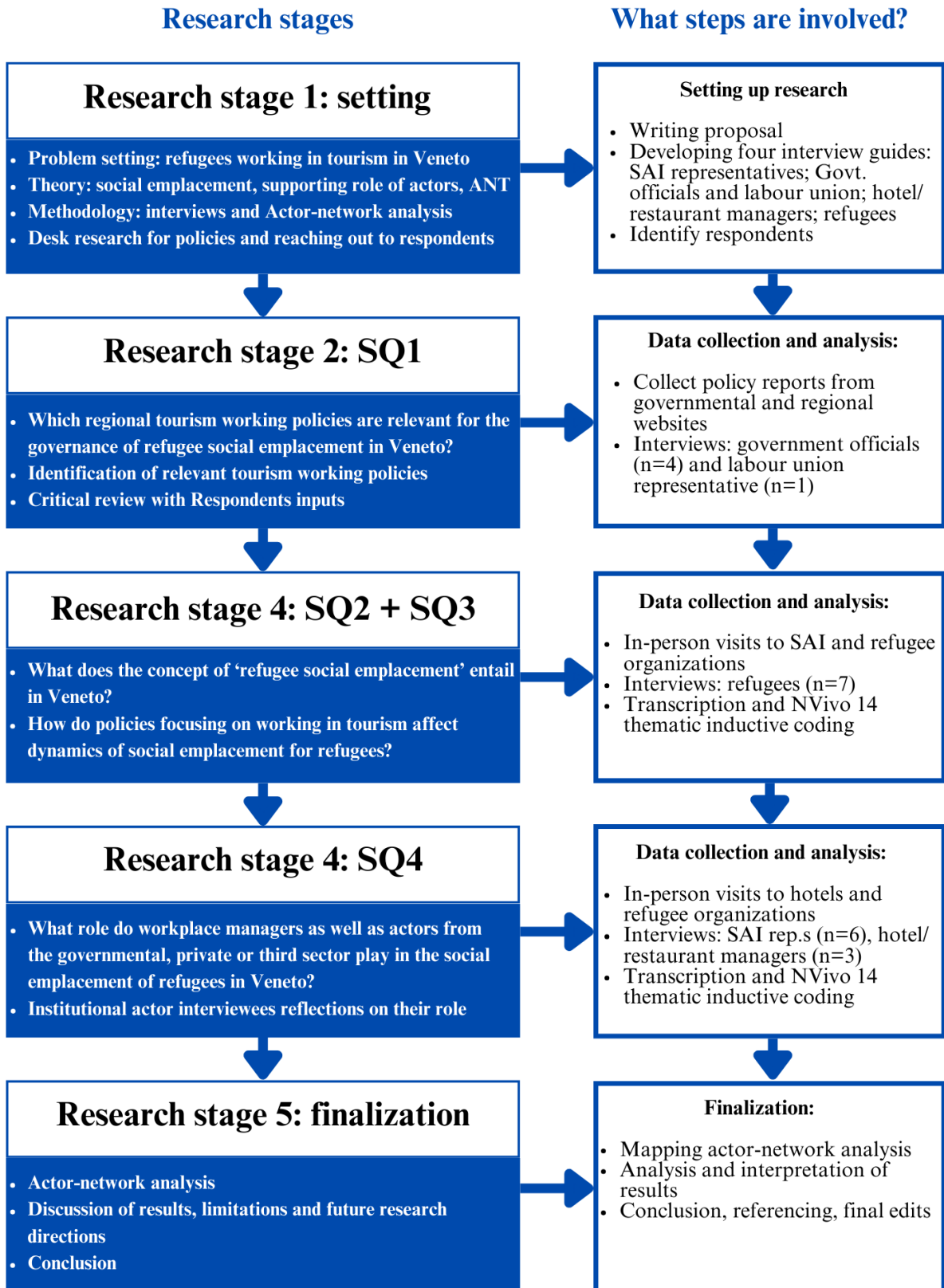


Figure 6: Analytical framework. Source: Author’s own work.

## 4.5. Data processing

The process of data analysis involved concurrent transcription of ongoing interviews. The interviews collected were transcribed and translated from Italian and French to English when needed. This approach allowed for the incorporation of inductively derived insights from initial interviews to refine the interview guide as needed. Additionally, each interview underwent comprehensive coding using NVivo 14, thus enabling a final comparison of results. The deductive codes were drawn from the literature addressed in the Theory chapter and the ‘Multistakeholder plan in 10 points’ written by the OECD and UNHCR (2018): these correspond to the indicators listed in the tables in the Operationalization section. Inductive codes on the other hand, arose during the processing of the transcription of interviews: an overview of both can be found in the codebook in Annex C. This systematic analysis furnished the essential information required to address the research questions and sub-questions, ultimately leading to the formulation of a conclusive summary. In addition to this, an actor network analysis was conducted to analyse how networks of actors—both human and non-human, such institutions—interact to shape social phenomena. This can be found in Chapter 5.

### *Operationalization*

To operationalize the concept of social emplacement, some indicators must be defined (Table 1). These are later used as deductive codes when analysing the data collected. In the table below, for each sub-element of social emplacement, a set of indicators are identified.

<b>Sub-elements of social emplacement</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Indicator(s)</b>
Path dependency	How paths of emplacement are determined by the specificities of a particular territory.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job availability in contextual region</li> <li>• Availability of transport infrastructure</li> <li>• Availability of institutional support for refugees</li> <li>• Presence of social occasions and activities</li> </ul>
Choice	The freedom of choosing where to live and work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perceived freedom of choosing where to live based on aspirations and individual preferences</li> <li>• Perceived freedom of choosing where to work based on aspirations and individual preferences</li> </ul>
Urban sociabilities (proximal, workplace, institutional)	Fruitful relationships between refugees and local actors resulting in: provision of help, protection and resources and the development of social connections. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proximal: neighbouring residents</li> <li>• Workplace: colleagues and managers</li> <li>• Institutional: reception agencies, churches, schools and any other service centres.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having one or more fruitful relationships with proximal actors</li> <li>• Having one or more fruitful relationships with workplace actors</li> <li>• Having one or more fruitful relationships with institutional actors</li> </ul>
Access to services and housing	Having the possibility to reach health, educational services and adequate housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ease of access to health services</li> <li>• Ease of access to educational services</li> <li>• Ease of access to adequate housing</li> </ul>

Table 1: Definition and indicators of social emplacement and sub-elements

With regards to the operationalization of the supporting role of institutional actors, an overview can be found in Table 2. These are later used as deductive codes when analysing the data collected. As mentioned in the workplace managers section, the ‘Multistakeholder plan in 10 points’ written by the OECD and UNHCR (2018) can be used as the reference source for establishing such indicators. Not all the points mentioned in the paper were included, since only some could be addressed in the interviews. In the table below, for the supporting role of each institutional actor, a set of indicators are identified.

<b>Supporting role of institutional actors</b>		<b>Indicator(s)</b>
Private sector	Workplace managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer internships, mentoring and/or apprenticeship programmes</li> <li>• Work with public authorities, public and private employment services</li> <li>• Reach out to refugees by contacting civil society organisations</li> <li>• Put refugees in contact with colleagues to facilitate their social integration</li> <li>• Promote a professional and respectful working environment for all.</li> <li>• Support newly arrived refugees in learning the language</li> <li>• Provide additional training courses (OECD and UNHCR,2018)</li> </ul>
	Trade union operators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collective bargaining for dignified working conditions</li> <li>• Protection of human and working rights</li> <li>• Counselling services for migrant workers to understand recruitment procedures</li> <li>• Provide legal support during process of attainment of justice</li> <li>• Vocational, cultural and language training for migrant workers.</li> <li>• Direct assistance for any socio-economic needs</li> <li>• Assistance with banking services intended for sending remittances</li> <li>• Collaboration with trade unions in origin countries of refugees (ANOLF, n.d.)</li> </ul>
Governmental		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that rules are applied uniformly throughout the country</li> <li>• Invest in vocational training of refugees to guarantee legality of their stay</li> <li>• Improve procedures and information on the recognition of foreign titles</li> <li>• Ensure language classes suited to the skills, background and specific needs of refugees</li> <li>• Ensure financial support or loans for driving licence</li> <li>• Guide refugees to find occupations compatible with their skills or alternative careers</li> <li>• Provide support services (transport, childcare, flexible hours, etc.) that in rural and remote areas increase refugees' opportunities to access employment</li> <li>• Adopt anti-discrimination mechanisms</li> <li>• Remove administrative barriers to the activation of paid traineeships</li> <li>• Ensure tailor-made, preferably individualised, support, including for women and persons with special needs (OECD and UNHCR, 2018)</li> </ul>
Third sector		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structure up-to-date databases with all relevant information on the administrative framework concerning the employment of refugees</li> <li>• Assist refugees and businesses by providing them with info on labour rights</li> <li>• Support refugees in learning about work practices and behaviour once employed</li> <li>• Establish info-sharing systems among civil society organisations to exchange knowledge on services available</li> <li>• Assist refugees in drafting CVs and motivational letters</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer training courses on intercultural communication in the workplace</li> <li>• Inform low-skilled refugees of the need to find a compromise between starting work ASAP and acquiring basic skills useful for long-term employment</li> <li>• Make employers aware that while hiring refugees can be problematic, it can be very cost effective if they employ human resources characterised by diversity, adaptability and willingness to learn (OECD and UNHC, 2018)</li> </ul>
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Table 2: Indicators of the supporting role of institutional actors (OECD and UNHC, 2018)

**4.6. Reflection on positionality**

The findings of this research are an inevitable result of the subjective opinions and interpretations of the researcher and the study participants (Hennink et al., 2020). Moreover, my own positionality might create some bias in the research. I am an Italo-American Caucasian female university student who has lived in Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. I come from a position of privilege as I have always had the opportunity to study and take any decision I wanted for myself. This may be contrasting to the lived realities of people who had to flee their own country and who have a completely different background from mine. There were moments when even though I ensured that the refugees respondents knew I was a student who was guaranteeing them anonymity if desired, they might have still abstained from disclosing the whole (either positive or negative) truth about events that happened to them. Finally, given my origins, I am familiar with the context of Italy which might create some inherent bias into how I perceive the political dynamics and governance of the country with regards to topic of international development, such as the refugee crisis. This being said, I had never lived in the region of Veneto before and was therefore, unfamiliar with the precise dynamics of refugees reception and asylum in the region prior to my fieldwork.

**4.7. Limitations and ethical issues**

During the data collection, I encountered language barriers. Although I speak native Italian, as well as English, French and Spanish fluently, these were often not the preferred languages of refugees coming from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan or Syria. Therefore, a mix of Italian and English was used to carry out some of these interviews with the additional help of a translator app. Moreover, I perceived some hesitation from some third sector organizations when I approached them regarding my thesis: some of them did not feel it appropriate to share contacts of refugees due to privacy and safety concerns. They had negative experiences with previous volunteers or researchers and thought that my interviews might trigger negative emotions and feelings in the refugees. For this reason, I was able to conduct less interviews that I had originally planned.

With regards to ethical issues, I ensured the anonymity of all respondents and absolute discretion with their data. Moreover, I invited them to abstain from answering any questions they felt uncomfortable responding to.

## 5. Results: analysing the impact of networks on social emplacement

This section serves to outline the results of the research in a thematic manner. First, the most influential regional working tourism policies are unpacked while incorporating the reflections made by one government official and one trade union representative during the interviews. The former works for the organizational unit for European projects and socio-economic integration of non-EU citizens and is thus invested in governing refugee emplacement at a regional level. The latter is the president of a local branch of a trade union for immigrant worker and is therefore, faced with governing policies in his work and is invested in addressing or even contesting them if needed. Furthermore, by analysing the interviews conducted with institutional actors and refugees, the dynamics of social emplacement are untangled. Finally, the actor-network theory is used to map and analyse the supporting role of institutional actors. All these serve to respond to the overarching research question which looks at the extent to which regional working policies contribute to the process of social emplacement of refugees who are employed in tourism in the Veneto region of Italy.

### 5.1. Relevant regional working policies

*“I hope that this conversation will be seen by other people. And that they understand that people who leave their country do not do so because they want to leave. So, if we arrive in a foreign country, that foreign country must be a little more supportive and make our integration easier. [...]*

*And Italian politics, as we know, are a bit difficult. Padova is lucky to be an open city, because I see a lot of tourists here who come from here, who want to visit. It's a city that's open to the world. A lot of tourists come here. Sometimes when I pass by, I see people speaking French. Others speak German. Others often speak Spanish. So it's a town with a lot of residents.”*

This statement was made on June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024 by Respondent 7, an Ivorian refugee who arrived in Italy in 2022 and is now enrolled as a student of political sciences at the University of Padova. Throughout the interview, he reflected on his own reception process when he first arrived in a country and his current perception of Padova as a city. In his words Italian politics are ‘difficult’ and that is something that many other respondents agree with. The ongoing migration crisis is a topic often brought up by both national and regional politicians as they cannot agree on how to go about it. Despite the growing influx of refugees, many right-wing politicians push restrictionist agendas and Veneto is commonly known in history for having a more conservative regional government. Respondent H, an employee at a Verona-based NGO providing support to refugees, emphasizes how in 15 years, the mayor of Verona allowed for the gentrification of the old town (“una città modello vetrina”, meaning a model city as if showcased behind a shop window) in an effort to attract and suit the needs of tourists. By doing so, he believes that wealthy tourists are being prioritized to vulnerable, coloured foreigners who come to Verona, and Veneto, for work and living opportunities. These views, however, contrast with those of Respondent A, a regional government official invested in the socio-economic integration of non-EU citizens, who discusses new developments in regional policies aimed at further supporting all these “vulnerable, coloured foreigners”.

In light of these contrasting opinions, it is thus, necessary to better understand the policy landscape in Veneto and the manner in which the issue of refugee employment in tourism is governed. Although tourism can be managed on a national level by a Ministry of Tourism which creates a national plan, it is often regional governments which carry out the policies hands-on. In the case of Italy, some regions

possess autonomy or even a ‘special statute’ rendering them autonomous with regards to legislation, finances and administration and can protect their linguistic and cultural minorities (Camera dei deputati, 2021).

Veneto as a region has an ‘ordinary statute’, and this entails a standard degree of autonomy (Consiglio regionale del Veneto, 2012). Its regional government therefore can regulate regional planning, safety, healthcare and education provided these do not conflict with national laws. Similarly, it has administrative autonomy over local transport and infrastructure, along with financial autonomy. Finally, it has cultural autonomy, and this pertains to areas of cultural and environmental heritage. The region is responsible for preserving these sites and promote projects of protection and sustainable tourism (Consiglio regionale del Veneto, 2012).

### *Piano strategico del turismo del Veneto 2022-2024*

In 2022, a Strategic plan for tourism in Veneto 2022-2024 was launched (Consiglio regionale del Veneto, 2022). In it the regional government announces the core objectives as being:

1. Digitalization: creating more opportunities for virtual forms of tourism, the enhancement of workcation opportunities for digital nomads and hybrid workers, greater focus on e-commerce, among others.
2. Sustainability: both environmental and social. There is an ever-increasing attention by tourists on waste reduction, energy consumption, sustainable modes of transportation. In addition to an awareness of the local community and the desire to respect their customs.
3. Diversification of tourism offerings
4. Collaboration between various stakeholders in the public and private sectors (Consiglio regionale del Veneto, 2022)

By implementing these measures, the regional government expects Veneto to experience increased tourist arrivals and visitor satisfaction, which will both generate sustainable and financial growth. With regards to the employment of refugees in tourism, all these interventions seem to direct towards an opening to new and fair working conditions in the sector (Consiglio regionale del Veneto, 2022).

### *Fondo Asilo Migrazione e Integrazione (FAMI)*

The FAMI (Fondo Asilo Migrazione e Integrazione) is the asylum, migration and integration fund and it is a financial instrument funded with the objective of promoting an integrated management of all the aspects of asylum, from migration to integration in Italy (Ministero dell'Interno, 2014). The finances were provided by the European Union after a debated policy dialogue and the program was originally intended to span from 2014 to 2020. Given its necessity, the national program was extended with new funds for the period 2021-2027, which renders it relevant for the scope of this thesis (Ministero dell'Interno, 2023).

