## roar @UEL
### research open access repository

University of East London Institutional Repository: http://roar.uel.ac.uk

# The Lack of Integration Policy and Experiences of Settlement: A Case Study of Refugees in Rome

MAJA KORAC
School of Cultural and Innovation Studies, University of East London, UK

**Abstract**

This article examines the question of an absence of an integration policy, and specifically how this lack of state intervention is perceived by refugees themselves, and how it shapes their attitudes towards and strategies for integration. The emphasis in examining integration of refugees in this paper is on the importance of human agency in the process of structuring and re-structuring social relations across space and time. The article is based upon research among a group of refugees from former Yugoslavia settled in Rome. Their experiences presented in this paper document a case of integration in which the refugees, for the most part, have not encountered any kind of assistance programme. This situation caused considerable difficulty in the process of their settlement, particularly during its early stages, yet it permitted spontaneous and personalized encounters between the refugees' native culture(s) and that of the receiving society. It is suggested that the nature of these encounters contributed to strengthening the adaptability of the refugees. It also affected their subjective wellbeing and tended to compensate for the numerous problems associated with other aspects of their integration.

Introduction

Integration of refugees in receiving societies has become a much-debated issue among researchers, practitioners and policy makers. Problems of integration are both conceptual and practical, as the term has been defined differently and policies aiming at facilitating integration are developed in different ways. A 'top-down' approach to integration in which governments and policy makers define integration goals and impose them on refugee populations in receiving societies has become the prevalent approach in facilitating integration and in 'measuring' its success. Empirical studies about problems of refugee settlement have tended to adopt this approach and to focus primarily on structural and organizational aspects of the integration 'system'. This has led to analyses of different integration policies in various country contexts and their effect on the settlement process.

While there are empirical studies examining the effect of state-developed integration programmes, the question of the impact and consequences of the lack of such initiatives has rarely been asked. Moreover, it is important to examine not only how governments manage large influxes of refugees, but also how these policy instruments or their absence help or hinder the process of social inclusion from the point of view of refugees themselves. Hence, this article examines the question of absence of integration policy, and specifically how this lack of state intervention is perceived by refugees themselves, and how it shapes their attitudes towards and strategies for integration. It appears that for some refugees the lack of a centralized welfare policy system (which does not mean a lack of any type of assistance) may be beneficial for some aspects of integration in specific circumstances. Therefore, the paper aims to stimulate further a debate on the complexity of the process of integration and the reasons why it cannot be addressed adequately by a single, uniform, policy approach.

The paper is based upon research among a group of refugees from former Yugoslavia settled in Rome. 1 Italy, like other southern European countries, does not have a well-developed welfare system, which has led to an underdeveloped integration programme and often ad hoc measures of assistance for individuals granted asylum. The character of the social protection and welfare system in the country has led to a minimal assistance for asylum seekers and refugees. It is assumed that those in need will be assisted primarily through self-help systems established within refugee and migrant networks, which will encourage them to become self-sufficient in a short period. A new immigration law, enacted in 1998, states for example that asylum seekers are to be accommodated at government- run centres; however, few such centres were established at the time of the research, in 1999 and 2000. Moreover, although the new Immigration Law was enacted in 1998, corresponding legislation concerning asylum and temporary protection status had not been introduced at the time of this research. Consequently, it can be argued that there is a lack of an organic legislative framework corresponding to a global social plan pertaining to reception and integration of refugees in Italy.

The lack of any integration strategy at the national level, supported by a corresponding financial and institutional structure, has contributed to the situation in which both governmental organizations and the NGO sector in Italy continually deal with emergencies. The Italian NGO sector with a specific mandate to assist asylum seekers and refugees is a relatively recent phenomenon. Most of the organizations were founded at the beginning of the 1990s. They are unevenly spread over the country and less numerous than church organizations, which offer assistance to the destitute in general, including refugees. In the context of an emergency-based assistance 'policy' set by the government, NGOs and church organizations are struggling to meet at least some of the basic needs of the recently arrived. They provide shelter, usually available for up to three months, while church organizations also offer free meals (one per day) to the destitute in general. Additionally, church organizations provide language courses for immigrants, including refugees. All these types of assistance offered by church organizations and the NGO sector are scarce, particularly accommodation. Consequently, asylum seekers and refugees are often forced to sleep on the streets of the towns and cities where they wish to settle. Moreover, other integration initiatives and often innovative programmes aimed at the employment and/or educational needs of refugees, set up by some NGOs, remain only small projects, inadequate to meet the needs of a growing refugee population in the country. This situation is aggravated not only by the lack of the organizational and financial capacity of the NGO sector to provide sufficient assistance to refugees in Italy. It is also intensified by the absence of a systematic strategy for reaching out to refugees who are in dire need of assistance. Hence, the lack of information about (scarce) assistance available is a continuing problem. Similarly, in the very few government-run programmes for assisting refugees, such as providing finance for those who would like to start small family businesses, assistance is very hard to obtain. This is either because of the lack of information about this type of assistance or because of the highly bureaucratic procedure for applying and decision-making. Therefore, it is common for resources allocated by the government for such programmes to remain unspent at the end of a fiscal year.2

Consequently, the experiences of the study population presented in this article, document the case of integration in which the refugees, for the most part, have not encountered any kind of assistance programme. This situation caused considerable difficulty in the process of their settlement, particularly during its early stages, yet it permitted spontaneous and personalized encounters between their native culture(s) and that of the receiving society. The nature of these encounters, it is suggested, has contributed to strengthening the adaptability of the refugees. It has also affected their subjective wellbeing and tended to compensate for the numerous problems associated with other aspects of their integration.

This qualitative research explored how refugees experienced their social condition in Italy. It specifically examined their perception of structural and other barriers to their social inclusion and their ability and willingness to participate in different spheres of the receiving society. As this is a qualitative study, the number of refugees contacted, observed and interviewed was not large. The group of refugees interviewed consisted of relatively young (between 20 and 40 years of age), urban, and well-educated individuals, predominantly single or cohabiting, without children, overwhelmingly from Bosnia-Herzegovina (see Appendix). Consequently, the narratives of 40 refugees settled in Rome collected in this research do not claim to be representative of the situation of all refugees from former Yugoslavia in the city or of all refugees in general. They are, however, demonstrative of the complexity of the integration process and of the problems of how to facilitate it. The 'voices' of the refugees in this article reveal how this specific group of people reacted to a range of 'choices' they were 'offered' in a chaotic integration 'system' in their place of settlement. It demonstrates how and why the lack of a centralized system of assistance has become beneficial to some aspects of their settlement, regardless of the fact that it also made some other aspects of their lives in exile difficult.