Its reach is intended to be multi-sectorial, multi-level, multi-stakeholder and attentive to the complementarity of different funds. The core objectives are the following:

1. Strengthen and develop all aspects of the common European asylum system, including its external dimension (EU commission, 2024)

2. Support legal migration to the Member States, including by contributing to the integration of third-country nationals
3. Contribute to countering irregular migration and ensuring effectiveness of return and readmission in third countries
4. Enhance solidarity and responsibility sharing between the Member States, in particular towards those most affected by migration and asylum challenges (EU commission, 2024)

In Italy specifically, these goals are translated into local measures, namely: funding of primary reception housing for unaccompanied foreign minors; more offices dedicated to procedures for granting Italian citizenship; launching the MIGRASTAT project to produce national reports on the migration phenomenon and on the state of implementation of the national plan; and finally, resettlement and "humanitarian admissions" activities (Ministero dell'Interno, 2023).

Examples of calls for projects can be found on the website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. In June 2023, a public notice was published for 'Promoting the social and economic autonomy of refugees' (Ministero dell'Interno, 2023a). In it, the Government pledged to allocate €35million to any organization involved in the reception of refugees. This includes local SAI (Reception and Integration System) projects, as well as regions, education institutions, NGOs, amongst others. To apply for such funds, the organizations must prove to be carrying out individualized pathways of socio-economic integration to each recipient of the service (Ministero dell'Interno, 2023a). These extend to housing services, employment services, parental support, healthcare support and social integration support. Emphasis when drafting these pathways should be placed on recognizing skills already acquired but not formalised in Italy, updating of the skills balance sheet, the participation in non-professional training and/or specific Italian language workshops. Moreover, these projects can also entail financial contributions for the purchase of work equipment, for the obtainment of licenses and reimbursement of expenses to support work activities (Ministero dell'Interno, 2023a).

Veneto Lavoro (n.d.) as a regional governmental agency of Veneto governing policies concerning labour, vowed to contribute to the overall goals of FAMI in Italy and approved a couple of projects. The first one is aimed at boosting civic and linguistic trainings for refugees as these are considered fundamental for their integration process in Italy. The second strives to reinforce school integration of students – primary, secondary and university - from third countries (Veneto Lavoro, n.d.). Respondent A works in the organizing unit of the European project for Veneto Lavoro and according to her some policies are very rigid and tend to overlook the needs of vulnerable non-Italian workers. Hence, she believes that by implementing FAMI “what we try to do is just to understand, to experiment what can be more useful [for asylum seekers]” as they “must first be equipped with the tools to access these policies”. Therefore, her team is working on ways to render FAMI projects more targeted to refugees and one way in which this will be done is through the multi-action FAMI: “We will make the training of the operators compulsory every year, so it's also easier for everyone to participate. [...] Multidisciplinary team within the job centre will also have the task of going outside the job centre both in the direction of vulnerable workers and in the direction of services”.

Previously, Respondent A's team, within the scope of FAMI's 'Impact Veneto' project, experimented by inserting experts in migration and labour market within job centres in three different provinces (Treviso, Venice and in Padova). Moreover, they started designing linguistic modules that provide refugees with useful lingo and terms for their jobs. They are “combinable modules of 20 hours each that will touch different aspects. (...) Italian but designed for work. We were probably thinking of doing part of it within companies, for example at Fincantieri, a request came in. [It is] where a lot of Bengalis work [with] often not a word of Italian, no equipment, and [Fincantieri] still don't do safety courses in Italian,

for example”. An additional project, Veneto Lavoro and Respondent A’s team worked on was the Momentum project, organized by AMIF, an EU wide fund on asylum, migration and integration. The objective of this project was to involve female asylum seekers to enhance their soft skills, motivation which could be useful for entering in the labour market. What Respondent A figured is that third sector organizations have a very important role both because they are responsible for reception and over the years have gained expertise for addressing the needs of the most vulnerable people.

### *Garanzia di Occupabilità dei Lavoratori (Guarantee of Employability of Workers)*

A further relevant policy is the Garanzia di Occupabilità dei Lavoratori (GOL): this is the Guarantee of Employability of Workers and was launched in March 2022 (Veneto Lavoro, 2024). Within the scope of the PNRR (National Recovery and Resilience Plan) - that Italy received after the Covid pandemic by the EU - GOL is a reform action that aims to redesign the system of employment services and to upgrade the supply of active policies. This is achieved by focusing on the improvement of research opportunities and support for citizens searching for a new employment. Particular attention is given to the more vulnerable citizens by establishing flexible interventions (Veneto Lavoro, 2024)

The program encompasses five different pathways that can be suggested to the recipients of it (ClicLavoroVeneto, n.d.). The first pathway is on work reintegration and is intended for all the people closest to the labour market, who do not have a skills gap to be filled by access to a training offer, but who might require digital skills enhancement (ClicLavoroVeneto, n.d.). For them, the program lasts around two months, and it consists of specialised guidance, job accompaniment, digital skills training. The second pathway is on upskilling and is intended for people further from the labour market, who have a skills gap that can be filled by short-term training. For them, the program lasts around three months, and it consists of specialised guidance, upskilling training, job accompaniment, digital skills training. The third pathway is on reskilling and is intended for people far removed from the labour market, with skills that do not match their needs and who therefore require a medium to long term training offer aimed at retraining. For them, the program lasts around six months, and it consists of specialised guidance, retraining with extracurricular training, participation allowance (for those not receiving income support), job accompaniment, digital skills training (ClicLavoroVeneto, n.d.).

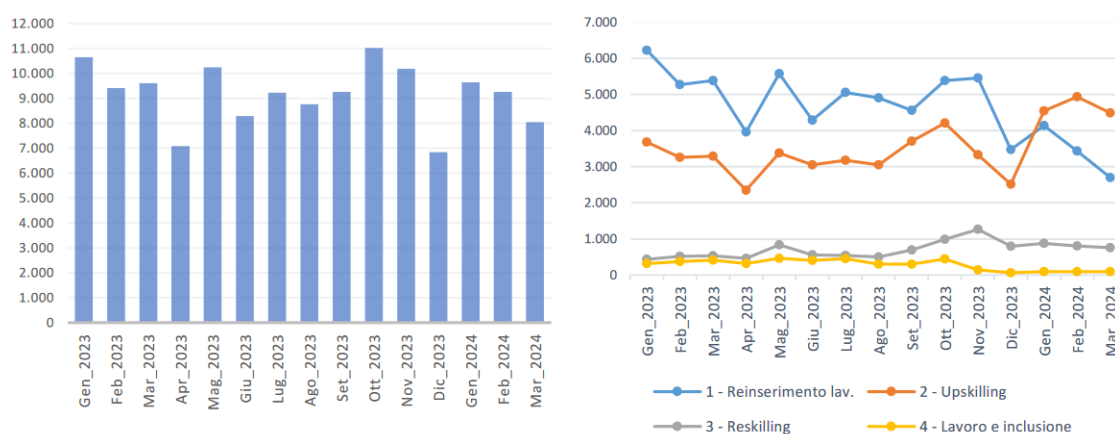
The fourth pathway is on work and inclusion and is intended to support the re-employment of workers most distant from the labour market, with complex personal and family needs and with skills to be retrained (ClicLavoroVeneto, n.d.). It implies synergic and multidisciplinary actions with the network of territorial services (educational, social, social-health, reconciliation, third sector), modulated and customised on individual needs. For them, the program lasts around eight months, and it consists of specialised guidance, reskilling training, apprenticeships, job accompaniment, support for self-employment, digital skills training, reconciliation vouchers (for those with care responsibilities) or service vouchers (mobility and connection). Finally, the fifth pathway is on collective outplacement and is intended for groups of workers involved in company crisis situations, workers benefiting from wage supplementation treatments for whom a reduction in working time of >30% is planned and NASpl (unemployment benefit) recipients. The objective is to enable the workers to update their professional skills and abilities and the possibility of a rapid professional reintegration. For them, the program lasts around four months, and it consists of specialised guidance, job accompaniment, training, support for self-employment, training for digital skills (ClicLavoroVeneto, n.d.).

Newly arrived refugees tend to fall into pathway 3 and 4 as they may have skills that have not yet been converted to Italian standards and may require dedicated support when searching for employment. According to Respondent A, GOL is “the first tool we have to help [refugees] workers get back into



work”. With regards to this policy, Veneto Lavoro strives to have at least 3 million recipients of the program by 2025, of whom 75% are vulnerable people. Moreover, they would like to involve at least 800,000 training recipients, of whom at least 300,000 are reinforcing their digital competencies (Veneto Lavoro, 2024). To access GOL, one must simply contact the closest employment centre. Refugees, given that they are considered a vulnerable section of the population, can access this service to strengthen their work competencies with the goal of finding a suitable employment. Figures 7 and 8 provide an overview of the GOL recipients in 2023 and 2024. Figure 7 displays the number of recipients per month per pathway recorded in Veneto, while Figure 8 shows their corresponding demographics, proving that as of March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024, 25% of them were foreigners.

Figura 1 - Ingressi mensili in GOL, complessivi e per singolo percorso, a partire dal 01/01/2023



Fonte: Veneto Lavoro (dati al 31 marzo 2024)

Figure 7: The number of recipients per pathway from January 2023 to March 2024 (Veneto Lavoro, 2024a)

Tabella 2 - Presi in carico in GOL per provincia e per alcune caratteristiche anagrafiche

	Tot.	Sesso		Età			Cittadinanza		Anzianità disoccupazione		
		Femmine	Maschi	15-29 anni	30-54 anni	55+ anni	Italiana	Straniera	≤6 mesi	6-12 mesi	≥12 mesi
Belluno	7.509	4.047	3.462	2.465	3.404	1.640	5.964	1.545	5.968	230	1.311
Padova	34.808	20.469	14.339	10.858	17.343	6.607	25.627	9.181	26.097	1.189	7.522
Rovigo	11.899	6.875	5.024	3.439	6.012	2.448	9.336	2.563	8.299	380	3.220
Treviso	29.454	17.454	12.000	9.499	14.132	5.823	21.981	7.473	22.953	1.117	5.384
Venezia	36.705	21.700	15.005	11.453	17.884	7.368	27.195	9.510	29.025	1.054	6.626
Verona	29.783	17.930	11.853	9.230	15.000	5.553	22.483	7.300	23.736	830	5.217
Vicenza	28.119	16.593	11.526	9.153	13.879	5.087	21.037	7.082	22.284	810	5.025
<b>Veneto</b>	<b>178.277</b>	<b>105.068</b>	<b>73.209</b>	<b>56.097</b>	<b>87.654</b>	<b>34.526</b>	<b>133.623</b>	<b>44.654</b>	<b>138.362</b>	<b>5.610</b>	<b>34.305</b>
Comp. %	100%	59%	41%	31%	49%	19%	75%	25%	78%	3%	19%

Fonte: Veneto Lavoro (dati al 31 marzo 2024)

Figure 8: The number of recipients per province, gender, age, nationality and duration of unemployment (in months) (Veneto Lavoro, 2024a)

### Supporto per la Formazione e il Lavoro (SFL)

The final policy is the Supporto per la Formazione e il Lavoro (SFL): this is a training and labour support launched in July 2023 by the Ministry of Labour and Social policies (MLPS, 2023a). Its goal is to assist

all the people who are at risk of social and employment exclusion and enabling to participate in training projects, profession requalification and civil service (MLPS, 2023a).

This service can be requested by all people between 18 and 59 years of age who have an ISEE (Indicatore della Situazione Economica Equivalente) inferior to €6000 per year (ClicLavoroVeneto, n.d.-a). ISEE is a means-tested indicator used in Italy to assess the economic situation of households for the purpose of accessing various social benefits and services. Moreover, applicants must not belong to households with minors, persons with disabilities, persons aged over 60 or other disadvantaged persons taken care of by the social and health services. Finally, they must have been a resident in Italy for at least 5 years, the last 2 of which on a continuous basis (ClicLavoroVeneto, n.d.-a).

### *Challenges*

Although there are many policies in place intended to facilitate the socio-economic integration of refugees in Veneto, some notable challenges for refugees persist. With regards to the Decreto Flussi, Respondent N who is the president of ANOLF reflects on the 2023 report and the vast number of requests for workers in hotel/tourism, as well as in the personal care sector. Nonetheless, in his opinion, getting migrants to work in Italy within a specific sector is quite difficult and hence, it might be recommendable to first source from the pool of workers already present in Italy. He claimed that along with his team: “we made as a proposal that if the government can accept it, we could give a hand for that in doing the regularisation, try to regularise so many people who are illegal in the system”.

Respondent A additionally, listed four other obstacles: waiting times, inadequately trained mediators and mentors and the housing crisis. The first one relates to the length of time the prefecture can take when releasing residence permits, which can often be up to 2 years, and training programs which job centres can take up to 3 months to organize. Respondent I, the representative of a SAI in Treviso, listed some ripple effects of this:

*“Regulations end up penalising [refugees] a bit because they do not allow, for example, in the SAI projects, to provide certain services that in my opinion would be fundamental to help a process of integration in the territory or to give some more tools to the person. But also just not to keep people stationary for a period of time, maybe then they go to the commission and the commission recognises a protection and then these services can be provided, but all this time in which the person has been is a period of time lost, and secondly, it is also a period of time in which the person has not been able to be stimulated properly and therefore reactivating this process is even more difficult.”*

The second challenge Respondent A mentioned is when it comes to public tenders requesting mediators or mentors. She stated that the risk with the tenders is that only the big companies win, and they start sending translators rather than trained mediators. Moreover, most mentors hired to support newly arrived refugees are either trained Italians or sometimes people from foreign countries but who were raised most of their life in Italy. This can result in refugees not feeling able to rely on them due to cultural differences.

Finally, Respondent A mentioned the housing crisis. In order to get a job, you need to show a housing contract, however housing is a very critical topic due to its shortage. Some refugees thus risk falling prey to ‘caporali’, who are hiring managers, usually in the agricultural sector, who promise to give housing and compensation but with an irregular contract equating to exploitation. Respondent G also discussed the unregulated nature of the tourism industry by stating that the problem is often labour exploitation, since tourism is one of those less regularised sectors. Hence, foreign people encounter difficulties in recognising themselves and understanding what their rights are.

Additional shortcomings of the regulatory system are the limited allocation of funds to integration projects, the bureaucracy of language and training certificates and the political ideologies of provincial governments. Respondent I claimed that as a cooperative representative he cannot directly pay for refugees to start a vocational training course. He can only look for “other funds that are not project funds and so maybe if there are regional programmes for which I can do a work placement or things of this kind, then I can do them”. However, in that case the issue tends to be that the refugees must speak Italian fluently to attend. With regards to trainings, Respondent N stated that ANOLF is unable to issue certificates. Therefore, if a refugee participates in a language or vocation training with them, ANOLF still needs to reach out to an accredited body that can issue the certificate. These are necessary for refugees to prove that they speak Italian.

## **5.2. Social emplacement of refugees**

As introduced in Chapter 2, social emplacement is the foundational concept of this research as it was used to direct the focus of the data collection on certain elements of the living conditions of refugees in Veneto. As defined by Moralli et al. (2023), social emplacement are the social elements influencing the process through which refugees can build networks of connection within the opportunities or constraints of a specific city. In addition to this, the framework by Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2016), focusing on urban sociabilities was identified as adding value to this. All in all, social emplacement was theorized to comprise of four sub-elements: path dependency, choice, urban sociabilities and access to services and housing. When it comes to social emplacement in a more general sense, interview respondents agreed on three topics that enable for an effective social emplacement. For one, it is important for refugees is to have opportunities to leave any integration project or reception centre they are in to explore what type of vocational training, education or social activities are available outside of it. According to Respondent I, the president of a cooperative offering refugee services in Treviso, exploring services beyond reception services means: “Participating in voluntary activities, going to events, courses, sports activities”. All these opportunities here can increase a person’s network and their possibilities for developing a feeling of settlement in the region.

A second topic is work, which is the primary focus of this research: how can employment in tourism contribute to social emplacement? Respondent F and M are a hotel and a restaurant manager who directly hire refugees in their businesses. F has two hotels in Padova where she hires female refugees for internships, while M has several restaurants, and she mostly hires 16-18 old newly arrived refugees. In this way they provide them the tools to work, get a sense of how it is to work in Italy, in tourism and finally they get the chance to learn the language faster. According to Respondent M, after working for some years with refugees, with her colleagues at an NGO in Padova, they started to realize what people really need to attain social emplacement and they: “came to this conclusion that what they were looking for and what they needed for true integration was work”. Through work, refugees can develop a sense of worth and financial autonomy. Finally, the third salient topic is social relations, with all refugees, as well as institutional respondents agreeing that these are fundamental. According to Respondent G, an employee at an NGO, a social support network can help refugees in “finding a job, deepening their knowledge of the Italian language, finding all the various aids in daily life, dealing with certain practices that are very complicated”. Sociabilities can therefore represent a support system for refugees who are unfamiliar with practices or services in Veneto. All these topics are further addressed in the following sections as the findings relating to sub-question 3 are unpacked and analysed.

### *Path dependency*

To address the topic of social emplacement, the four sub-elements must be addressed: path dependency, choice, urban sociabilities and access to services and housing. With regards to path dependency,

refugees generally sparked positive perceptions of their host cities as they all experience sufficient availability of services and support. Six out of seven respondents have been welcomed and supported by either a SAI or a religious charity organization in their respective host cities as soon as they arrived which helped them settle in in the first months to years of living in Veneto. Respondent 6 stated: “Italy is a country for refugees, they help enough, or they say little, but they help the kind that after a year or two years they help you to work in Italy, and after that you are like an Italian”. Respondent 7 nevertheless, had a different experience as he came to Italy irregularly via boat. He first arrived in Lampedusa where he was dropped off in a place that was isolated and disconnected from any urban centre: “we were practically in the forest. We had no contact with anyone, not the Italians, not anyone”. From Lampedusa he was relocated to Salerno to get his residence permit, however he lived in a small provincial town called Padula and he faced some difficulties adapting. He was residing far away from the city centre where all the essential services and his job were, therefore even going to a language course took him hours by bike. Now he is in Padova where he finally feels like there is enough opportunities for him to lead an easier life: more services are readily available and with a residence permit he has the same rights to working and getting a house as native Italian. On which he stated: “(Italy) is also a country that gave me the opportunity to integrate more easily. They put a lot of things at my disposal when I came here to facilitate my integration. (...) Padova is a city that's open to the world”.

Other institutional actors provide their input on this topic but with a specific focus on the cities their service is active in. Overall, bigger cities are equipped with better infrastructure, transportation and accessing services and work is therefore substantially easier. Contrastingly, smaller towns and provinces such as Belluno have fewer means of transportation, services and jobs available. Respondent I works for an NGO and he talked about Treviso as a territory that is well-connected in terms of transportation infrastructure and offers both essential services and working opportunities. There is a high demand for low-skilled labour and it is simply more dynamic than smaller territories such as Belluno which “perhaps has a lower network of mobility services, these are a bit more complicated because either you manage to find a low-level job in the city, or else going outside the city is inconvenient because the means of transport are not good”. However, even big cities present their challenges. Respondent M works as manager of Strada Facendo, a restaurant that hires refugees in Padova (depicted below in Figure 9) and when asked about Padova and the services available for the social emplacement of refugees, she responded by highlighting some of the hurdles in the system. First, she finds there to be a notable housing crisis due to the large influx of students and short supply of houses for rent. Moreover, there’s a lack of personnel reviewing the documents of refugees and releasing permits which slows down the process of attaining these. Without proper documents, it is harder for refugees to access the services that a big city such as Padova supplies.



Figure 9: Ethical restaurant Strada Facendo (n.d.)

### *Choice: perceived freedom of choosing where to work and live*

With regards to choice, interviewees were asked what their perceived freedom to choose where to work was. Their overall responses were mixed: most were able to find jobs in hotels and restaurants but stated that these are not their dream jobs. The responses can be categorized in three types. The first response was expressed by the respondents who have been living the longest in Italy and are the eldest from the group: they currently work as hotel manager and head of the cleaning staff at a hotel. They are satisfied with their jobs and after receiving promotions since they started, they can see themselves keeping the same job for the longer term. The second response was expressed by Respondent 4 and 5: they do not hold any previous university qualification and came to Italy for work. They expressed contentment when talking about their jobs as assistant cooks and do not seek for a different profession. Their only remark is that they would like a higher pay and shorter working hours. The final category on the other hand is made up of the youngest respondents: Respondent 2, 6 and 7. All of them either already have a university degree or are planning to enrol at a higher education institution as soon as their language skills improve. Although currently working as cleaning lady or assistant cooks, they all expressed their intention to pursue a different career in the future. Respondent 2 felt she has not had enough opportunities to choose her job given that she would like to be a nurse. Respondent 6 enjoys being a cook, but he is looking to study computer sciences or economics at university: “So if I say that from the kitchen side it will also be a bit difficult because I have to put so many years to learn to get to the place I want. Depending on what I have to study, maybe if I start university, maybe I'll get to the place I want faster, but I'm trying to find the right thing”. Finally, Respondent 7 simply saw his restaurant job as a necessary way to support his studies and future: he looks to graduate from university and work in politics or in the social sector.

### *Proximal sociabilities*

All interviewees strongly value proximal sociabilities and hold these supporting individuals in high regard. Respondent 3 highlights how the Italians she met in her town are very kind and supporting, she stated that: “If they see that a person wants to work, is willing to. They teach you, they give you the courage to go on. When they see that you are an honest person, they help you a lot. To look for a house, to look for a car, for everything. We want help. They were always by our side. I thank them so much”. Nevertheless, what is very common is for refugees to look for compatriots living in Italy, while struggling to connect with Italians. Respondent 4 is from Bangladesh and mostly befriended other Bangladeshi, while not being able to approach Italians. The reason for this is according to him, his

limited knowledge of the Italian language. Similarly, Respondent 6 befriended some Afghan people when arriving to Padova with his brother. Through his friends they found a job at the restaurant where they already worked at and now lives together with them. Although initially relying on the support provided by proximal relations, Respondent 6 has now been in Italy for three years and considers Padova “his second house”: he has a job, an apartment, friends and fluently speaks the language. He has become himself a sort of gateway agent for Afghans and services in Italy, he provides an example for this when talking about his involvement in Refugees Welcome, a supporting organization: “I told everyone [all his Afghani friends]: ‘Look, there’s this community that actually helps you, maybe if we have a problem with documents’”.

Institutional actors all agreed on the importance of this type of sociabilities. Respondent I, the president of a social cooperative in Treviso, emphasized how such networks can help refugees finding housing:

*“A Malian guy who worked in a bakery and couldn’t find a home, he took an hour and a half by bicycle to get around because he was in a small village outside Belluno. So, of course, the bakery works at night, he leaves in the evening, works the bakery, then in the morning he goes back by bicycle. (...) now he has managed, through friends, to find a house, practically five minutes from the bakery, and he has done it”.*

Respondent K shared a very similar story, while Respondent G stressed how vital these relations can be in finding a job, learning the language and any other type of support: he believes proximal sociabilities to be fundamental in the sense that what is very often missing for people who arrive in Italy is a social support network that can help them find a job, deepen their knowledge of the Italian language, find all the various aids in daily life, help in dealing with certain practices that are very complicated. Finally, Respondent N defended the value of connecting with people from one’s own origin country (“There is a Nigerian, Somali, Argentinean, Albanian, Filipino, Moroccan, communities”) to be able to speak in one’s language and exchange advice and tips on who to reach out to for documents, jobs and so forth.

### *Workplace sociabilities*

The second kind of sociability is the one established in one’s workplace. These can be relations with colleagues or managers. All respondents hold their managers in high esteem and feel like they can rely on them without a second thought. Respondent 7, who was not able to build many proximal relations is quite fond of his workplace connections, both with his manager and colleagues:

*“Yes, yes, yes. The chef is very nice. His name is X. He’s very kind and open. Everyone respects each other. I respect them too [manager and colleagues], because it’s mutual. They’re very nice people. They’re very available. I don’t really feel like I’m a foreigner here. These people have such an open mentality. They respect people, not on the basis of their skin colour or their origins, but on the basis of what you’re worth, your value. That’s why I’m so happy to be there”.*

Despite respecting their manager, some respondents face difficulties with their colleagues. Respondent 2 when asked if she connected with her colleagues, said that she tries “not to trust every person I meet here”. Respondent 3 has been working in her hotel for 3 years now and faced quite a bit of discrimination when she first started because of stereotypes of Syrians and Arab people. She has since then been capable of changing their mentality: “I am happy because I changed this mentality of them all coming from the Arab country, they make trouble, they make a mess (...) I agree with them, but it’s difficult for me because I had to face this thing”. Respondent E is herself a manager of a hotel and talked about they engage with newly arrived foreign workers by showing them how to do carry out their jobs in practice and people who have been in the company and in Italy for more years to act almost as mediators.

### *Institutional sociabilities*

The final kind of sociabilities are institutional ones. These are created with individuals met in institutions, which can be integration-oriented or even sports institutions and religious institutions. Both Respondent 1 and 3 when they first arrived in Italy, were welcomed and supported by catholic groups and nuns. Respondent 1 was initially a guest of the “Clarisse nuns in Fanano” and even though now she lives in Padova, she is still in touch with catholic groups there such as Santa Rita, Sant’Egidio and scuola Vides. She regularly attends their workshops and is even involved in organizing their activities. Respondent 3 similarly, mentions joining gardening activities or events organized by the local rectory. She even offered her services as cleaning lady a couple of times as a thank you service. All the other respondents have built fruitful connections with employees at their respective reception centres or SAI. Respondent 2 stated that she still has not been able to build strong connections with people except with the “Employees at One Bridge to Idomeni” (the organization that provided her and her family with a house and support services). On a similar note, Respondent 5 strongly relied on il Samaritano (a SAI in Verona) employees and both Respondent 6 and 7 were supported by Refugees Welcome Italia. Respondent 7 even reached out to Adam, an employee at Refugee’s Welcome on his birthday and celebrated it with him. Respondent H is an employee at One bridge to Idomeni and he runs a community centre for refugees where several activities and support services for them take place (Figure 10). He further highlights the scenarios in which refugees offer to become volunteers at their organisation and in this way they build:

*“Close networks, ties, relationships that have also allowed them to have their own social circuit within which they can lean on for requests or simply to be networked. Within this space here, from a more professional point of view, we try to maintain this type of relationship, and it is not an exception”*

In addition to integration-focused organizations, Respondent 3 found that she could rely on educational institutions for help with her children's education: “The teachers also helped them a lot. There was one of them who came to my house. Yes, very good. She came to teach it herself. Nicola, the same thing. There was a maths teacher who came with an Italian gentleman, but he's very good. He spoke English, so he explained”.



Figure 10: Community centre of One bridge to Idomeni (n.d.) in Verona

### *Access to services and housing*

The final element of social emplacement is access to services and housing. With regards to health care services, respondents experienced no problems overall thanks to the support of institutions. Respondent 1 even feels that refugees have access to more services than a regular Italian citizen. As soon as an asylum seeker obtains the refugee status, they have access to healthcare as easily as any Italian, however Respondent K claims that some type of specific health support is not so easily attainable. Among these she mentions: “there is a lack of resources to ensure psychological pathways or ongoing support for other health issues”.

With regards to education, refugees also seem to encounter no problems accessing it. Respondent 3’s children have been able to attend the public middle school and high school as soon as they arrived in Italy, while Respondent 7 enrolled in university. He did nevertheless state there is a limited amount of universities open to refugees: one university in Perugia and one in Padova. Respondent B who works for Veneto Lavoro explained that healthcare is guaranteed to all citizens as it is in some way universal.

The service that is harder to attain seems to be housing. All the refugees interviewed found housing through to an organization, hence they do not perceive difficulties. However, experts disagree as they all claim finding a house is a widespread challenge for most people in Veneto and especially for foreigners. Respondent I (president of an NGO) discussed the topic by stating: “With respect to housing, housing is a huge thing, because we are in an area that already has few possibilities from this point of view and therefore offers little not only to foreigners but also to Italians”. Respondent M (Manager of Strada Facendo) adds to this by bringing up the topic of discrimination: “the difficulties that [refugees] find in practical life despite having a job, are for instance when they talk on the phone and they [landlords] hear that the person has a different voice because he is Nigerian, they do not give him the house”.

### *Challenges to social emplacement*

From the interviews, several challenges to social emplacement emerged. The first one is coming from less economically advantaged families. Some refugees, such as Respondent 4 and 5 came to Italy in search for work opportunities to support their families back home. Because of this, they did not have time to participate in integration activities, except for some basic language courses. They both work in restaurants and in their free time they mostly call with their families back home.

A second challenge is having a different skill set than the one required from the work they obtain when arriving in Italy. This reduces their chances of finding suitable employment. Respondent N in this regard said: “The only problem we are having with this lately is that companies are now looking for qualified people. And sometimes we know that migrants do not have this kind of qualification that is required by the company. That's why it becomes a bit difficult to find the right people to place within the company”.

The third challenge is inadequate integration support. Respondent M discussed the detrimental role inadequately trained volunteers can play. They can adopt a welfare mentality but she insisted that “Even volunteers in the things they do must also be prepared to understand certain concepts and enter these people's lives on tiptoe but understanding that you can also damage a person's path if you are not prepared”. Moreover, Respondent N found that refugees when arriving in Italy may find it difficult to find the information they need for any service they require: “because immigrants when they arrive in Italy do not know where to go for information because not all information counters are as structured as we are”. An additional challenge is the obtainment of papers due to the long queues and slow bureaucratic processes. With no papers it is not possible to receive an identification number that “gives



access to the national healthcare or even to a job centre. So, it gets harder to get a job and enrol children to school” (Respondent F).

On top of these, speaking the language is a necessary skill in Italy: respondents 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7 speak it quite fluently while Respondents 4 and 5 know the basics. According to Respondent 6, not speaking the language really hinders the integration process: “I have met some foreigners who have been living here for many years and they are still in a place that they don't even have a flat to live in. More or less they speak Italian but they can't find a job, they can't stay in a job so when I see them they say I'm going very fast and that's enough for me”. A final challenge for integration mentioned by Respondent 3 is choosing not to work. She talked about an Algerian family that she met and how the mother did not seek employment or envision to learn the language. According to her, that was the reason for the woman's inability to integrate and understand society in general, to the point where even raising her children in this new context becomes difficult.

### *Working in tourism*

All respondents interviewed work in tourism, either in hotels or restaurants of art cities. For this reason, their employment contracts may be short-term but none are seasonal. When asked about how they felt about the industry and what they enjoyed about it and did not, they mentioned several themes. With regards to opportunities in the sector, the interviewees who work in hotels enjoy the diversity of it and the chances to meet people from different cultures. Respondent 1, a refugee who is now the hotel manager of Casa Battisti, a hotel funded by a social cooperative (Figure 11 and 12), said in this regard: “But everything is surprising, because, I mean, you don't know who's coming, and who's that, it's beautiful, and it also transmits its culture to you, for better or for worse”.



Figure 11: Casa Battisti (2014)



Figure 12: Casa Battisti (2014)

Respondent 6 was keen of the fact that there is room for growth and promotion. When she started three years ago, she was a cleaning lady and now she was promoted to coordinator of the cleaning staff. Respondent 6 moreover, believed that there is a lot of demand and finding a job is very easy if one makes use of hiring platforms such as Indeed. Another benefit of working in a hotel are the decent working hours. Respondent 6 is assistant chef in a hotel kitchen and since he only works in the morning, he has time in the afternoon to attend activities. Furthermore, working in tourism has helped him learn the language faster: “when I started working I only studied for four months when I started working I spoke a lot in Italian so I learnt more on the job in the kitchen”. Finally, the tourism sector offers many internship opportunities or part-time jobs. Respondent F oversees interns at her hotel and on the topic, she shared that the traineeships they offer often last 6 months, which is “the right amount of time to understand and give back to the woman her skills, her competences, her talents”. To this she added that a benefit can be for these refugees to set aside some cash while still having time in the afternoon to attend school or courses in the profession they would like to pursue later.

Respondent C works for Veneto Lavoro and she noticed a trend of more and more foreign workers coming to Italy for seasonal work in tourism:

*“However, the trend that we observe in our data is a progressive thinning of the contribution of EU labour in our labour market, in some sectors in particular we see this in agriculture but also in the tourism sector and instead a progressive growth of the non-EU component and also in the tourism services sector the presence of non-EU workers in the southern sector is increasing, particularly for seasonal activities.”*

Such seasonal work can even guarantee a bed to sleep in while looking for a new accommodation as stated by Respondent H. During the summer season, it is quite common for work providers to offer a hotel room to their employees who work in the facility.