The point of entry into the integration debate adopted in this paper, is embedded in the acknowledgement of refugees as 'social actors' (Miles 1993) who should contribute to how integration is defined, facilitated and assessed. Hence, the emphasis on the voices' of refugees themselves. Recognizing refugees as social actors also implies that integration is a 'goal-directed' process entailing major obstacles that have to be negotiated before newcomers can attain a level of societal participation that is in harmony with their integration goals (Valtonen 1998: 57). However, the prime determinant of subjective wellbeing of refugees during this process, as Valtonen's research reveals, is not the degree of discrepancy between goals and actual conditions of settlement (Valtonen 1998). Rather, their subjective wellbeing is determined by 'the extent to which agency can be exercised in the resettlement situation' (Valtonen 1998: 57). On a theoretical level, this suggestion fits in with Giddens' account of 'duality of structure' (Cohen 1989: 41). As he pointed out, social structures not only constrain behaviour and peoples' social lives, but also enable their actions (Giddens 1984: 173). The emphasis in examining integration of refugees in this paper is, therefore, on the importance of human agency in the process of structuring and re-structuring social relations across space and time.

In discussing the effect of the lack of integration policy on the process of integration, this paper calls for re-affirmation of Knudsen's (1991) critique of settlement programmes. He argues that paradoxically, assistance programmes designed to facilitate refugee settlement may intensify stress involved in the process of their integration. Knudsen emphasizes that programmes assisting refugee settlement are based on the ambiguous concept of cultural conflict. Such a concept implies opposition of cultures, with the culture of the receiving society usually ranked as superior (Knudsen 1991: 30). Knudsen, therefore, argues that integration programmes are often 'founded upon unequal power and authority rather than on integration and equal worth' (Knudsen 1991:3 1). In such a context, as he further points out, contacts with social service providers, who are usually key guides to the receiving society, tend to remain within the structural framework of a minority situation (Knudsen 1991: 34). As such, these encounters involve structural limitations that are often difficult to overcome (Knudsen 1991: 35-36).

Two conceptual considerations underlie the analysis of the settlement experiences of refugees presented in this study. First, integration is understood as a relative and culturally determined process (Kuhlman 1991). Within this conceptual framework, analysis of integration is not about the examination of absolute levels of measurable variables, such as housing, education, employment, and socio-economic mobility beyond which it is assumed integration has been achieved. Rather, analysis of integration becomes the exploration of processes shaped by the needs, goals and norms of specific groups of people in particular

contexts, places and time-periods. Second, integration is not a singular, stage- sequential process. Rather, as Castles and associates point out (Castles et al. 2003), it consists of sets of overlapping processes that take place differently in various spheres of receiving societies and have various outcomes, because receiving society is not a monolithic entity. Therefore, the assessment of integration and the development of policies to facilitate it calls for empirically grounded examination of the various processes and levels of societal participation and their interrelation.

## Experiences of Becoming Independent in the Italian 'Model' of Integration

Italy does not judicially recognize humanitarian refugees, but refers solely to the Geneva Convention. Consequently, populations fleeing the general violence and armed conflicts of the 1990s, for example in Albania and former Yugoslavia, were granted temporary permits to stay, based on specific government decrees. Based on such a decree, introduced in 1992, 77,000 temporary resident permits were granted to persons fleeing former Yugoslavia between 1992 and 1997.[3] Almost none of the refugees interviewed had obtained Italian citizenship and almost all had a temporary, humanitarian, permit to stay based on this special decree. This temporary status was usually granted without any lengthy determination procedure and included the immediate right to work and study. However, the vast majority had received no assistance to settle in Italy. The government established 15 reception centres for those fleeing the region. Their gradual closure began at the end of 1995; at the time of this research, these centres were closed. The centres could accommodate up to 2,000 persons at a time. The exact number of those accommodated at such centres was not available, but there is a well founded indication that the number was not much greater than a couple of thousand (Losi 1994). Additionally, the NGO sector initiated forms of assistance to refugees fleeing former Yugoslavia. The organization Consorzio Italiano de Solidarita, founded in 1993, was particularly active. From 1993 to 1996, the organization helped approximately 2,000 people fleeing the post-Yugoslav states. It helped in providing accommodation to these refugees through its own network of local organizations or volunteers, primarily in smaller industrial towns in northern Italy. Initially, refugees were accommodated with Italian families, were helped to enrol in language courses and in some cases to find jobs. The regional governments financially assisted these programmes. In 1996, the organization started providing assistance for people fleeing other troubled regions of the world.[4] This brief discussion about the assistance available to refugees from former Yugoslavia suggests that many of them encountered profound problems in achieving a minimal financial security and their first years in Italy were characterized by a struggle for physical survival.

The lack of an organized attempt to meet the group needs of refugees in Italy forced them to rely on their personal skills and resources in settling in Rome. A 42-year old single man from Bosnia, with a technical school degree, in Italy since 1993 and employed in a restaurant in Rome, explained the situation of the majority of the refugees in this study:

> We were without any kind of assistance here and we were forced to do all kinds of things just to survive. To come to a foreign country, fleeing war, without anything at all and to be left in the streets, that's a major blow. They [the government and the NGO sector] gave us absolutely nothing. Accidentally, a lot of people I knew also found themselves in Rome, those who came to Italy a year or several months before I did, so they helped me with accommodation and finding some small jobs. I got by during the first months thanks to their help and the help of other people [refugees] I met during that period, until I managed to find a steadier job and became more independent.

During their first years in Rome, they spontaneously formed networks which served as an alternative self-help reception 'system' dealing with their most pressing needs, such as finding

accommodation and work. A 36-year-old Bosnian man, with a secondary school degree, in Italy since 1992, living in Rome with his partner, also a refugee from Bosnia, explains how and why these networks and friendships developed:

> For us who found ourselves here [refugees from former Yugoslavia in Rome] it's normal that networks and friendships have developed. The situations we were faced with when we arrived here were extreme, no papers in the beginning, no job, no help, war in our country, so those strong ties were made. Even today, we live a much more stressful life than Italians do.

Most of the interviewees in Rome, both men and women, had (by local standards) relatively good rental accommodation in the city at the time of the research. Single people, but sometimes also couples, often lived in shared accommodation. Some could afford to live on their own, which was not the case for years after their arrival. When they arrived, most found their first shelter in apartments of known and unknown refugees from the region. The following account of a 38-year-old single man from Serbia, with an interrupted university education, in Italy since 1992, employed in a restaurant in Rome, illustrates how this self-help 'system' worked:

> During the first five years I'd been staying in a flat in downtown Rome, which became some kind of a cult place. It was a huge flat where there was always a lot of us [refugees from former Yugoslavia], known and unknown people. Five of us were sharing the place for financial reasons, to share the costs. There were five bedrooms, plus a living room. A whole bunch of people would hear about 'the place to stay' and would come by; some of them would stay for a couple of nights, some much longer; we were from all ethnic origins.