In terms of the challenges encountered in the tourism sector and frequently associated with lower-skilled work, the first one identified by some interviewees is the difficulty of the job from a physical point of view. According to Respondent 2 and 3 being a cleaning lady can be quite tiring, while Respondent 5 is strained by his long shifts in the kitchen. Another challenge faced by Respondent 4 is that his job is not well compensated. There is hence a risk that people in this sector experience exploitation. Respondent G summarises this by saying that the problem in the tourism sector are the shifts, the wages, and in addition to these, a foreign person may not be completely up-to-date on his rights as a worker or has language difficulties in understanding certain things or certain written documents. This can result into fraud and exploitative actions against them. A form of exploitation can be discrimination which does not give room to the promotion of foreign workers. Respondent I believes that many restaurants think accordingly:

*“If I have a floor maid who is Nigerian I don't always like her or I don't know, the Bengali is an assistant chef and it's okay for him to be in the kitchen but not to be a waiter in the hall even though he would have the qualities to do so.”*

This inherent racism still seems to be present in employers which can really hinder refugees' chances at upward mobility.

All these factors can result in refugees wanting to live and work in other countries. Respondent C believed this when she said: “there is an intensification of competition with other states, because workers who used to come here to Italy, but also for seasonal activities with forms of commuting, prefer other territories Spain, France, where they may have better conditions”.

### *Future ambitions*

With regards to the future, despite the challenges encountered, five out of seven of the respondents already know they want to stay in Italy. Respondent 1 wants to hire someone young and qualified to take over her job and would potentially go back to Syria to take care of her mother, even though leaving Padova would cause her sadness. Respondent 7 wants to stay in Padova for at least four or five more years to conclude his university career but would then consider moving somewhere else in Europe. The rest have ambitions to attend university, such as Respondent 2 and Respondent 6, while Respondent 3 wants to attend an English course, a computer course and her driving license.

### *Social emplacement services through the perspective of refugees*

Most refugees interviewed are satisfied with the support received from institutions for their social emplacement process in Veneto. Respondent 7 who arrived irregularly however, did not have a good experience with early reception services as he, as aforementioned, found himself in a location – the

island of Lampedusa – that was isolated from other urban centres. That proved to be an obstacle for him as he could not interact with anyone from the local community which prevented him from learning the language. Moreover, he had to wait more than 8 months before he obtained the papers that allowed him to stay in Italy.

To improve these issues and render integration services more streamlined, Respondent A suggested an integrated grid of service with a multi-agency perspective. She stated that: “One of the objectives for the future is to think more and more from a multi-agency perspective, i.e. of a structured network of services so that the process has a result at the end and that it works for the person who undertakes it, so that they are not discouraged.” Within this agenda, they will introduce “shorter training courses with a view to modularity and above all that they can travel in parallel so the Italian course will not be the 200-hour course at CPIA but it will be an on-the-job Italian course done on modules”. Finally, she suggested improving the training of supporting service employees to ensure they are competent and prepared to support refugees.

Respondent I agreed that establishing a grid of services is necessary step forward for integration services when he said that the development of parallel projects that complement the work of SAI is necessary. Through European projects, cooperatives can start offering vocational training, networking events in the area, language training, and other “channels for working with people”. A further future development could be the expansion of social enterprises, such as the restaurant Strada Facendo or the hotel Casa al Carmine, so that more refugees can benefit from interning there for some time. In this regard, Respondent M and N want to expand their operations with a new restaurant for Respondent M and a new project along with the organization Uno di Noi for Respondent N. The latter serves to overcome landlords’ resistance to renting out houses to immigrants. They often have prejudices believing that immigrants will not take good care of rental houses and hence the project will consist of “tak(ing) photographs of the houses that have been rented to the migrants who have been kept in order. And so we invite the Italians and say ‘Look, the house is on this street, go and see, look this house is rented to a migrant for 5-10 years. Look how well-kept the house is’”. Finally, Respondent G asks for the government to invest more in SAIs and integration services. What their organization requires is more funds as most of their employees work on a voluntary basis and can only provide occasional services. What the community therefore requires to grow are more full-time employees.

### **5.3. Supporting role of institutional actors**

Unpacking the services offered and the resources provided by workplace managers, labour unions, public sector actors and third sector organizations serves to understand how they contribute to the social emplacement.

#### *Supporting role of managers*

Managers play a crucial role as institutional actors within the actor-network, primarily representing refugees’ main contact in the workplace and can be a source of support through their social emplacement process. From the interviews, different ways in which they provide support to refugees arose.

For one, they collaborate with third sector institutions to ensure refugees are in contact with communities that can provide targeted support for any legal or counselling request. Respondent 6 for instance stated that: “the boss who called me told me that there is a community (Refugees Welcome) that helps maybe if you have some problems”. A second supporting measure, managers have in place are diversity policies. Respondent E is the manager of a hotel branch in Padova and discussed some policies they have for minority employees that are attentive to their inclusion, however no measures are specifically targeted to refugees workers. An additional way in which managers express their understanding towards

refugees' living situation is by signing long-term working contracts when this is necessary for finding an accommodation. Respondent 6 experienced this:

*“(the manager) told me that we make you indefinite (contract), because I asked that I have this problem, and they told me don't worry, we make you indefinite, but before it was a bit difficult because I didn't know what to do, but now it's better from this flat, so it's still a difficulty, but I'm trying to find an accommodation”*

Furthermore, managers who are open to offering internships, mentoring and coaching provide the right conditions for refugees to acquire new skills in a safe environment. Respondent 1 for instance, started as an intern at reception of Respondent F's hotel and later got hired as manager of their other hotel branch. Respondent G mentioned some examples of hotels in the Verona province which hired people in the tourism hotel sector, and they were very open to receiving people who had very little knowledge of Italian, but who showed good skills in the workplace, helpfulness, and had all their documents in order. Nevertheless, there are some cases of interns whose stories were brought up by both Respondent 1 and F, that were not as successful or even dropped out of the internship before completing it. This is often due to their expectations not being met by the job or even their inability to adapt to a new working context with different norms than in their home countries. This is however linked to previous experiences, perhaps traumas that the individuals hold and not necessarily something that can be tackled or solved by their hiring managers.

A further supporting service managers give is ensuring that refugees find themselves in a respectful working environment. Respondent E discussed a series of trainings and mentoring available to any newly hired employee when they join her workforce: “a series of courses to be done, which are related to sustainability, GDPR, all that is related to customer pervarsity information management, anti-fraud, and then a series of more technical courses related to the use of company tools. In addition, so these are the compulsory courses that are given when a person is hired, and then there is also a portal that is completely free of charge that our employees can access, where there are disparate courses on languages, mindfulness, conflict management, in short, many different topics that can be useful in personal and professional life, and then there are really internal career development courses, so becoming head of department”.

### *Supporting role of labour unions*

The second actor of relevance are labour unions. From the interview with Respondent N, many insights could be drawn on the supporting role of such entities. For one, ANOLF as trade union specifically targeted at foreign and migrant workers, aids with socio-economic services as they specifically provide advice and information on jobs available and employment opportunities. Moreover, they “share information that is useful for the immigrant. This information could be, practically speaking, that maybe there is a real estate agency that finds houses for rent for immigrants or for people looking for a house”.

In addition to this, ANOLF intensively collaborates with other institutions as they are a gateway between migrant workers and other hiring or third sector institutions. These institutions in fact, often contact ANOLF asking for their services and to provide support to refugees who have already left a SAI project but who might be looking for a job or housing. Similarly, if refugee workers have any specific requests with regards to employment in specific sectors, such as the tourism sector, ANOLF redirects them to the dedicated services: “So when we get these things that have to do precisely with workers in the hotel tourism sector, then we refer it precisely to FISASCAT because FISASCAT is the one with the competence”.

A further service offered by ANOLF is legal support. According to Respondent E “most refugees sign a document they don't even know what's in it. But [ANOLF is] able to help these people to understand what they are signing and then to understand what their responsibilities, their obligations are, what they have to do once they take over a person's house or a lease”. ANOLF was also a contributor to some changes in the law system after some advocacy campaigns. Respondent E describes how lately a national agreement in response of their advocacy campaigns was reached regarding people working night shifts in the tourism sector. Compared to before, they can now earn 15% more if they choose to work such late shifts. Furthermore, a new law has enabled for a tax reduction on tips so that seasonal workers can earn from them. The final activity carried out by ANOLF with the best interest of refugees in mind is the arrangement of language courses. Respondent E discusses how some agreements were reached with CPIA, “the provincial centre for adult education” to enable refugees who start a language course with ANOLF to be transferred to courses given by CPIA for A1, A2 levels.

### *Supporting role of public actors*

The third important category of actors in the context of service support for refugees are public actors such as the regional government. Interviews with four respondents working for Veneto Lavoro were conducted. From these conversations, the first topic arising was public institutions' engagement with other institutions. Respondent A emphasized the importance of dialogue and collaboration between different levels of institutions and organizations. Respondent C added to this by exemplifying some already existing collaborations between the regional government and foreign institutions as seen by the creation of the council of foreign associations. Respondent A however, stressed that many actors invested in the integration process of refugees have expressed an interest in getting to know other services that operate in the territory and according to her:

*“This evidently means that there is a lack of understanding [by institutions] about the general integration trajectory of immigrant citizens and even more so of the vulnerable ones who have been in Italy for a shorter period of time: those who have lower language skills, are without a support grid.”*

Hence, enhancing the already existing collaboration networks can be a beneficial endeavour. Respondent A took Treviso as a virtuous example whereby the “prefecture is not only in a network but also in constant dialogue with the employment centre and with the whole third sector that deals with reception. In particular, here I refer to the Release project, which made it possible to structure what was previously a somewhat more informal network”.

Public institutions furthermore, help refugees finding a suitable employment. Respondent A mentioned reaching out to external professionals who were available in the weekend to meet up with organizations and teach them how the labour market functions. This entailed workshops on how to make a CV, how to read a payroll slip or they would inform them about their labour rights. Additional ways in which the public sector is supporting refugees in their social emplacement process is by helping them in sorting out paperwork and documents. In Respondent 3's words, a group of government officials “was very organized. One of them was helping us getting our documents. The permit, the passport. He would take appointments for us. He did everything”. Moreover, Veneto Lavoro has an antidiscrimination observatory in place to promote any activities that prevent and contrast racial and ethnic discriminations (Regione del Veneto, 2024). As part of this project, third sector organizations, among others, were involved and trained to be active antidiscrimination agents.

Finding housing as discussed above is a widespread challenge in Veneto, therefore public institutions are actively assisting refugees in finding accommodation. Both Respondents 3 and 7 mentioned the municipality as the reason why they found housing. Another crucial topic for refugees emplacement is

a sufficient knowledge of the Italian language. Both Respondents 2 and 7 accessed language courses by the CPIA, a public education centre for adults. Respondents A, M and N also mention this organization when addressing the topic of language learning courses for refugees.

Finally, Veneto Lavoro conducts research on the current migration trends, as well as employment trends. In this way they share data on working opportunities in Veneto for refugees and shed light on the current policies regarding workers. Respondents B, C and D for instance write an editorial every couple of months which is a thematic in-depth column on recent developments in labour, as well as training and educational policies.

### *Supporting role of third sector organisations*

Third sector organizations, including NGOs, cultural organizations, and religious groups, are instrumental in supporting refugees through various services. They engage in advocacy, collaboration with other institutions, and direct support in terms of skills and language training, finding housing and employment. All these contribute to the wellbeing of refugees and their sense of belonging to the host territory. Advocacy campaigns are conceived to raise awareness on the difficulties faced by refugees. Respondent N claimed that in this way they pressure can be put on the governing institutions to hopefully see their policies “translating into concrete actions of coordination with other institutions or projects”.

Additionally, they dedicate efforts to collaborating with other institutions. For one, they collaborate with the UNHCR (Respondent K) and with the municipal governments: both Respondent F and G mentioned open partnerships with the Padova and Verona municipalities. Respondent F however mentioned some resistance from Padova towards projects for refugees funded by the EU. Similarly Respondent G admitted that although they collaborate with Verona on “accommodations, social services, taking charge, (...) reception”, their relationships are not the most fruitful. In addition to governmental institutions, Respondent F highlighted her organization’s partnership with the University of Padova, whereby a master study was created to train students in becoming expert workers in reception centres, after a proposal by Respondent F’s organization. Further partnerships established are with job centres and hiring companies (Respondent I) among which hotels, restaurants and thermal baths (Respondent L) interested in hiring refugees workers. Moreover, third sector organizations in Veneto have ongoing projects with Irecoop Veneto, the regional institute for education and cooperative studies, to organize trainings for refugees (Respondent F) as well as with other cooperative to share successful and non-working practices (Respondent L). One relevant project is Progetto Navigare, mentioned by Respondent J, whereby they are involved with anti-trafficking operators to report any case in which a company does not pay their employees adequately or makes them work longer hours than legally allowed.

A third manner in which third sector organizations contribute to social emplacement of refugees is by providing counselling services. Most SAIs design different individual pathways of support for each refugees depending on ambitions, competencies, the desire to stay in Veneto, interest in a specific sector or the ambition to start an internship. Respondent K stated that the first step is to understand the professional history of the worker and after that, they can assess whether those skills can be useful in various sectors. The specificities of each individual are looked at and an attempt is made to investigate whether there are opportunities in the area. If necessary, the SAI workers can contact job centres or companies directly. Respondent F added to this by saying they are open to help with understanding how electricity bills work or any type of request of this sort. Some SAI’s, like Respondent J’s in Vicenza, decide to allocate refugees to a given reception centre depending on the category they fit in: depending on the users a whole operation follows suit. There are therefore training courses, job placements and babysitting services offered to refugees. Finally, investments are continuously sought to fund specific trainings and collaborate with new institutions (Respondent G).

Furthermore, third sector organizations can sometimes provide financial support. In Respondent F's case, they cofinance internships of refugees with any company that directs them to her service. Even though, limited financial support can be provided, third sector organizations are fundamental in helping refugees get a job. Respondent 2 for instance, found her current job thanks to Respondent G who reached out to hotels on her behalf. Respondent G (NGO worker) stated that he actively looks for work opportunities from the Ente Bilaterale Turismo in Verona which promoted a portal where they share work openings in tourism. Respondent F and M, as aforementioned, directly hire refugees in their hotels and restaurants. Respondent J although he does not directly look for employment on behalf of refugees, his organization doublechecks that "a regular contract is made anyway, so not off the books, we check a payroll support, i.e. know how to read the pay slip, get the pay slip sent and so on, then let's say we do a kind of anti-trafficking check, they say in the jargon, because trafficking is both about sexual exploitation and labour exploitation".

Internships are considered by third sector organizations very valuable opportunities to enter the labour force. In Respondent F's words, an internship is beneficial as a refugees can experience working in a context that is real but also protected. The working staff is professional with professional equipment and will monitor refugees workers at every step of the way. Moreover, there is a chance for being hired directly after the internship period ends.

Three additional services provided by third sector organizations are housing, language training and vocational training. With regards to housing, these organizations, such as SAI's, can only provide housing for a limited amount of time: for 6 months or in exceptional circumstances, for longer. Respondents 4 and 5 currently live in housing owned by il Samaritano, the organization that received them in Verona. Respondent G and J also mention nine total apartments they have for refugees and Respondent M's organization has a reception centre for refugees minors. Language courses are mostly followed at the CPIA but some organizations such as Respondent M's organize some courses for people who require them in a period when the CPIA courses are not taking place. Finally, vocational training is organized in perhaps different ways in all third sector institutions interviewed. In Respondent I's organization they have "an operator dedicated to interviewing people on their working ambitions. This means taking into account the person's skills and also making an assessment of what is realistic to find here in Italy because there are often myths about what you can find, about how much the pay is". Respondent K's organization set up, within their resources, group trainings in mathematics, curriculum building and preparatory in-company job interviews. Respondent M trains refugees on the job by hiring them in her restaurants. None of this work would be possible without the reliance on volunteers. Most third sector organizations interviewed do not have the funds to hire full-time workers, hence all mention the role played by volunteers.