Shared accommodation with other people from the region, immigrants from other countries, or at a later stage with Italians they happened to meet early in their stay, became a housing model for many. There were some, of course, who spent their first nights at Termini train station, and others who could not think of any other solution but to spend their first nights and their last money in inexpensive hotels. Only two refugees in this study found their first shelter in the dormitories of one of the church organizations or NGOs in Rome. The small number of people provided with accommodation was not only due to the general lack of such provision in the city. It was also the consequence of the lack of a well established NGO sector at the time when most of the refugees interviewed for this study arrived that is in 1991, 1992 and 1993. The small number of people assisted with accommodation was also due to the general lack of information about services available to refugees. Those few who were helped with accommodation, obtained the information by a stroke of luck, rather than any organized effort on the part of the providers. Moreover, those two who were lucky to obtain temporary accommodation through one of the NGOs, found that these organizations had very little or no time, financial and human resources to meet their other needs. A 31-year-old single Bosnian man, a student and an IT consultant in Rome, in Italy since 1995, explained the problems he encountered:

> They [NGOs] tell you about all kinds of services they offer, but I haven't heard that anyone got a job, or that anyone got any other help but accommodation and food. They have it all on paper. I know, for example, there's a possibility that the communa [municipality] pays half of your rent, but that's not what's happening in reality. They keep saying that they're in some kind of emergenza [emergency] and that's why they can't do it.

My research reveals that men experienced more difficulties in securing shelter and jobs than women did. On arrival, a general pattern of finding jobs emerged. Most of the younger

women would find work within a matter of days as live-in house- keepers or nannies. This was due to the situation in the labour market in Rome that offers opportunities in domestic service, but it was also related to the kinds of social networks the women from the region had in the city. During the 1970s and 1980s, a number of young women, predominantly from Dalmatia, Croatia, and Herzegovina, the south-eastern part of Bosnia-Herzegovina, would come to Rome for six months or a year to work as live-in housekeepers. They would earn a little, learn the language, and return home. Before their flight, many of the women interviewed had direct or indirect contacts with women from the region who did this kind of work. These contacts were instrumental in gaining vital information about how to search for work in domestic service. After the first refugee women found work, they served as a source of information and contact for those who arrived later. A 33-year-old single woman from Croatia, with an interrupted university education, an IT specialist in Rome, in Italy since 1992, explains one of the many ways in which these initial contacts and networks were established. Her account also details the pattern of work and life of most of the women during their first year in Rome:

> During the war [in Croatia], my parents used to go to a nearby shelter regularly, at the time when our neighbourhood was heavily shelled. In the shelter, they met a middle-aged woman who happened to know a woman, Helena, who was a live-in housekeeper in Rome in the late 1980s. That is how I got in contact with her, and she helped me find my first job in Rome. I was among the first to arrive here, I helped many other women who came later [... ] The way for us women was first to get a job as a live-in housekeeper. You stay in a family until you've saved enough money which enables you to look for a new job. It took me 10 months and when I'd set enough money aside I left the family. When you leave the family you worked for as a live-in housekeeper you find a flat and your jobs are either in a caf6 or cleaning people's houses.

A live-in housekeeper's job would not only secure a modest salary for women, but also accommodation, food and an environment to learn Italian. All the women interviewed described their period of work as live-in housekeepers as a 'prison- like' experience. The main problem they faced was a lack of control over their time, and a feeling of isolation from the outside world. The change of employment was an important step forward for these women, even when they stayed in the cleaning business, because it meant freedom.

The situation for men finding their first jobs was particularly difficult because of the characteristics of the labour market in Rome. In most cases, the first work men found, commonly through contacts refugee women developed with Italian families they worked for, were manual, unskilled jobs such as building, painting, gardening, and so forth. The problem with this kind of work is not only that it is poorly paid, but also that it may not be paid at all. Hence, their first months, even years in some cases, depended on sheer luck in finding a trustworthy boss. Unlike many women whose jobs, although low paid, were paid regularly, men often had to work hard and long hours for little or no pay. This situation made the lives of many miserable, because the vast majority had no savings and thus no means to sustain themselves. The fact that men had not only to find jobs immediately, but also affordable accommodation compounded the problem. A 32-year-old man from Serbia, married to an Italian, with a university degree, employed in an NGO, in Italy since 1993, explained the problems of refugees I interviewed:

> I found my first job through people I knew [through the refugee networks] and I got to carry bags of cement to the third floor, and I didn't get paid in the end. In such a situation, you don't know how to react. Your language is poor; you have no one to protect you. So, that first period, in which you are supposed to earn some money to have something to start from, proved to be very disappointing. All we

could afford to eat was pasta bianca [plain pasta] sprinkled with either sugar or salt. This went on for a long period of time, about one year, when all we could do with our tiny incomes was to pay the rent.

It was particularly difficult for those with small children and the elderly to survive in the city without any assistance, and most of them left before the research took place. They either moved to other parts of Italy where it was easier to find work or resettled in a third country. In families that stayed on, children were often instrumental in developing networks and friendships with Italians through their contacts with Italian children at school. A 47-year-old Bosnian man, married, with two children, with a university degree, employed as a blue-collar worker in a firm in Rome, in Italy since 1992, details how he got his first job after almost five years of unemployment:

My wife must've told you about the difficulties we had for many years after we arrived here. There wasn't anything for us here, no help at all. My wife got a housekeeping job soon after we came here, through the contacts she had with an Italian family from the time when she was working in Rome, as a young, single woman, in the 70s. But I couldn't find a job for years. We were lucky to meet some nice Italian people who were willing and able to help us. One of our sons became friends at school with an Italian boy and they would visit each other at home. The boy told his mother that I was unemployed so she talked to a man who was the manager of the company I'm working for now. That man came to our house to meet us and told me to come and work for him. For the first two years, it was illegal work. After that, I signed a one-year contract, and this year they've given me a steady job. Now, I can even start thinking about retirement.

Children were not only instrumental in establishing networks with Italians. Those who were in their early teens often had to work during their first year in Rome, and contribute to inadequate family budgets.

However, children were not the main avenue to establishing contacts with Italians, because most of the refugees interviewed were either single or in relationships without children. Most of the contacts with Italians were established in neighbourhoods where they lived, while shopping, at work, or when socializing at places such as cafds. Through these day-to-day activities, they encountered many Italians who made many generous gestures of support and were willing to help. The following account of a 37-year-old Bosnian woman, living with an Italian partner, with a university degree, employed in an NGO, reveals the experience of her family after they arrived in Italy in 1992:

Many people from the neighbourhood would come to see us when they found out that we had moved in. We never got any help from the Italian government, but we did get help from many Italians, ordinary people, who helped us with essential information, such as how to find schools for children, where to shop, how and where to search for jobs. Some even offered us furniture, clothes, and you name it.

The experiences of hardship in finding shelter, learning the language, finding work and becoming independent without any assistance were interwoven with feelings of self-respect for being active in finding solutions and for being self sufficient. The importance of maintaining self-respect was paramount among the studied group, so much so that even when some form of assistance was available, in the form of provision of free meals at Caritas, for example, the refugees tended to avoid relying on it. A typical explanation for such an attitude comes from a 24-year-old single man from Bosnia, who arrived in Rome in the summer of 1992. This man, whose high school education was interrupted by war and who was working as a bartender when I met him, said: 'I was happier when I was hungry, I felt better with an empty stomach than to be among the crowd there.' Although the refugees confessed to being

on poor diets for months and some even for years upon their arrival and hence in dire need of food, they emphasized the importance of dignity as the critical factor that kept them going. As they were allowed to work and, therefore, were permitted some level of choice as to whether or not to rely on aid, almost all of the interviewees opted for independence, often regardless of the hardships involved.

The fact that they did not rely on aid, made them aware that this situation had potential benefits for their day-to-day interactions with Italians. The following account of a 45-year-old woman from Bosnia echoes the 'voices' of refugees I interviewed. This married woman with a secondary school degree, with two children, employed as a housekeeper in Rome, in Italy since 1992, said:

> There was nothing here, no assistance or any kind of support for us, and I'm glad about that. Everywhere they look at foreigners as people who the taxpayers' money is being spent on. I think that's one of the major issues in most EU countries today, and it's less so in Italy. We've earned [she and her husband] whatever we have here. If I'd gone to Caritas to ask for something, I'm sure my neighbours would be looking at me in a different way. This way, they respect me.

The perception of settlement problems was also shaped by information about the experiences of their friends and relatives in exile in other European countries. These transnational networks and exchange put their own experiences into perspective. A 33-year-old woman from Bosnia, in a common-law relationship with a Bosnian refugee, with a university degree, employed as a waitress in a bar discotheque, in Italy since 1991, explained how she formed her attitude towards her situation in Italy:

> While I was in Germany [visiting], I met a guy from Bosnia who'd been a refugee there and he told me about their experience. Everything was perfectly organized for them - reception, accommodation, children's education, financial support, you name it. Our people who found work there were always paid for doing it, not    like in Italy where it often happens that you don't get paid. Therefore, their situation in Germany was much better. But their papers didn't allow them to go where they wanted-for example, someone who lived near Stuttgart wasn't allowed to go to Munich. They lived like prisoners, well off prisoners though. My papers here allow me to go wherever I please. So, the way I feel about my status and life here is perhaps best described by the title of Milan Kundera's book The Unbearable Lightness of Being.

A 22-year-old single woman from Bosnia, a student and a part-time sales person in a retail shop, gave yet another account of why she feels better off in Italy than if she had been in some other European country. She explained in the following way the situation of people from her home town in exile in Denmark, where her mother is also a refugee:

> Our people there become overly humble and they lost a lot of dignity. Many just go on living on welfare, they lost self-respect and many became drug addicts or alcoholics. You can see that they grew old so fast. They became ruined, old and apathetic.

There was a unanimous agreement among the refugees interviewed that their compatriots in exile in Denmark, Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands and Norway, for example, enjoyed a better standard of living. Nonetheless, there was also a shared view that the policy systems that shape the choices and life prospects of refugees in other countries have many negative effects. These organized programmes of reception and integration were seen as disabling individual initiative, hence undermining self-esteem, or as limiting basic rights, such as the right of free movement or the right to work. In consequence, their compatriots in these

countries were often described as inward looking, preoccupied with the past and socially isolated.

One of the main sources of their empowerment in the Italian context was the right to work. This is best revealed in the account of a 37-year-old Bosnian woman, with a university degree, employed in an NGO in Rome, living with an Italian partner, in Italy since 1992:

> I think that working here made us feel better, regardless of what kinds of jobs we've had. I think that's what helped us keep our wits about us, and I think that's what kept me sane all these years. We've been working all the time, we were occupied with something, there was no assistance-here's a house, here's the money. I have contacts with many of my friends from Bosnia, for example in Norway, they say they     can't work at all. In the last two years they've started some kind of additional training, but otherwise they're together all the time and preoccupied with stories of the past. I think it's good that we've started a new life here. You have to start it once; you can't live in the past.

The following words of a 31-year-old single Bosnian man, a student and an IT consultant in Rome, in Italy since 1995, are yet another example of this shared attitude:

> Practically everyone who wanted to work found a job, those who wished to study enrolled in university-they've been studying very slowly, okay, that's on the whole because of the lack of assistance here, so they had to work. Frankly, I don't know where I'd be today with my life here if someone gave me a flat and a half a million liras a month. Perhaps I would have started studying, probably I would, but I don't know if I'd be feeling better right now, how determined I'd be to do something with my life here [... ] I'm not saying that the financial support isn't important assistance in getting a place to sleep and something to eat, what I call 'economic zero' [... ] All of us here had started from more or less the same material basis; we'd all started from below that economic zero, as I call it.

Although the importance of work in developing successful coping strategies was emphasized by all the refugees I interviewed, it was not perceived as a straightforward way to empowerment. Refugees I interviewed prized the right to work. However, they contended that the lack of an initial reception system forced them to become self-sufficient at a high cost. They were forced to enter a niche of the labour market from which it is very hard to move up the economic and social ladder. The words of a 32-year-old single woman from Serbia, with a technical school degree, a sales person in a retail shop, in Italy since 1993, echo the accounts of many refugees I interviewed:

> It was a struggle in the beginning and it is the same struggle now-to have a place to sleep, to have something to eat. There's no security here, I work an awful lot and it's a vicious circle from which there's no way out. I'm okay for them [the host society] and that holds while I am relatively young, while I'm free [single], while I am able to give. God forbid that I should fall ill or that I should have some serious problem. I can't even imagine what would happen then [... ] I don't see that any of us has settled down so that she/he can say that she/he's satisfied.

For those with an interrupted education, the cost of the immediate need to find any kind of work was delaying or abandoning the idea of its continuation. A 31-year-old Bosnian woman, with an interrupted university education, in Italy since 1992, a student in Rome at the time of my research, describes the situation shared by many of the refugees:

> I couldn't bear my life here any more. It boiled down to 10--12 hours of hard and senseless work that could only secure basic living. We [she and her partner, also a

refugee in Rome] couldn't even dream of continuing our studies and planning for the future [... I All they [the Italian government] did was to give us permission to stay and work, but we had to do everything else ourselves [... I But when my partner and I could finally afford to continue our studies everything changed. I'd regained my hope for the future [... I Compared to my partner's brother and his wife in Sweden [also refugees], we're about the same level now, only it was much more difficult for us to reach it. Even that may turn out to be an advantage, because that difficult life is a valuable experience. My partner's family has been more or less in the hands of the Swedish government, which was leading them through their lives step-by-step. Their only problem at the beginning was how to manage with the social benefit they were getting, so as not to make it last 15 instead of 30 days. It's true that they are still much better off financially than we are, but altogether we're about the same.