A further striking finding that emerged is the role of religious institutions in the social emplacement of refugees. Although no representative from such organizations was interviewed, many respondents mentioned religion groups as an important source of strength for them. Respondent 1 when first arriving in Italy was hosted by nuns, while Respondent 2 already started joining catholic mass. She is by faith, Christian Orthodox, however she does not mind going to a different church. Respondent F moreover, mentions working with the Franciscan nuns on a project for women who were victims of illegal trafficking. Finally, Respondent K also believes Vicenza to be a very religious (Catholic) city and hence the church is involved in the reception projects and locals tend to be quite supportive of newly arrived refugees.

All in all, third sector organizations are fundamental in helping refugees develop a sense of belonging to cities in Veneto as they can find people to trust and to rely on. In Respondent G's words:

*“So obviously that there is the first thing, to give a safe, calm place, where [refugees] can get answers, get someone who listens to you and this thing here obviously then also makes people come back. Because they see in this place or in the other places where these services are developed, a safe, assuring place.”*

This means, that third sector organizations are available and open to any request even after refugees leave the SAI and become autonomous. In order for third sector organizations to maintain their standing and legitimacy in the regional territory, they must work together with the government, provide them all information on the refugees currently in their reception centres as well as their payroll slips and documents (Respondent J). Moreover, they continuously organize public events to raise awareness on the living and working conditions of refugees in Italy (Respondent G and K).

### *Supporting role of mentors*

A final actor mentioned by respondents working in the third sector are mentors. Mentors are key actors in accompanying refugees through their integration process. Respondent A described mentors as "reference figures who are there during the Italian workshop as a specific example, and who become a point of reference for the ladies, a sort of bridge." Mentors provide crucial support and information on services, contributing to the overall social emplacement of refugees.



## 6. Discussion

The present research was conducted to determine the extent to which regional working polices contribute to the process of social emplacement of refugees employed in tourism. To answer such question, the Veneto region of Italy was taken as case study where in addition to desk research, interviews were conducted with refugees and institutional players. The next sections, therefore, serve to contextualize the findings of this study in the broader theoretical debate on this topic and provide some final policy recommendations. Finally, some future research directions are suggested as well as a disclosure on the limitations of this research.

### 6.1. Theoretical implications

To start, the research served to extend the existing theories and studies on the topic of social emplacement by Moralli et al. (2023), Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2016) and Phillimore (2020) to mention a few. In this paper, local tourism policies in the region of Veneto were considered to demonstrate how they can create enabling environments for refugees. Through the use of the actor-network theory and strength of weak ties theory, the interactions between these policies, institutional actors and social emplacements were unravelled. Through this endeavour, a need for further collaboration between institutions emerged along with a policy-making process which is more participatory in nature.

#### *Regional and national politics*

The policies addressed by this paper were the Strategic plan for tourism in Veneto 2022-2024, the FAMI fund, the GOL pathways and the SFL. All were launched in the past ten years and are complementary in their scopes. Together they address the regional sustainable and just tourism agenda; the issues of asylum, migration and integration of refugees; reskilling programs for marginalized citizens and employment services. These policies are ambitious but accessing them can be challenging for refugees. With the research data at disposal, the policies were criticised in view of the interview respondents' input. FAMI is a European-wide fund with localised solutions per country. In Italy, the money is mostly devolved to third sector organizations such as SAI and NGO's, and regional governments to invest in socio-economic services for refugees. In the region of Veneto, the general perceptions of policies targeted at the integration of refugees are mixed. The refugees interviewed overall experienced limited obstacles in accessing integration services as they were welcomed and safeguarded by SAI, NGO's or religious organizations. Some NGO and SAI representatives, however, strongly believe that more funds are needed to keep providing adequate services. For instance, these organizations currently heavily rely on volunteers as the financial resources are too limited to hire the necessary fulltime employees.

This lack of funds could be in part attributable to Veneto's and Italy's right-leaning politics. Veneto is currently governed by the regional president Luca Zaia. He belongs to the Lega party: a right-wing populist party, with an acclaimed reputation for having an anti-immigration stance (Lega, 2022). In their electoral program, Lega frames immigration as a 'structural emergency' which should be addressed by limiting and impeding the arrival of illegal migrants, who for instance arrive with boats to Italy (Lega, 2022). They claim, this can further be obtained by drafting 'new security decrees', aka regulatory instruments to combat illegal immigration, preserve public safety, and combat Italian and foreign organised crime. The regional government claims to be favourable to immigration and to welcoming refugees, and has programs targeted to their reception and integration. However, a recurring debate for them is how to approach illegal immigration (Ferasin, 2023).

The rise of right-wing populism in Italy has significantly influenced the discourse surrounding immigration and asylum seekers. Iocco et al. (2020) write a critical analysis on how the Lega party, represented by Matteo Salvini, has been framing immigration and asylum seekers as part of its political narrative. The party has effectively enforced a discourse that positions migrants, particularly those originating from Africa, as threats to national identity and agricultural integrity. This narrative is rooted in an ideology that focuses on the protection of 'Made in Italy' culture and portrays migrant labour as a source of exploitation and competition for local workers. This aligns with a shift in public sentiment towards "closing the ports" to migrants (Iocco et al., 2020). In contrast, Bruno and Downe (2023)'s paper unravels the broader effects of populist governance on public policy, including immigration. Populist leaders often undermine established norms and institutions, leading to fewer democratic practices. In the realm of immigration, populist rhetoric results in policies that prioritize nationalistic sentiments over humanitarian considerations. The authors suggest that such policies exacerbate the vulnerabilities of asylum seekers, who are often caught in a precarious legal and social limbo, facing increased hostility and reduced access to rights and protections (Bruno and Downe, 2023). In conclusion, the politics of immigration and asylum seekers in Italy are deeply intertwined with the rise of right-wing populism. Going forward, addressing these challenges will be crucial for fostering inclusive and humane immigration policies that respect the rights of all individuals.

In addition to right-leaning politics in Italy, at the European level, more restrictive asylum seekers policies are underway. In April 2024, a new Pact on Migration and Asylum was published with the goal to "ensure that the Union has strong and secure external borders, that people's rights are guaranteed, and that no EU country is left alone under pressure" (European Commission, 2024a; European Commission, 2024b). In practice this means that European countries now have the right to send asylum seekers back to their origin country if proven to be unlikely to need international protection. This further allows for Member States who feel under strain to extend the border procedure for an additional six weeks when needed. Moreover, the European union wants to promote collaboration with the countries of origin to easily identify their nationals and for the return and readmission to function effectively. This Pact has surely caused some turmoil in the migration governance field with NGO's being outraged and voicing their concerns about it. Refugees Welcome for instance, is an Italian NGO, also active in Veneto, mobilizing citizens to promote the social inclusion of refugees and migrants (Refugees Welcome Italia, 2024). As a response to the issuing of this new pact, they wrote an open letter where they define the pact as "the end of right to asylum". In their view, the security approach to close off borders has largely proven to be a failure and it can only create a system that leaves critical issues unresolved and negatively impact human rights (Refugees Welcome Italia, 2024).

It is needless to say that with this new legislation, Italian regional governments might be less inclined to fasten the paper processing procedures which are already lengthy. In addition to the uncertainty on whether they will be allowed to reside in Italy, and stress that comes with it, asylum seekers may now have to wait even longer to obtain their papers. This was already mentioned by several of the respondents as currently being an issue: long waiting times can hinder integration by making a person lose time and motivation. In this period, they can further experience deskilling which will make it less likely for them to find a job that matches their previous working experiences. As mentioned by Jang et al. (2021), temporary residence permits for refugees can create restrictions in terms of the jobs refugees are allowed to apply to and therefore they can end up working without contracts or employed on a daily basis. Such precarious working situations can even lead some refugees to fall pray to caporali, as mentioned by Respondent A, who usually employ them in the agricultural sector. In their hands, refugees work without identification papers and are reduced to total exploitation by working and living in precarious and degrading conditions, neglecting any hygienic and sanitary standards (Il Fatto Quotidiano, 2024; Mira, 2017). For this reason, it is important, as proposed by the labour union representative, to regularize all

the documents of irregular immigrants already living in Italy, rather than inviting new ones through the Flow Decree every year. By supplying them with the correct documents, refugees can search for decent and appropriately retributed employment.

### *Tourism and seasonal employment*

From the interviews conducted it appears that the Veneto tourism sector, in specific, provides opportunities for fair work, with room for promotions and internships and good working hours. However, this is more the case for hotel workers rather than restaurant employees who complained about the low pay and long working hours. Making a generalisation from these findings to the overall tourism sector of Veneto and Italy is a difficult endeavour as the tourism sector and refugee employment is often associated with seasonal work which is characterised by a low retribution, discrimination and taxing work. The refugees interviewed however, were not employed under a seasonal contract due to the low seasonality of tourism in the art cities (Regione del Veneto, 2018). A study by Guidetti et al. (2021) on the seasonal nature of tourism work in Rimini, Italy, a coastal city not too far from Veneto, was mentioned in the introduction. For his study, he took a sample of 407 seasonal workers hired in tourism and his key findings indicate that people employed on a seasonal basis are often faced with instability, low skill opportunities and limited career options. In spite of this, workers' perceptions of job quality vary depending on individual and job-related factors. The research identified a positive correlation between perceived job quality and age, meaning that younger workers have higher expectations that are less likely to be fulfilled by seasonal positions (Guidetti et al., 2021). These younger workers often regard seasonal jobs in tourism as "bad" more frequently than older workers. The dissatisfaction among young workers may be linked to their proficiency in horizontal skills, such as foreign language knowledge and basic computer skills, which are not required for seasonal work (Guidetti et al, 2021). The present research in part supports the argument that seasonal work is not necessarily to optimal solution for refugees. The younger interview respondents, although not employed on a seasonal basis, still mentioned that they consider their employment in tourism as temporary and that their ultimate goals are varied: from becoming a nurse (Respondent 2), to studying and working in politics (Respondent 7) or informatics (Respondent 6). The other respondents on the other hand, are satisfied with their current job position and only aspire to a promotion or a better pay in the same sector. This could either be explained in two ways: for one, older respondents who have been residing in Italy and working in tourism for longer, experienced promotions through the years and are therefore content with remaining in the industry. Secondly, some refugees came to Italy with lower skills and with the goal of earning an income to send home as remittances: they were seeking for lower skilled jobs that they could find rather quickly and easily.

Finally, although no inferences can be confidently made from this sample due to its limited size, I made two observations which should be further substantiated with research. First, the refugees coming from Syria and Afghanistan seemed to have encountered fewer difficulties in accessing integration services and finding a job when coming to Italy. This could be explained by their higher level of prior education and perhaps some existing arrangements between the EU and their origin countries which enables them to enter Italy through a rather seamless journey (EU External Action, 2020; European Commission, 2024c). Due to this latter reason, refugees from these countries are more likely to meet networks of co-nationals already living in a European country and aspire for more higher skilled jobs. Their perception of Italy and their social emplacement process was different from refugees coming from Bangladesh and Pakistan: they came to Italy with friends simply to find low-skilled employment in tourism. They stressed their need to send money home as remittances and not having time to learn Italian. They did not seem to aspire to higher skilled jobs but are content with working in restaurants or perhaps shifting

to working in warehouses. Both these observations made with regards to their countries of origins call for further investigation.

### *Choice and social emplacement*

When addressing the perceived satisfaction and freedom of choice of the interviewees when it comes to choosing where to work, it is unclear whether this is the case or simply their perception. Nikolaev and Bennett (2016)'s findings indicated that people with an internal locus of control tend to be more successful in domains of life and this character trait derives from the environment one lives in. It, however, remains to be determined whether Italy truly is a country with economic freedom and more precisely, whether this is possible for refugees. As already explicitly mentioned by Respondent 3 and 7, as well as third sector organization representatives, refugees are quite often victim to discrimination, prejudices and bias which can create a barrier to their integration in society when it comes to finding housing or work. In their article, Bolzoni et al. (2015) precisely researched about the effects a denial of housing has on refugees in Turin, Italy. By refusing to rent out their properties to refugees, landlords exacerbate social marginalization and limit refugees' ability to integrate into society and access essential services. This aligns with statements made by the institutional respondents I interviewed. Discrimination and denial of housing are topics that have been relevant for years and which are still prominent in a region such as Veneto. As suggested by Stewart (2015) when refugees' choices are limited by host countries' legal frameworks and prejudices, their 'vulnerability' is exacerbated which can reinforce their feelings of temporariness and ambitions for decent housing or work. As per housing, respondent N agreed with this study as he emphasized the importance of awareness campaigns in changing the public perception of refugees in Veneto and making them feel welcome. As per work, evidence shows that in Italy refugees and immigrants, mostly stay in lower paying jobs with little room for progression. Ambrosini and Panichella (2023) in a report written within the scope of the International Labour Organization (ILO), describe the labour trends of migrants in Italy. The high employability of migrants, especially those with a lower level of education, is largely due to the demand for flexible, low-skilled, and low-paid work in various sectors. The study shows that the highest expected job entries for migrants are in tourism, construction, and personal services. This proves that despite their growing presence in the Italian labour market, migrants often find themselves confined to precarious, dangerous, low-paying jobs with limited social status (Ambrosini and Panichella, 2023). This therefore unbalances the employment composition of foreigners, compared to that of Italians. For example, foreign workers are more likely to be waiters, bartenders and cooks than their Italian counterparts, who are more often in managerial roles in hotels and restaurants (Ambrosini and Panichella, 2023). This study cannot support nor deny this argument as the refugees interviewed were not residing in Veneto for a long enough time to draw such conclusions. Nevertheless, it is important to consider these statistics when critically reflecting on the implications of social emplacement in the long-term.

This being said there is still perhaps room for hope. Five out of seven respondents interviewed fit into the 'good immigrant' trajectory (IRES, 2021). Their driving motivation was full integration in Italy, with the desire to stay in the country for the longer term. Hence, they were open to internships, learning the language and establishing a network within the reception institutional sphere. Furthermore, they were working on creating meaningful connections within the workplace and with both locals and people from their origin country. These traits are indicative of a smoother integration process which can increase the likelihood of success in obtaining a better work, housing and life in Italy (IRES, 2021). Precisely this topic leads to a reflection on the role played by networks in the social emplacement of refugees which is the leitmotif of the following section.

### *The role of networks*

Networks were a key element of this thesis as an ANT, in combination with SWT theory, was used to map and analyse the findings from the data collected. Thus, the supporting role of institutional actors with regards to the services offered and the resources provided to refugees is best analysed by making use of the ANT and SWT theories. In figure 13 below, a depiction of the Actor-network mapping can be found and is later explicated in the text and integrated with a reflection on SWT.