However, a majority of refugees I interviewed were not lucky, able or resourceful enough to continue their education interrupted by war. Refugees in this study had low paying, service sector jobs, often in the informal economy, regardless of their right to work. Yet, they were well educated and often with considerable experience in their professions. Consequently, almost none felt that they had succeeded in settling in Italy so as to give them a sense of security in planning their future. When defining the losses involved in their flight and exile, they characterized them as losses of economic welfare or uncertain prospects for their future, but not so much as loss of personal agency or social contacts leading to social isolation.

Clearly, the absence of experience of reception centres and contacts with professional or voluntary aid workers associated with an organized assistance programme meant considerable hardship in settling in Rome. However, it also saved this group of refugees from a systematic bureaucratic labelling. Labelling refugees usually means ascribing a common identity to a group of people, without any reference to their individual backgrounds and needs. It also often implies a dependent role, one of victims or of sick or traumatized persons. The process of forming such a bureaucratic identity, as Zetter (1991) emphasizes, is deeply non-participatory in nature and usually renders refugees powerless. As the discussion so far reveals, the lack of integration policies and assistance in settlement affects the way in which refugees become independent and the quality of their self-sufficiency. It also determines the nature and patterns of refugees' social interaction and relations within, across and outside ethnic boundaries, the issues discussed in the following section.

Social Networks and Interactions with the Surrounding Society

Exile affects 'the social world of refugees', which Marx defines as the sum of all their relationships and of the forces impinging on them at any moment of their experience (Marx 1990: 189). An important feature of the experience of exile is a loss of family, kinship, friendship and wider ties with community and society. Settlement and integration are characterized by the process of healing and coming to terms with the loss of social ties, as well as forming and consolidating social networks. The present study indicates that the character of the integration 'system' of the receiving society importantly shapes the type, pattern and quality of social interactions among refugees and with the surrounding society.

Although the underdeveloped integration 'system' in Italy rests upon the assumption that refugees and other newcomers will be assisted through self-help groups they form, the policy framework in the country does not specifically encourage the formation of community groups. Consequently, although immigrant and refugee organizations exist, they are not numerous or evenly spread over the country, well-established or well-funded. Unlike in some EU countries, where the state institutions create spaces for the recognition of groups rather than individuals (Joly 1996), in Italy, the formation of associations is not the main avenue for

a group to obtain support or finance from the state. In such a context, intra-group ties and networks are primarily informal and formed spontaneously to facilitate the needs of the group.

As the intra-group links of the studied group were characterized by weak ties, because most of the refugees were single and did not have previous kinship connections in Rome or Italy, they were prone to establishing diverse networks. Gurak and Caces argue that weak ties among migrant networks are important, because they unite diverse networks and increase the resources available to network members (Gurak and Caces 1992). Their social interactions included networks within, across and outside their ethnic group(s).

The group of refugees in Rome, as my research reveals, belonged to networks composed of people of all ethnic origins and from different parts of former Yugoslavia. The vast majority of refugees in this study had contacts across ethnic boundaries. The intensive contacts across ethnic boundaries resulted from the specific circumstances in which they took place, rather than from the absence of ethnic tension associated with the conflict in the region. The words of a 33 year old single woman from Bosnia, with a university degree, in Italy since 1992, employed in a café in Rome, explain the character of these networks:

> Each of us had our own opinions about politics [...] We'd have disputes over that [...] But despite the political discussions, we'd help each other whenever we could, regardless of where we were from and what our political views were. That attitude was essential, because we needed these contacts and each other's help [...] As soon as I arrived here, it become clear to me that I can't expect any help from this state [...] Despite the fact that this has generally been a negative experience [settling without any organized assistance], I think it had one good and positive side. A very great positive side is that I saw for myself that people from different regions of former Yugoslavia, despite the war in the country, could live together.

The networking across ethnic boundaries happened primarily because of the lack of an organized reception and assistance system, as discussed in the previous section. Consequently, for many of the refugees, contacts across ethnic boundaries were literally a matter of physical survival during their first years in Rome. These networks enabled them to cope better with their day-to-day problems in meeting their immediate needs, which proved to be common to all regardless of their ethnic background. It can be argued, therefore, that the characteristics of the policy context in Italy have created a situation in which people fleeing the deeply divided and war-torn region had to recreate links and coexistence destroyed by war.

This cross-ethnic networking was facilitated by two contributing factors: one relating to the absence of developed networks of old migrants, the other embedded in the characteristics of the group of refugees interviewed in Rome. The establishment of immigrant/refugee associations is promoted and financed by many receiving countries in Europe and elsewhere, as it is expected that they will fulfil the function of orientating newcomers. Further, these organizations are also an important link to the institutions of the home country and as such, they 'constitute the major arena for the articulation and affirmation of a national identity' (Eastmond 1998:164). However, when people are fleeing conflicts involving ethnic division, such as the wars in former Yugoslavia, issues concerning national identity are often highly problematic, because national identities are central to the identity politics of such conflicts. The lack of well established community organizations supported by the Italian authorities or by the governments of the post-Yugoslav states meant the lack of support such organizations can provide. Nonetheless, the absence of their support also freed the refugees from political disputes about the conflict, the causes of their flight, and other highly politically charged issues. Importantly, it created a need for spontaneous self-organizing by the newly arrived refugees. These cross-ethnic networks were also successful because most of the refugees

interviewed in Rome were young, educated, from multi-ethnic urban areas, and were often themselves of ethnically mixed backgrounds. They themselves had no other experience but that of peaceful multi-ethnic coexistence and friendships before the conflict.

When reception and assistance systems for refugees fleeing wars involving ethnic cleavages are set up so that cross-ethnic coexistence is not essential for settlement, ethnic tension and divisions tend to be carried over and transplanted into the new context. In such circumstances, they remain central to the exile experience. This is intensified even more when policy systems of receiving societies accommodate essentialized notions of national identities and cultures. Eastmond rightly argues that culturalist policies, concerned with the consequences of people 'uprooted' from their native cultures, may be seen 'as expressions of the same nationalist logic of a "natural" relation between a people, a place and a culture' (Eastmond 1998: 178-179).

Although initially, social communication of the group in Rome was primarily with their compatriots, almost all the refugees gradually developed contacts and ties with Italians. The main obstacle in making closer social contacts with Italians during their first years in Rome was the lack of opportunity to become acquainted with people of a similar educational and social background as themselves. During their first years, they were almost exclusively in touch with the Italians with whom they worked. Given that all of them were employed in work for which they were overqualified, Italians with different interests and life aspirations overwhelmingly made up their social milieu. In this respect, during their first years in Rome, men were more disadvantaged than were women. Initially, as discussed earlier, women were primarily employed in domestic service. This type of work provided for many women valuable initial contacts with Italians. Contacts with their employers (that is, Italian families) often developed into friendships not only with the family they worked for, but also with their relatives and friends.

At the time of the research, approximately half of the interviewees had more contacts with Italians than with people from the region. These contacts were predominantly described as 'good friendships' involving regular outings, home visits, and joint vacations. Within this group, there were also those whose partners or spouses were Italian. Most of these close relationships started accidentally, through many contacts the refugees had to make with Italians in their neighbourhoods, at work and other social settings while searching for information or help of some kind. The other half of the interviewees did not express a tendency to isolate themselves from Italians or society at large, but they preferred to socialize with 'their own folk'. This preference, as they explained, stemmed from their feeling that they understand each other better because they still lead more 'extreme' lives than Italians do.

Spontaneous social contacts that occurred with Italians were facilitated by the fact that the refugees interviewed were not spatially segregated in the city. Their neighbours were Italian, and often their flat-mates who, although Italian, were also newcomers in the city. These spontaneous and individualized social encounters helped to avoid a perception that the differences between Italian and non-Italian identity and culture are set in opposition. This strengthened the adaptability of refugees to the new environment, and encouraged their openness to differences between the cultures and people.

The narratives of refugees collected in this research document a complex process of negotiation within refugee discourse concerning the reorganization of attitudes and behaviour required for meeting personal needs and expectations in exile. This reorganization resulted in a realistic approach to the problems of exile in Italy. Most of the refugees interviewed were seeking to accomplish an integrated accommodation with the receiving society, consistent with their past and present situation and identities (Kunz 1981). As a 38-year-old single man from Serbia, with a high school education, in Rome since the spring of 1992, explained:

The only way to become integrated somewhere is to be in contact with local people. That means stepping out of a kind of 'national scheme'. Limiting yourself to what you see as your own identity prevents you from accepting whatever may be outside it. Some of us, for example, speak perfect Italian, even the Romancio dialect, so there's no way you can recognize them as foreigners, they're very well adapted. However, there's still a difference, which isn't bad at all. From what I've seen it's not a disadvantage and I'd like to keep that distinctive quality.

This man's approach to integration, like most of the other refugees in this study, did not entail a desire to reshape his identity in order to make it more congruent with Italian attitudes, and social and cultural customs. Rather, a clear desire to retain a notion of difference was central to the process of negotiation of identity. This, however, did not imply a need for 'entrenching a symbolic boundary'(Bauböck 1996) between the collectives.

This is not to argue that the refugees were not critical of Italian society and way of life. However, their criticism was constructive in the sense that the majority of the refugees were pragmatic and realistic in the way they negotiated their dissatisfaction with certain characteristics of the society that the majority perceived as their new 'home'. The following words of a 25-year-old single man from Bosnia, in Italy since 1993, illustrate the approach to Italy and Italians that was shared by most of the refugees:

There is no point in complaining about Italy and Italians, because this is their country. There's 57 million of them here. There's room, of course, for constructive criticism but things aren't that bad at all. They aren't 100 per cent bad. You feel like a foreigner as much as you wish to feel as a foreigner. I socialize with Italians and I make an effort to understand their mentality. The more nations and cultures you get to know, the richer you are. Besides, many Italians managed to learn something from us, too.

Spontaneous and individualized encounters with Italians and between cultures were primarily seen as a way of learning about the receiving society. Moreover, the spontaneity of these encounters was important for refugees' perception that the process of learning, shifting and shaping attitudes is mutual, and it affects both the newcomers and Italians.

The scope and quality of social contacts made with the established community contributed to a subjective feeling of refugees that the wider society is not an alien, closed community, and beyond reach. This subjective feeling played a positive role in assessing their individual situation in exile, and tended to compensate for their dissatisfaction with the quality of their participation in the labour market as well as their objectively undervalued social role. Montgomery's research of components of refugee adaptation shows that how refugees feel about their experiences is as important as 'objective' indicators of adaptation, such as employment, income or language efficiency (Montgomery 1996).

The research also suggests that the process of reconstruction of lives of individual refugees was facilitated by informal social interactions with Italians. Social communication outside the group of compatriots fosters outward thinking and helps to overcome some problems associated with the past. As a 47-year-old married man from Bosnia, with two children, in Italy since 1992, explained:

I'd thought that socializing with our people [refugees from former Yugoslavia] and talking about our problems and politics would only give me a headache. It's better to be with Italians, especially if they're such wonderful people as the ones we know [he and his family].

For refugees who flee internal conflicts and wars involving ethnic cleavages, social interaction outside the group of their compatriots is often the preferred way of informal communication, because it helps overcome the problems concerning ethnic division and associated nationalist politics. A 33-year-old single man from Bosnia in Rome since 1992, gave the following account:

> I fled Bosnia partly because of the bombs, which I got to experience a great deal, partly for fear of being conscripted, and mostly because of the collective madness which left no room for dialogue. Among the people who went abroad, some did believe in some kind of 'absolute truth' about the conflict. That bothered me. At the beginning [of his exile in Rome] contacts with refugees from ex-Yugoslavia meant a lot to me, because I needed to share information and my experiences with our people. As time went by, however, I'd reduce these contacts to a small circle of our people with whom I remained friends to this day. Otherwise, I socialize with Italians, I feel much better among them.

For the refugees in this study, the subjective feelings about their situation were importantly grounded in their experiences of Italian culture. This experience indicates the perception of compatibility of cultures or lack of a profound cultural distance between the sending and the receiving societies. Although before becoming refugees the vast majority had never set foot in Rome, they all mentioned their positive attitude towards the 'Italian life-style' and Italy. As a Mediterranean country, it was perceived as similar to their countries of origin. A 42-year-old single man from Bosnia, in Rome since 1992, gave the following account of these similarities:

> We were born on the Mediterranean. We're used to eating a fig here and there, to cheat someone a little here and there, and then to be kind and helpful to total strangers-that's the Mediterranean atmosphere. This is a Mediterranean country too, thus very close to us [people from former Yugoslavia]. If I went somewhere north [Northern Europe] where you have cloudy skies for months, where there's no sun, even with all the good things you get there, I don't think it's all there is to being happy.

Most of the people interviewed came to Italy because that was the only country they could reach. It was nearby and Italy was one of the last EU states to introduce a visa regime for nationals from the post-Yugoslav states. Nonetheless, this research indicates that the perception of the compatibility of cultures was also one of the factors which played a role in their decisions to flee to Italy. Although cultural differences exist, ranging from profound language differences, to religion in cases of refugees from non-Catholic religious backgrounds, and political system, aspects such as interpersonal communication, some values and traditions, were found to be familiar if not identical. This perceived compatibility also proved one of the reasons for remaining in the country regardless of the hardships they had to confront.