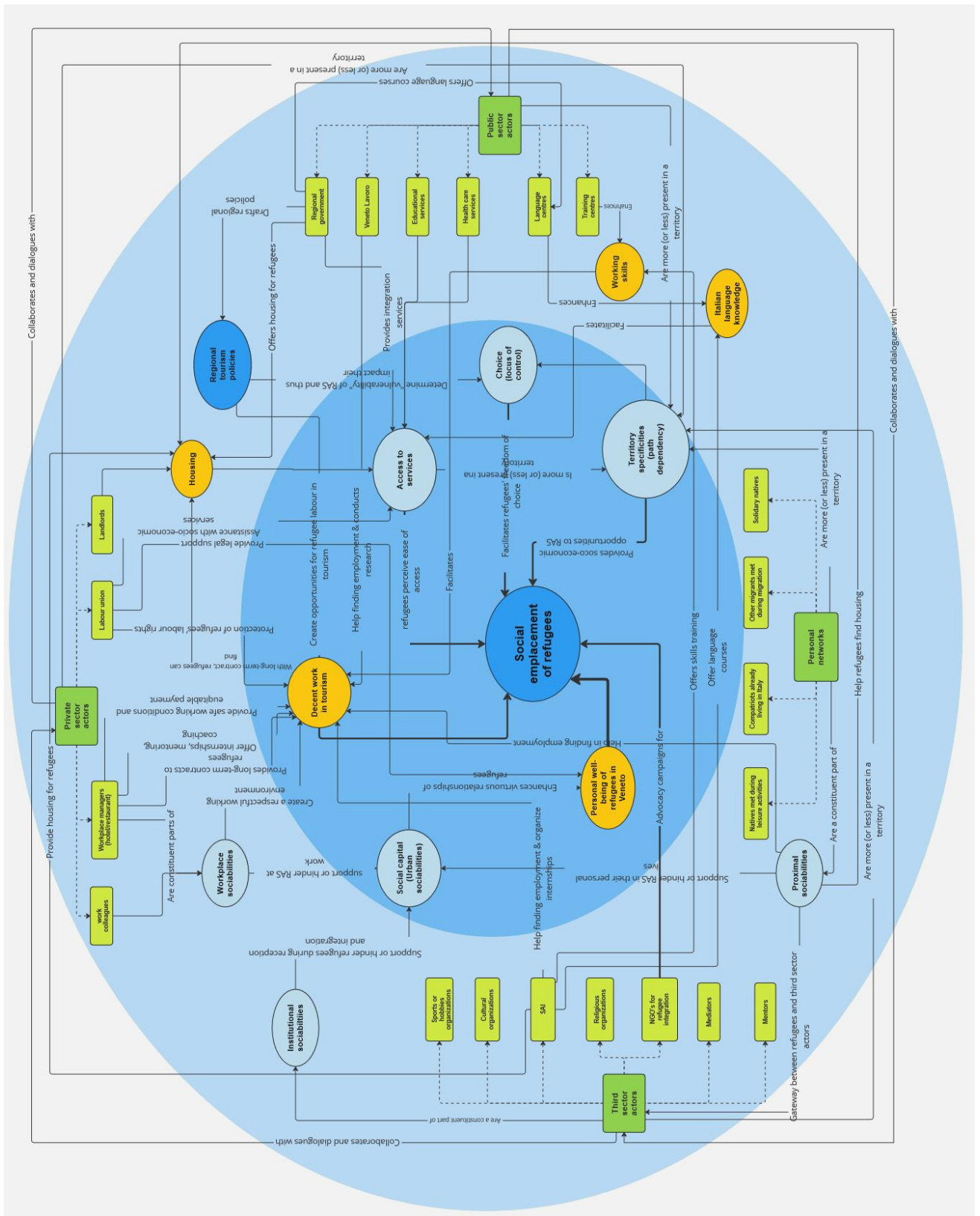


Figure 13: Actor-network mapping of the supporting role of institutional actors and their interactions to the social emplacement of refugees. The map depicts the actors and their respective roles. The interactions are depicted by the arrows and the actors include key non-human actors (blue) as they are fundamental elements of social emplacement, other non-human actors (orange) as they emerged during the research and key human actors (green). The bold arrows are to demonstrate direct influence on social emplacement, the thin straight arrows demonstrate interactions between other actors, while

dotted lines showcase the relation between overarching actors and their respective sub-actors. The link to the figure can also be found [here](#). Source: Author's own work.

The human actors having a direct influence on the social emplacement of refugees are their proximal, institutional and workplace sociabilities. Proximal sociabilities mostly constitute strong ties for refugees and they can provide comfort and contribute to their well-being. In the ANT mapping, as part of personal networks I included the four groups identified by IRES (2021), namely: the network of compatriots already living in Italy; other migrants met along the migration route and in reception centres; solidary natives and finally natives met during leisure activities. Several respondents talked very highly of friends and acquaintances they made in Italy, with some of them connecting with compatriots and others with locals. The findings from this study align with the paper by IRES (2021) in the sense that the first form of network enabled refugees to share their own cultural traditions with someone as well as find someone to live with, someone who invites you to events and someone who can nominate you for a job in the same restaurant or hotel they work in. The second form of network on the other hand are mostly natives met through associations or NGO communities they are involved in and they shared with them knowledge on jobs or volunteering opportunities available as well as refer them to a new housing. They all in all, helped refugees navigate the unfamiliar context of services in Veneto. In such way, having strong ties was useful for some of the interviewees to find employment, which would contradict with Granovetter (1983)'s findings. However, in all cases the positions found required few skills to begin with which might explain this phenomenon: for jobs requiring a higher level of education and skillset, weaker ties might be a better means for referral.

Institutional sociabilities were all the social relations built by refugees with members of third sector organizations - such as NGO's, SAI's and religious groups – or with governmental institutions and labour unions. The findings suggest that these were fundamental for refugees. A strong reliance on these types of sociabilities was necessary for refugees to access documentation and counselling services, finding a job, finding a community, housing, as well as connecting with people which may otherwise not be in their immediate surroundings. These types of relations can be defined as weak ties since in Respondent H's words, what the organizations do is help refugees while maintaining a professional relationship. It is not in their intention to become close friends and establish close connections for refugees. However, within their centres, refugees can rely on the support of volunteers and professionals who can connect them with a wider range of networks. This aligns with the findings by IRES (2021) where the authors stress that third sector organizations can assist with securing housing, serve as guarantors for rental agreements, and offer information about job opportunities. While trade unions advocate for better working conditions and governmental and public institutions are the ones obtaining state or EU funding and investing in reception, integration projects (IUTCS, 2023). Because of the nature of the personal relationship between institutional sociabilities and refugees, their networks can be conceptualized as weak ties and the findings support Granovetter (1983)'s SWT theory. The third sector organizations are a crucial actor in this as they have the most competence in the topic and have curated pathways of services specifically for refugees over the years. The weak ties are fundamental to bridge refugees to flows of information and resources, such as primary services and employment.

The concept of employment directly leads to the third type of sociabilities, namely workplace sociabilities. All respondents agree that they find their managers to be supportive, fair and finding ways to stimulate them at work. A lot of emphasis is put on the notion of respect between refugees and their colleagues and managers. This finding aligns with Boese (2015)'s paper on the roles of employers in the regional settlement of recently arrived migrants and refugees. Based on the data collected, employers in the context of tourism in Veneto assume two of the five roles identified by the author. For one, they provide settlement support by referring refugees to NGO's focused on supporting refugees. Moreover,

they organize skills trainings for refugees and help them with their language skills. Secondly, they are the determinants of current and future residency in some cases: Respondent 6 for instance, emphasized how grateful he was to his manager who empathized with his difficulties in finding a house and thus, decided to give him an indeterminate contract. Landlords in Veneto often require such contract before they rent a house or apartment to someone as a guarantee that the tenant is capable of paying rent. Boese (2015) further mentions the risk of discrimination within the workplace and this was confirmed by Respondent 3. In her case, it was not the manager who perpetrated the discrimination but her colleagues. They held some prejudices against people of Islamic faith and used them against her. With time however, the situation improved, and cultural tolerance was developed in her workplace.

### *Additional networks*

Overall, the findings of this thesis heavily emphasize the importance of institutional actors in supporting the social emplacement of refugees. This conclusion was drawn from the data collected from interviews and reports touching upon what is considered to be the “ideal immigration trajectory” for refugees coming to Italy according to these sources. Hence, the refugees are being guided and supported throughout their social emplacement by projects initiated by the (regional, national or EU) government or by SAI’s and third sector actors which all combined can provide the refugees with some useful tools for a successful settlement. Despite this being the case, it is important to acknowledge that refugees who are not so actively involved with such supporting institutions might adopt a more autonomous approach, perhaps even due to the illegality of their immigration journey. This could result on them relying on different networks than the ones highlighted by this research to achieve social emplacement. They could perhaps rely more on personal networks for accessing job opportunities or even new types of informal networks altogether. Relying on these types of personal networks can however lead to criminal associations exploiting immigrant workers as they follow a path not directed to integration in the host society as stated by Giampaolo and Ianni (2020).

## **6.2. Policy recommendations**

This study shows that the process of social emplacement for refugees who work in tourism in Veneto is currently positively influenced by the regional working tourism policies but that third sector organizations and workplace managers carry a lot of the burden in terms of support services. Therefore, set of targeted policy recommendations can provide a pathway to more effective and inclusive integration:

### *1. Providing refugees with new internship opportunities*

Ensuring that refugees find fulfilment in their employment and preventing them from becoming deskilled workers are crucial aspects of social emplacement. Because of obstacles in the labour market, a lot of immigrants arrive with abilities and experience that are frequently misused. Through fostering opportunities for meaningful work and internships, refugees can uphold and advance their professional skills.

### *2. Recognizing and strengthening the role of institutional actors*

Institutional actors are vital to the lives of refugees, especially those employed by NGOs and SAIs. The significance of these actors is emphasized in the second recommendation. Policymakers can guarantee that refugees receive the ongoing support required for their social insertion by acknowledging and enhancing their role—for example, by providing financing. Further alignment of services to create a comprehensive grid of integration efforts.



### *3. Further alignment of services to create a comprehensive grid of integration efforts*

Respondents A and N expressed emphasis on this policy direction. In order to guarantee that refugees receive coordinated support in crucial areas like housing, education, and employment, this alignment can promote collaboration amongst government agencies, non-governmental organizations, local communities, and other stakeholders. Duplication of effort will be minimized, as well as the maximisation of resources, via a robust and well-established grid of services.

### *4. Reducing negative perceptions through targeted public awareness campaigns and educational initiatives:*

Stigma and discrimination remain significant obstacles to the integration of refugees in Veneto and Italy. Thus, there is a need for challenging these misconceptions about refugees, while highlighting their positive contributions to society and promoting a more inclusive environment. An example for this is the campaign currently planned by ANOLF (Respondent N). More inclusive housing policies could for instance address landlords' reluctance to rent properties to refugees and thus, promote social integration for refugees in urban settings (Bolzoni et al., 2015).

### *5. Establishment of participatory forums that bring together refugees, local communities, and policymakers:*

By providing a space for candid discussion, these forums enable refugees to express their issues and participate in the formulation of public policy. These forums can contribute to the development of a feeling of community and guarantee that policies are responsive to the real needs of refugees by encouraging trust and cooperation between all parties. Engaging in these kinds of forums empowers refugees and encourages a more democratic and inclusive integration strategy. Perhaps this might be done in conjunction with ANOLF, the Italian organization that focuses on foreign and migrant labour.

In conclusion, these policy recommendations offer a comprehensive approach to improving the integration and inclusion of refugees in Veneto and Italy. By aligning services, creating new opportunities, raising awareness, recognizing key institutional roles, advocating for flexible policies, and fostering participatory forums, policymakers can address the challenges faced by refugees and pave the way for a more inclusive society.

## **6.3. Limitations and future research directions**

In spite of the theoretical implications and the cues identified for future policy directions, the research presents some limitations. For one, due to the time and resources constraints the sample collected was quite limited to be able to confidently generalize the results. Although 21 interviews, in addition to the desk research, provided a substantial amount of data, ideally more than seven interviews with refugees would have been conducted. A wider range of refugees with different demographics, origins and host cities would provide a more detailed representation of the refugee population in Veneto. Moreover, in addition to the actors interviewed, it would have been beneficial to interview some religious organizations representatives, considering the relevance of the role when it comes to integration services for refugees. On top of this, one could claim that the influencing role of tourists as an actor should be considered when assessing the social emplacement of refugees. This is because the tourism sector heavily relies on demand and the satisfaction of tourists coming to a location and spending time there. Their point of view however, was not considered in this paper as the focus was on institutional actors and no data was collected in relation to tourists.

A further limitation is that one of the refugee respondents lives in the province Udine, in a town that is technically in the neighbouring region to Veneto: Friuli-Venezia Giulia. A third shortcoming is that most of the institutional actors interviewed work in NGO's and SAI. Their input might therefore create some bias in the way the topic of social emplacement is analysed and portrayed.

Fourth, the refugees interviewed were contacts I received from either local SAI's or NGO's which entails that they were already benefitting from integration services and support. This detail is fundamental for the way in which they talk about third sector organizations, as well as the way in which they perceive Veneto as a host region and the services provided to them. Finally, all interviews with refugees were conducted in Italian, except for one in French. Given that Italian was not their first language, misunderstandings sometimes occurred as well as the need to use a translation app. This language barrier therefore, might have discouraged respondents from sharing all the information they intended to share due to the limited vocabulary.

In addition to limitations, some future research directions emerged from the study. For one, future studies should focus on a bigger sample of participants and conduct the fieldwork after the new European pact on migration and asylum is in place for some time. This is because the social emplacement process for refugees might be impacted by this reform as well as a result of the conservative policies the regional and national government might intend to issue. Furthermore, future research could compare the context of Veneto with that of another region outside of Italy to assess what further factors and variables might impact the social emplacement of refugees in different contexts. Future research should also consider different social emplacement paths by further considering the role of personal networks or other informal networks that refugees can resort to if not relying on the institutions highlighted by the present research. One additional network could be that of tourists: a new research avenue could be exploring how tourists' expectations and interactions with refugee workers shape their emplacement. Finally, this study only focused on art cities, nonetheless future research could consider locations with a higher degree of seasonal workers and assess how this impacts the working conditions and emplacement of refugees employed as seasonal workers.

## **7. Conclusion**

This research sought to explore the extent to which regional tourism policies contribute to the social emplacement of refugees and asylum seekers (refugees) employed in the tourism sector in the Veneto region of Italy. By taking into account the interactions between institutional support and the experiences of refugees, this study aimed to fill a significant gap in the literature regarding social emplacement in Veneto, an under-researched regional context. To achieve this a qualitative research design was employed: a content analysis of regional policies was coupled with in-depth interviews with 21 respondents. After collecting the data and analysing the results, the study revealed that the social emplacement of refugees is heavily influenced by the specificities of the host territory and the policies governing it. The findings stipulate that while regional tourism policies provide a framework for employment opportunities, the experiences of refugees are further shaped by a complex range of factors, including the support from institutional actors, the attitudes of local communities, and the individual agency of refugees themselves.

The social emplacement of refugees is defined by the respondents as heavily depending on three pillars: work, social relations and the opportunity to explore activities and services available outside of one's reception centre. These topics are also identifiable in the conceptualization of social emplacement used in the theoretical framework of this thesis. The concepts of path dependency, choice, urban sociabilities and access to services and housing were therefore used to answer sub question 3. Here refugees stressed how living in bigger cities such as Padova and Verona enables them to access all the services they need

to settle in Italy and find employment in tourism. They further stressed the importance of their proximal, workplace and institutional sociabilities in navigating the socio-economic system in Veneto. Some challenges were however identified with regards to the disconnect between their current jobs and their future career ambitions as well as finding adequate housing in the cities they reside in. Finally, with regards to sub question 4, the study highlights the necessity to better coordinate efforts between various actors, including the regional government, private workplace managers, labour unions and third-sector organizations, in facilitating the social emplacement of refugees. Their engagement and support are crucial for creating fruitful working and living environments for refugees and this was depicted by an actor-network mapping.

The theoretical and social implications of this study extend beyond the Veneto region, offering valuable insights for policymakers and stakeholders in the tourism industry. By recognizing the potential of tourism and employment as driving forces for social inclusion, there is an opportunity to develop more inclusive practices that could benefit refugees and enrich the local community. Future research should explore the dynamics of social emplacement in different contexts, particularly in regions facing similar challenges related to immigration influx and integration.

In conclusion, this study emphasizes that by fostering an environment conducive to social emplacement, we can promote social justice, trust, and accessibility, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive society. The results of this research serve to advocate for the involvement of all stakeholders in the integration of refugees. On top of this, it serves to promote collaborative efforts in creating frameworks that are supportive of a culture of belonging at work and in life for refugees in a host country. As one of the interviewees puts it and in accordance with Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN, 1948), everyone has the right to seek and enjoy asylum from persecution in a different country:

*“Now, I also want to thank the Italian authorities, because it's true that the integration process is a bit difficult, but the authorities are doing something to ensure that there is a good integration policy here.*

*The Italian government is doing a lot for our integration, and through my experience as a refugee and everything I've been able to benefit from here, I'd also like to thank the government for being more open to people who leave their country, because if we leave our country, it's because we have difficulties, and international law allows all countries, all citizens of the world, to live in this world, in safety. All countries must be open to people, to refugees, and improve their education”.*

The extent to which this universal declaration is upheld by the European Union institutions remains to be seen as the new Pact on Migration and Asylum is coming into effect. Climate change and conflicts, among other variables, can only exacerbate the vulnerability and capabilities of world citizens in the upcoming future. This can lead one to wonder what conditions and factors the EU plans to consider to determine who is worthy of seeking asylum in one of its member states.