Additionally, and very importantly, the lack of experiences of racism and xenophobia at the level of informal social contacts facilitated the establishment of a satisfactory social interaction outside their ethnic groups and their general satisfaction with their situation in Italy. The following account of a 50-year-old married woman from Croatia, with a child, in Rome since 1994, explains the distinction made by all the refugees I interviewed:

> As for the general atmosphere [towards foreigners in Italy] I've felt good and safe. Most people are nice to me. Of course, there are some sporadic cases like in any other country. They're [Italians] very nice people, charming, good and sentimental. Foreigners here are an issue that politicians keep up their sleeve when

they need someone to blame for the high unemployment rate. That way you stir up public attention and move it from the real problem.

The experiences of the refugees in this research demonstrate how day-to-day social interaction with the established community and the relating feeling of social inclusion may counterbalance the experience of exclusion at the level of state institutions and the wider public.

This research demonstrates the centrality of the refugees' need to become part of the social fabric of life in the places they settle. This need was usually accompanied by their conscious effort to establish closer ties with Italians in their neighbourhoods, at work, and other social settings. The perceived openness of the established community towards the refugees I interviewed facilitated the scope and quality of their social interaction with Italians. A similar perception was absent, however, when the formal institutional system and wider public were concerned, as was the willingness of refugees to participate in formal institutional structures of Italian society. These issues are discussed in the following section.

## Attitudes towards State Institutions and Citizenship

Citizenship is arguably the ultimate goal and 'measurement' of full integration in the receiving society. It is also one of its most important determinants, as it represents the willingness of a society to absorb newcomers (Weiner 1996). Citizenship is an indicator of the formal membership in the receiving society, as it dejure guarantees enjoyment of a set of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

Integration is a process that implies a long and unspecified period during which individuals and groups interact and change. Often, the process can take as long as a lifetime. This research reveals that while, at the integration stage examined, citizenship is the desired legal status, the refugee notions of integration and active participation are often not associated with the need for full political participation. Rather, citizenship was understood among the studied group as a purely practical matter that will allow them to 'travel freely' and to feel 'accepted by a state'. The latter reflects the situation concerning their still temporary status in Italy as well as an increase in racism and xenophobia in the country, rather than an articulated need to gain more civil, social and political rights. As a 25-year-old man from Bosnia explained it: 'To what state I belong now [after becoming a refugee] is a purely practical matter. I don't feel that I belong to any state but I have to have someone's passport.' It can be argued, that for many refugees fleeing wars involving the break-up of their country of origin, citizenship primarily means regaining the sense of security and freedom of movement they lost. Therefore, during a prolonged period of exile, up to eight years for the refugees in this research, the question of citizenship is seen as a purely practical or security matter but not as a matter of belonging to a state. Equally, the need and willingness to become part of the community and social fabric of life is not always associated with the need to participate in the political sphere, even at advanced stages of the integration process.

The unwillingness of refugees in this study to participate in the political realm can be explained by two interrelated factors. First, the refugees in this research overwhelmingly belong to the generation of people brought up in an undemocratic political system, which created among the younger generation a perception of politics and political activism as a 'dirty business'. A 31-year-old man from Bosnia illustrates this attitude:

> I was never interested in politics, like very many people of my generation back home, because I thought that no politician there ever deserved my vote. I've kept that opinion regarding the political situation in Italy as well, because there's no such thing as an honest politician.

Second, their experience with the first multi-party political elections in Yugoslavia when nationalistic parties came into power was deeply disappointing. The words of a 50-year-old woman from Croatia echo the voices of most of the interviewees:

The curiosity about what's going on here in politics is normal. I follow politics because I live here, it is of interest to me. I'm not indifferent about who the prime minister is, which party is in power-on the contrary. I look and read critically, because I live here. Nonetheless, I have no interest in taking part in that 'game', not after what had happened in our country.

Hence, the experience of the first multi-party elections, consequent war, bloodshed and dismemberment of the county left them convinced that politics is a 'dirty business' in both one-party and multi-party political systems.

The mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion in the receiving society operate at two levels: at the level of day-to-day social interaction with members of the established community, and at the level of state institutions and the wider public. Experience within the two contexts influences the ways in which boundaries between us-the refugees, and them-the established community, are constructed and within which the notions of belonging are created. This experience affects the process of negotiation of individuals' commitment to the receiving society and the perceived meaning of citizenship and questions of belonging. For the studied group, the experience of exclusion at the level of state institutions was often compounded by the experience of exclusion associated with break-up of the country of origin. This situation tended to create circumstances in which notions of belonging were most accurately conceptualized in transnational terms, as well as in relation to locality (Rome, for example), rather than in terms of belonging to a nation-state.

## Concluding Remarks

The analysis of the experiences of the refugees in this study documents the case of integration in which the refugees, for the most part, have not encountered any kind of reception system. Furthermore, given that the admission procedure was not lengthy, it did not create any excessive pressure on refugees by prolonged uncertainty about their right to stay and work or study in Italy. The character of the policy context in Italy caused significant hardship during the first phase of their settlement and has resulted in dissatisfaction with the quality of their functional integration via the labour market and education.

The absence of any organized assistance programme prompted the refugees to rely on their personal capabilities and to engage actively in reconstructing their lives. In so doing, they found material and emotional support among their compatriots, also refugees in Rome, and often among Italians with whom they gradually established closer social ties. The latter social contacts not only played an important role in fulfilling their immediate and pressing needs, but were also a crucial form of encounter between their native culture(s) and that of the receiving society. Given that these encounters were spontaneous and personalized, those involved in such social interaction were usually perceived as individuals, rather than representatives of a culture or society, perceptions of which are often based on stereotyped and biased images. This has contributed to a two-way type of social interaction in which the parties involved listen to each other and (re)act to behaviour, needs, and expectations of those involved in the communication. These factors have contributed to strengthening the adaptability of refugees as well as to their appreciation of the new social environment.

The analysis of the experiences of exile documented in this article has to be taken with caution, because of the many limitations of the research. The analysis in this article was based on the experiences of a relatively homogeneous group of refugees. They represent a relatively young, educated and urban population that fled to Italy spontaneously. Spontaneous flight

already implies a considerable level of agency and resources, ranging from material to social, in terms of skills and networks. All these factors make this refugee population considerably resourceful and, therefore, more prone to develop successful survival strategies with practically no assistance. With all these limitations in mind, it can be argued that the experience of the refugees in this research can be characterized as an active reconstruction of life in which informal social interaction with the established community played an important role.

The establishment of closer social ties with Italians was facilitated by two intervening factors. First, the lack of professional aid workers, who usually also act as mediators between the refugees and the receiving society and often create dependency, spared this refugee population from non-participatory attitudes. The absence of any organized mediation resulted in social action on the part of the refugees, who became actively involved in networking outside their group boundaries and in seeking out support in fulfilling their immediate needs. The lack of spatial segregation in the city facilitated this process. Second, the perceived compatibility between the native culture(s) and that of the receiving society was important in establishing contacts with Italians. This aspect of the new social environment influenced the openness of refugees towards Italians, although it was not necessarily always sufficient for their mutual understanding and establishment of closer social ties.