## 8. References

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## 9. Annex

### A. Interview respondents

Respondent	Demographics
<b>Refugees</b>	
Respondent 1	Padova, Syrian, Woman, Hotel manager, around 50 yrs old
Respondent 2	Verona, Syrian, Woman, cleaning staff at hotel, around 20 yrs old
Respondent 3	Udine, Syrian, Woman, cleaning staff manager, around 50 yrs old
Respondent 4	Verona, Bangladeshi, Man, assistant cook, 27 years old
Respondent 5	Verona, Pakistani, Man, assistance cook, around 30 yrs old
Respondent 6	Padova, Afghani, Man, hotel cook, 23 yrs old
Respondent 7	Padova, Ivory Coast, Man, assistant cook in restaurant, 30 years old
<b>Governmental actors</b>	
Respondent A	Works for Veneto Lavoro in the organizational unit for European projects and socio-economic integration of non-EU citizens.
Respondent B	Researcher of the Regional Labour Market Observatory, established and based at Veneto Lavoro
Respondent C	Researcher of the Regional Labour Market Observatory, established and based at Veneto Lavoro
Respondent D	Researcher of the Regional Labour Market Observatory, established and based at Veneto Lavoro
<b>Hotel and restaurant managers</b>	
Respondent E	Manager of a local branch of an international hotel chain (Padova)
Respondent F	Manager of a hotel in Padova founded by a social cooperative (Padova)
Respondent M	Manager of the Strada Facendo restaurant founded by a social cooperative in Padova
<b>SAI representatives</b>	
Respondent G	Founder of One bridge to Idomeni: a Verona-based non-profit organisation working on the Balkan route in support of migrants and in Italy in witnessing what it does.
Respondent H	Employee at One bridge to Idomeni
Respondent I	President of Una casa per l'uomo: a cooperative that has been working in the immigration sector for 30 years in various fields in Treviso
Respondent J	President of Pari Passo: A cooperative founded in 2017 to do widespread reception of migrant people particularly aimed at mother-child nuclei, (i.e. a single parent mother-child nucleus that generally came from large hotels) in Vicenza
Respondent K	President of Il Mondo nella Città: a SAI focusing on socio-economic integration in Vicenza
Respondent L	President of Progetto Rondine: a SAI project of the municipality of Padua active since 2006, one of the first in Italy
<b>Labour union representative</b>	
Respondent N	President of a local branch of ANOLF in Padova-Rovigo: an association specifically targeted at foreign and migrant workers in Italy

Table 3: Interview respondents

### B. Interview guides

#### Interview guide for refugees

Italian	English
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<p><b>Introduzione:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Presentazione personale, della ricerca e dello scopo dell'intervista</li> <li>2. Assicurare la riservatezza e spiegare come verranno utilizzate le informazioni raccolte.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Introduction:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Begin by introducing myself, the research and explain the purpose of the interview.</li> <li>2. Assure confidentiality and explain how the information gathered will be used.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Informazioni di base:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Può parlarmi un po' del suo background? (sonda: da dove viene e da quanto tempo è in Italia).</li> <li>2. Cosa l'ha spinto a lasciare il suo Paese e a rifugiarsi in Italia?</li> <li>3. Potrebbe descrivermi il suo viaggio verso l'Italia? (sondaggi: eventuali sfide che ha affrontato lungo il percorso).</li> <li>4. Come è stato per lei il processo di sviluppo di un senso di appartenenza in questo ambiente?</li> </ol>	<p><b>Background information:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Can you tell me a bit about your background? (probes: where you're from and how long you've been in Italy)</li> <li>2. What pushed you to leave your home country and seek refuge in Italy?</li> <li>3. Could you describe your journey to Italy? (probes: any challenges you faced along the way?)</li> <li>4. How has the process of developing a sense of belonging in this environment been for you?</li> </ol>
<p><b>Occupazione ed esperienza lavorativa:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Come è entrato in contatto con il settore turistico qui in Italia?</li> <li>2. Ritiene di aver avuto sufficienti opportunità per scegliere la posizione che desiderava assumere?</li> <li>3. Che tipo di lavoro svolge?</li> <li>4. Ci sono delle competenze del suo Paese d'origine che ha portato nel suo lavoro qui?</li> <li>5. Ha incontrato difficoltà o discriminazioni nel trovare lavoro nel turismo italiano come rifugiato?</li> </ol>	<p><b>Employment and work experience:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How did you first get in touch with the tourism sector here in Italy?</li> <li>2. Do you feel like you had enough opportunities to choose the position you wanted to take?</li> <li>3. What type of work do you do?</li> <li>4. Are there any skills from your home country that you bring to your job here?</li> <li>5. Have you encountered any difficulties or discrimination in finding employment in Italian tourism as a refugee?</li> </ol>
<p><b>Condizioni di lavoro:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Come trova le condizioni di lavoro nel suo attuale impiego?</li> <li>2. Ci sono sfide specifiche che deve affrontare sul lavoro a causa del suo status di rifugiato?</li> <li>3. Si sente adeguatamente compensato?</li> <li>4. Ci sono problemi di sicurezza sul posto di lavoro di cui vorrebbe parlare?</li> </ol>	<p><b>Working conditions:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How do you find the working conditions to be like in your current job?</li> <li>2. Are there any specific challenges you face at work due to your refugee status?</li> <li>3. Do you feel adequately compensated?</li> <li>4. Are there any safety concerns or issues in your workplace that you would like to discuss?</li> </ol>
<p><b>Situazione socio-economica:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. È in grado di accedere a servizi essenziali come l'assistenza sanitaria e l'istruzione per sé e per la sua famiglia?</li> </ol>	<p><b>Socio-economic situation:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Are you able to access essential services such as healthcare and education for yourself and your family?</li> </ol>

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Come ci si muove nella burocrazia italiana in termini di documentazione e status giuridico?</li> <li>3. Ha incontrato ostacoli nell'accesso all'alloggio o ad altre risorse?</li> <li>4. Ha partecipato a iniziative che promuovono l'unità tra gruppi diversi nella comunità?</li> <li>5. Avete trovato punti in comune o aspirazioni condivise che vi hanno avvicinato agli abitanti della città?</li> <li>6. È riuscito/a stringere legami forti (di amicizia o di solidarietà) con individui locali della zona?</li> <li>7. Ha incontrato barriere o ostacoli nell'accesso alle risorse a causa delle strutture di potere della città? (strutture di potere, ovvero il modo in cui l'integrazione dei rifugiati è governata da istituzioni governative, ONG e private)?</li> <li>8. In che modo lavorare in questo settore l'ha arricchito o le ha dato l'opportunità di sentirvi più integrati nell'ambiente locale?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. How do you navigate the Italian bureaucracy in terms of documentation and legal status?</li> <li>3. Have you encountered any barriers in accessing housing or other resources?</li> <li>4. Have you participated in any initiatives that enable for collaboration and unity between diverse groups in the community?</li> <li>5. Have you found any commonalities or shared aspirations that have brought you closer to locals in the city?</li> <li>6. Are there any local people you are close with</li> <li>7. Have you encountered any barriers or enablers in accessing resources due to power structures in the city? (power structures aka the way in which refugee integration is being governed by governmental, NGO and private institutions?)</li> <li>8. In what ways has working in this sector enriched you or given you opportunities to feel more integrated in the local environment?</li> </ol>
<p>Aspirazioni future:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Quali sono i suoi obiettivi o aspirazioni per il futuro, sia a livello personale che professionale?</li> <li>2. Si sente ottimista riguardo al suo futuro in Italia?</li> <li>3. In che modo pensa che le relazioni sociali che hai instaurato con gli altri possano contribuire a creare un cambiamento positivo o a sostenere i diritti dei rifugiati?</li> <li>4. C'è qualcosa di specifico che vorrebbe vedere cambiare in termini di sostegno ai rifugiati in Italia?</li> </ol>	<p>Future aspirations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are your goals or aspirations for the future, both personally and professionally?</li> <li>2. Do you feel optimistic about your future in Italy?</li> <li>3. How do you think the social ties you have formed with others can contribute to creating positive change for refugee rights?</li> <li>4. Is there anything specific you would like to see change in terms of support for refugees in Italy?</li> </ol>
<p>Chiusura:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. C'è qualcos'altro che vorrebbe aggiungere o discutere che non abbiamo trattato?</li> </ol> <p>Ringraziare i partecipanti per il loro tempo e la loro disponibilità a condividere le loro esperienze. Ribadire la riservatezza e fornire le informazioni di contatto per eventuali domande o supporto.</p>	<p>Closing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Is there anything else you would like to add or discuss?</li> </ol> <p>Thanked the participant for their time and willingness to share their experiences. Reiterated confidentiality and provided contact information for any follow-up questions or support needed.</p>

## In French

Introduction:

1. Commencez par vous présenter et expliquez l'objectif de l'entretien.
2. Assurez la confidentialité et expliquez comment les informations recueillies seront utilisées.

#### Informations générales:

1. Pouvez-vous me parler un peu de votre parcours ? (sondages : d'où vous venez et depuis combien de temps vous êtes en Italie)
2. Qu'est-ce qui vous a poussé à quitter votre pays d'origine et à chercher refuge en Italie ?
3. Pouvez-vous décrire votre voyage vers l'Italie (par exemple, les difficultés que vous avez rencontrées en cours de route) ?
4. Comment s'est déroulé pour vous le processus de développement d'un sentiment d'appartenance à cet environnement ?

#### Emploi et expérience professionnelle:

1. Comment êtes-vous entré en contact avec le secteur du tourisme en Italie ?
2. Pensez-vous avoir eu suffisamment d'opportunités pour choisir le poste que vous souhaitiez occuper ?
3. Quel type de travail faites-vous ?
4. Avez-vous des compétences acquises dans votre pays d'origine que vous apportez à votre travail ici ?
5. Avez-vous rencontré des difficultés ou des discriminations dans la recherche d'un emploi dans le secteur du tourisme italien en tant que réfugié ?

#### Conditions de travail:

1. Comment trouvez-vous les conditions de travail dans votre emploi actuel ?
2. Êtes-vous confronté à des difficultés spécifiques au travail en raison de votre statut de réfugié ?
3. Vous sentez-vous correctement rémunéré ?
4. Y a-t-il des préoccupations ou des problèmes de sécurité sur votre lieu de travail dont vous aimeriez discuter ?

#### Situation socio-économique:

1. Êtes-vous en mesure d'accéder aux services essentiels tels que les soins de santé et l'éducation pour vous-même et votre famille ?
2. Comment naviguez-vous dans la bureaucratie italienne en termes de documentation et de statut juridique ?
3. Avez-vous rencontré des obstacles dans l'accès au logement ou à d'autres ressources ?
4. Avez-vous participé à des initiatives qui favorisent la collaboration et l'unité entre divers groupes de la communauté ?
5. Avez-vous trouvé des points communs ou des aspirations partagées qui vous ont rapproché des habitants de la ville ?
6. Y a-t-il des personnes locales dont vous êtes proche ?
7. Avez-vous rencontré des obstacles ou des facilitateurs dans l'accès aux ressources en raison des structures de pouvoir dans la ville ? (par structures de pouvoir, on entend la manière dont l'intégration des réfugiés est gérée par les institutions gouvernementales, les ONG et les institutions privées).
8. De quelle manière le fait de travailler dans ce secteur vous a-t-il enrichi ou vous a-t-il donné l'occasion de vous sentir mieux intégré dans l'environnement local ?

#### Aspirations futures:

1. Quels sont vos objectifs ou aspirations pour l'avenir, tant sur le plan personnel que professionnel ?
2. Êtes-vous optimiste quant à votre avenir en Italie ?
3. Comment pensez-vous que les liens sociaux que vous avez tissés avec d'autres personnes peuvent contribuer à créer un changement positif en faveur des droits des réfugiés ?
4. Y a-t-il quelque chose de spécifique que vous aimeriez voir changer en termes de soutien aux réfugiés en Italie ?

Clôture:

1. Y a-t-il autre chose que vous aimeriez ajouter ou discuter ?

Je remerci le participant pour son temps et sa volonté de partager ses expériences. Je réaffirme la confidentialité et fournis des informations de contact pour toute question de suivi ou de soutien nécessaire.

### Interview guide for NGOs and third sector

<b>Italian</b>	<b>English</b>
<p><b>Introduzione:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Presentazione personale, della ricerca e dello scopo dell'intervista</li> <li>2. Assicurare la riservatezza e spiegare come verranno utilizzate le informazioni raccolte.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Introduction:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Begin by introducing myself, the research and explain the purpose of the interview.</li> <li>2. Assure confidentiality and explain how the information gathered will be used.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Informazioni di base:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Può fornirmi dettagli sul suo ruolo e sull'organizzazione che rappresenta?</li> <li>2. Da quanto tempo si occupa di sostenere i rifugiati nel loro processo di integrazione, in particolare per quanto riguarda l'occupazione nel settore turistico?</li> <li>3. In che modo la vostra organizzazione è influenzata dalla politica e dalle politiche regionali?</li> <li>4. In che modo collaborate con il governo? (sonde: finanziariamente, dialogo, relazioni di potere)</li> </ol>	<p><b>Background information:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Could you give me details about your role and the organization you represent?</li> <li>2. How long have you been involved in supporting refugees in their integration process, particularly regarding employment in the tourism sector?</li> <li>3. In what ways is your organization impacted by the regional politics and policies?</li> <li>4. In what way do you collaborate with the government? (probes: financially, dialogue, power relations)</li> </ol>
<p><b>Integrazione e acquisizione di un lavoro:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Siete a conoscenza di politiche governative sull'occupazione nel settore turistico? Se sì, quali?</li> <li>2. Quali strategie o iniziative adotta la vostra organizzazione per facilitare l'integrazione dei rifugiati nel mercato del lavoro del settore turistico?</li> <li>3. Come collaborate con le imprese locali o con i datori di lavoro del settore turistico per creare opportunità di lavoro per i rifugiati?</li> </ol>	<p><b>Integration and job acquisition:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Are you aware of any government mandated policies on employment in the touristic sector? If so, which one?</li> <li>2. What strategies or initiatives does your organization employ to facilitate the integration of refugees into the tourism sector job market?</li> <li>3. How do you collaborate with local businesses or employers in the tourism sector to create job opportunities for refugees?</li> </ol>

<p>4. Esistono programmi di formazione o di sviluppo delle competenze specificamente progettati per preparare i rifugiati all'impiego nel settore turistico?</p>	<p>4. Are there any training or skill-building programs specifically designed to prepare refugees for employment in the tourism sector?</p>
<p>Misurare il successo e l'impatto:</p> <p>1. Può fornirmi qualche esempio di storie di successo in cui i rifugiati si sono integrati con successo nella forza lavoro del settore turistico grazie al supporto della vostra organizzazione?</p>	<p>Measuring success and impact:</p> <p>1. Can you give me any examples of success stories where refugees have successfully integrated into the tourism sector workforce with the support of your organization?</p>
<p>Supporto fornito ai rifugiati:</p> <p>1. In che modo la vostra organizzazione facilita lo sviluppo di relazioni sociali tra migranti e locali, in particolare sul posto di lavoro e nel loro ambiente di vita?</p> <p>2. In che modo queste relazioni contribuiscono al loro senso di appartenenza e di empowerment?</p> <p>3. Potete fornire esempi di come i migranti e gli autoctoni abbiano instaurato relazioni positive basate su ambiti comuni di affetto e rispetto reciproco?</p> <p>4. In che modo queste interazioni contribuiscono all'assetto sociale complessivo della comunità locale?</p> <p>5. Come affrontate e gestite le sfide della disparità di accesso alle risorse e alle opportunità di lavoro per i rifugiati in Italia?</p>	<p>Support provided to refugees:</p> <p>1. How does your organization facilitate the development of social relations between migrants and locals, especially within the workplace and their living environment?</p> <p>2. How do these relationships contribute to their sense of belonging and empowerment?</p> <p>3. Can you provide examples of how migrants and locals have formed positive relations based on common domains of affect and mutual respect?</p> <p>4. In what ways do these interactions contribute to the overall social layout of the local community?</p> <p>5. How do you address and navigate the challenges of unequal access to resources and job opportunities for refugees in Italy?</p>
<p>Sfide e opportunità:</p> <p>1. Come monitorate i progressi a lungo termine e il benessere dei rifugiati che hanno partecipato ai vostri programmi?</p> <p>2. Come affrontate le barriere culturali o linguistiche?</p>	<p>Challenges and opportunities:</p> <p>1. How do you track the long-term progress and well-being of refugees who have participated in your programs?</p> <p>2. How do you address cultural or language barriers?</p>
<p>Direzioni future:</p> <p>1. Quali sono i piani futuri della vostra organizzazione per sostenere ulteriormente l'integrazione e l'occupazione dei rifugiati nel settore turistico?</p> <p>2. Ci sono partnership o collaborazioni all'orizzonte che potrebbero migliorare</p>	<p>Future directions:</p> <p>1. What are your organization's future plans to further support refugee integration and employment in the tourism sector?</p> <p>2. Are there any partnerships or collaborations on the horizon that could enhance your organization's efforts in this regard?</p>