The analysis in this article revealed that disadvantages involved in the lack of an organized programme of assistance for the refugees in Rome, although profound, also entailed potential advantages because it permitted and enhanced personal agency in reconstructing their lives. The absence of reception and integration programmes meant that the refugees did not have to confront the structural limitations inherent in the encounters between the helpers and recipients, based upon unequal power and authority. The discussion also indicated that personal satisfaction and assessment of integration success goes beyond simple, measurable, indicators, such as individual occupational mobility, and includes indicators such as quality and strength of social links with the established community. Further, the analysis revealed that how refugees define 'membership' in community and receiving society is not necessarily associated with their willingness to participate actively in the political realm of the receiving society.

This analysis is by no means an apologia for the absence of assistance programmes and an integration strategy. Rather, it is a call to critically examine the character and consequences of the prevailing legal, institutional and other structural means which currently facilitate these processes in many EU countries. This could help articulate innovative and flexible ways of assisting different groups of refugees without undermining their personal coping strategies. As the study reveals, human agency in the process of structuring and re-structuring social relations in exile is central to the refugee notion of a successful reconstruction of life. Moreover, social interaction with the established community is an important goal of integration and plays an important role in how refugees assess their situation in exile. Policies pertaining to refugee integration, therefore, should acknowledge the importance of refugee agency by allowing for flexibility and diversity of needs of different groups of refugees.

2. Information obtained from a UNHCR representative during an exploratory visit to Rome in November 1999.

3. Data provided by the Ministry of the Interior during an exploratory research visit to Rome in September 1999.

4. Information and data obtained from the NGO representatives during an exploratory research visit to Rome in September 1999.

BAUBÖCK, R. (1996) 'Introduction', in Baubock, R., Heller, H. and Zolberg, A. R. (eds.) The Challenge of Diversity: Integration and Pluralism in Societies of Immigration. Aldershot, Brookfield USA, Hong Kong, Singapore, Sydney: Avebury.

CASTLES, S., KORAC, M., VASTA, E. and VERTOVEC, S. (2003) Integration: Mapping the Field. Home Office Online Report (http:l/www.homeoffice.gov.uklrdslpdfs2/rdsolr2803.doc).

COHEN, I. J. (1989) Structuration Theory: Anthony Giddens and the Constitution of Social Life, London: Macmillan.

EASTMOND, M. (1998) 'Bosnian Muslim Refugees in Sweden', Journal of Refugee Studies 11(2):161-181.

GIDDENS, A. (1984) The Constitution of Society, Cambridge: Polity Press.

GURAK, D. T. and CACES, F. (1992) 'Migration Networks and the Shaping of Migration Systems', in Kritz, M., Lim, L. and Zlotnik, H. (eds.) International Migration Systems: A Global Approach, New York: Oxford University Press.

JOLY, D. (1996) Between Exile and Ethnicity. Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations, University of Warwick, Coventry.

KNUDSEN, J. C. (1991) 'Therapeutic Strategies and Strategies for Refugee Coping', Journal of Refugee Studies 4(1): 21 -38.

KUHLMAN, T. (1991) 'The Economic Integration of Refugees in Developing Countries: A Research Model', Journal of Refugee Studies 4(1): 1-20.

KUNZ, E. F. (1981) 'Exile and Resettlement: Refugee Theory', International Migration Review 15(1): 42-51.

LOSI, N. (1994) Future Plans of Displaced former- Yugoslavs Hosted in Reception Centres in Italy. Rome, Geneva: International Organization for Migration.

MARX, E. (1990) 'The Social World of Refugees: A Conceptual Framework'. Journal of Refugee Studies 3(3): 189-203.

MILES, R. (1993) Racism after 'Race Relations'. London/New York: Routledge.

MONTGOMERY, R. (1996) 'Components of Refugee Adaptation', International Migration Review 30(3): 679-702.

VALTONEN, K. (1998) 'Resettlement of Middle Eastern Refugees in Finland: The Elusiveness of Integration', Journal of Refugee Studies 11(1): 38-60.

 WEINER, M. (1996) 'Determinants of Immigrant Integration: An International Comparative Analysis', in Carmon, N. (ed.) Immigration and Integration in Post-Industrial Societies: Theoretical Analysis and Policy-Related Research. London: Macmillan.

 ZETTER, R. (1991) 'Labelling Refugees: Forming and Transforming a Bureaucratic Identity', Journal of Refugee Studies 4(1): 39-62.

 Appendix

*Table 1*

| Social Characteristics and Legal Status of the Interviewees | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Characteristics** | **N=40** | **%** |
| Age | | |
| 20 to 30 | 15 | 37.5 |
| 31 to 40 | 17 | 42.5 |
| 41 to 50 | 7 | 17.5 |
| over 50 | 1 | 2.5 |
| Total | 40 | 100 |
| Gender | | |
| Female | 21 | 52.5 |
| Male | 19 | 47.5 |
| Total | 40 | 100 |
| Marital status | | |
| Single | 19 | 47.5 |
| Married | 10 | 25.0 |
| To Italians | 4 | |
| To their compatriots | 6 | |
| Common Law relationship | 10 | 25.0 |
| With Italians | 2 | |
| With their compatriots | 8 | |
| Divorced | 1 | 2.5 |
| From Italians | 0 | |
| From their compatriots | 1 | |
| Total | 40 | 100 |
| Parental status | | |
| Single with children | 0 | |
| Married with children | 6 | |
| Common law relationships with children | 0 | |
| Divorced with children | | 1 |
| Total with children | 7 | 17.5 |
| **Characteristics** | **N=40** | **%** |
| Educational level acquired in home country | | |
| Elementary level only | 0 | 0 |
| High or Secondary level | 7 | 17.5 |
| University degree | 16 | 40.0 |
| Interrupted by war | 17 | 42.5 |
| Education continued or vocational training taken | 13 | |
| Did not continue | 4 | |
| Total | 40 | 100 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Time of arrival | | |
| 1991 | 9 | 22.5 |
| 1992 | 17 | 42.5 |
| 1993 | 12 | 30.5 |
| 1994 | 0 | 0 |
| 1995 | 2 | 5.0 |
| Total | 40 | 100 |
| Legal status | | |
| Humanitarian status | 22 | 55.0 |
| Work permit | 10 | 32.5 |
| Italian citizenship or permit to stay for family reasons | 5 | 12.5 |
| Total | 40 | 100 |
| Current labour market status | | |
| Employed | 28 | 70 |
| Work and study | 7 | 17.5 |
| Only study | 5 | 12.5 |
| Unemployed | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 40 | 100 |