<p>gli sforzi della vostra organizzazione in questo senso?</p> <p>3. Come immaginate che si evolverà il ruolo dei rifugiati nel settore turistico/lavorativo italiano nei prossimi anni?</p>	<p>3. How do you envision the role of refugees in Italy's tourism sector/working force evolving in the coming years?</p>
<p>Chiusura:</p> <p>1. C'è qualcos'altro che vorrebbe aggiungere o discutere che non abbiamo trattato?</p> <p>Ringraziare i partecipanti per il loro tempo e la loro disponibilità a condividere le loro esperienze. Ribadire la riservatezza e fornire le informazioni di contatto per eventuali domande o supporto.</p>	<p>Closing:</p> <p>1. Is there anything else you would like to add or discuss?</p> <p>Thanked the participant for their time and willingness to share their experiences. Reiterated confidentiality and provided contact information for any follow-up questions or support needed.</p>

### Interview guide government representatives

<b>Italian</b>	<b>English</b>
<p>Introduzione:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Presentazione personale, della ricerca e dello scopo dell'intervista</li> <li>2. Assicurare la riservatezza e spiegare come verranno utilizzate le informazioni raccolte.</li> </ol>	<p>Introduction:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Begin by introducing myself, the research and explain the purpose of the interview.</li> <li>2. Assure confidentiality and explain how the information gathered will be used.</li> </ol>
<p>Informazioni di base:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Può fornirmi dettagli sul suo ruolo e sull'organizzazione che rappresenta?</li> <li>2. Da quanto tempo è impegnato in questo settore?</li> <li>3. Potrebbe descrivere brevemente le attuali politiche lavorative relative all'impiego di rifugiati e richiedenti asilo in Veneto?</li> </ol>	<p>Background information:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Could you give me details about your role and the organization you represent?</li> <li>2. How long have you been involved in this sector?</li> <li>3. Could you shortly describe the current working policies regarding the employment of refugees and asylum seekers in Veneto?</li> </ol>
<p>Piano strategico del turismo sostenibile:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dato il mio campo di studi, sono particolarmente interessata al modo in cui il turismo viene condotto in modo sostenibile in Veneto. È a conoscenza di piani strategici per il turismo sostenibile del governo regionale? (Sonda: Piano Strategico del Turismo del Veneto 2022-2024)?</li> <li>2. Ne è coinvolto? Cosa ne pensa?</li> <li>3. In che modo affronta le questioni della sostenibilità? (sonda: soprattutto ambientale o anche sociale?)</li> </ol>	<p>Strategic Sustainable Turismo Plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Given my field of study, I am particularly interested in the way tourism is conducted in a sustainable manner in Veneto. Are you aware of any sustainable tourism strategic plans of the regional government? (Probes: Piano Strategico del Turismo del Veneto 2022-2024)?</li> <li>2. Are you involved in it? What do you think about it?</li> <li>3. In what way does it address questions of sustainability? (probes: mostly environmental or also social?)</li> </ol>



<p>4. Questo piano considera anche le opportunità e le condizioni di lavoro dei refugees? Se sì, in che modo?</p>	<p>4. Does this plan also consider the working opportunities and conditions of refugees? If so, in what ways?</p>
<p>Mercato del lavoro per i rifugiati:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In quali settori economici lavorano maggiormente i rifugiati e i richiedenti asilo in Veneto?</li> <li>2. Come si presenta il processo di ricerca di un impiego stabile per loro rispetto agli italiani?</li> <li>3. Quali servizi specifici di supporto offre la vostra organizzazione ai rifugiati per aiutarli a integrarsi nella società italiana?</li> <li>4. Può descrivere alcune delle sfide che i rifugiati comunemente affrontano nell'accesso al lavoro nel settore turistico? Come affronta la sua organizzazione queste sfide?</li> </ol>	<p>Labour market for refugees:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In what economic sectors do refugees and asylum seekers mostly work in in Veneto?</li> <li>2. How does the process of finding a stable employment look for them compared to locals?</li> <li>3. What specific support services does your organization offer to refugees to help them integrate into Italian society?</li> <li>4. Can you describe some of the challenges refugees commonly face in accessing employment in the tourism sector? how does your organization address these challenges?</li> </ol>
<p>Integrazione e acquisizione di posti di lavoro:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In che modo Veneto Lavoro collabora con le imprese locali o con i datori di lavoro del settore turistico per creare opportunità di lavoro per i rifugiati?</li> <li>2. Esistono programmi di formazione o di sviluppo delle competenze specificamente concepiti per preparare i rifugiati all'impiego nel settore turistico?</li> <li>3. In che modo la vostra organizzazione offre opportunità sia ai migranti che ai locali?</li> <li>4. Quali sono i temi attorno ai quali migranti e locali si incontrano? E quali sono i temi intorno ai quali si separano?</li> <li>5. In che modo queste relazioni contribuiscono al loro senso di appartenenza e di empowerment?</li> <li>6. Potete fornire esempi di come i migranti e gli autoctoni abbiano instaurato relazioni positive basate su ambiti comuni di affetto e rispetto reciproco?</li> <li>7. In che modo queste interazioni contribuiscono alla dinamica sociale complessiva della comunità locale?</li> <li>8. Come affrontate e gestite le sfide della disparità di accesso alle risorse e alle opportunità per i rifugiati in Italia?</li> </ol>	<p>Integration and job acquisition:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How does Veneto Lavoro collaborate with local businesses or employers in the tourism sector to create job opportunities for refugees?</li> <li>2. Are there any training or skill-building programs specifically designed to prepare refugees for employment in the tourism sector?</li> <li>3. In what ways does your organisation provide opportunities for both migrants and locals?</li> <li>4. What are themes around which migrants and locals come together? And themes around which they part ways?</li> <li>5. How do these relationships contribute to their sense of belonging and empowerment?</li> <li>6. Can you provide examples of how migrants and locals have formed positive relations based on common domains of affect and mutual respect?</li> <li>7. In what ways do these interactions contribute to the overall social dynamic of the local community?</li> <li>8. How do you address and navigate the challenges of unequal access to resources and opportunities for refugees in Italy?</li> </ol>
<p>Misurare il successo e l'impatto:</p>	<p>Measuring success and impact:</p>

1. Potete fornirmi esempi di storie di successo in cui i rifugiati si sono integrati con successo nella forza lavoro del settore turistico grazie al supporto della vostra organizzazione?	1. Can you give me any examples of success stories where refugees have successfully integrated into the tourism sector workforce with the support of your organization?
Sfide e opportunità:  1. Quali sono le principali sfide che la vostra organizzazione deve affrontare nel supportare i rifugiati a integrarsi nella forza lavoro del settore turistico? 2. Come affrontate le barriere culturali o linguistiche?	Challenges and opportunities:  1. What are some of the main challenges your organization faces in supporting refugees to integrate into the tourism sector workforce? 2. How do you address cultural or language barriers?
Direzioni future:  1. Quali sono i piani futuri della vostra organizzazione per sostenere ulteriormente l'integrazione e l'occupazione dei rifugiati nel settore turistico? 2. Ci sono partnership o collaborazioni all'orizzonte che potrebbero migliorare gli sforzi sostenibili della vostra organizzazione in questo senso? 3. Come immagina che si evolverà il ruolo dei rifugiati nel settore turistico/lavorativo sostenibile in Italia nei prossimi anni?	Future directions:  1. What are your organization's future plans to further support refugee integration and employment in the tourism sector? 2. Are there any partnerships or collaborations on the horizon that could enhance your organization's SUSTAINABLE efforts in this regard? 3. How do you envision the role of refugees in Italy's SUSTAINABLE tourism sector/working force evolving in the coming years?
Chiusura:  2. C'è qualcos'altro che vorrebbe aggiungere o discutere che non abbiamo trattato?  Ringraziare i partecipanti per il loro tempo e la loro disponibilità a condividere le loro esperienze. Ribadire la riservatezza e fornire le informazioni di contatto per eventuali domande o supporto.	Closing:  2. Is there anything else you would like to add or discuss?  Thanked the participant for their time and willingness to share their experiences. Reiterated confidentiality and provided contact information for any follow-up questions or support needed.

### Interview guide managers

<b>Italian</b>	<b>English</b>
Introduzione: 3. Presentazione personale, della ricerca e dello scopo dell'intervista 4. Assicurare la riservatezza e spiegare come verranno utilizzate le informazioni raccolte.	Introduction: 3. Begin by introducing myself, the research and explain the purpose of the interview. 4. Assure confidentiality and explain how the information gathered will be used.
Informazioni di base:	Background information:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Può fornirmi dettagli sul suo ruolo e sull'organizzazione che rappresenta?</li> <li>5. Da quanto tempo è impegnato in questo settore?</li> <li>6. Potrebbe descrivere brevemente le attuali politiche lavorative relative all'impiego di rifugiati e richiedenti asilo in Veneto?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Could you give me details about your role and the organization you represent?</li> <li>5. How long have you been involved in this sector?</li> <li>6. Could you shortly describe the current working policies regarding the employment of refugees and asylum seekers in Veneto?</li> </ol>
<p>Piano strategico per il turismo sostenibile:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dato il mio campo di studi, sono particolarmente interessata al modo in cui il turismo viene condotto in modo sostenibile in Veneto. È a conoscenza di piani strategici sostenibili avviati dalla sua struttura alberghiera/restaurazione? (sonde: codice di condotta e politica dei diritti umani, due diligence)</li> <li>1. Siete coinvolti? Cosa ne pensa?</li> <li>2. In che modo affronta le questioni di sostenibilità? (sonda: soprattutto ambientale o anche sociale?)</li> <li>3. Questo piano considera anche le opportunità e le condizioni di lavoro dei refugees? Se sì, in che modo?</li> <li>4. Sapete se il suo hotel or ristorante ha anche qualche marchio di certificazione sostenibile?</li> </ol>	<p>Strategic Sustainable Turismo Plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Given my field of study, I am particularly interested in the way tourism is conducted in a sustainable manner in Veneto. Are you aware of any sustainable strategic plans initiated by your hotel? (probes: code of conduct and human rights policy, due diligence)</li> <li>2. Are you involved in it? What do you think about it?</li> <li>3. In what way does it address questions of sustainability? (probes: mostly environmental or also social?)</li> <li>4. Does this plan also consider the working opportunities and conditions of refugees? If so, in what ways?</li> <li>5. Do you know if your hotel/restaurant also has any sustainable certification labels?</li> </ol>
<p>Integrazione e acquisizione di posti di lavoro:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In che modo il vostro hotel collabora con le imprese o i datori di lavoro locali del settore turistico per creare opportunità di lavoro per i refugees?</li> <li>2. Esistono programmi di formazione o di sviluppo delle competenze specificamente concepiti per preparare i rifugiati all'impiego nel settore turistico?</li> </ol>	<p>Integration and job acquisition:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How does your hotel collaborate with local businesses or employers in the tourism sector to create job opportunities for refugees?</li> <li>2. Are there any training or skill-building programs specifically designed to prepare refugees for employment in the tourism sector?</li> </ol>
<p>Misurare il successo e l'impatto:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Potete fornirmi esempi di storie di successo in cui i rifugiati si sono integrati con successo nella forza lavoro del settore turistico grazie al supporto della vostra organizzazione?</li> </ol>	<p>Measuring success and impact:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Can you give me any examples of success stories where refugees have successfully integrated into the tourism sector workforce with the support of your organization?</li> </ol>
<p>Sfide e opportunità:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Quali sono le principali sfide che la vostra organizzazione deve affrontare nel supportare i rifugiati a integrarsi nella forza lavoro del settore turistico?</li> </ol>	<p>Challenges and opportunities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. What are some of the main challenges your organization faces in supporting refugees to integrate into the tourism sector workforce?</li> <li>4. How do you address cultural or language barriers?</li> </ol>

4. Come affrontate le barriere culturali o linguistiche?	
<p>Direzioni future:</p> <p>4. Quali sono i piani futuri della vostra organizzazione per sostenere ulteriormente l'integrazione e l'occupazione dei rifugiati nel settore turistico?</p> <p>5. Ci sono partnership o collaborazioni all'orizzonte che potrebbero migliorare gli sforzi sostenibili della vostra organizzazione in questo senso?</p> <p>6. Come immagina che si evolverà il ruolo dei rifugiati nel settore turistico/lavorativo sostenibile in Italia nei prossimi anni?</p>	<p>Future directions:</p> <p>4. What are your organization's future plans to further support refugee integration and employment in the tourism sector?</p> <p>5. Are there any partnerships or collaborations on the horizon that could enhance your organization's SUSTAINABLE efforts in this regard?</p> <p>6. How do you envision the role of refugees in Italy's SUSTAINABLE tourism sector/working force evolving in the coming years?</p>
<p>Chiusura:</p> <p>3. C'è qualcos'altro che vorrebbe aggiungere o discutere che non abbiamo trattato?</p> <p>Ringraziare i partecipanti per il loro tempo e la loro disponibilità a condividere le loro esperienze. Ribadire la riservatezza e fornire le informazioni di contatto per eventuali domande o supporto.</p>	<p>Closing:</p> <p>3. Is there anything else you would like to add or discuss?</p> <p>Thanked the participant for their time and willingness to share their experiences. Reiterated confidentiality and provided contact information for any follow-up questions or support needed.</p>

### C. Codebook

Name	Files	References
Challenges to integration	0	0
Coming from less economically advantaged families	1	1
Different skill set	6	6
Inadequate integration support	2	6
No papers	3	5
Not speaking language	7	7
Not working hard	2	3
Current host city	7	8
Future ambitions	9	24

Name	Files	References
Job role	18	22
Migration journey before current city	7	11
Organization name	18	19
Origin country	10	10
Reflections on migration	2	6
Regional policies	7	13
AMIF (EU Level)	1	2
Challenges	4	13
Decreto flussi	1	1
FAMI	1	2
FAMI impact Veneto	1	2
FARM and COMMON GROUND	1	5
GOL	1	3
Irecoop	1	1
SAI	2	2
Working tourism policies	3	3
Social emplacement	0	0
Access to services and housing	5	6
Ease of access to education	2	3
Ease of access to health services	6	7
Ease of access to housing	6	6
Choice	5	7
Perceived freedom of choosing where to live	0	0
Perceived freedom of choosing where to work	2	2
Institutional sociabilities	9	12

Name	Files	References
Path dependency	9	25
Availability of institutional support for refugees	0	0
Availability of transport infrastructure	0	0
Job availability in region	0	0
Presence of social occasions and activities	1	1
Proximal sociabilities	12	27
Workplace sociabilities	11	18
Success stories	2	4
Suggestions for integration services	13	26
Supporting role of labour union	0	0
Assistance with socio-economic services	1	3
Collaboration with other institutions	1	5
Counselling services for refugees workers	1	4
Legal support	1	3
Vocational, cultural, language training	1	1
Supporting role of managers	0	0
Collaborate with other institutions	1	1
Diversity policies	1	1
Language training	1	1
Long-term contract	1	1
Offer internships, mentoring, apprenticeships	5	7
Sustainability policies	1	2
Supporting role of mentors	1	2
Supporting role of public actors	0	0
Collaborate with other institutions	2	6

Name	Files	References
Financial support	0	0
Help in finding employment	2	2
Integration services	3	4
Offer housing	2	2
Offer language courses	5	5
Offer vocational training	0	0
Research	1	4
Supporting role of third sector actors	0	0
Advocacy	1	1
Collaborate with other institutions	7	15
Counseling services	8	14
Financial support	1	1
Help in finding employment	8	10
Integration services	12	30
Internship	2	7
Offer housing	10	14
Offer language courses	3	4
Offer vocational training	5	5
Provide information	4	4
Religion	5	5
Volunteers	3	4
Working in Tourism	0	0
Challenges	11	22
Opportunities	10	22